

**A Question of Meaning:  
Motivation as a Meaning-Making Process for Late Adolescent Learners Engaged in  
Multilingual Language Learning**

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Participant R

*Interview 1*

Interviewer: Alright, so, um, yeah and it's being recorded, as I mentioned before. Em, alright so, just to kind of start then, um, so you, um, so you're majoring now, you're studying Middle Eastern & European Languages and Culture, that's your major, right?

SR: Yeah.

Interviewer: And you're just in your first year, finishing up your first year. Not a very...

R: Finishing first year, yup.

Interviewer: Pretty strange end to your first year, I guess.

R: Yeah, you can say that.

Interviewer: They're moving everything, they've moved everything online obviously, so your exams...

R: Yeah, yeah, so exams are cancelled, assignments are all pushed back, like it's fine.

Interviewer: Oh ok. Alright, so, can I ask then, what kind of drew you to that major then? I mean, it's obviously related to languages, so you know, what specifically about that major?

R: Yeah, so, I wanted to do law for a long time because the way the system is in Ireland, like with points, em, the better you do on the leaving, the more choice you have. Em, the leaving cert. And I figured I would do well and the system worked well for me in the way that they tested us. And I was like well, I probably am going to do okay, what do I want to do with this? And I was really set on law for a long time, and I don't know if it was more that I was like, well, I definitely don't want to do medicine, I don't want to do anything like that, em, but then I was looking at it one day, like I realized, so I was dead set on law and I was like yeah, I definitely want to do this, and then I realized, I was like I don't know, I definitely don't want to go to college if I'm not going to be doing languages because it's really important to me, and then, em, one night, because basically when I started looking, so you're in secondary school for six years in theory yeah? So in fourth year, em, it's called transition year, and like you're em, doing work experience, you're doing placement, em, and you're looking at courses, you're starting to look at courses. And my course right now didn't exist when I was looking at courses. So I didn't know about it until I think the winter of sixth year, and I was just looking online and I was looking at just courses based on languages, and, em, this came up and I was like oh my God, this looks so interesting. (inaudible) typical, are you interested in this, are you interested in that, so it was basically like politics, history. I really liked the idea of getting to learn Arabic or something, like I am probably going to pick Arabic, but I really liked the idea of getting to

learn that, something a bit different, bit of an edge. Em, I probably will work in languages hopefully at some point as well.

Interviewer: Ok, so this, so this, the course of study you say didn't exist when you were first looking at things, and then when it popped up you just really, it struck a chord with you I guess.

R: Yeah, yeah absolutely. Like it took me a while to kind of get over because I'd had such a set plan for so long, em, but I went to the talk at the open day and I was like, ok well I guess I have a decision to make then, and em, I went with it in the end and I'm really glad I did.

Interviewer: Interesting. So like just the fact that this course all of a sudden popped up changed your entire life plan, I guess you could say. At that point, I mean, the life plan, as far as you had one.

R: Yeah, something like that. Yeah, I guess so. Yeah.

Interviewer: Or at least career plans, let's say career plans, maybe not life plans.

R: Yeah, I mean I might, I might still go into law. Like I had a feeling that I wasn't going to do something conventional anyway. I didn't want to be like a barrister or solicitor, em, so I was like, is there really much point in me doing this law degree then? And then, yeah, so it has kind of changed things, but it's, you know, for the better, I think.

Interviewer: Alright. And you said you're going to pick Arabic, so do you have a choice of languages that you get to...

R: Yeah, em, we're, we can do Turkish, Arabic or Hebrew. Em, and out of the 17 of us I think there's one person doing Hebrew and one person doing Turkish, and the rest are all going to do Arabic.

Interviewer: Can one person do, like, do they have, like how would that work?

R: Apparently they do. I have no idea, maybe

Interviewer: Just one person

R: Because it's not just our course. We'll probably be in with, there's like a, you know the whole joint honors system?

Interviewer: I'm kind of aware of it, yeah.

R: Yeah so there's like a joint honors version of our course, and I think they get to pick to do a language as well, I think they get to do Hebrew or Arabic. So I don't know, I don't know what's going to happen but our class is so small anyway I think they have to accommodate us. But there might end up being like 3 people in the class.

Interviewer: So you haven't had any Arabic yet? That's coming up?

R: None, none yet. They decided not to do, I don't, I don't know why it is, I think it's more that it's just too much at the same time, but we don't start before second year.

Interviewer: Oh alright. Alright so, um, is Arabic the...why, why are you looking at Arabic? Why do you think so many people are looking at Arabic along with yourself?

R: Um, well, Hebrew's very, it's a lot more specific. And then Turkish is as well. Like unless you're going into Turkey, there's not that much point. And then whereas with Arabic, you're talking about the whole Middle East and, you know, a good part of North Africa as well. Even though, I mean, we'll be learning like I think, classic standard and then you've got all your dialects in like Morocco and Algeria and everything. Em, but I think for a lot of us it's kind of that universal pull almost. It's like one of those languages to have. Em, yeah.

Interviewer: Alright, so we'll come back to that in a little bit. Um, another thing I wanted to clarify, you mentioned in the survey that you have ability in four languages but you only talked about two, you spoke about French, Irish, and then of course English would be on there. What's the fourth language that

R: German

Interviewer: you kind of have some...what was it? German?

R: German, yeah. So I've been taking German since secondary school, em, and I'm taking it now as part of my course.

Interviewer: Oh alright.

R: Em, so yeah, I've, I've basically just completed first year of German in college. I still don't feel that comfortable in it though, like I'd be a lot more...that's why when I'm talking about, because I know for some people when they're, when they're like oh how many languages do you speak and what do you speak? They might gravitate towards the ones that they picked up in secondary school, because, I don't know, maybe it's because I have like two others that are pretty much fluent, I don't feel comfortable saying I speak a language when I still don't feel that comfortable speaking German. Em, but yeah I, I mean I can read and write kind of, as well. Em, I feel like I'm waiting for something to happen in German when I finally feel like it clicks and it hasn't happened yet but that's ok.

Interviewer: Alright, so German you did this first year and you said you also did it in secondary school?

R: Yeah, so I did six years of German, yeah.

Interviewer: Oh alright, 6 years. So French, how did you learn French? Because it says you don't have any school experience. Was that at home? On your own? Or...

R: It's my mum, my mum's French.

Interviewer: Oh, okay, alright. Oh so you're, so how would you describe your household? Is it a bilingual household? Is it trilingual?

R: Em, not as much as it used to be. Well it's not trilingual because neither of my parents speak Irish. Uh, but when I was a kid, em, my mum spoke to me in French and my dad

spoke to me in English. And I was lucky because my dad speaks French as well, because I have a few friends that like, they'll have like a parent that, that speaks, one of my friends is half German, because her dad doesn't speak very much German, em, it was kind of difficult for the mum to teach the kids. I feel like that's a big factor because with my parents, like, my mum could speak to me in French and my dad like understood what was going on, whereas like, em, I feel like that's a big factor. But em, she stopped speaking as much to me in French when I was, when I went into like primary school because I would be around my friends and like she couldn't speak to them in French so like, em, it's not as much now. And then mum has been living here for so long, like 30 years, she kind of like thinks in English at this point. So like, yeah, I mean, it's difficult because I do consider myself like a native speaker because I don't speak French the way I would if I'd learnt it in school, but I still, like there are times when I'm not 100% sure of what I'm saying necessarily grammatically, and I've never formally learnt the grammar, em, I want to do that, em but I've never had a formal education in French. Like I took the exams, my state exams, but the standard in Ireland is so low that it doesn't really matter that much. But I, I speak to my grandparents in French. We have like our family group chat on Whatsapp, that's in French, that kind of thing.

Interviewer: Interesting, alright. Um. Alright so then, you speak English mostly at home now, spoke some French early on, now not so much, except with extended family, uh, and um, okay and then you've studied German, and then Irish of course, and um, you learned Irish throughout school, are you still, you're still kind of keeping up with the Irish as well?

R: Yeah, I mean, I went to a Gaelscoil, which means my entire education was through Irish. Because you get thing with a lot of, most Irish people will have done fourteen years of Irish in school but still can't speak it because of the way, there's a sort of meme (?) of because the way it's taught but like, it is true that it isn't taught properly. Em, and you're lacking that kind of immersive experience, so people end up coming out of fourteen years of Irish, have no idea how to speak it, and resent the language as a result, which is really frustrating. Em, but I did, so basically my mum's a lecturer, so she, she used to teach French and she'd have all these students and the only ones that spoke Irish properly and that liked Irish were the ones that went through Gaelscoils. So that's part of the reason that she decided to send me to one. Em, so I did, every day was through Irish, you know, I did maths, science, everything was through Irish, like every single class, except English, was through Irish.

Interviewer: I'm just kind of processing everything you're telling me now. It's interesting because you've got, you know you've got English, and then you studied some German, you also have French, from kind of growing up speaking both English and French, studied Irish and you plan to do Arabic and these languages are all kind of, they're very different, like you know, different families,

R: Different (...?)

Interviewer: I mean German and English are probably like the only ones that are kind of similar and even there, like English has been influenced by French as well and by all these other languages that, it's got some relationship with German but not so much. You've got kind of, quite a, like an eclectic mix you're building, kind of. Eclectic mix. It's kind of, because a lot of others who do study a lot of languages, they tend to kind of gravitate towards languages that are very similar

R: Yeah, the Romance languages and stuff. I'm kind of branching out a bit.

Interviewer: Yeah, it's just kind of interesting that, that that's the way you're heading. Um, so, so yeah, that's quite helpful, thanks for clarifying some of that, um, some of that. Um. Alright, so going back to what you mentioned on your survey, you talk a little bit, or you mention, when you're talking about Irish, um, or actually when you just talk about like learning a language, um, you say it's like having another window, so I'm just wondering, what do the windows look like in your head? Like what is it, when you're using French, like, you know, how, how does it make you feel when you use French? Is there something, um, like, what is it that you see when you're using French, um, English, Irish, like is there anything that you can tell me about that?

R: Em, I don't know.

Interviewer: Like what does the world look like to you like through those languages? This is a very strange question, so if you don't have an answer, it's ok. I'm just curious if there's anything.

R: Yeah, no, but yeah I really like that phrase because I feel like it's a really good, we actually were taught it by, em, em, so there's the Gaeltacht in Ireland yeah? So like they're pockets of Ireland that still speak Irish and just only Irish, and we went there on a school trip and em, one of the teachers said that, and I was like, oh my God that makes so much sense because I find usually people that don't want to learn languages are quite close-minded, and I just feel like there's, it's just different perspectives. Like Irish, for example, em, is so interesting to me because of the way that it was kind of like beaten out of the Irish. You have a kind of, its growth was stunted in a way. So you have your very traditional Irish, your traditional phrases. Like there's these phrases in Irish that are just so unlike anything you'll hear, like em, there's like the, the insults in Irish are so, so mean. Like there's something that, I'm going to make a, like something about the devil making a ladder out of your spine, like it's really like-

Interviewer: Wow, okay

R: Yeah, and then a lot of it, it's very religious as well, so like hello in Irish is Dia duit, God be with you, like it's all...so then you go Dia is Muire duit, or like God and Mary be with you. And then if you want to be, like, go up a notch, it's like, eh, Dia is Muire is Seosamh, so like God and Mary and Joseph, so like it's, everything's very religion-based, like there's just...so like Irish, I feel like...so there's that aspect of it that's been kind of preserved as like this language that developed in like, oh I don't even know that much about it but the very traditional aspect and then the way that it kind of got stunted, so you've got this em,

aspect of Irish which, in Irish it's called Béarlachas, so it's like Englishism in the way that, em, like some words just don't, I'm trying to think of an example, but like, it didn't develop in the same way a lot of other languages did which means that a lot of words are just based on the English with a spin on them, like spelt a different way, pronounced differently, whatever. So, em, like a lamp is like a lampa, do you know what I mean? Then light is solas. So like there's words that are completely, they're more kind of like primitive words are very very different. The verbs are completely different, but like phone is fón, spelt differently. It's that kind of a thing which I find interesting. And then obviously French is very poetic, very romantic, em, personally when I'm using French I don't feel like I can express myself as well because I stopped, how do I put it? My mum, my mum spoke French to me exclusively until I was like 5, and that's all good, but unless you're like, growing up somewhere where you're actually like, so, you know, I had to ask, my 7 year old cousin was asking me questions like a few years ago, and she was like oh, you know, do, like, she was asking me about flirting with boys, and like I had no idea what she was on about because like I've I've never, like I just don't have any slang, I have nothing. So there's that. And then German, I feel like it's just a whole other minefield because it's so completely new to me, whereas with French like it'll never be like, there's a familiarity with French even though I feel a bit restricted sometimes, there's 100% familiarity there because I'm bilingual like. Em, so, yeah. I find French and German interesting from the point of view the way that English is used, because like I'll be in France with my family and like, be seeing these ads and like English is like the cool thing to use and I'm like, that's gas. That's funny. Yeah. Does that answer your question?

Interviewer: Oh yeah, no, that's, that answers the question. There's nothing I'm looking for, like I don't want you to think that like I'm, I'm hoping you say something. It's just more listening to what you say and kind of taking notes and processing, so like if I'm silent it's more that I'm like writing stuff down and just kind of thinking about it and seeing, you know, if there's anything else that I'd like to ask you about that particular thing or if it's time to move on. Um, just, the nature of this, kind of, you know, being online is uh, if we were in person you'd see me like actually taking notes. Here you can't see that, but that's what I'm doing if I'm quiet. It's just more thinking and processing. Um, but that does kind of answer my question and another question that I was thinking about asking as well, like is there any, like what do you use the different languages for? Is there anything that you can do better in one language than another? You kind of mention that in French you feel, even though it's familiar you feel a little bit restricted in what you can actually do in French. Um, and then clearly like, I'm guessing English is probably your most comfortable language because you can, um express more in that. German's going to be more of a school language, and then you mention Irish, you also mentioned about the tradition and history in Irish.

R: Yeah, like it's such a, there's, there's a lot of like, there's a lot of importance connected to it. Em, so the people that love Irish love Irish, you know? And I didn't really at all until I was in 5th year, so my second last year of secondary school which is, second last year of 14 years education, I wasn't really that big into it, and then I got a really good teacher, and she taught us really well, and she taught us the grammar really well. Em, and I was

like oh my God, like all of a sudden, like I feel like once I learn how to speak something properly, like I want to know the grammar inside out before I can actually like freely express myself. So, so for the leaving cert you have to do like an oral exam, and, for Irish, and, you know they drill us, they're like, the way they do it in English speaking schools is that they'd have them, like give them a list of all these phrases to learn off. Oh my name is X, I am Y years old, I live here, blah blah blah, like all this, and they don't actually know what they're saying, and I went into my exam and I was actually really calm, and I just, I just had a chat the way we're having a chat now because I'd gotten to that point where I felt so comfortable expressing myself in Irish that I was like, talk about anything. Like I ended up talking about a story that I hadn't told in years, and like I wasn't even, I wasn't, my grammar was pretty good, like my grammar, like it's kind of slipped a bit now because I haven't used it as much, but at that time it was like pretty much like top notch, and then, you know I was really careful about what I was saying, but it was coming so naturally to me, em, and I made a few mistakes here and there, like I even used an English word because I couldn't think of the Irish, and he still gave me I think like almost full marks, which was like a big deal for me because even in an Irish school that doesn't happen that much because we're compared off each other. So say like, you throw, yeah, you throw, there's such a bell curve like, you throw, eh, a student from an Irish speaking school into an English speaking school and they would get full marks off the top, off the bat like, but because we're all together they can't all give us 90% you know? So there's that. There's something interesting about Irish for me, though, is that, I think because it took me so long to get to that place where I felt, like, comfortable and I felt like my grammar was like on top of things. I've, feel like I lost it faster than with French. Like with French I can go months without speaking it and fall back into it in a few, not months, like I, you know, so I spend maybe two weeks with my grandparents every summer and I'm not speaking English except to my mum every now and then or to my friends, so like, but I'm speaking French with them and, you know, I don't have an accent in French, like I have a very neutral accent, you wouldn't tell that I'm Anglophone, em, and I fall back into it a lot easier than I ever fall back into Irish. Whereas with Irish, because I have almost no opportunity to speak it, that's not, well that's not true because a bunch of my friends, so I went away with my friends this summer, well not this summer, not this summer anyway, last summer and, eh, we don't want people to think we're English because everyone hates them abroad, like in Europe, like we definitely don't want people to think we're English, so we speak Irish to each other. We speak Irish to each other when we want, when we don't want other people to know what we're saying about them, so it's great because you're on, say like a Hungarian tram or something and you're trying to talk about the person next to you and you know there's a very very very slim possibility that they speak Irish, so that's where we used it. But it's interesting even when you aren't doing that. Like I was on a, like a school trip, an exchange a couple of years ago and the way a lot of young people speak Irish, and even if they're fluent like I am, like my friends are, is we speak Irish and every now and then we'll throw in an English word because that's, that's just how we do it, like, it's, it's the way the language has developed. You can't, I don't think you can contain a language to just its rules (?), especially because if you were to give a word to those phrases, they would sound very similar so, and we'd be looking



around at us at these Germans who were desperately trying to figure out if their English has slipped somewhat so they can't understand us, but actually we're speaking a completely different language just with a few other words thrown in, yeah.

Interviewer: Oh ok. Well you've given, like, in what you just said there's like 3 or 4 different things I want to follow up on, so like you've actually just introduced a bunch of stuff. Um, so, um starting with one, I want to go back to that what you said about how, you know you studied for fourteen years but it wasn't really until like, like 12 years in that you started to enjoy it because you had that teacher who you felt really taught you well and everything. Um, so was it just the way that the grammar was being taught? Like what was it, what else did, did the teacher do anything else to kind of spark your interest in the language? That you had, you had kind of, you just did, I guess, for 12 years, then you started enjoying what you were doing. Was there anything else that the teacher did?

R: I don't know, she obviously like loved it a lot. There was that, because she was from like inner city Dublin, she didn't have any Irish until like, she had Irish, she was good at Irish, but she wasn't, she wouldn't have been to our level, she wasn't in an Irish school. She went to the Gaeltacht and learnt it properly and, em, she was just such a stickler, like and I liked her so I wanted to get stuff right as well. Em, but learning the grammar properly was a big thing because for my first three years, there's this teacher in my old school who's like insane. Like crazy. We weren't learning anything off her, we were trying to get through the class without getting screamed at or something. She was just absolutely, like, to this day she's not assigned any classes over like, second year, I don't think, she's not allowed to anymore. She got, like no, genuinely like, there's something off but with the Irish system you can't lay teachers off the same way. Em and then in fourth year we had a teacher who just, I swear to God she was on some kind of suicide mission to send her blood pressure through the roof. She would scream at us every single class, so I didn't enjoy Irish at that point. Em but the thing is is that even though I didn't learn Irish properly properly, I was still doing it in every other subject, so I could still talk to you about chemistry in Irish, do you know what I mean? So it's that kind of ... thing, so like even if I didn't have the grammar for it, like I still had the vocab and I still like had a very high understanding. Em, but it wasn't until that I really learnt it properly and then they have this system in my school which is like, em, like ceannairí (?). Have you heard of like prefects and stuff? In schools like it's kind of like a student that's sort of assigned a sort of authoritative role. So we don't have those really, we have like ... organize events and stuff like that. There's this event that takes place every year which is Seachtain na Gaeilge so like Irish week, and there's the Gael Ceilí, like a dance, and like there's competitions and like, there was something, that, I don't know maybe that then it was like cool to be good at Irish and know Irish properly and not that I've, not that I was really that fussed about what other people were thinking. Em, but there is something, there was a really nice kind of little group of us that were like, yeah we're going to speak Irish really well and that 's what we're going to do. Em, but it was, I do credit that to my teacher, a lot, she was really really good.

Interviewer: Did you have that same teacher for fifth and sixth year?

R: Fifth and sixth year, yeah.

Interviewer: And then the other teachers you mentioned, like the teachers that weren't so great, they were two different ones? Or was it the same teacher?

R: It was like the same teacher from first to third year, but then she kind of took like a leave of absence. Don't know what happened there, em, for a while in third year I think, so we got landed with this, no actually, oh my God, first and second year I had her and then third year I had another teacher who was also like, crazy, em, but for different reasons, but then at that point we had done nothing of the, because there's the junior cert, yeah? In third year. So we had done nothing for the junior cert, so we ended up having to cram the three year course into one year, so there wasn't any enjoyment there either. She did teach us a bit about like the basics, like the genitive case and everything. So we did know a bit of that, and then like, the prepositions that like manipulate words after them, I think we did those as well, kind of, but nowhere, no one came close to my teacher in fifth year, she was just excellent.

Interviewer: And this was your experience in a Gaelscoil, in an Irish speaking school.

R: Yeah.

Interviewer: Wow, ok. That's, um, that's surprising. Like I don't, obviously know about like the schools and things like that. But that's surprising that, like even there you get kind of a, I guess with teachers, you know, it's hit or miss. So then, it's, are you still there? You're kind of like,

R: I don't know there was kind of like a

Interviewer: A hiccup kind of, yeah

R: Yeah

Interviewer: Alright. No I was just saying that like with teachers it's kind of

R: Can you hear me?

Interviewer: Yeah I can hear you. Um there's a bit of a delay, it looks like. It's like kind of coming in and out. A little. Um so let me try asking this question and hopefully it'll get through, through the connection. Um, so then you're talking about this teacher, and the teacher is now teaching you properly, and that was the next question about this whole, you know, speaking properly. Is that, and you mention that that's something that, uh, that kind of, that you look for, you know, being able to express yourself properly, being able to speak properly

R: Yeah

Interviewer: When you were talking about the exam you say, you know, that you were kind of proud of yourself that you were able to speak mostly, kind of correct, I guess you can say

R: Yeah

Interviewer: So it, do you find that you are kind of the same way with the other languages that you speak? Like with French as well, you say you kind of are able to fall back into it a little bit more easily, and this is what you mean that you're able to be kind of accurate using French. Um, with English

R: Well then, sometimes, sometimes with French the way it is is that like my grandparents, my mum, they speak good French. So like, how to put it, em, see I wouldn't have known this because like I can't really pick up on accents, I can't really pick up on like different slang and stuff, for me a lot of the grammar would come naturally. It's just what sounds right on the ear. But then sometimes my mum will pick me up on something and I didn't know it was wrong because I had been saying for years and years and years. So it's not the exact same thing but I will, like, you know, I can usually pick up on, how to put it, like I can pick up on the really like, the easy stuff, like, like masculine and feminine, like that is like on my ear, I don't need to think about it, like, easily. And then, em, but then other stuff like, I don't know, it's more that like I feel really comfortable in my accent in French, like I know I'm pronouncing stuff right like 90% of the time. I feel like (?), 99% of the time. And then, em, yeah I don't know, because I never formally learnt stuff really, and then so much of it with French as well is that the written is so different to the spoken because like, stuff sounds the same it's just spelt differently. With the verbs and stuff. Em, so it's different, it's different, whereas with Irish there's a lot in the pronunciation, there's a lot in em, being very careful with the way that you, em, pronounce words, because there's a lot of h's put in, depending on the word, depending on the preposition, so you need to pronounce things properly. Whereas in French you could be in your head using the wrong word, but it sounds the same, if that makes sense.

Interviewer: Oh ok, yeah. Yeah I don't know much about French but I know like there's some words that are pronounced similarly even though, like, is it like, in some sense like the singular and plural can sometimes kind of sound the same when you pronounce them but when you write them separately

R: Yeah, they are the same. Yeah basically.

Interviewer: Yeah, alright. In general you'd say accuracy or being able to be correct is, is, something you strive for in your speaking.

R: Yeah, I do tend to be a bit self-conscious sometimes when I don't feel like, so like there are times when I feel like there's a language barrier with me and my family almost which has held me back a bit, even though, like I talked to my mum about it and she's like, \_\_\_\_\_, that's just not true, it's just you being self-conscious about it, em, but there are times when I'm like oh I don't think this is right, I don't want to, like, and I get like a little bit embarrassed or like self-conscious about it which is really dumb, but, em, I can't really help it. So I am trying to, you know, strive to say stuff properly. But then properly, I mean, that's a whole different argument because half of, you know, Irish colloquialisms are just completely off but it's Hiberno-English so it's not necessarily correct or incorrect. Em, I think with Irish, because it's quite like isolated in away, like the grammar rules are the same, they aren't, they haven't changed in like years and years and years. So, well, maybe

like, I don't know when the Caighdeán was, there, there was kind of a thing, but even then, right, the provinces are different, so you have a different sort of dialect almost in the four provinces. And they use words differently, so, so like there are some provinces that after a preposition they take a h, which is the standard, em, so that's like the, most sort of classic Irish is based on, like, em, Connacht Irish, so like Galway, Mayo, but then they'll say stuff differently to the Caighdeán, the standard, and then, em, up north is completely different again, and then down south is also different, so basically there's a standard but then there's exceptions to the standards, but basically the rule was if you were keeping with the same dialect through your piece, through your speech, then that's fine, that's correct, but you can't be like, going in and out, it's about consistency. If that makes sense.

Interviewer: That makes sense. So then, another thing that I wanted to follow up on, like your experiences using the different languages, and you spoke a lot about like your experiences using Irish on the exam, um, and then you also mentioned when you went on a trip with your friends to what was it, Hungary, I think you said, or

R: We went, yeah, we went on Interrail

R: Yeah, there's a lot of that.

Interviewer: Do you find, like have you traveled to, like what other countries have you traveled to in Europe? Aside from that trip

R: We went, see my parents don't speak Irish, so anything like that would have been with my friends. I went to Germany with my school and then with those friends that are, speak Irish as well, we, we did like Interrail, so we did the Netherlands, we did like, yeah so like Amsterdam, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Zagrab, Bled in Slovenia, Venice and Paris, and we spoke Irish basically in every city, yeah.

Interviewer: Because you found a lot of like, anti-English sentiment there.

R: It was partly that and partly, em, partly also just because we wanted to be able to talk to each other without anyone listening as well.

Interviewer: Oh ok, yeah.

R: Em, but no yeah we don't, there is a thing of not wanting to be seen as English, because we're really really not, so.

Interviewer: So, um, you studied Irish in school, you studied German in school as well, did you find the, like, the, what was the difference between the experience of studying German in secondary school versus studying Irish? Did, did you have, do you think you had better German teachers than Irish teachers? You said you know, your first couple Irish teachers weren't the greatest, did you have a similar experience with the German teachers?

R: Em, I had the same German teacher for six years, and in hindsight, she was ok, our class was awful. I had a really bad, like naughty class almost, em, and they just didn't

want to know, and like, we're doing stuff now, or we were doing stuff in the grammar lecture, and I was like, oh, I've actually, like I've done this. Em, so she did actually teach us quite a bit. There was some stuff that I didn't understand why she never taught us, like, she never taught us really simple words like, you know, how and why and that kind of stuff. Em, but then, yeah so, I don't know, her approach was a bit different, but it's a totally different experience, especially when you're in a Gaelscoil, em, because we're not learning it as a foreign language, you know. We're learning, eh, we're learning how to do the grammar to the utmost, but like we have it on the ear, we have a lot of it on the ear, you know? Em, and then, but with Irish, well like German's, German's a foreign language and Irish just isn't for us. Whereas in English schools you will get a lot of that, that Irish is being taught like a foreign language because it almost is to them, which is sad, but true.

Interviewer: Did you, did the teacher teach German through Irish?

R: Yeah

Interviewer: Oh really? So teaching all the grammar points and everything through Irish. That's oh, huh.

R: Yeah, so like all of my like, my flashcards that I use now for revision for German are all in Irish, which is hilarious to me, but em, it works.

Interviewer: That must, I mean, I would, I would guess that's probably more difficult than learning it through English simply because the differences between the languages are going to be far greater than if you learned it through English. So they didn't use, there was no English at all

R: Yeah, I mean like, well like, formally, so our book was in English, like, but then, her teaching in the class was always in Irish, and she actually had really good Irish (...) she was from Mayo. Em, but sometimes it made sense like, learning the genitive through Irish made a lot more sense than it would have learning it through English because she could refer back to the genitive in Irish and we'd be like, oh, I know exactly what you mean. Em, but, yeah there are some bits where like it would have made so much more sense to learn through English because of vocab and stuff. But then I suppose that eliminates some false friends almost, as well.

Interviewer: Yeah. Um, there was one more thing, at least one more thing I was hoping to ask, um, so like you've already kind of given me a lot, like you've given me a lot to think about for the first part, um just a couple things to tie up here. Oh yeah, this is what I was going to ask. Um, so you mention as well, um, and you've spoken about this today as well, that Irish is very, the history and the tradition behind it. And you say that you know, speaking Irish is like connecting to your own history. Um, do you feel the same way with, with French or English? Do you feel like there's like a historical or traditional element there?

R: No.

Interviewer: Not really.

R: No, it's not the same thing because of the persecution, em, like people weren't allowed to speak Irish, you know? It was like beaten out of Irish people. Em, I suppose it's interesting for me because my family, like my family on my dad's side is Irish but we kept, like, emigrating back and forth from the UK, so a lot of my family, like I was the first person on my dad's side, of like the Interviewer-- to be born in Ireland for like 200 years. Like the family stayed Irish, we married other Irish people and moved back and forth. But there wasn't like a tradition, I think my great grandma on my dad's side was, she was in my family by marriage but she spoke, em, she spoke Irish, em, but there isn't like a tradition of speaking Irish in my family, so it's a bit different for me to connect to it that way. But it is purely, like there is very much like a pride thing that oh my God, we've kept it alive for so long through all of this, you know. Like there's the whole phrase of like 800 years of oppression, and it is partly that that, em, you know, it makes me really angry for example when people try and apply, like, people are like huh, Saoirse, like Saoirse Ronan, like why is it spelt like that? Haha, that doesn't make sense. And I'm like, you wouldn't try and apply English grammar rules or language rules to a French name or a German name, so why are you doing it to Irish. Em, stuff like, petty stuff like that really irritates me. Em, but there's there's definitely like a sort of pride element to it that we have kept it alive for this long. Like there's, there are a lot of links as well between like Irish language and Irish nationalism which is a bit dodgy in places because I have people in my class, or not my class, may...yeah probably in my class, but that would genuinely be like, yes, Tíocfaidh ár lá, Up the Ra, we're gonna get 6 counties back, like it's very eh, Republican, em, you know, and like, that's a bit dodgy and you will get more of that in like an Irish school. There was also an aspect of the fact that my school was so white in an area that isn't that white. Like in the area where I live, it's got a huge African population, huge Pakistani population, but because it's an Irish school, you wouldn't have, have a lot. There was maybe, when I was there, when I left there was about 800 kids in the school, and I'd say maybe, oh my God, 20 of them, if that, weren't white, which like, for Ireland, still now, because like maybe in the 80s that would have been good, but Ireland now is really not good especially considering the area I'm in in the suburbs. Like there should be more representation than that. Em, that was one thing that was a bit of a downside, em, the fact that there, like everyone was very very white and very Irish. Em, but, yeah that is the downside then, that the fact that it is so linked to sort of, Irish Republicanism and nationalism, I suppose.

Interviewer: Mmmm. Alright. So like now, is there, so you did German during the first year of college now. Do you have to continue with that? Or do you, are you gonna just, is it going to be a complete switch over to Arabic? Are you going to continue with German? Do you have to?

R: No, no, I continue with German this year, yeah. So...

Interviewer: So you'll be learning German and Arabic in the second year.

R: Yeah, yeah. I probably should have done French in college in hindsight. But that's ok.

Interviewer: Alright. So like, so, and um, I guess French isn't really like a language you're actively studying, it's just something that you use whenever the opportunity arises, for example talking with your family.

R: Yeah

Interviewer: The language that you're like studying studying (...?) ...yeah go ahead

R: Sometimes like series on Netflix that are like French series, I will watch them in French with French subtitles. Like I watch everything with subtitles, but I pay special attention because my issue with French is that I can't write it as well as I speak it, which is, I think the case for a lot of bilingual kids, like one of my friends, she's the same as me, em, so, yeah like I, I've no problem watching stuff in French. Reading it is a bit harder, but like, so reading in French for me takes not as much effort as like, how to put it, it's more effort than reading in English but it's less effort than reading like an academic text in English, if that makes sense.

Interviewer: Ok, alright, yeah.

R: Em, I just have to concentrate a bit harder.

Interviewer: And then with the Irish, it's, you're talking with friends and things like that, because you said that your family doesn't really have it, it's more like with your, your own age group

R: No, my family doesn't have it at all. Yeah, no. Em, because like my granny, my dad's mum never lived here until she was like, eh like in her 30s and my dad went to like, a private school and they didn't really care as much about Irish, and then my mum actually had to learn a bit because she's a lecturer, which is funny because the French woman in the house knows Irish, but em, nowhere near to the point where you'd want to be like, speaking it, you know?

Interviewer: Yeah, okay. Alright. Ok, um, yeah that's pretty good for right now. There's a lot for me to think about.

## *Interview 2*

Interviewer: Um, anyway did you get a chance to read through the stuff I sent?

R: Say that again?

Interviewer: Did you get a chance to read through the stuff I sent you?

R: Yes, and I made some notes. Um, so I don't know if you want to go through those...

Interviewer: Yeah, I mean, yeah so like this whole, the purpose of this kind of meeting is uh, to get your reaction to what I put down and I put a couple questions there, it's uh, I'm trying to get the story straight so I wanna see if you have anything to add, if you wanna elaborate upon anything, anything struck you, did I get anything wrong, or do you wanna kind of correct me...

R: You weren't really, like, you got most of the stuff, it's weird like to see yourself analyzed like this. Um, some stuff, the second, oh no it was like the end of the first point about like, reestablishment of continuity, em, me, it was like, you said, so I wonder if you seeing my mum not using French makes me wonder if I'll stop using it. Em, I don't get that at all. That's actually not a thing for me. I never even, it's never even crossed my mind. So no, not on that. Em, but your last point, that I expressed more stronger feelings about Irish in a broader social concept, eh, context, yes that, that does make sense. Em, then you said something actually before that, about my concern for the Irish language and the students that go through the system, I wouldn't feel as much for the students as I would for Irish, like I, it wouldn't be as deep for me. Em, there was a word in the transcript that you spelt wrong, obviously because it's transliteration, em, I will send the spelling to you over email so you have it. And I fought that seanfhocail, so it's (as Gaeilge), so basically, 'May the devil make a ladder of your backbone and pick apples in the garden of hell'. So...

Interviewer: Wow, okay. The garden of hell. That's interesting. Yeah no that's good to know that, there's you know that, there's a couple things, yeah, that need to be clarified. Um, you know, it's, it's, there's a bit of conjecture there, obviously, that's what I'm trying to get at, I'm trying to get at it from your perspective, you know what you're seeing, just trying to understand it from your point of view, so you know, those clarifications are helpful. Um, what was I going to say, oh yeah, um, so the, so there were a couple other questions there as well, and I kind of wanted to go over those questions that I put there and see if you had anything to say to them. Um, so, uh, I think probably, uh, we'll start with, I'm trying to see, I have the questions here. So I kind of wanted to ask also, yeah this is something that we didn't really get to in the first, uh, interview, but I was just wondering, um, like do you have any memories of like your first, your first exposure to or your first contact with either Irish or German, I mean with French you know, it's gonna be, I can't imagine you'd remember the first time you speak French because, you know, you were speaking it since, uh, since you were born essentially. But like with Irish and German, like can you, like do you ever, can you remember like your first contact? Did you ever think, you know, did you ever think them strange? Or, like, you know, trying to work



out the pronunciations. Do you remember anything about your first experiences with either of those languages?

R: So, with the Irish, em, I went to an Irish primary school as well, so it's essentially immersion from, like, I was 4 when I started so I didn't, like I don't remember, it's not that I don't remember, it's partly that I don't remember, partly that I already had, I had already been raised bilingual by that point, you know, so I feel like probably what it was for me at the time was another thing to pick up. Em, the thing is they're very, they were lenient for the first two years and then, from when we were in first class, we would have been about seven, like we were expected to speak Irish at all times. We would get in trouble if we didn't. Em, and then with German, I actually did a few months of that in my last year of primary school before I went into secondary school, um, I think with German, because it's so, like, you know there's a few letters, so like, you know, your 'w' sounds like a 'v' in Anglophone terms, and 'sch' sounds like an 'sh', like, as soon as you get those down, like it's very literal, so I don't really remember, to be honest, that well. I'm sorry, that's a bit, a crappy answer.

Interviewer: No, no, it's fine. It's just, I was just curious about that. Um, so it wasn't, like, I guess, it would be fair to say that it just never kind of crossed your mind that these were all that different, that they were just...

R: It did for German, because it was a sort of excitement, of 'oh my goodness, a new language, so much fun', well, I don't know if I remember thinking that but like I would spend, it was an hour a week after school on Mondays when I was in primary school. Em, so it wasn't that much, it was like, you know, your basics, colours, numbers, and they had us all grouped in together so, and, did I start taking it in fifth class? I can't even (?) remember, but yeah no, it was like a year of very casual learning, so when I actually did properly start learning it in first year I already had a little under my belt, but not that much.

Interviewer: So like, and I think on the summary I sent you, you know, I kind of mention that you still seem to kind of be waiting, and you mentioned this before, you're still waiting for a moment in German where it kind of clicks for you, you feel comfortable, you'll be able to say yes, this is one of the languages that I speak and I can use, um,

R: I made some notes on this. Em, where is it? So, um, there's a question of why I didn't do French in college instead of German, and you basically got it (freeze) I wanted to, you know, keep learning it because it did cross my mind, obviously, to do French, especially with my, like, you know, as I was learning about the middle East and like Arabic and stuff. I mean there's, you know, colonialism or whatever, so I did think about learning French and then there would have been the side that I would have been absolutely bored out of my skull in some of the French lectures because, em, some of my friends, em, that are really good at French but only did it in secondary school are so bored like, and, you never want to be that asshole who's like fluent in the language and is just like there in back of class. No, no, that's not true, but em, like one of the girls in my German class, she's Swiss German so it's a different dialect but she does speak German and we're all kind of like, oh

okay, em, so yeah, I just, I probably, it's a funny mix with French because some of the grammar would have been new to me, some of it would have been familiar (?) (...inaudible - freeze ), but also I would have been so so bored, so it was that and also just more of the fact that I had been learning German for six years and I didn't want to, you know, stop, you know? Just, I wasn't going to lose French by not doing it in college was the thing, but I would have probably lost German.

Interviewer: So, it's not, you're waiting but it seems like you kind of want that to happen, you kind of want, you want that payoff kind of. You kind of want that payoff from all the time you spent.

R: I don't even know because payoff makes it sound very, like,

Interviewer: Alright, well maybe not payoff

R: you know, like shallow almost. No, no, I know exactly what you mean, I know exactly what you mean but for me it's not like, I don't know, I don't know if I'm working hard enough at improving my German to actually (inaudible) so I don't know, I just find it very daunting, em, still, and I would just like to be in a place where I can kind of express myself freely. Like I did a German exchange a couple of years ago, em, and it just so happened that the, like the, my exchange student spoke like perfect English and then her mum spoke English and French so we ended up speaking like a mixture, the three of us, and like it was just so daunting as I was there kind of like trying to scrabble words together, and I did actually make a note somewhere about how, like, doing German in college, em, yeah actually, I don't know if you want me to skip ahead or not but

Interviewer: No go ahead, I'm following you. Just go ahead

R: On the last page of the notes, em, you were saying, em, the reevaluation of my secondary school German experience and how, like, I was kind of surprised at how much I had learnt, I will say that that is in a technical grammatical sense more than actual practical application because I was finding that we had already done the relative pronouns, ok, I was solid on them, I understood, like, accusative, dative, genitive cases, however I wouldn't feel comfortable holding a conversation in German. Like I have all this vocab, I have all this grammar, but I don't feel that I have the practical confidence. I don't have confidence in speaking, my confidence in speaking actually went down this year, uh, because, you know like, in my school, no one really gave a shit about German, there was like 30 of us and maybe like five people were actually trying. Em, so it wasn't hard to be good, whereas now, I'm in class with people (inaudible 17:41 ) kind of thing, um, and I did find that I was very, very self-conscious about speaking German in class in front of, you know, a German person because up until now I'd only ever had Irish people teaching me, like, em, I don't know if it's because I speak French and sometimes, I try not to, but sometimes I can find myself wincing at people as they're trying to say stuff, and I'm like oh God, what must this German person be thinking while they're listening to me speak, you know? So, yeah, um, on those things...

Interviewer: I mean, you clearly still have an interest, you said that your plans, you know, had, you know, we not been stuck inside this summer, you would have been in Germany, you would have been heading over there to, you would have been two months over there?

R: Exactly, I was supposed to be, I think almost like two and a half, maybe, I was supposed to do training, yeah it was going to be like 8 weeks of work. I was so excited because I was supposed to, like, teach English, so I wouldn't have actually been speaking that much German, like it would have been more on my days off and stuff but I was supposed to be like, I was supposed to train in Berlin for like a week and then, yeah, I was so bummed like, because I had everything set up, also means I'm gonna be so broke because like, there's no jobs going here and, yeah, I don't know, but em, yeah I do like actively want to improve it but I am a firm believer in immersion, I don't think you can, you know, like learn a language from just, like studying like this. And also, I'm going like in my third year, who knows now what's gonna happen but my third year is Erasmus, or rather exchange and Erasmus, like that's a given, you're not allowed to do, not that you're not allowed but like the idea is that you do your third year abroad, so I'm looking at Vienna, I think, em, and then like Beirut in the second semester, if I'm allowed, but who knows now? I do want to spend a little bit of time in Germany before I went to another (? - frozen screen) German-speaking country, so that was the plan this summer but obviously that fell apart, anyway, it happens. What's it called, I was looking at, asking why I'm self-conscious in French and is it that I worry that I'm not as able to express myself properly, yes, for sure, I just get really self-conscious, that's like, just as a general thing with languages, like I'm just so anxious to say the wrong thing, I don't want to sound stupid, like, you know, that's maybe more of a me thing than a language thing but um, then also you said you may be thinking that it's slowly starting to drift from you, not really, it's a bit different because for me, it's not like I had this really really great, sophisticated French and all of a sudden I couldn't speak it anymore, it was more that I was totally immersed with my mum until I was about 4 or 5, and then I started actually like going out into the world, it's very difficult to develop the two languages side by side when you're living in like, like, you know learning English based in an Anglophone country, an Anglophone family in France is very different to like, you know, speaking French at home. I, it's not that I feel it's drifting from me, I didn't develop at the same rate as English would have. So like, my reasons for being self-conscious in French are like, they're silly because, I'll complain to my mum about it and she's like, well \_\_\_\_\_, like, there's no way you ever would have learnt that because, you never learnt it so it's more of a, like, lack of development as opposed to a loss, if that makes sense. Yeah, uh, especially, just especially because of my background growing up in Ireland as well. Em, then the thing about language needs, (inaudible - freeze) contained to its rules, that for me is more for Irish but you know the whole thing of like, you need to learn the rules to break them kind of thing? Em, so I feel, yeah so would apply that but it's more Irish than anything else, and again it's again just because of the fact that I didn't develop at the same rate, so like, there isn't a word for some stuff. A lot of the time as well, something I was gonna say was that, em, Irish, there's very little, there's not much slang because it didn't develop at the same rate as, you know, English

or French or German or whatever, em, there isn't a lot of like informal language so a lot of people will sub in English slang when there isn't an Irish equivalent because often there just isn't like. Like there just isn't, em then you get a lot of Béarlachas, and like Béarlachas isn't necessarily, Béarlachas is a bit of a bad thing, Béarlachas is more when someone isn't trying, like when they're doing a lot of direct translations, that's from my experience anyway, like, em, I'm trying to think of an example, it's not coming to me, but em, like, I will think of something and I will send it in an email with my spelling stuff, but em, it's more like when someone, like, well there is an Irish translation for something, Béarlachas is more when someone goes for a direct translation which just isn't correct, when there is actually an Irish translation, em, as opposed to like just using English words, because that's just English that's...

Interviewer: So you mean like a transliteration, where they take the, like the English word and then translate it, like the dictionary definition to Irish but it doesn't really make sense

R: Yeah, yeah, yeah, basically, as opposed to what I was saying, which is like using English words, that's a bit different, again, to me it is anyway. But like when em, when our teacher would pull up stuff for Béarlachas it was when we were speaking Irish but it wasn't sounding like Irish as in, you could hear, obviously you'd need to speak Irish to know but you could hear that it wasn't actually right, it was just someone had decided that, ok alright well this is this, so transliteration, transliteration, yeah.

Interviewer: I see what you mean. Like, yeah so it's, it's just the words have been translated into the language but that phrase itself doesn't really exist in the language or it's not commonly used because, it's just not the way that language works. Ok, alright, I see. I get that. Alright, um, so do you find like, when you're speaking these other languages, do you correct yourself a lot? Do you kind of stop and, like if you, if you make a mistake do you consciously, like, go back and fix your mistake as you're talking? Or do you kind of just let it slide?

R: Yeah, so I mean, it depends. Sometimes, like if I just catch myself like a few words ahead of, then I probably will repeat, but otherwise I'll just think about it as I'm speaking and stew. Em, but yeah I will try and correct myself most of the time, yeah.

Interviewer: Sorry, it's just you're cutting out a couple times, like a little bit so like that's why, if there's a delay on my side, it's because, it's probably a delay in the network, so I'm just waiting to catch up, yeah. Alright. Ok, you kind of cleared up a lot of the things that I was, that I asked up there, and I had a couple of questions but you've kind of answered them as you were talking just now. Was French, like in your secondary school then, was French not offered? O you just did, or it was just, you didn't want to take it for the same reasons you didn't want to take it at university? It was just, you didn't want to be that person who kind of knew all the French and was just...

R: It actually wasn't offered in my school.

Interviewer: It wasn't, oh ok.

R: No, no. Em, my school only offered German and Spanish. Em, see there's a very small pool of teachers when you're in a Gaelscoil, and also my mum never would have let me, she was like, I'm not having you learn French from an Irish person, like. No, like she was so right to, because, you know, that would have been all of her years of hard work just like completely disregarded because the other thing is, is that in a Gaelscoil, you're not, like you're definitely not gonna get a French person teaching French, you're gonna get an Irish person teaching French, so she was like, no. (inaudible) Em, and then obviously I didn't even have the choice, so, yeah.

Interviewer: Because I had a question, I was going to ask if like, if your friends, the people at the school, knew that your mother spoke French, knew that your mother was from France and like, if they ever bothered you for like help with their homework or something, but clearly that wasn't an issue because there was no French offered.

R: That's happening in college now, actually, which is, it's funny because, the people in my course, there's 17 of us, and I think there's maybe five or six people doing French, and one of the girls, like, would ask me for help every now and then, which for me is funny because one of the girls in the course is French, like she's half English but she would be more like French than British and em, then Freya (?) as well, my friend (?) and her French is really good, em, so yeah, no I have been asked a couple of times. Freya actually, Freya's French is really good but she'll ask me if she's stuck, a lot of the time I will pass them on to my mum though just because I don't want to give misinformation. Em, I did actually have friends at other schools like coming up to exams and stuff, I did have some people, em, looking for help, which is still fine because, the way the Irish system is, you need all the help you can get. Em, yeah, but it wasn't a common occurrence like in school. They didn't know she was French so, they didn't know that.

Interviewer: Yeah I'm just going over the notes as well and seeing if there was anything I was hoping you'd elaborate more upon. Most of these questions, again, you kind of covered.

R: Oh, there was, can you hear me?

Interviewer: Yeah I can hear you.

R: Ok, there was one question, it says, do you remember the first time your mother or another family member corrected my French. Em, I don't really like, because it wasn't some major thing because they're usually like minor little issues here and there, like, I don't conjugate something properly or like, very very rarely I will get a gender mixed up, very rarely. There is one thing I do remember though. Just because I'm so insulated in my French learning, if that makes sense, em, we were leaving my grandparents because, like, we're very close with them, and em, my granddad, my granddad's ex-army, right? So he's turning 90 this year but he still goes on like big walks around the woods near the house, like no like it's actually a joke because like, he worries us so much. I was looking at my Snapchat memories that came up the other day, and I was like, me and my Snapchat memories going "Here I am, looking for my granddad, he's just on top of the garden wall", I'm like oh my God, so like yeah, so obviously all you need to know is that he tends to

push things too far. Like he's fine, obviously, but he's a 90 year old that acts like a 60 year old and stresses everyone out but em, what I was going to say was yeah, so one time we were leaving, and em, my mum was like, now don't be worrying like, her mum, and she like, said, so like no, and basically what I said was then (French), which is like, like, no fuckery kind of, but I didn't know it was a swear, like I didn't know, I didn't know, and everyone was like, what the hell Sarah, like obviously it was funny because it was just us and like, they knew that there was no malice behind it but I had no idea, I thought it was just like, no messing, but like no, don't be fuckin around basically is what I said to my granddad. I do remember that, that is funny. Em, I'm just, part of it is that I'm so terrified of that happening in a scenario that is not with my family and is with people I don't know, and they're like what the hell is this girl on, but yeah, (inaudible 30:36 ) like that. Yeah.

Interviewer: Do you know where you might have heard that? Obviously you would have heard it somewhere, do you recall

R: Yeah, for sure, like, no it was probably like

Interviewer: Like did your mother ever say it to you or something?

R: It's not, ok but it's not that strong a swear, I don't think, because my family are very formal in that kind of way, like their French would be, like it was funny, I, I found when I started first year of college, I was like, I can read academic texts which is really handy with my, because I was going to do a project on Algeria, and the first thing(?) was like there's so many French sources in the library, I could use this and eh, I was like, I wonder why this is? Because you do notice, like, from, like in English that there's a step-up with academic texts, whereas I didn't get that as much with French, and I was, I wasn't expecting that. I was like, what the hell, like I, my, I struggle reading French but I'm not struggling reading this French. I don't struggle, it's just a bit more effort, a bit more concentration. I'm not struggling any more with this than I am with actual novels, and my mum was like, yeah, that's because our family speak really good French basically is the thing, em, so like it's weird because I never formally learnt French but my standard of spoken French, when it's correct, is quite high, if that makes sense, in terms of, well, whatever you think a high standard is, it doesn't necessarily have to be like, grammar is standard

Interviewer: Like educated kind of like, academic stuff

R: Educated, very little slang, yeah which is interesting because like, you know, my granny, my granny was a teacher like, we weren't from a particularly like very well-educated stock, like not really middle-class at all, but my, my granddad and my grandma always spoke really good French and my mum does as well, but then my mum would have done, she would have qual, like what did she even do? She's qualified to teach French, so she must have learnt it formally as well, so her French would be very good and she always made sure that mine was, too. I think that definitely passed on to me.

Interviewer: So the grandmother who was a teacher is your French grandmother you're talking about.

R: Um-hmm, well, yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: So I mean, I guess it makes sense, you know, if you've got teachers in the family, teachers tend to, kind of, be more...

R: Yeah, it's funny though, because my granddad never had a formal education, he joined the army at like 18 or something, and he has a bit of a chip on his shoulder about that, which is, this is off-topic now but this, like, he does have a bit of a chip on his shoulder about like, you know, he never really sat his, like, his baccalaureate, he ended up doing like a different set of exams when he was in the army, which are actually at a higher standard, and he did really well in those, but he still feels like the dunce of the family, which just isn't true because that man is a wealth of knowledge, but eh, well yeah, we speak good, good French, good educated French, as you say, so, so classist but em, yeah.

Interviewer: Still, you must have picked that up from somewhere, I'm just trying to think

R: Yeah, no, for sure like

Interviewer: That kind of slang

R: I don't even know, maybe off a TV show or something, like, but I must have heard it somewhere in the family, like, because I have extended family as well (inaudible 33:53 ) but em, ah it was just so funny like, so so funny, but yeah. Em, there's that, that I'm always terrified like you know how when you're maybe in your teens and you start, like, learning a bunch of new words and you wouldn't necessarily want to use them because you're not entirely sure what they mean, that's me with French, very frequently. So I'm just like, oh God, not doing that again.

Interviewer: Yeah, I mean, I'm just looking, I don't, yeah, so I don't have any specific questions aside from what I've already sent you and you kind of covered quite a lot there. Um you know, I was going to ask about, you know, dialects and things like that but you said that your French is pretty standard, I'm assuming your Irish, you mentioned as well

R: My French is pretty standard, I don't know if I've mentioned this before, but like I've just said, my granddad was in the army, right, so my mum would have moved like every two years, she has a very neutral accent, em, so do I basically, and honestly we have like a really, we sound really similar. Like it's funny, because if you heard my mum speak English you'd like, there's no, like, there's no similarity at all, but like if I pick up the phone and it's one of my French family members, they won't know who it is. So we sound very similar, she has a neutral accent and so do I. Em, in terms of Irish, Leinster Irish is modeled off Connacht Irish, em, which is what I would have learnt, so I basically speak Irish with a Dublin accent, is that, and then German I don't really know. Apparently I have a bit of a French accent when I speak German because I tend to roll my r's a bit, but I don't really know about dialects and that, yup.

Interviewer: I don't know, I don't know if it's a huge issue but I have, you know, heard that, there is a bit of controversy with the whole Leinster Irish thing. Again, you can correct me if I'm wrong, these are just things I've heard.

R: No, what have you heard?

Interviewer: Like there's a, compared to what might be considered more "authentic" Irish, you know, from, like, Donegal or Connacht or Munster, those other more traditional accents, I guess you can say, or the ones that have informed the standard, that, uh, there's kind of a, well not just with one specific accent I should say, just among Irish speaking accents, there seems to be a bit of a, what do I want to say, like um, that some accents are more acceptable than others, I guess you can say.

R: Yeah, ok, so, basically the running joke is that Ulster Irish, so Donegal, is unintelligible, you can't understand it, it's ridiculous, em, but like the same way like a very thick Donegal accent is difficult to understand in English, em, but like, like Ulster Irish is very very different, they use different words, like the dialect is nuts, like it's lovely and I've had a couple of teachers throughout school with, em, Ulster Irish, but it's a whole different universe. And then your Connacht Irish is very classical, very typical, very traditional, like you said, the thing about Leinster Irish versus the other dialects is that the other dialects are modeled, like they're modeled off the Gaeltacht, so your Donegal Gaeltacht, Mayo and Galway, Kerry, whereas you don't have a Gaeltacht here because it was the Pale, you know, it was, yeah, so you have I think one Gaeltacht in Meath but they, those people were moved in from, I think though I'm not entirely sure, so like do check, but I think the Gaeltacht in Meath is made up, or it was originally made up of the people that were moved off the Great Blasket Island off of Kerry, I think, em so that's the people who were there. They would have had, like, Munster Irish, I suppose, as well. Em, Munster Irish and Connacht Irish are more similar than any of the others with Ulster Irish, and then Leinster Irish is a lot modeled off Connemara Irish, so Galway, especially because a lot of Irish teachers will train there. Em, I think so, I think that's it anyway, like my Irish teacher who I'm so fond of, like she learnt her Irish in the Gaeltacht so she speaks Connacht Irish with a Dublin accent, which is, yeah, there's a few, like, mannerisms as well, like little things in the dialect that don't apply. So like the Caighdeán, the standard, like, standardization I suppose, kind of, it doesn't have any anomalies whereas all of the dialects do, and then, then your Leinster Irish is, as far as I'm concerned, most heavily based off Connacht Irish, but without the little, em, I don't want to call them mistakes because they're not mistakes, it's just tradition, like the way that em, like, when you say, like some prepositions will take a séimhiú, like a 'h', and in, in Connacht Irish they don't, they take an urú instead, so like say you were saying, if I was to say 'at home', I would say 'sa bhaile', so that's my (inaudible) s-a and then a séimhiú on 'baile', but as far as I know, Connacht would say 'sa mbaile', so they put an 'm' in front of the 'b' instead, em, so yeah basically Ulster Irish is kind of wacky, off the wall, and then Leinster Irish is most heavily influenced by Connacht Irish. That make sense?

Interviewer: Alright, yeah. And then, isn't there, there's also, is it Waterford? Isn't there Irish,

R: I don't know, like honestly, we never really learnt that much about



Interviewer: I think there's one that's kind of very very minor and doesn't get figured into the, into standardization at all. I might be wrong though.

R: We, well, what we formally learnt was Gaeilge Uladh, Gaeilge na Mumhan, Gaeilge Chonnacht, and then, like Leinster Irish really isn't even a thing, like, it's just the three main dialects, and then the Irish we were speaking, like Dublin Irish I suppose, but then you get a lot of like, sort of, puritans almost, like people from the Gaeltacht who don't really think that Dublin Irish is like, real or whatever but, you know, gotta keep it alive some way, em, there is a lot of, there is an issue (inaudible) at the moment, especially because like, there's been a sort of like revival of Gaeilge on Twitter, like there's a very like active Irish Twitter kind of presence, and em, there's an issue around like snobbery, whereas like we can't afford to be snobs if we're gonna keep it alive. Em, and there is, as far as I know, a bit of looking down noses at Dublin Irish, but like, a lot of that could just generally be classism in terms of like not liking North Dublin accents, which I think is such a pity because like, I like the way I speak Irish, you know, like I'm not looking to sound like, it's very strange, like one of my teachers in, one of my teachers in school, he never taught me actually but em, he learnt Irish in the Gaeltacht, so if you ever only spoke to him in Irish, you would think he was from Galway, and then he spoke English and he sounded like he was from inner city Dublin, like, so it's, no it's really strange, like, and then even my art teacher had a very neutral accent in Irish, like she'd only actually learnt it when she came to our school, but then if she ever spoke English, she had much more of a north Dublin (frozen ) kind of thing going on, it's interesting, almost like codeswitching in different language, if that makes sense, (inaudible) yeah, there is a certain amount of snobbery around the dialects.

Interviewer: Alright. Yeah, I'm just looking over my notes, yeah I don't think, there's not much else that I'm, I've got to ask at this moment, yeah so I think, I'm trying to think, no, I mean, so, yeah, no that's it. I was just trying to kind of jumpstart my mind and seeing if there was anything else that I wanted to ask. (explain next steps)

### *Interview 3*

Interviewer: I want to hear what you have to say before I say anything. I do have a couple things I'd like to ask you, just like last time, but I want to hear what you have to say because I might ask questions in response to what it is that you commented. So please, go ahead, you can start.

R: Can you repeat that last part?

Interviewer: Yeah I was just saying that I would prefer that you start because like although I have some things that I do want to ask you I would also like to just listen to what you have to say and react, you know ask you questions in response to that. So, um, was there anything there that you wanted to, you said you had notes, so let's hear some of your notes.

R: I just went through theme by theme and em, they're pretty much all relevant to me, more or less, em, so like I kind of just, the way I was looking at it was like, going through and then whatever theme related to me in terms of like which language, if that makes sense. So like, you know the three groups, family, peers and teachers, so like for me family is French, peers and teachers is Irish, teachers is German again, familial influence was very important em, the, immigration wasn't relevant to me because I just grew up in a bilingual household with my mum and dad, em, parents, my parents didn't really like, I was just one of those kids that liked school and didn't see any reason to not work at school so they never really had to push me. And usually, if anyone's panicking over my French it's me, not my ma, my ma's going you're fine, calm down. Seriously like, yeah, no. And then em, within my own generation, I didn't have as much influence as some of the other people because like, I'm an only child, I'm the oldest of all my cousins, so like, and they wouldn't like, they're either Irish or French, so they don't have the same experience as me in that respect. Em, I would have been influenced by my grandparents in terms of the French and, em, growing up in an environment that was conducive to the learning of more than one language, yeah, we have a lot of respect for languages in my house basically. Em, then yeah, actually, relationships with my peers, I was looking at it and I was thinking about how em, I should be better at German than I am because like, I studied it for six years in school, but because I was like, self-conscious about actually trying, with like my accent and everything in class, because I didn't get on that well with a lot of my classmates, so I didn't want to give them another reason to pick on me, em, so like, yeah no like, but that's on me though, I shouldn't have cared as much but em, I feel like I would have, I would be better at German if I'd cared a little less, for sure. So like school environment was very influential in that one. And then your emergent sense of camaraderie, I talked about or I thought about (...?) Gaeilge, so like the Irish language prefects, which was nice because like, being good at Irish wasn't, it wasn't like a goody two shoes embarrassing thing, like people kind of, especially because at that point there was like 5th year or 6th year, ... , I don't know, how to put it, we're in 5th year or 6th year by the time we become (...?) so like, at that point people don't really care as much about that stuff anymore, so if you're good at Irish, you're good at Irish, and that's it, you know

like. But there was the group of us that were kind of trying to, em, like you know, speak Irish as well as we could, because the thing in my school is that like, speaking English was against the rules, like you'd get detention, but that didn't mean that everyone spoke Irish all the time, like I didn't, but some people were just better at hiding it. But then by the time we got to like 5th year, 6th year, most of the (...?) would like speak Irish all the time, which was like, kind of a big thing. Even though it's just the rules, but like, that was kind of the idea. Em, teachers, yeah like I've told you before, like my Irish teacher that I got in 5th year like completely turned me around in that respect, and then my German teacher, I'm not sure, and then teachers who disappeared half the year, It was my second year or first year Irish teacher, like mental, and then em, the rote learning, I would have done that in like, with like German vocab. Again, I just feel like I should be better at German at this point, you know, like we didn't work enough on like actual conversation or like practical skills, we learnt a lot of vocab, so now, you know, I'm in class with like other people from like different schools, and I'm just there and I'm like, actually, like I don't feel comfortable speaking, like it's so stupid that like I did 6 years of it and I'm just like, oh God, but em, yeah, rote learning. There is an element of that in the Irish education system though, in fairness, like I don't know if people have rounded to you about the leaving cert before.

Interviewer: Well yeah, I mean,

R: But like it's essentially just a lot of

Interviewer: I mean, I've talked to other Irish students as well, students who went through the Irish schooling system, and because I've asked about school experience, yeah the leaving cert often comes up, uh, and like learning for the leaving cert and all that.

R: It's terrible like. No it takes the joy out of it completely. I feel like I was so lucky to go back to college, not go back to college, go into college and actually be able to like find the joy in it again instead of just like, learning for learning's sake. Em, like, awful but em, teachers who explained how language works, that would have been my Irish teacher, she was great, em, oh and then skip ahead to the bit where it was like, the experience of learning something new, starting over, that would probably be me with Arabic because I don't know if I've really gotten where I wanted to be with German. I actually found out the other day that we can drop German or like the European language in like 4th year, don't know if I'm going to do that, we'll see. Em, but yes. Em, want to move on to the second theme?

Interviewer: Um, let's just kind of pause for a second because I wanted to, because it's on my mind right now and I just want to get into, there are a couple of questions, like going back to what you just said, about the leaving cert, just as a comment more than a question, like I said others have mentioned the leaving cert, and even, I've talked to students in other countries, who were educated in other countries as well, and you know that whole rote learning seems to still be a very, it's kind of the fallback method in a lot of places, for a lot of teachers, and most students respond to it in the same way, that you know, it's, I think it's tedious, that word has been used quite often, it's tedious, it's

boring, um, you know, it is effective in a way, like you mentioned, you know, for learning vocabulary and things like that, but um, and for the purpose of examination, for the purpose of something like a leaving cert, it kind of gets the job done, but it's not always, it's not evaluated very highly. Students don't like it. You know that's basically it. But that's kind of common, and not just within Ireland but also other places that have similar systems where you have like a college entrance exam of some sort, um, rote learning seems to be the fallback method and again, it's not really, and for language as well, and my own personal opinion of course too is that it's, you know, there's a certain sense in which it is

R: For languages especially yeah, because like, (no, go ahead) em, like with language learning, it doesn't make any sense, because I have all of this vocab in German, but I'm not comfortable using it because we didn't work on actual practical skills like. Like send us off to Germany and we have all this vocab on stuff that we can't actually even use, you know? Em, like, I respond pretty well to rote learning personally, but that doesn't make it a good system, you know? Em, like uh, but then again we went through it for years and years and years, so like, I don't know, it seems to be like, language learning in Ireland is just learning a lot of words with no like actual method behind it, you know? So it's a bit silly like.

Interviewer: So that was kind of a thing, and that's why it was there, uh, or I kind of mentioned something about evaluation, maybe not in that section but later on, but then the thing about like teachers disappearing, this also happened not just, this happened in several different contexts, where the teacher would kind of, would be replaced halfway through the year and no one knew why, or um, just, or not even replaced, just there would be a vacancy for a while and um, and so nothing would get done obviously, you can't, it was just kind of, it was weird to hear that, you know, I mean, you know that things like that happen but it was just funny to hear it from multiple students, multiple people.

R: It happened like, yeah, my English teacher, my last year of school, so sixth year, I was, I loved English so much I actually ended up doing really well in English but that was a huge surprise because 5th year, we got like a student teacher, fresh out of college, she had no idea what to do with my class, and then 6th year we got a, actually the more senior teacher who was back off maternity leave and then got pregnant again, and then had to go, like she was, no like, bless her, like whatever, you know, her own personal choices, none of my business, but the fact was that like we were in 6th year and I think we went 6 weeks without actually having an English teacher, like two months out from the exams, so it ended up being me and one of my friends marching down into the principal and being like, you need to do something about this because it's actually ridiculous, like not even giving us a substitute, because we had a few like, because in my school, everyone, they've eased it now because there's just not enough teachers, but they, ideally they want everyone to be able to speak Irish. But they kind of eased it a bit now with the practical subjects and like the English teachers, the language teachers, they're like well, if we can't find them, we can't find them, so we're just going to have to make do. And there

was one teacher, she wasn't actually, I think she might have been an English teacher for one year, em but she wasn't actually, like her role in our school was being a substitute, covering classes, whatever, so what ended up happening, we were on really friendly terms with our principal, he was a bit useless but like he's nice, we ended up being like, you need to get us this teacher for our classes because we haven't had an English class in six weeks, like this is ridiculous. No like, that kind of stuff happened all the time, all the time. Like, there are horror stories, there are plenty of horror stories obviously. Um, I don't know, I'm not surprised, not surprised at all.

Interviewer: Being, like, just being a student in that situation, you kind of, the way you're talking about it now, I mean obviously a lot of frustration there, confusion, bewilderment, just, and also, like, I don't know, I can imagine, like you said, being a couple months out from this exam which you've been told and led to believe is incredibly important, and it is, you know, it's the only determining factor (the most (...?) important), yeah it's the only determining factor, there's nothing else that will allow you to enter the university of your choice other than doing as well as you need to on this exam, and um, then the teacher, and then not being supported in a way, because like you having actually to go to the principal and request something at this juncture, at that juncture...

R: It was actually mental, especially because like our teacher as well, like I know she was on, I think bed rest or something, it was her third pregnancy, I don't think it was an easy one, but she was giving all of the other years detailed work to do and just telling us to study, and like that didn't work well with my class, they'd just do whatever, they'd do their homework for other classes, and we were kind of going like, what the fuck, like, do you know what I mean? It's just, but yeah, so that was English, like, no, I don't know, maybe ... reason ... just disappeared (audio problems), chances are she had a mental breakdown, we don't know. Um, but like there's definitely like, she's not allowed to teach anyone over 2nd year now, because what happened is that my class is that we had to catch up the entire junior cert in one year, a two year course and we did it in one because she was just so incompetent, so I don't think she's allowed to teach anyone past 2nd year now. Em, but yeah that's just my school anyway.

Interviewer: I mean clearly, and kind of just going outside of my immediate interest right now, but I've heard that there's just a general shortage of teachers in Ireland, there's kind of, you know, which is kind of a shame because I've also heard that Irish teachers are actually trained very well, and you know, in general the teachers, that's what I've heard, I don't know, I mean. I haven't gone through the system, you've been through the system, yeah you have a different experience from what I've heard.

R: Yeah I have a different experience because like, my mum being slightly judgemental, being an educator herself, sometimes coming back from the parent teacher meetings going, Jesus Christ, they picked them because they speak Irish, that's the thing it's like, when you go to a Gaeilscoil you're going to have a more limited pool. What ended up happening as well was a lot of the younger teachers actually went to my school, I can't think of anything worse than going to a school for 6 years, going off to train for like 4 or 5 years, and then going right back, and like these people would be like colleagues now with

the people who taught them. So (inaudible) teach, and they'd have siblings in the school, like one of, a good few of them had siblings or cousins in the school, and you'd have like, you know, 23 year old teachers basically being babied by the older teachers because they were literally like had them when they were 12. But like it's a rent problem as well, especially in the Dublin area it's a rent issue because people can't afford to live here, so they can't afford to work here, whereas the people that went to my school obviously are still living with their folks so they can commute to my, oh, it's just, I'm just...how many when I was there, I think there was like, my form teacher went to my school, he was older though, it wasn't as weird to me as like the, the like people who literally were fresh out of college and came right back to where they were. That is just, I, like, more power to them or something, but it was just like what is wrong with you that you're doing that? You left secondary school for a reason and you'd literally have them like crouching down, talking to the other teachers, like, not even, how to put it, say we had like, they, how to put it, like if they were coming into a different teacher's classroom, they wouldn't like, the other teacher wouldn't really like stand up and talk to them like they would with the others, they'd just like, you know, crouch down, it was just so mental because they were obviously former students, it was just, like the dynamics, yeah.

Interviewer: So there's kind of a, I guess, I'm trying to think of a good way to put it, um like a power structure, like a visible power structure where, like the younger teacher would come back, and they're like physically crouching down to talk to the teacher who's older than them. In the way they spoke and things like that.

R: No like, basically I've seen that happen a few times, like, basically one of the guys who was a business teacher, he looked about 15 except he was like 65 or something, and I used to do, I did supervised study all through 5th and 6th year, and where you're basically in the sports hall, everyone has a desk and is doing their work, and the teachers would stand or sit down (?), at like the top, with like a desk of their own, and I have vivid memories of \_\_\_\_, the really stupidly tall teacher, like crouching down next to \_\_\_\_, our religion teacher, talking to her, and like it's so weird because you know that she taught him. And like our German teacher was like in her fifties, she taught my form teacher. Every now and then we'd get a more senior teacher, and we'd be like, alright, so what was this person like in school? We want to know. Like so I feel like there's a way in that like they were never really fully seen as like actual functioning adults because they'd just come right back to where they were like five years before they left. Ugh. I can't, no, that is actually my worst nightmare. I don't really want to be a teacher, but what I would not do is go back to my secondary school, not even, not even, I think it's ok if you come back a few years later, if you've done like a stint somewhere else, but going right back fresh out of college, that is just something I do not understand. I've ranted about it to my friends and they're like, alright \_\_\_\_, calm down, and I'm like but think about it! You literally haven't made any progress, you're doing the same commute that you did when you were 12, like. Oh God, yeah but a limited pool of teachers, for sure.

Interviewer: It sounds like also, like the way you describe it, it's a very, and maybe like you said, because of the lack of teachers and also the language itself, Irish, you're at an

Irish school, you need teachers who, you know, speak Irish and we already know that that's limited, you know, there's only so many people who speak Irish to the level that they need to in order to teach, so it ends up being kind of a closed society and you have already said you're kind of looking for new experiences, different things so, that it just didn't, that whole thing obviously is going to look very strange to you because that's not something that you're interested in at all. You're interested in going beyond, kind of, this little

R: I think part of it as well, yeah, I think part of it as well is when I, basically my school now, that building was built for like 500 people max, and it started like, the school is only 25 years old so when it started in the 90s it was like a really closed, tight-knit little community kind of thing, and we were the last year to come in and still be like that, like now I've left and I don't know half the teachers and the, like I see students I've never seen before kind of thing. Like when we went in, like there was, like we were the first year to have 5 classes in a, so in every year you'd have 5 classes of maybe like 25 to 30, and that was huge because the year above us only had 3 and then between them there was only maybe 3 or 2 classes, so like it was tiny before. So you had this very tight-knit thing where the teachers would be really friendly with the students and they'd know everyone, everyone would know each other, so I feel like there's part of that for those, because they would have been in the school when it was still like that, whereas we were coming in at the end of that, like we got the, like I talked to my friends about it, the ones that are just leaving now, and I'm like I think us, 2 years, were the kind of last good years before it kind of just went generic like, because when I left there were like 800 people in the building, I think it might be breaking more now, like it's to do with catchment area because, em, it's not, like it's a Gaeilscoil so you need to have a Gaeilscoil in a certain catchment area, which means that we were having people come as far from like West Meath and like Kildare and like, traveling like an hour in the mornings to come to school, and like that's a bit mental, it meant that the school was kind of overrun, so they, I think they implemented a policy where they were only letting siblings of past pupils and people from like the schools in Lucan, maybe Leixlip which is like the town over, but basically my school... so my school, my secondary school is right next to my primary school, and then on the other side of my secondary school is another primary school, so they're letting people from those two Gaeilscoils in and I think one school a town over, but they're building another Gaeilscoil in a town a bit further out so all the people that would have been traveling from the west, well not the west properly but like traveling like a good amount will probably go to that school now, but yeah it basically go overrun, which is kind of an issue because there were literally like classes in years that would go, like I think one year didn't have a maths teacher for like nearly the whole year, like just didn't have a maths teacher, like the principal would cover classes, like bless him (...?), like didn't, it was bad. You end up with a limited pool basically is the very short version of saying what I've just rambled on about. But yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah, um, the school, and those three groups that I mentioned in that first section, you know, they're all kind of related with schooling in general. You've got teachers, parents are obviously involved and things like, that, but you know, we here, at

least for me, reading things and what not, there's a lot of good stuff said about the Irish schools and everything, the need for them, but you know, listening to you, you hear this other side, that you don't often hear at my level, you don't hear from the students and their experience, so it's interesting to hear this from you, just in general.

R: No like I, I loved my school and I loved being in a Gaeilscoil, if I settle down in Ireland my kids will go to a Gaeilscoil, pretty sure to be honest, em, apart from anything else, learning Irish in an English school is like, is just doesn't make any sense. Like I've talked to you about this before, I think immersion is one of the only ways to actually learn it properly, especially because there's not really much media available, people aren't really going to go home and stick on, there's this soap opera called *Ros na Rún* set in Galway, my 6th class teacher was from where it's filmed, she's like, yeah, I was an extra or something, we were like, oh my God! It has to be the most low budget soap but anyways, no like I think Gaeilscoils are great, I think they need to be managed a lot better than they are, like I've got a friend who went to a Gaeilscoil in a nicer area, they have a better reputation I think. My school used to have a better reputation but then it kind of got, like, crowded, but it's still, I was still, we were still a lot more privileged than like the English schools in our area because we had access to more funding because we were a Gaeilscoil and like they're literally just given more funding and more likely to get grants and technically the entry is limited as well because you have to speak Irish but it's not private, it's really not private. Anyway, no like it's definitely, but it's flawed because like there's a huge lack of not even Irish speaking teachers, there's also a lack of Irish teachers, like teachers of Irish as well, so you can imagine like, if there's a lack of Irish teachers, there's definitely going to be a lack of Irish speaking like, geography teachers or something, you know? So yeah.

Interviewer: How about the next section then? What did you have to say about um, what was the next section, about self and whatnot? I think.

R: The whole difference of self and self-expression and everything, em, yes, I think it's like based on how, I don't know, like the way, like I sound like my mum in French, I don't like sound like her at all in English, like we do not sound the same at all, but in French we have nearly the same voice to the point where like I'll answer the phone and my relatives don't know who it is. Like they'll think I'm her all the time. Em, like I have a softer voice, it's different, it's a bit weird, and then I think as well there was a thing with like, so like Irish was the language I spoke at school, and it meant that I was nearly always quite formal with it, and like I think about it all the time, like our, how to put it, the students in an Irish school would be much less likely to slip up and swear or something, or like curse, because there's already a level of like in my mind, like Irish is kind of, I associate it with school, it was formal, whereas in English, it was almost like, not letting myself go but it was kind of like, I don't know how to describe it but it was definitely something I've experienced. Like in English you can end up saying something bad or whatever, like I remember, or even like seeing you know Snapchat videos or whatever of my friends in other schools and they're speaking English and I'm just like, wow dangerous! Like, no, it's fine, that's literally what they do, but em, yeah there was definitely an element of



formality that went with the Gaeilge like, which meant that it was just a language for that setting, if that makes sense.

Interviewer: Oh no that definitely makes sense.

R: I'll use it with my friends sometimes but like, yeah, so, then fuller freedom...yeah so I feel freer in English, and then Irish is a funny one because like I said to you, like we tend to mix in a lot of English words, so like, maybe I'm more free expressing myself than I would in French but it's because like, fluency is kind of compensated almost, with like English words here and there, I think. I think I'm gentler in French, I'm not as aggressive with my opinions, em, depends. I think sometimes in French I'm trying, because it's usually like the audience I'm speaking to, like, I was telling you I barely know any slang in French because I don't have friends over there, I have family, you know, so like, I have family, I have older family, so, eh, you know, it's interesting from that point of view but like, it's definitely different.

Interviewer: Are you the youngest

R: Image of myself as a student

Interviewer: Sorry are you the youngest in your generation, I was asking, like among your cousins and everything? (No I'm the oldest.) You're the oldest out of the cousins, ok.

R: No, I'm the oldest, yeah, so I have like, I only have three first cousins, the rest of them are second cousins but like we're close enough as it is. My mum, my granny's the oldest and my mum's the oldest so I was the oldest, and the next one after that, he's, it goes down, like on my French side it goes down like, on my granny's side it goes down in twos, there's...I'm 19 so he'll be turning 17, the next one's 15, 13, 11, so there's them, and on my other side they're much younger, then on my like Irish English side, as in they're English, I'm not English, em, they, there's one that's like older than me, and the next one, like everyone apart from that one English cousin is younger than me. Like even his brother is like three weeks younger than me, they're all younger than me. And then here, I have three first cousins, my uncle's kids and the eldest is turning 12 and the other two are like 7 and 5 so, yeah I'm the oldest, basically, is the point of that. Em, being an only child as well, you know, it's very much learning to speak around adults and adults only, because I was also the first kid of all my parents' friends, so they were the first ones to have a kid, so like, I'm friendly enough, like there's a couple of girls, like my godmother's kids are like around my age and we get on, but it wasn't the same thing as being born into a huge family full of kinds, you know? Having like older cousins, because I just didn't. Em, when you said for many of you studying a language or languages...yeah I did French, I just did the exam, and that got me an H1 with like little to no effort, well not little to no effort, I did prepare a bit because I actually had to like learn the grammar, but like miles easier considering the amount of time I would have spent preparing my other subjects that I did as well in. Like it's nothing, like I was maybe spending like, for every hour of French I was probably spending like 6 hours on English, you know? That kind of thing. It was just easier like, for me. Em, something with the hybrid identity, like, yeah, I mean I feel that because when I go over to France to see my family, like I'm the Irish girl and I'm

here, I sort of wouldn't be seen as fully Irish either, like I don't have an Irish mammy, you know, my family are quite, em, they're not really very typical, like I don't have a big bustling family in the countryside, you know? And then my grandmum would have been pretty much raised in the UK so she'd be very English about a lot of things. Em, so I don't see myself as typically Irish by a longshot, like at all at all. But I wouldn't be fully French either of course. But I have another friend who's, both her parents are French, but her experience is closest to mine because she actually grew up here so she's kind of Irish, but she's also just like there's no Irish blood in her, she just is Irish, and then her parents are both French, so it's interesting there that like it's kind of a similar experience with like, like even less than an Irish experience almost. Like stuff that I just didn't do as a kid because it just wasn't a...I'm trying to think of examples, like we don't, like we didn't eat the same type of meals, we didn't have the same kind of traditions like, we just didn't do things in a very Irish way, so I don't know if it was necessarily the French kid here but I definitely wasn't typically Irish by a longshot. 38:04 Em, and then obviously in France, well I don't know, like I, like they're more just interested, you know and especially because I speak English and English is like the language they all want to learn, they kind of want to know and want to practice and I'm like, no, not now, my turn, they're really good and like, and I'm just so jealous of them as well, like their English, like my little cousins at like 7, 8, were speaking really good English, and I'm like I didn't even start doing second language until secondary school, like mental. But em, yeah, identity is definitely a big thing for me in that to be honest, I don't think I'd feel as connected to like my French side if I didn't speak French. Um, yeah. Yeah that's me and identity.

Interviewer: Alright. Yeah em, I'm just thinking if there's anything there that I wanted to follow up on. Um, yeah I mean it's interesting because you went to school, you went to an Irish school, and obviously there's a lot of, you know, that's the Irish part of you, the language mostly more than anything else, um, but you know, your experience because of your family is going to be different than, did you ever find that like you, were you kind of, was there anyone else in the school who had kind of a similar kind of hybrid background to you? Or was everyone else there mostly like, there were others...?

R: Oh like, no there definitely were a few, I was just more vocal about it when I was a kid for some reason. All the teachers would eventually find out that I had a French mummy, but em, one of the girls in my class, \_\_\_\_, her mum was German, and one of my friends \_\_\_\_, her dad is Jordanian, so she had a whole different thing in that like being literally like a different ethnicity from the rest of her class, which was like kind of harder for her when she was younger, and then she started to really like get into the culture, learning Arabic properly, she really embraced it a bit later, but em, there's definitely a whole like, I don't know if it's just an Irish thing of just being like "you're different and therefore weird", you know? Em, yeah most of the people in my class would have had two Irish parents, or at least two English speaking parents, you know, like, a couple of my friends would have been, there was twins in my class from when I was like a little kid, we were literally in school together, in the same class, for like 14 years, em, their dad is American and they would like, identify quite strongly with that when they were younger and now obviously, with everything that's going on, they're kind of distancing themselves a little

bit. You know, police state vibes, but em, (It's good to have that option, you know?) it wasn't quite like, they would definitely feel a bit, but then again their mum had the very Irish country background, so they would have had like, you know, Christmas dinners with the cousins in Kilkenny kind of thing, they'd have had family like all over whereas I literally only have family in Dublin, and that's it, and then like, some of my, I have distant family in Cork, but we wouldn't even be on Christmas card terms with them, do you know what I mean? So like I couldn't really relate to like all the kids who'd be like oh yeah so my mum's from Galway and my dad's from Kerry and like, I just didn't have that at all, em, and like a small family, especially because for my dad's generation two kids was quite unusual, like you're talking usually like three or four at least, or even like people talking about like, God like, you know families with ten siblings was still a thing for my dad's generation, you know, so like born in the late 60s, 70s even, em, like it was definitely, because obviously, actually hang on, when was the pill even introduced in Ireland? It was really late, like, so you're talking big huge families, like very big families, em, whereas I didn't have that experience at all. So, but I don't know actually how much that has to do with like, language but definitely but on top of having a mum who was from somewhere completely different, I didn't have the typically Irish experience on my dad's side either, if that makes sense.

Interviewer: It makes perfect sense, yeah I mean like, there's nothing there that doesn't, I mean if it makes sense to you it makes sense, you know it's not like, I wouldn't put myself in a place to question that kind of thing, that's you know, obviously, that's your experience and that's why I put it there. Like there's other people who have similar, and just my own, coming from my own background as well, I grew up in New York but my family was from Puerto Rico and so we kept those traditions at home, so like going to school and everything, and then of course, but New York is a bit more, where I grew up, it was much more diverse, we'd have culture day and things like that, there was definitely like the outside culture and the whole "American" culture, but most of the people I grew up with, we didn't really fit into that, the typical...

R: I feel like New York is almost like a thing within its own because there's so many different people there, I don't know, I've never been obviously, but like

Interviewer: Well the area I grew up in, it was like, whatever would be presented as American culture, maybe in media or whatnot, even New York, when you see New York on television, it's not the same New York that I grew up in. Most of the time you'll see like Manhattan, and Manhattan is very different than where I grew up. I grew up in an area called the Bronx, and the Bronx is, much more (One of my mates is from there, yeah) so like, if you talk to them you'll find out.

R: He hates New York now, he doesn't want to go back. Like he goes to, he goes to college here and his family have a house here, but he went back to New York for Christmas. He's like, I'll be happy for like, he was like I'll be happy for like a week and then I'll hate it, I hate New York. And then I'm like, how can you hate New York? But I haven't been, so I don't know, but like, em, yeah, but even he was saying everyone he grew up around, like, you know, Italian, a lot of Jewish people where he was, which just isn't a thing in Ireland,

no Jews in Ireland anymore, you're talking like mainly Christians, yeah diversity is definitely like, it's getting better now, but em, it's not the first thing that springs to mind when you think of Ireland. Anyway, uh

Interviewer: Anyway, so, how about, I think that's all I have for that part. How about the third part then? I think it's emotions, feelings and things like that. Yeah.

R: Em, the healing thing wasn't relevant to me, like at all, I just didn't relate to it at all em, then the feeling of frustration by not getting it, I think you probably already know I'm going to say German because like yes, German, just because sometimes I'm like oh my God, I've been doing this for so long and like, in fairness I haven't put in as much effort as I maybe should have, and if I did work at it as much as I wanted to, if that makes sense, if I worked at it I could get to the point where I want to be, I'm just, I need to try harder basically. That kind of feeling of frustration, em, couldn't get what I wanted out of the class, for sure with German, like it just not, and the earlier days of Irish, like I keep forgetting that my first four years of doing Irish in secondary school were just awful, because like I said we had that kind of teacher that was gone, and then we had a horrible, she wasn't, well, she like, threw a book at a student, like we had these, so basically like I said we had to catch up all of the junior cert course in one year, and we had like diaries, like journals, where we'd write our homework in, and they were like these hardback books that were maybe like roughly A5 but a bit bigger and there was this one guy in my class, and em, he was always like getting away with being cheeky, and then one day he got in trouble for actually something that wasn't his fault, and eh, he like kind of slapped his book onto the desk kind of thing, and she like literally picked it up, he turned around, she picked it up and like hurled it at the back of him. She didn't hit him, which like, she would have if she wanted to, she was a sports teacher as well, but em, she was like if you're going to throw it at me I'm going to throw it at you, and we were kind of like, we could not stop laughing, I never got in trouble with my teachers but I was in fits of laughter with me and my best friend next to me, and what ended up happening was she gave us like notes as well, so I went up to her desk and I placed my diary very carefully on the table, oh God. Well yeah, so, and then fourth year, my TY teacher, she was just like, I don't know what her problem was, she was just awful, she'd scream at us all the time, so em, I definitely wasn't getting what I wanted out of Irish for like four years, but I think that maybe because I felt like I already spoke it, it was fine, and obviously, with Irish, like, with German we were only doing German [in German class], with Irish in Gaeilscóil, you're speaking Irish pretty much every class apart from English, so it's like not as clear to see that there's an issue, if that makes sense. But yeah, I definitely didn't get what I wanted out of em, Irish or German at times. Em, oh I was thinking about the sense of urgency, I get that with French sometimes, I'll be in a panic about losing it or you know, feeling like there was something you know, I was lacking or whatever, and then I'm like what do I do now? Because I kind of just never really had to learn it, I just knew it, but like usually it's when I'm stressed about other stuff, my mum's like all of a sudden, you're like, panicked about French when there's actually no need, uh, I didn't make choices on further languages based on what I already knew, really, like I, actually that's not true. I mean I didn't pick Spanish because I already spoke French and I was like, they're too

close, so maybe that is actually true to me, yeah, em, but I picked German because my dad did it in college, which was probably a stupid reason because now I'm doing it in college and I'm kind of like oh, ok. Em, but I didn't think, like I didn't want to pick up a new language in college because I was going to be picking up Arabic this year anyway, and my mum was like (inaudible) might be a bit too much and also just, I don't know I've been doing German for so long now that I just kind of want to know German, even though in a worldly perspective of what's actually going to be relevant (?) I'd be better off with Spanish but, sure enough (...?) and here we are, I might learn Spanish another time. Em, and then opportunities with languages, for sure. There's a reason I'm doing Arabic and not Hebrew, you know what I mean? It's a lot wider in terms of like, yeah. Oh yeah, the stuff about at the beginning, being really excited to learn a new language, and then just getting a little bit bored, also German. German's getting a bad rap today, but em, and then the kind of media, I don't know if I've said this to you before but I feel like there's a huge, I feel like it's a lot easier to learn, ok obviously English is like one of the most difficult languages to learn. However I think in terms of the media that's available, like, you know, American, British, even Australian, there's so much available, whereas if you're learning German, it's like, do you want this film about the war or this file about the war? Do you know what I mean? I just feel like maybe if there was more stuff available, it would be easier, I don't know, maybe, maybe I'm just making excuses, there's just, media is definitely like a, I feel like it's a big factor. Respect, em, oh yeah, people and relationships, so like my family, in terms of like French, like, it's a connection to my family and it's a connection to like, my like, my ancestors as well, I suppose, but like, em, definitely be very closely tied, and then sometimes I get really panicked because I worry there's nearly a language barrier between me and my grandparents and that, God forbid something happens to them and I haven't said everything I wanted to because I just couldn't get the words out, even though like, I probably can and I'm just overthinking, em, but there's definitely like very, em, very raw emotions associated with French, and Irish as well, not as much with German, and I don't know about Arabic, we'll see, but I think that because I have first-hand connections with French and Irish, em, like I talked to you about the political history of it, like it's so important to me, and then with French it's a family thing and you can't get more emotional about family, so yeah. Ah, creativity with curses, excellent, we love to see it, we love to see it. I was talking to my mum about it last night, she was saying how like, Irish, em, is very imaginative and there's a lot of imagery as well, and she was saying that's how, like, Hiberno-English is so influenced as well. Hiberno-English, sometimes I don't realize, you know, that things don't make sense to like, because I have American friends now on my course, and I'll say something, and they'll be like, what? And I'm like, you know, and they're like, eh? But like, that's more for them to learn. Or like, like when you hear Americans start to say "grand", meaning like "ok", it's like wow, you're learning! Yeah, yeah no emotions, definitely like, relevant to me

Interviewer: Like that whole, well like frustration, urgency, a lot of people mention that, and like you're, you've also said several times, being self-conscious, and you've mentioned that with different languages, you're self-conscious with French at times, self-

conscious even in German, there's that whole, you keep saying that you feel like you should be better, you should be better, um, and just, it's like, there's a lot of, just talking to people again, this third time through as well, what's coming out now, which I wish I would've added to that but I couldn't because it hasn't really stood out to me until now is this idea of expectations and how, like, you know, you put expectations on yourself, there's also expectations put on you, and then there's a lot of that kind of reacting to those expectations. You know you expect that after having studied German for almost seven years (Yeah, almost 100% like), you should be better and you're not at that point. And I don't know, I'm wondering if maybe

R: Or even like, I used to get frustrated, I used to get frustrated when I didn't know things in French and mum would be like, why are you frustrated? You never learnt this, why would you know this? You know? Because I'm not growing up in a Francophone environment, like we don't speak French all the time, we should but we don't, em, like there's no reason for me to know that but I get frustrated at myself anyway. Em, but yeah no, expectations definitely like, a big thing.

Interviewer: It's like, you grew up, you feel like you should know the language, and then you hit a wall, like wait a second, I want to say something, why don't I know how to say this? It's like, it's that kind of whole

R: Or like even like, my, because I grew up kind of learning them at the same rates but then around like 4 or 5, there was more of a focus on English, I feel a bit stunted almost with French. Like my French hasn't gotten any worse, it just hasn't really progressed in the same way that English has, like at all, which is obviously quite frustrating to me because I, like I'm very big on self-expression and I like reading and all this, you know, reading books, and like I was reading, I'm reading Camus at the moment and I'm having to like Google a word every couple pages, and that's frustrating as well, because I feel a bit stupid, but it's nothing to do with my intelligence, maybe to do with my work ethic and not having worked more in French, but it's nothing to do with my intelligence, I need to get that out of my head. But there's, yeah, a sense of I should know this, why don't I know this? And it's like, there's a very very good reason, it's that even though you grew up with the language in the environment, you never formally studied French, that's why. Like that's the very short, simple answer, like it's not some cryptic thing. Yeah I don't know. Because like, to the point where like, I don't know if I consider myself fluent because I'm definitely not fluent in grammar, I'm not fluent in that kind of thing, but I'm also a native speaker in a way, do you know what I mean? Like I'm not some beginner, intermediate person who picked it up in secondary school, but I also wouldn't consider myself formally trained at all, so when a job is calling for French, I'm a bit like, I don't know if I want to put myself in that situation, you know? Em, yeah.

Interviewer: I'm guessing that's probably a common feeling, like when you're kind of, you're born in a family where you know, in a bilingual or multilingual family and although you are in that environment, you're, like, your education and the outside world is all through one specific language, one of those languages rather than another, it's a little harder, and then you don't study it, you said you never really formally studied French so,

like, you're not, you've never been given an opportunity to kind of see where you're at and then, once in a while you are but for the most part, you know, you really haven't had that. And then if you're only using it with your family

R: Like I did one class, I did one class in third year, my junior cert year, in French and em, it was like, it was specifically for bilingual kids, so like a good few of us were half French and other people would have spent a couple of years there, like because their parents would've worked there when they were younger, or they'd have two French parents or whatever, and all of these kids have the same issue in that they can express themselves really well like spoken, then written is just a bit stunted, em, so like on the report it was like, \_\_\_\_ has no issue with speaking, it's more like grammar she needs to watch, I'm like yeah I know. Yeah.

Interviewer: How about the next section, for the next section, like, there was something I was going to ask if you don't mind, because that next section about the different types of knowledge and whatnot, um, like from you, obviously you've spoken to me a lot about kind of the history of Irish and the place of Irish and you just mentioned as well with the politics behind the language and all that stuff, in, is that something that the school taught you? Or is that something that you just ...

R: 100%, yes.

Interviewer: So the school was very intent on teaching students, this is the condition of Irish, this is how it got this way...

R: Yeah, yeah yeah. 100%. Like we had a teacher, we had a teacher, she never taught me, in primary school, but she was like, she was a bit mental like. I don't know, she was nice enough, she was just terrifying, and I remember once, what they used to do when we had a, when our teacher was out they used to split us into groups of like 2 or 3 and send us, and we'd all sit in a different class for the day, and I remember, so she had the year ahead of me so I think I was in 5th class and they were in 6th class, they were the oldest, and em they were learning \_\_\_\_, like the (...?) song, the national anthem, and some of the guys were messing about and putting their hands over their hearts, and she was like, no no, we don't do that, that's what the British do, we don't do that, they killed us, literally like it's that narrative that we had, we had the Proclamation hung in most classrooms, you know, there's definitely an environment for it, em, for sure for sure, but I don't know, because I don't really know, I've never been to a English school but maybe, like in terms of history as well, you would have, they might just be a little less fervent of it, call it like Irish culture or something like that, but it's definitely like a, controversial thing almost. I don't know if you heard, apparently, I don't know if it's recently because I actually have to like read the article instead of just reading the headlines, but in the UK, this family wanted to bury their Irish-born mother with like a, like an Irish proverb or something, I think it was one of those like ... something to do with loyalty or there's one that's like ar dheis Dé, so like on the right hand of God, whatever, like I said it's very religious, but the parish or the church, I can't remember, wouldn't allow it because they were scared it was political, with the IRA like, and this family were like what the hell? And like, it's not, it

wouldn't be political if the Brits hadn't come in and, very like biased on my side, but the truth is they, I mean there's an Irish part of that as well in that like, I'm pretty sure, I think I heard was all primary schools until the 60s were Irish schools, and then the Ministry for Education at the time was like, no this is stunting kids too much because they might not even go to secondary school, they need to be able to speak English. Em, so there's definitely an element of like wanting to come in to the 21st century with everyone else, because I know there's an issue, is it Iceland? Where like people are having to learn English because Icelandic just doesn't cut it anymore in terms of world relations kind of thing? I don't know, I remember my mum saying that to me once after I went on a fat rant about the British for a bit.

Interviewer: It would make sense, I mean, like, but I haven't heard anything about Iceland.

R: No, but like, Scandinavian countries all speak English as well so it's not, but I feel like that's almost more a voluntary thing than us, just can't speak Irish, and obviously it's a thing in a lot of colonized countries, like, Africa like, yeah, Africa just got done dirty with the French and the British and the Spanish and the...you know, anyway, but em, yeah I don't even know where I started with that, but there definitely is a sort of nationalist element to being in an Irish school which I didn't always love so much, but em, it was, yeah, it was ok. That definitely is the environment that we're bred into though, that Irish is very important because it was taken away from us. You know?

Interviewer: I know that article you were talking about, I think it was the church that didn't allow, because the language would have been seen as political, and it just, I was thinking about that, sometimes you hear about that even with Welsh, like with Welsh they won't allow, or there's things about showing Welsh on signs because, you know, just the fact that it's there is also seen as political. In the North too, in the North when you see, like whenever they put up signs in Irish in the North.

R: It's so weird, driving over the border into Belfast and all of a sudden the signs are monolingual, that's very odd, like that's really weird to someone with like everywhere bilingual signs. Or even yesterday, I was on the bus for the first time in ages, em, because of Covid, and I was listening, and you know how, the Dublin Bus, they have the English and the Irish, and there was a new, I was like that's a new voice, because it was about Covid 19 so it was a new recording, and she stopped the English and I was like hang on a minute, then she started the Irish and I was like ok. But then you'd have a lot of people in Ireland who are like, that's a waste of funding, that's a waste of money, and I'm sorry but that's just not good enough, we're a bilingual country, we're supposed to be anyway, and I suppose, that's always the case when you're fighting for the arts though, because people are like, there's no point and it's useless, and it's like well, I saw someone yesterday give out, because you know there's a huge issue with like theater, the theater industry is really after taking a hit, and a lot of people are like, we don't need drama, and then some girl was like, no one ever tries to say this about football but we don't need that either, like. Very big sense of like need and not need and it's like, why don't we just fund everything and stop arguing and whatever. But yeah, so, there's definitely like,



unfortunately it can be seen as political like. I don't know. But that's the thing, it wouldn't have to be, it was inflicted on us, do you know what I mean? Like it wouldn't have to be that way. And then I think in Wales it's to do with the mines, isn't it? The people that would go work in the mines would have to speak English because you'd have like people from all over coming to work there and they need to be able to talk to each other, something like that anyway. Em, yeah, Welsh is really pretty as well, actually. They're actually making good content in Welsh, though, like have you seen *Hinterland*? (Yeah I've seen) It's on Netflix, it's like a, yeah, like I actually haven't seen a lot of it but I saw like an episode with my mum and I was like, this is really good, and it's in Welsh. But then again, like we like to watch Scandinavian stuff, so we're no strangers to subtitles, you know, where I don't mind, like I like listening to other languages whereas some people are like, I don't want to have to read when I'm watching something (mocking tone), it's like, ok, ok.

Interviewer: This also kind of connects to, I think in one of our earlier interviews, you talked about, you know, openness and being open, kind of the whole, you know, being open to another language, another point of view kind of thing, and there's this idea, I mean, just from my own experience, I guess people who speak English, at least people from English speaking countries such as the US, the UK, they don't tend to be as open to other languages

R: Like, oh yeah, no, there's a, I don't know if I've said this to you before as well, but there's such the, I'm sure you know it, the Anglophone narrative of like wanting everyone to speak English and going to different countries and not even trying, like I think that's the rudest thing, because they end up in like a tiny village in France and they're like asking them to speak English and they're not even attempting to communicate, because chances are, like if you go into that tiny village in France and start to speak French, they'll probably help you out and switch to English. But like, Americans and Brits, they just go and they're like, no you must speak English, like...the whole like British thing in the south of Spain as well, Gibraltar and all, where they've basically like, picked up, I don't know, Sheffield and dropped it like, in the middle of Spain, making no attempt to integrate with the culture, these are the same people that give out about the Muslim community like. And they're talking about integration? Like, anyway, but yeah there is definitely like a close-minded thing with Anglophones. Like even all that drama in *Parasite*, and the fact it's subtitled and not dubbed, it's just so close-minded. Unbelievable. Unbelievable. Em.

Interviewer: That was my question, but was there anything that you wanted to comment on in that section? About the different kinds of language (In the fourth theme?), the different types of knowledge, yeah so like, we talked a little bit about the political, um, but you know in there I also mention some other things.

R: In like the dialects, relevant to Irish, again, and code-switching, see I don't sound like my family. My mum, she doesn't, she has a neutral accent. You know she's not Irish, but you don't really know where she's from. Like people might guess German, they might guess other stuff, she's really really good at English like. And uh, then my dad was born and spent the first four years in the UK, and then his parents would have grown up there, so, like he has kind of an English accent, which is gas because you just hear him screaming

at the rugby, cursing these English players in his Brit accent, it's the funniest thing, I don't sound like either of them. And I would have definitely code-switched when I was in school, there's more of like a, I don't know, I don't even want to call it working class, that's not what it is, maybe it can be considered working class by a lot of people who are from like nicer areas in Dublin but Lucan, right so basically Lucan, where I am, is essentially just a very big commuter town, but it's next to another town, Clondalkin, which has a bit of a bad reputation, em, so people from nicer areas would tend to group us in together, which, you know, not my problem, that's them, but em, like the way I'm speaking to you now is not the way I would sound when I'm talking to the girls I grew up with in school. Uh, and then there's the whole thing around the Trinity accent, I don't know if you've heard about that but like people go into Trinity and they start sounding like really D4, like you know, just that kind of way. Like, I know people that sound like that, like actually sound like that, and I'm like ok, like my best friend \_\_\_ is a terror for it, because around his family he's a bit of like a culchie accent almost, his dad's from Kerry and he's from Maynooth, which is in Kildare, and you get a lot of that kind of thing there, but like, he definitely has gotten a bit more of like a D4 kind of thing since going to Trinity. Em, and then code-switching like, I would go, in Irish, what's really funny about Irish is that like you have a Dublin accent but in Irish, so it's like a Dublin accent you'd hear in English, but it's in Irish. It's funny. So, yeah that kind of thing, depending on who I was talking to, I'd probably sound a bit different. Em, and then I have a very, in French I have a very like, because mum's an army brat, they moved around a lot, and em, she has a very neutral French accent, like you can't tell where she's from at all, em, which means that the French, they can't place me. Like where my grandparents are now, they're settled in a, I say settled, they've literally been there since my mum was like 15, but em, people know that they're not from there, they know I'm not from there, because there's a very particular like, there's a very particular accent, so they know that (talking to mother)...sorry, eh, em, what was I saying? So yeah, no, so like they know I'm not from that town but they don't necessarily, they definitely don't know I'm foreign. Em, like my mum, my grandparents now, but they're like "you don't have an accent anymore, you used to have one" and my mum was like that's bullshit, she never did, em, but I don't have an Anglophone accent in French, I definitely don't, but I also don't have a particular regional accent either. I don't sound like either of my parents, I sound like my mum in French, but I don't sound like either of them in English at all.

Interviewer: So they would be able, if you were in France, they'd be able to tell you're not from that area but they wouldn't be able to tell that you're not French kind of.

R: Yeah, essentially, yeah yeah. Em, the bit that was like trying to make myself understood better and also trying to better understand others, I'm grand on understanding others, like 90% of the time I know what's going on, em, like I said I'm really not broken up about having to look up words here and there but it's just because they're not commonly used, like if they're commonly used I usually know them, so it's more about, it's, for me it's very internal, like I said, my whole self-consciousness around it like, em, oh and then this bit about like being a student and being a student of languages, I 100% agree, I, as much as I wanted to do well I knew that it would, that you

can't just, you can't cram the way you do for other subjects, like I would have crammed for history and chemistry, I never crammed for German because there wasn't any point, and I wanted to be good at German, I didn't want to get a really good grade, I wanted to be really good at it like. Em, oh and then the thing about growing up bilingual, my mum was talking to me about it actually, when I was a little kid I used to mix French and English because I didn't understand that like people didn't, not all people didn't speak, because like, I didn't even have the distinction at home because my dad, you know, speaks decent French and he understands French quite well, so I didn't even have that at home at all, em, which means stuff would just get mixed, which is like, as far as I'm aware, like normal for little kids. Like I remember actually doing that in school, like mixing words in, and then I had the added thing of, I was in school where everyone spoke English but also I was supposed to be learning Irish, you know? So, yeah, no, I definitely didn't do it past like 5 or 6, I don't think, but I do remember it happening, em, but it was less conscious because I was a little kid and I didn't understand, but yeah. Em, my mum was saying I learned Irish as a bilingual kid as well, so I need to get her to expand on that, but yeah. Em, yeah that's me on those ones.

Interviewer: I mean like yeah, what you said, that's normal, yeah that is normal, I mean, how are you supposed to know what's what, you know, if you're not told? And that's true for anything, language, whatever it is, if you're like 3 years old, you just started talking, and you're still figuring things out yourself, I can't imagine you know, oh this is French, this is English, there's no way you would know unless someone tells you that. You're just trying to express yourself in the words that you have, you know, and some of them are in one, some of them are in another, but you don't know that this word is French, someone else tells you that it's French. So yeah that's perfect, there's nothing there. But that's the thing, that's what I'm finding, with people that were born into a bilingual household, they have to be taught that these things are separate, and you learn early on that these things have become separated over time, um, yeah, so you're learning that difference. There was something else that I was going to ask, it kind of fits into this but one thing that you have mentioned, not just today but also in a previous interview, and maybe it's just an interest of yours or maybe it's just something that is a concern of yours I guess, you know you've talked a bit about like classism and class, and is this just a thing you're just generally interested in? Like social classes, socioeconomic classes and things like that. Is this a, or is it just something...does it go along with the Irish? Was this also kind of taught in your school about class distinction... (No) not so much? Ok.

R: It wasn't. No, not at all. I never really, because everyone in my school always thought I was posh because I, em, my parents were big on grammar and pronunciation, so I was kind of earmarked as posh. Then I got to Trinity, oh, and I'm like, what is happening here? Like I've never ever felt conscious about it before then, em, like actual kind of like Blackrock (...? inaudible). One of my friends one day was like "I thought you were from like Clontarf or something". Like thanks Felicia, yeah cheers, because I don't, I don't, but like I don't know because Lucan is so, I was actually having this conversation a few weeks ago with one of my friends who lives around the corner, we were talking about how like, there's a lot of different people here, because you've got your like, em, like immigrant

groups, you've got a really big Pakistani community, a big African community, like, and then you have a group that's maybe considered more working class, but then you have a lot of people who are like technically middle class but just can't afford to live where they'd ideally want to maybe. I don't know, like it's, but no class wasn't something that was insisted upon in school, em, because you kind of almost, unless someone was really really Dublin, we had a good few people like that, that like, very thick Dublin city accent, and they'd speak like that in Irish, everyone else would kind of just blend in, you'd forget who was from Leixlip and who was from Kilcock, you know, it didn't really matter. Em, but it's definitely something I've gotten more conscious of since I went to college, I will say that.

Interviewer: I just mention it because I think the first time...

R: For sure, when I was telling people in my school that I was going to go there, they'd be like, oh, right, yeah Trinity, grand and everything. Sorry.

Interviewer: I just mention it because I think the last time, in the previous interview, I said, I used the term 'educated' I guess, and then you used that term like classist or classism, and I just thought it was, like, I didn't take it as a criticism or anything, I understand that you know when you say that word 'educated', there is that kind of connotation, there is a such thing as good education versus bad education kind of thing, so I was just curious if this was a thing that was,

R: Oh I don't know about that, like I would be a firm believer of like, people in, it depends, like I know a guy, there's a private school in like the middle of nowhere in Kildare and it's got a like, you know, it's like a few hundred years old, it costs like 20 grand a year to go because it's boarding, and the kids in there are like kind of dumb, like there was a, I think my school had like a 450 points average, and theirs had like 350 or something, you're talking about people paying 20 grand a year to go there and their kids aren't even doing that well. Em, like they 8 H1s between them in the year, I don't, I know that a lot of, how to put it, like I know, it's different circumstances but I don't know, I wouldn't be, I'd shy away from calling people educated and labelling it the same way as working class. I think privileged is one thing, so like my mum, her friend teaches in like a, like a Deis school in an area that's not so well-off, and there's definitely issues that come with, because like a lot of the times the socioeconomic background can contribute to like how education is perceived in the house and you know, the actual importance put on work as opposed to like education, but I wouldn't, I'd never, I don't know maybe if I've made it seem like that but I don't, I don't put educated and middle class in the same box because I don't think it's the same thing at all. Plenty of people who I've met who are like, from privileged backgrounds and they're like honestly just a bit thick like, because they don't care, everything's handed to them. Em, like, my mum's college, DIT, like where she teaches, em, doesn't have the best reputation. For a lot of people it's kind of like a second choice, but her biggest feeder, the biggest feeder school is Blackrock like. So you've got these kids who are like middle class, very well off, but don't really care about education because they know that their parents will just bail them out, you know? Em, like, I find people have like (?) more of a drive for education because they want to get themselves

out of whatever situation it is, if they want to, or just education for the sake of it, you know? But, yeah it's interesting.

Interviewer: The only reason I ask is because like that word has come up a few times talking to you, and I was just wondering why, that's all. There was nothing like...

R: Maybe because I'm from Dublin, and like, there's, no because there's very different accents all over Ireland, but even in Dublin, you like literally split it off Northside Southside, it's divided by a river, and people sound so different. So different like. And there was this fake Trinfest (?) post, I think last year, and it was like, I don't want to be rude or anything, but like does anyone else like clutch their things a little tighter in the library when someone comes in in a tracksuit? Awful like, awful. And a lot of people were like, the post itself is fake but there would definitely be people with that mindset in Trinity, for sure. Like, for sure. Um like, ok. Bit dodgy. Like the same people who looked at me crooked when they found out I was from Lucan, I was like, oh my God, you are so weird (?), but yeah. No. I don't know. I think maybe it's been weighing on my mind more since I went into college. It wasn't really relevant, it definitely wasn't relevant in secondary school.

Interviewer: Alright. I was just curious. That's not a main focus of mine at all, I was just curious because it kept coming up. I don't want to spend any more time talking about that. Uh, like I'm conscious of time as well, I don't want to keep you too long here. Um, how about the last section, about time, anything to say?

R: Um, yeah I think, it was interesting what you said about noticing a negative change rather than a positive change, like the idea that I'm like losing French almost, for sure, I've felt that before. Or like this idea that I should be better at German even though I definitely have improved since I started, but I just don't think I'm as good as I should be, em, I still don't feel comfortable using it kind of thing. Em, and yeah, "perhaps you feel...bursts", I think I had that with my like, leaving cert orals, because they were all within like two weeks of each other. So like French was fine, I just knew that I'd done well because I was picking up on my examiner's grammatical mistakes so I knew she wasn't going to pick up on mine. Eh, and then my German examiner told me I was good at German, and I had, I think I've said it to you before but I had a really nice, easy conversation with my Irish examiner, it was grand. So, um, yeah no, like the sudden burst does make sense, but like for me, sometimes with French I'm just like, oh God, em, what's happening, I'm losing it, it's because I used to have it, but like I said, like in a rational point of view, my French hasn't gotten any worse, it just hasn't progressed at the same rate because I'm now 19 and like, would consider myself, you know, could speak quite eloquently in English when I want to, and then not having that same kind of thing in French. It's just a bit less freedom I think, but em, yeah and then, yeah so it does make sense to me, yeah, for sure. Especially, just because I was better at French when I was younger but not really, but you know what I mean. Em, yeah.

Interviewer: That might be a good way of putting it. It's not so much that you've lost it, it's just that you're not progressing or you don't feel like you've progressed at the rate

you feel like you should be progressing, and so it feels like a loss rather than actually (For sure, yeah)...Yeah, alright, ok. And then the age thing is not, because you're going to try and learn Arabic now anyway, the age thing was never a concern for you. Like did you ever feel, did you ever get that whole thing like because you're bilingual you feel like, like the age thing is not a big deal because you probably can pick up a language later on if you wanted to?

R: Yeah, like I've always been told I was like good at languages and that I should go into it because it's easier. It definitely is like, like even picking up Irish would have been easier for me, and then, like, so I basically went into secondary school with three languages under my belt already, like that's a lot for a 12 year old, you know? Em, and that's something I think a lot of my schoolmates took for granted, that we were all bilingual pretty much, and that learning German shouldn't have been that difficult for us. And yes, like, it's just effort like. It's just effort that wasn't put in. But yeah, no, I don't know about, but we'll see with Arabic. I hope that I pick it up. But em, we'll see like. Especially I'm quite daunted by the fact that it's a, it's not the Latin alphabet, you know? Figure it out.

Interviewer: I don't know, I teach some, I teach a lot of students from the Middle East, and so, you know Arabic is around and I see them writing it too and, a couple of them have tried to explain to me what the writing, like how the writing system works and everything, and it's, um, I mean I don't want to put you off but it will take work. I'll just say it that way. It's going to take work. Once you get, obviously once you get it, once it clicks, like you put it before with German, you haven't clicked in German, I think once it clicks, it'll make more sense. It seems to be intuitive, but I think getting to that point is going to take some time.

R: One of my, that friend \_\_\_\_\_ that like, her dad's from Jordan, she was like to me, she was like, "you're going to be so fine, I literally learned to read and write in 6 weeks", I was like "\_\_\_\_\_, you were already fluent in Arabic", like not the same thing at all. But em, at least I have someone that I could ask questions. It's more, it's more that like, what's more daunting I feel like with Arabic is like I'm going to be learning classical standard whereas no one speaks classical standard. So I'm like ok, do I pick a dialect? Where do I go from here, you know? Figure it out.

Interviewer: That is odd, they would choose to teach you a language, well I guess because the classical standard would be the one that's used for administrative purposes in most of those areas.

R: Basically, yeah, the one in the newspapers is the way they described it. So, like, in terms of being more widely applicable, technically it is. I don't know, I'll have to pick a dialect basically. Because like \_\_\_ was saying, so she's got like Jordanian Arabic and like, there's times when she can't really even understand Egyptians or Moroccans, she just like, she doesn't. So, sure look, we'll see. Hope for the best.

Interviewer: There's just one last question I wanted to ask, it was something that I actually wanted to ask last time, and it kind of, it doesn't really tie into this last theme but, um, just in general, I was curious, with you you've got your English and your French

are your native languages, I'm guessing you already feel close to them in some sense, even if you feel self-conscious in French at times, there's a closeness there. With Irish, I was just wondering, do you feel like you have a duty to speak Irish? Like is that a feeling, an obligation almost to speak it...

R: It's not obligation because, like definitely, like I said that's the narrative we were given, that it was taken away from us and we need to protect it now. Em, but that definitely wasn't like a cool kind of mindset when I was younger. It's when you get older, because a lot of people were kind of too cool for school about it, whereas now I'm like, you know, it's just, it is very important to me. And I do feel like a connection as well to like older, like yeah, I'd say it's like, well I can speak the language now, why wouldn't I, like keep it going. I've been interested in endangered languages for like a long time. Like have you seen that website where they show you the map and it's all of the, yeah yeah and it's fascinating to me. I think it's so sad when languages die out, so sad to me, like you know, so, em

Interviewer: You mean the map of Ireland and how the Irish speaking areas...

R: No, no, there's a website, it's like, I have it pinned to my toolbar, endangeredlanguages.com, and it gives you like a map of like all of the world and shows you like all the different, em, all the different like languages that are endangered and everything, like Navajo and everything, even like different ones, and I think like Ireland or Irish is considered like critically endangered, sadly. Very, very sad. But anyway, I don't know. It would be a pity if it died out, I think there's so much like culture tied to it like. So much of the folklore as well. Like it's, what I find funny is when like lifestyle brands will throw in Irish words, be like "uisce", or like, you know there's definitely, and it's like what are you doing? Because you're like using this, and you know, it's very like cool to use almost, like the training centers for people who don't want to do, who don't want to go to college or do an apprenticeship, they used to be called "Fás" which is the Irish for like "to grow", so like it's used in those kinds of contexts but then not respected in others, and I'm like you can't have it both ways, you can't have it both ways because it's not just like this neat little thing that you can tap into when you want a cool slogan, you know what I mean? Anyway, em, but I definitely, I do feel a sense of duty, for sure. For sure. It's more of a, it's more as well like with French it's very personal, whereas with Irish you do feel like you're part of something bigger in that respect, if that makes sense.

Interviewer: Alright, ok, so that's all I had. You provided quite a lot, so that's quite helpful. I think that's pretty much it for today.

## Participant D

*Interview 1*

D: Like with the whole personality, I find it so weird, like I can't, if I start speaking in one language with someone, then if I try and switch, it's so strange, like.

Interviewer: No, I get the same way because I grew up in a bilingual household too, and I, like it's weird if I don't, if I don't, like, intentionally switch it comes out more naturally but if I intentionally switch, I start fumbling. Like if I try, if I try to just do one or the other, like, if I, like, okay now I'm going to speak Spanish, ok now I'll do this. But then, you know, I find myself struggling for words but if I just let it come out, it's weird for me, like.

D: See, I don't find, it's not the words for me, it's the persona. I feel like so, say for example, my, one of my half-sisters, like she's fully Irish, grew up in Ireland, all of that. She came over to Málaga to learn Spanish for a few years. And like her boyfriend now, he's Mexican so they speak in Spanish, and when I'm around, see because when I met him I started speaking Spanish to him, when she's around then the three of us speak Spanish. But I never really spoke Spanish to my sister. So it's just so strange because I feel like she's seeing a side of me that she never saw. Because in Spanish I'm way more like all of this [gets excited] whatever, and then in English I feel like I'm more like composed. So I'm like, oh you probably think I have like personality disorder.

Interviewer: Ok, no so that is interesting. So you, like, you actually feel like you're different people

D: Yeah

Interviewer: When you're talking, depending on the language.

D: Ok, not like completely different but very, I feel very different.

Interviewer: So you felt like, so you were, would you say you were kind of embarrassed to let her see this side of you a little bit?

D: Yeah.

Interviewer: How about her? Like you had seen her speaking only English, like you only operated through English and then when you saw her speaking Spanish, did she seem different at all? Did you notice anything?

D: I think because she's not like, she, her Spanish is very good but she's not like fluent fluent. Like she still speaks like someone who learnt it. So I feel like her personality isn't coming through the language yet. Like she hasn't, she still is what she always was, just sounding a bit different. But yeah it is a little bit weird like.

Interviewer: Yeah, like that's another thing that I was interested to hear about and find out, like what other people have experienced. Just that whole idea of feeling different,



and noticing yourself feel different when you're speaking one language versus another, or even like mixing the languages or things like that. Yeah, so that's no that's interesting to hear. Um.

D: Sorry I'll let you get to your actual questions.

Interviewer: No no no, it's already started, like no no, that's okay, like it's okay to like...It's an interview but what I was going to say was it's more just kind of a chat about your experiences so it's perfectly alright that you, you just start right away and go into it. I mean like I have some questions to ask but they're not absolutely necessary to ask. It's more like just, the way this works is just listening to you talk and we just kind of have a chat about it. And then after we've chatted for a while...[explain the process]. Yeah but like that whole experience about like, feeling different, a lot of people do that, and like I said before I kind of get the same way. Um, and then sometimes you have different, like you were saying you, you've only spoken to your half-sister in English and then seeing, like speaking Spanish was a very different experience, like that's also been something that's been described that, like when you first, the kind of language that you establish contact in becomes the default mode, and then when you go away from it, it does feel kind of odd. Because when I speak with my sister as well, like I grew up in a bilingual household too, my grandparents didn't speak any English so I only spoke to them in Spanish. My parents were bilingual, so I switched with them. I only spoke with my sister in English, but she speaks Spanish as well, but it's weird for me to speak to her in Spanish.

D: So you'd be if it's like your parents and you and your sister, you'd be talking to them in Spanish but then between yourselves in English. That's so weird.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, or even like with my parents, I'd switch between English and Spanish. For us it's, sometimes it's called Spanglish, like you know you just kind of codeswitch a lot.

D: I do that a bit with, um my best friend. She moved back to Colombia and she went to a, like, English school, so her English started getting like really really good, so sometimes she'd like, when you see texts it'll be like one sentence in Spanish and then, like, a few, but then in person we don't do it. It's like through texts but in person we don't mix, like we still speak in Spanish. So it's just, yeah.

Interviewer: No, yeah, it is, like that's what I'm interested in, the way people kind of communicate even when they have the same languages. You know, what you choose and things like that. Alright so like, with your parents then, do you speak only in Spanish?

D: Uh, so with my mum in Spanish, with my dad in English. So, um, I spoke to my dad very little, so let's, I guess start from 4 years old because before that it was a bit like, I was living with both and I was moving either from like Spain to Ireland or Ireland to Spain, so I guess that was a few years of like everything just being thrown at me, like different languages and different contexts and everything. So I'd say the, it became stable once I was four and then I moved back to Spain with my mom, and then my dad stayed here. So from there on it was me speaking Spanish all day, every day with my mom, and then, like

my dad would call maybe once a month, or something like that, so I'd speak to him in English and then I'd come over here for like a week and half during Christmas and like two weeks during summer, something like that. So then obviously at that point I'd be talking in English but until I was about, I wanna say like 7 or 8, I was going to a bilingual school back in Spain because my mom wanted to make sure I didn't lose my English because she'd no hope of my dad learning Spanish. So she was like, I guess you kind of have to communicate with your, one of your parents. So I'd say that also really helped to not lose English. Um, but what I did used to find is that I used to speak English with such a strong Spanish accent, like I listened back to, and I think this is also what confuses people a lot when they meet me, like how do I have this accent when I only knew...

Interviewer: I was going to ask...

D: When I only moved back to Ireland only a year and a half ago. And I've never like lived here full time, you know when I've come it's just been...and I hear back at tapes and I just remember like, my sisters making comments about my accent and stuff like that, and it was very strongly a Spanish accent when I was speaking English, and then it gradually, once I hit like teenager years, I started adapting like when I'd come over, maybe the first day or two it'd be like very strongly Spanish but then it would just switch and like, I'd start like, the accent just started sticking so strongly. And yeah it's just as the years went by, like I, it's not that I'd stayed here longer, it's not that I'd come more often, but it's like my ear just adapted much quicker, and I started taking off the accent.

Interviewer: So is your, so then when you would come here would you be, because your, like, from my limited experience with Irish accents, it's a bit of Dublin accent, I mean like what you're saying.

D: Mine? No it would be a Clare accent.

Interviewer: Is it a Clare accent? Ok

D: Yeah, my dad's from, yeah. But the thing is I have been here for a year and a half so there probably is a bit of Dublin accent and probably in a year it will be a, it's almost kind of, I feel like an imposter sometimes because my accents change so much. Like I remember two summers ago I went with my mom to Cuba and after the tenth day, I'm not saying I had a Cuban accent but I caught myself saying a couple of words where I was like, that's not your normal Spanish accent. So I feel like my ear just adapts, like, crazy quick.

Interviewer: Like you kind of catch the, the accent, the inflection of the people around you and you just unconsciously mimic, or even take it on, not so much mimic.

D: Yeah, and it's not conscious at all, like, I don't, I'm not like, oh I really want to make sure I sound like them or, it's really just like going into my brain.

Interviewer: So then, so, like, when you'd come back then, you said you started coming back fairly frequently around what age was it? Like.

D: Oh, it was the same frequency, it was always the same frequency, so it was always like, about a week and a half, two weeks for Christmas and then about, like, two weeks for summer.

Interviewer: Summer? Ok.

D: And then a year and a half ago was when I moved over here.

Interviewer: When you moved here completely, for, to attend college?

D: For college, yeah.

Interviewer: So then all of your previous education was back in Spain, Málaga.

D: Yes. It's just until I was like, yeah, seven or so, it was, it was a bilingual school, but it was funny because like some of the full Spanish kids had better English than me.

Interviewer: Ok. So then, like, going back, so you attended the same bilingual school for primary and secondary?

D: No, no, sorry, until, only until I was seven.

Interviewer: Only until you were seven? Oh ok.

D: Yeah so once I was seven it was fully Spanish education.

Interviewer: Oh, ok. So it's just for that first bit.

D: Yeah it's like my mom didn't want me to

Interviewer: It's almost like kindergarten, because seven years old you're just about, like, beginning of primary school, it's not even that old. Oh ok. And then from that, and then from that point on it was just

D: Completely in Spanish

Interviewer: Completely in Spanish?

D: Well I mean we had like, three hours of English a week. It was not very successful.

Interviewer: So then, like, alright, so for those first three years then, when you entered school, so how many years was it in that bilingual school? Was it just the three years?

D: Three, three four years about.

Interviewer: Like from four to seven, about. Oh ok.

D: Yeah, something like that. Yeah in terms of which one I learnt first, my parents can't, like I asked them, they can't really tell, I kind of learnt both at the same time because I was, so I was here and let's say, so I was born there in Spain but as soon as I was like probably a few months or whatever we came here. So I was here until that like four years when we moved back and to that school. So during that time I guess I was surrounded by English a bit more because the only person speaking Spanish to me was my mom at home, and like, my family when they'd come over to visit. Like my family from Spain. So I

guess you could say in the context there was more English being spoken but I apparently took up both like at the same rate. Yeah what I can't understand is the accent, to be honest.

Interviewer: Oh like how you got this accent?

D: Or like how my English got better during my teenage years even though the frequency was the same.

Interviewer: Huh, yeah.

D: It's not like I was coming over more, it's not like I was talking to my dad more on the phone, but all of a sudden it just started to flow much quicker, like I didn't have to think about it so much. Whereas I feel like when I was like ten or something, my brain would be exhausted after like a day of speaking English.

Interviewer: Yeah, huh. That is interesting. Like I don't have an answer for you right now. I mean it is something, like if I find any information that might be helpful for you to understand that, I'll pass that along but right now, like, I mean I've heard stories but right now, as far as I know, there haven't been any, like, real studies done on this kind of thing so, um, but like I can kind of sympathize with that experience. I go back and forth with my Spanish too, because like, I think, you would, during my teenage years, I just wanted to use it more.

D: Your Spanish?

Interviewer: Yeah like I wanted, but I was in New York and so like, again still in a you know, a bilingual environment, but I felt like I was kind of, just, there was so much English around me and then like, I think it also had to do with my, my parents, they wanted me to use a little more Spanish to make sure I don't lose it. Because again, my grandparents only spoke Spanish and it was like, to make sure you can actually talk with the people around you, you know you need to keep it so.

D: And like, you'd want to pass it on to your kids, wouldn't you?

Interviewer: Yeah, like, I mean things like that.

D: Where is your family from by the way?

Interviewer: Puerto Rico. Yeah, they're Puerto Rican.

D: I really want to go to, I guess maybe it's the influence...

Interviewer: Not right now, yeah, but like, uh, but the virus hasn't gotten there yet, so, like there's a few people who have been tested but like it's not as widespread in other areas. Um but they have their own issues with the infrastructure so it's not the best time to visit, but you know. Yeah so like, my grandparents moved from there to the mainland and so my parents were born in NY but, again, because their parents only spoke Spanish at home, but then when they went to school they only spoke English, so, they were fully bilingual, at least the environment was fully, kind of, going back and forth. My experience

was a little bit different, obviously, but I spent enough time with my grandparents to kind of learn it. And then when I hit my teenage years as well, it was kind of, alright, I'd do English all the time at school, I kind of wanted to go home and do something different, you know.

D: Did you feel like you were express yourself better in one or another?

Interviewer: It depends. Like it depends on what I'm talking about, too. Like, because again I grew up with, when it was my grandparents, my grandfather was all about baseball and my grandmother was all about cooking so those are the first groups of vocabulary I learned. I learned how to talk about baseball with my grandfather and cooking with my grandmother, like food, because she'd be telling me all these food words and you want to eat this? You want to eat this? Yeah I want to eat that. So those are the first things you learn. And then later when I went to school I started doing more, like I took Spanish in school just because I spoke it, I kind of wanted

D: It's just easier

Interviewer: Yeah. And then when I went to college I did a course in Spanish literature that was taught entirely in Spanish and we had to write essays in Spanish and things like that too, so that was, like I, for me that was my pathway of just making sure I don't lose it or anything like that. So I tried to do. But enough about me.

D: I do find that, um, in expressing myself, I feel very constrained by English. Like, I feel like, it doesn't have enough words, it doesn't, I don't get to fully, I feel like there's something that staying inside. Like it's not the most expressive language I feel like.

Interviewer: Like you put here, that's what I was going to ask, you said English is like being put in a box when you speak it. Trying to sound like something you're not, so, um, it seems like, yeah, that, it's not the language you, like another question, what language do you feel at home in, yeah it's not going to be, if you feel like you're being put in a box.

D: I just feel like, what's the word, constrained by it. Like it doesn't express my full self. It's kind of what I said earlier about, like in Spanish I'm more open and this and that, whereas in English I become a bit, I guess, like, I don't, I wouldn't say the word is formal but just kind of, I mean it makes sense with the culture. You know, like, language at the end of the day must be linked to some extent to the culture and Irish culture is much more reserved and you know you keep certain things to yourself and certain emotions and just in general it's much more about keeping to yourself whereas in Spanish you maybe even overshare sometimes.

Interviewer: Yeah yeah, no yeah. Like I mean if you feel like, I understand Spanish so like if you feel like slipping some in, if ever feel, like just while we're talking if you feel like you can express your answer better in Spanish go ahead.

D: I will, yeah.

Interviewer: For me, right now, I think like, I'll be able to slip a couple things in there as well but like, because I kind of have a similar feeling where, like I've kind of prepared this

in English so it's like, I kind of feel like I have to do it in English. I also, like this, this stuff would be very hard for me to do in Spanish because I haven't learned it through Spanish.

D: Yeah, like the technicalities and stuff.

Interviewer: Yeah, like the specific words and phrases and things like that.

D: That is interesting actually. If I were to talk about academia, I'd be better off in English probably just from this. Because like, I don't feel like in school we proper learnt any. You know your language is still kind of the same whereas now in college you kind of learn new words and technicalities to do with what you're studying so, sometimes yeah I don't know how to translate. Like, for example, certain types of, like contract law, like I doubt that it's *derecho del contrato*, like that's probably not how it works. So, certain things my friends are kind of, like when I'm telling them what I'm doing, they're like, well what is that?

Interviewer: So, um, alright let's kind of go back to education then. So your education, you obviously did it through Spanish. Um, Castilian Spanish I'm guessing, like the, official kind. Um, and you learned English as kind of a second language once you hit, and so you studied them for approximately the same, since like 13 years or so, but, um, while in school then, like did you learn, or did you have to study any other languages? Was there an option to study another foreign language?

D: Yeah, there was French.

Interviewer: Did you actually do French? Was it required?

D: But, um...I did do it, but I don't know if this is a stereotype but I've actually met 2 other people who've had the same thing, French teachers just disappear. Like, I don't know unlucky I was but from the five years I was able to take it, 2 years it was always on and off. They'd come for one class and then they'd be sick for a month, and then they'd come for two classes and they'd be...so let's say I did it maybe for like two and a half years and it was always, uh it was just so messy. Like, there was no way of actually learning anything.

Interviewer: So would the same teacher disappear and that teacher would come back? Or would it be like a new teacher?

D: Yeah, or like they'd get a new one and then that one...I just don't know what it is. They couldn't get it together with French teachers. But there was about like 2 years where we did stably have a French teacher uh, but I just felt like we'd progress to a certain extent and then we'd always go back. Like you'd come back next year and it was back to point zero. So it was like you'd learn the present tense of like, to be and like, all of those verbs and you know, basic vocabulary and then you'd forget about it during summer and then come back to it again. So, I don't think, I don't really bother saying I can speak any French. Like if I read it I can understand a lot of it but...and I'd be able to survive but I don't think I've acquired any knowledge of French.

Interviewer: This was during secondary school then right?

D: Yes, yes.

Interviewer: So the teacher'd just not show up for ages at a time.

D: They'd get, in fairness one of them I know had problems, like proper illnesses. The other one, we didn't even get to know well enough to know what was going on. Yeah education in the south of Spain doesn't work very well.

Interviewer: So then, so that was the only option, French? There were no other, there wasn't like Italian or anything like that?

D: No, nothing. I would have liked Italian though. I'd say it'd be easy enough to pick up.

Interviewer: And that never happened with any of your other teachers? It was just, like, it kind of was like, a French only...

D: Uh yeah.

Interviewer: Did other teachers disappear too?

D: Like other teachers did disappear, but just, it wasn't as, this pattern where it just happened during two years, we were like, how? But um, yeah.

Interviewer: Is this, was it a public school?

D: Yeah.

Interviewer: That's mad. When the teacher was there, though, was it, you said it's mostly just like memorizing verbs and things like that, really basic stuff.

D: Yeah, yeah, there was no, no talking. They tried to pull off some like, listening thingy every couple of months and then everyone would be like, what the hell? We didn't even understand a single word. And then they'd be like, ok ok we'll go back to memorizing verbs. Yeah, no teaching languages is something that the Spanish system is extremely bad at because they start teaching English since kids are 5. I have friends who are 20 years old, can't speak a single, like you go through your whole primary, secondary doing English about 4 hours a week, and they just don't, like some of them are great because they've taken it to themselves to like learn it because they know for the future they need it. But people who just go through the system, nothing like, hello and goodbye is all they can say.

Interviewer: So like, so when you were taking the English classes then, was there ever a point where you felt like, it was too easy for you? Or, it was always just too easy.

D: Oh, yeah. But it was always like the teachers would just either, they'd give me, um, like a different type of book to do work on which was still too easy, because at the end of the day I would like...I mean, you know sometimes I'd get to a certain vocabulary where I was like, I don't know what that means but, either that or I think they'd, I'm just trying to think back, so in primary school I just did the normal work. Um, and the teacher would sometimes like use me for like pronouncing things, like I think they kind of copped on that I didn't like that so they kind of stopped. Um, and then in secondary school, so like

my first year was just normal, second year was normal, and then third year there was a teacher who was giving me, like, extra things. So was on fourth year, and then I was so lucky the last two years I had a teacher who I had previously and he knew my level of English, so he let me do other work during English class. He was like, as long as you do the homework, because, put in the time just like everyone else, do the homework and do the exams, during the lessons you can work on other subjects if you want. So that was nice.

Interviewer: So these years you're mentioning are primary or secondary?

D: Both primary and secondary.

Interviewer: Both primary and secondary, oh ok. And so you just mentioned that they just like, used you almost like a model to pronounce

D: Sometimes

Interviewer: Sometimes

D: Or they'd ask me, like is this correct or not.

Interviewer: So they'd check with you.

D: Yeah I was, and like some of them, like they would say things that were wrong. Not as in, like, say a grammar rule that was wrong but like, they'd be talking and say something that was wrong. But obviously I don't...but I didn't really like that whole checking on me if something was...because then, I don't know there was always this kind of weird, it's like you're, what's the word, amenazando, um, oh what's the word, like you're scaring, not scaring them but like, you're a threat to their ego a little bit I guess. So yeah, I just kind of kept to myself. Try to, sometimes I'd put on a bit of an extra bit of Spanish accent when I was talking English, because then you don't want your friends to be like, oh this girl, she thinks she's all of this now, showing off for English. So I did restrain from that a little bit.

Interviewer: Almost like a challenge to their authority kind of. Oh ok. Huh. So that was pretty much all through schooling. And then obviously the Spanish you're learning, like, literature, you're studying it as a first language.

D: Yeah, yeah, we were just doing literature and something that I don't think you do in English, like syntax, you know like breaking down sentences.

Interviewer: Oh ok.

D: I fuckin hated that so much.

Interviewer: Yeah, I know what you mean.

D: And the way we put together sentences is sometimes so complicated with the like, subordinate sentences and then you have the complement, the direct complement and indirect complement.

Interviewer: You have to learn all that stuff, wow, ok.



D: You have to analyze it, yeah, like they give you a sentence and then you have to break it down so you have the, I don't know how this in English, but like sujeto predicado, oración subordinada eh, oración sustantiva, complemento circunstancial, de yo no se cuanto.

Interviewer: We learn, I mean, I learned grammar, like that kind of syntax or sentence, what is it called, sentence trees or something, sentence diagramming, when I was in primary school in English but like, not to that, not to that level, like we just did it very basically.

D: I don't get the purpose of it, like.

Interviewer: Because in Spanish like, the, there's so much variety with the sentence structure. You don't have to say it that way, like, there's a lot of flexibility. That's interesting.

D: Yeah, I did not enjoy that. And literature I found, the only literature I really found interesting was either the generation of, what generation was this, where Lorca, the one Lorca was in, Federico García Lorca.

Interviewer: Is that the 20s? Like or no?

D: I think so, something like that, and then I really like Latin American literature. I think those were much more enjoyable to read because they weren't trying to be like, pretentious and stuff, I feel like. They were just like interesting stories. But apart from that, I didn't, I didn't connect with Spanish literature too much, to be honest.

Interviewer: So now here, at Trinity, there's, for your major, law and political science, is there a language requirement? Are you given that option?

D: No, there was, we did have options for electives, and, but I wasn't really allowed to take Spanish because my nationality is Spanish, so you're not allowed to take a language in your, like your official language because obviously that would be unfair I guess.

Interviewer: Break the curve I guess.

D: Yeah. Um, and I did think about going into other languages but then I just saw other electives that I really liked so I just took those. I did, last semester I did Middle Eastern studies and now I'm doing, like social innovation. So, I mean it would have been, maybe I should have gone to French, see if I actually learnt anything during these years. But yeah, in general there's no space for me to learn, sorry not learn, practice my Spanish, which I found really huge. Just like, I just don't enjoy it at all. Like, I met a few Spanish people on campus and we just really didn't click because, regardless of being Spanish, it was very different backgrounds. Like they're, first of all they're not from the south of Spain, which in itself, I don't know if you know much about Spain but like, we're kind of a bit different.

Interviewer: I've heard the, what is it, the, Andalucia and like the, I've heard about, um, like stereotypes or kind of, what do I want to say...

D: Yeah, that we're lazy and like, yeah and we're too loud and all of that.

Interviewer: Yeah it's, yeah like, yeah, so I've heard things like that.

D: Yeah I feel like, yeah we're definitely different, I feel, to the rest of Spain. Um, I don't know, I don't care when people talk about it, because I'm like, well at the end of the day, if you want anyone funny on telly you're putting one of us, or like, if you want any good food, you're coming to the south. If ye want to dance flamenco you're going to have to admit that it comes from the south of Spain. So I'm just like, look, ye do your thing but at the end of the day, we know what we're worth. Um, so it's just different and then also in terms of like, socioeconomic background it's extremely different. Like, any person from Spain that's studying here has a, very wealthy background whereas for me it was just like, I took a year out to work and saved up money and like, I've my dad here so that's you know, obviously you make more money here than you make in Spain, and all that. So, just very different backgrounds and we didn't click, and that was sad because I kind of would have really liked to, um, have someone to talk Spanish with. And then, the Hispanic society is more just for like, non-native speakers, I think like. So I haven't really, yeah when I've gone back home I, it's just like a, oh, finally I get to just

Interviewer: Be yourself, kind of.

D: Yeah.

Interviewer: You're not on show, almost like.

D: Yeah, exactly. It's just such a relief and such a like, break to the brain, almost. Yeah I really need to find somewhere here to, like, I guess, get to speak a bit of Spanish.

Interviewer: I mean I like, kind of away from this, I always, like I went, I visited Spain a few years ago and I enjoyed the south, I think it was much nicer than, like, because I kind of went around, you know, the big cities you go to, like Madrid and Barcelona, Valencia, and then, but like I spent most of the time in Córdoba, Granada, I went to Málaga for one day. But like those places, Sevilla, you know like, those places are so, but also because when I started like kind of looking into language and the history of Spanish and how it spread, a lot of Caribbean Spanish comes from the Spanish of the south, like, from that area, from Andalucia and the Canary Islands as well.

D: Oh the Canary Islands are fascinating, like I went there two years ago, and it's just such, like a 50/50 mix of, I feel like, Latin American type Spanish and like, south of Spain Spanish. It's like they perfectly combined it or something. Yeah, they're, that's a very interesting place actually to study language I'd say.

Interviewer: But yeah, like I was always, when I started hearing those things about, about like the, like Andalucian Spanish and stuff like that, and how it's different and, and even just about, not just about the language itself but also the region itself, kind of, the regional what do I want to say, discrimination almost, kind of. You know, like, um, it was weird to hear that kind of stuff. Because from our perspective, you know, now I know that, like, when you say Spain, like, it's just a, it's a lump of these autonomous regions. It's not like, it doesn't have the same kind of national feeling that some other countries do.

There's a lot of regional differences and a lot of independence, like that strong feeling of independence.

D: Yeah, then you have the Catalans, like they've a whole different way of speaking as well and, the Basques, sure they don't even know where their language came from almost, like. It is, it's definitely not as centralized and unified, I think, as it's perceived to be.

Interviewer: But that's another thing that kind of surprises me with the languages. Because you'd think, or, you know, at least I would think that, uh, languages like Catalan or Euskera, like they would be available in other schools in Spain because they're, they're co-official languages at least. You know you'd think you'd be able to learn Euskera in another region but you're not. You can learn Catalan if you're in Cataluña. You know, you can learn Euskera if you're in Pais Vasco, you know, it's like. But if you're outside of those areas...

D: Sure, they're almost trying to shut it down even in those areas.

Interviewer: Yeah, that's another, that's true. Like they're just, a lot, it all depends on funding and things like that. Yeah no.

D: And I also feel like a lot of people feel pressured to not speak with their accent from Andalucia when they go, like, if they're a politician or I was just speaking to a friend and he's in college, and he was just like, oh I feel so, when I speak I just feel so, like there's no value to my words because of the way I'm saying them or something like that. Um, I personally feel very strongly about my accent, like I don't care if I'm president of Spain, I'm going to keep my accent like. I just can't, and I just, and I love it so much like, I'm sorry but we've some magical way of saying a lot in like, a few words. Like we cut everything so much but it still makes sense. So I'm really, I think I'm very passionate about the, not just Spanish but in particular, like the way we have of speaking it in the south of Spain. I think it's very special.

Interviewer: So why, so what was your reason for coming here for college then? Why not continue on there if the language is, is something you feel so strongly about?

D: Unemployment. I, there's just no chance of what I'm doing here, I just couldn't do it over in Málaga. Like, you're basically reduced to tourism, like, the year I was working before coming over here was just waitressing and it was like, 60 hours a week with like one day off making like less than a thousand euros. That kind of becomes everyone's reality and like, I was lucky, like my friends were like, oh my God Dara got herself a proper job, because people would be working those hours for less than like six hundred euros as well. So it's, like I've friends working for like 3 euros an hour doing deliveries, yeah no, yeah there's no, or like you're not really, there's people who'll get to pension age and they won't, they won't have been insured, like they won't even have had maybe a contract, so, yeah that's kind of...if you're not born into a family that does something else, that's something that I realize is very different here. Like there's a lot of social mobility, and I could tell that as well from my dad, because he came from, like he works

in the council now, not in Dublin but in Clare. I mean I'm not saying he's like high up but like, it's a nice civil servant job, whatever, for someone who came from like, a quite not well-off family at all but through education he managed to get there. So I always feel like the way he'd speak would be more like, you have more opportunities than you might think, whereas back home it always felt like this thing where you're trapped in what you see around you. So it's like you can be a waitress, or you can do delivery, or, like, if you're extremely lucky you can work in a shop, like there's people who have proper degrees and are unemployed. Like, one of my friends' sister, like she did biology and then she did a masters and she's currently working as a waitress. So, I think that fear that I'd be trapped and couldn't actually do what I want to do kind of brought me here. And it was such a shock like, when I started coming here and like, first week we had like a networking event with like lawyers from like Arthur Cox or something. I was like, oh what is this? It's just such a different world. So yeah that was the reason I guess, my career was not gonna be happening over there.

Interviewer: So would you, like, looking forward, would you consider going back? Like is the, kind of the, the ability to use the language, would that pull you back, like when you're done? Or...

D: I don't think so. Like it's very strong but I don't think it's strong enough to pull. Because, I mean I guess, like my dream, my ideal, my like utopia would be to go back. I just don't see that as a possibility at the moment. Like, I don't see what I could do there, like politics is very much about who you know and very clicky in that sense. And in terms of, maybe I could go to like a different part of Spain, like maybe I could work in Madrid or Barcelona, but then I'm like if that's not gonna feel like home either, then what's...but then again I would be speaking, it's kind of something I think about but I'm not sure I feel like I'm just kind of going to let my career guide wherever I have to go. But I don't think language would be strong enough of a reason for me to go back.

Interviewer: Well do you, can you see a possibility for your, I guess, I mean here, like you mentioned, I've seen it as well, that there's limited opportunities for Spanish, I mean. It's still a very, like when it comes to a foreign language, you know, after Irish and English, French is right there and then German would be right after. Like, Spanish, you hear it, you know, you hear tourists speaking Spanish but like...

D: Oh my God it's full of Spanish people

Interviewer: But aside from like tourists and then the groups of Spanish teenagers that are running around, the stereotypical Spanish students you see everywhere like, um, I'm curious, like do they talk about the possibility of using, you know, Spanish to practice law here? Or like, to do something related to your major, your career aspirations or like...

D: I was thinking maybe if I got involved with the EU there could be some space where I could use both if I was like interacting with, I have considered that. But I think in general I kind of just, I've done a separation where it's like, me and English and me in Ireland means me studying, me furthering my career, me achieving things, whatever, whereas Spanish, Spain, Andalucia, home, family, just means down time, breaks, relaxing,

partying, and all of that. I feel like it's almost divided and because of the way I am I'm always gonna probably push towards my career side more than my just like chilling out and relaxing. So, yeah I've never really thought of them as like, they mix. I feel like my professional language is, has just become English by default.

Interviewer: Do you think, like, English will eventually become something you feel more comfortable in? Or do you not want it to get to that point?

D: I hope for it. Um, see what I don't like is, so for me to feel comfortable in the language I feel like I rely a lot on slang, accents and like certain words that, so say certain words that we say in like, Andalucia, so like the way we shorten them, like, I can't think of anything right now but you know, something like that plus the slang we use plus the accent, that's what gives it that identity that makes me feel comfortable in it. So I feel like if I adopt those traits in English, they're not gonna be genuine. It's just gonna make me feel like an imposter because as far as the accent goes, if like in a year I have this like, strong Dublin accent, I'm just gonna feel like, Dara like, what are you doing? Like, this is not, you didn't grow up in Dublin. I feel like it has to match up with what my actual identity is and then the, like I've caught myself, because I hang, most of my friends are Nigerian, so I've caught myself saying a few words that I'm like that's their slang and I immediately, I'm like don't, like that just sounds so ungenueine. I, I don't know it just, like it came out naturally but then I'm like, trying not, because I don't want to, you know these people who just sound like something, and you're like, that's just not you. So I don't want to fall into that but I feel like that's the only thing that would make me feel fully comfortable in the lang...like that I'd feel like able to completely express...

Interviewer: But you still, but you still kind of feel, like you're, it's not authentic.

D: Yeah if I did use that, it would feel unauthentic. But then I'm like maybe after like 20 years, I start to accept more of an Irish identity if I stay here, I don't know. Like at the moment it's very hard for me to identify as Irish because it's like, I've never lived here. I wasn't really in communication very much with my dad which would have been like the Irish influence. Like, raised over there, by a Spanish mom, there's a lot of stuff about Ireland that I don't know and there's a lot of things that I just don't feel close to or like have no link to so, yeah, because I'm very, I think I'm very, my identity is linked to my culture and the culture is linked to the language and it's all this kind of like circle that I just haven't formed in English. Like, it's not cohesive in that way. Uh, so it's very annoying for me when I meet someone at, at the, I've kind of learnt to not say I'm Spanish anymore, like when people ask me, oh where are you from, I just say my dad's Irish, my mom's Spanish. I don't say, I don't actually answer the question because so many times I've been confronted with, no you're not. Or people talking behind my back saying I'm trying to sound interesting or something. So at this point it's like, you're asking me but you already, you've already decided your answer, you've decided I'm Irish even though I've no idea of, about Ireland, no link to this culture, no link to this identity. So, since you've decided it and whatever I say is not gonna change your mind, you can keep thinking that, you know.

Interviewer: Do you get that more from people here, like Irish people? Or do you get that...

D: Yeah, I never got that, because you grow up with the people, they know you, they hear you, or like people, um, if it's an Irish person that thinks that of me but they have like some little awareness of Spanish, because maybe they took it in school or something, once they've heard me speak on the phone or say something, they're like, oh shit I was totally wrong, like, because it just tells straightaway. So I've never had, when I was back home, no one ever questioned my identity, like, it's Dara, like yeah, of course, she's, she's like us, you know.

Interviewer: I wonder if you did speak English with more of a Spanish accent, if they wouldn't feel the same way. Like if they're automatically assuming you're Irish just from hearing your, you're Irish just from hearing you speak

D: Usually they point to accent the most. They don't comment, like obviously I look very Irish because I guess Celtic DNA is strong or something. Um but um, they always point out to the accent and, I think it's because, you know the way I was telling you I can't really explain it myself, like I don't know how it got like this? So then you're kind of, they're already questioning it and then you don't have a proper answer to give as to why you have this accent. So then it's like, ah yeah she's lying or there's something else behind this. That's why I just don't bother anymore, to be honest.

...

D: It's funny that you say about the getting your essays back all in red because number one thing on my feedback every single essay I do is you need to work on your use of English.

## *Interview 2*

Interviewer: So thank you again, thank you for your comments. I read through them and, um,

D: I hope it wasn't too much gibberish, I feel like sometimes I can start writing and I just, like, lose my thoughts, but

Interviewer: No, well I mean this is the whole, the whole point of this study is, it's me trying to understand what's going on for that other person. Like, it's quite a, it's a, I guess the way I'm trying to do it, this methodology or whatever, is, it's cooperative. So I do need to kind of listen to what you're saying, read what you're saying, and it's just me trying to, I guess, interpret, or help you interpret your own experiences. And then, I'm writing up about my experience helping others interpret their experiences. It's a weird kind of triple layer of whatever. Um, but there was no gibberish at all. There was some interesting, like there was some clarifications, one thing I noticed was like the way I phrased something may not have been the best way to phrase it, so that's actually letting me know that I have to rephrase it, rewrite it, which is actually quite helpful for me, that way I can, it's helps me with that. Like the first, one thing I noticed with the first comment where you mentioned about, like, being from Andalucia and um, and that idea of being put in a box and it being limiting. What I meant to say was that, the way I was trying to interpret it was that for you, it's as if, like in the eyes of other people, that they're kind of putting you in this box, and then they already have this idea of what it means to be from Andalucia, and for you, being from Andalucia is a very different, you're very proud of that fact, but for others it might seem, like it might seem like something you shouldn't be proud of or for others, you know they, you know because of the regional differences and kind of regional stereotypes, you're kind of dealing with these stereotypes and...

D: You know what's interesting, and when I read that I did think maybe that's what you meant, so I wrote it down kind of like just in case, but I think a lot of that, like in terms of how other, say, I know what you mean in terms of box, as in other Spanish people could see, oh you're from Andalucia so you're this and that. I think it's interesting to always bring it back to the socioeconomic, because I find that people from a higher socioeconomic background in Andalucia don't have that thing because they tend to, this is getting like way back into history, but a lot of, it's kind of like they don't recognize Andalucia as this entity, as being that different, they identify more as Spanish, it's all about the Spanish flag and all this because the Andalucian construct, as you can kind of call it, was very republican and was very left-wing, if that makes sense. So, it just gets so complicated when you get into like politics and stuff like that, it's almost like, being strongly Andalucian, in the sense of like, oh we're different and we have this and that and being proud of it is very linked to a more, kind of like, maybe I'm incorrect in saying socioeconomic, Maybe I'd be more correct in saying political kind of alliances. And as same as with the US, politics can be very divisive when two people are trying to interact. So yeah it, sorry it just gets so messy when when I start referring to that because there's so much involved, but I would like to think that if I meet someone else in Trinity that's

also Spanish but isn't from Andalucia, I don't think I'd generally assume they're not gonna want to talk to me because of that or that we're not gonna get on. It's more as you get to converse, then you can kind of see if your values are aligned, you know if they're one of these, I don't know if you've heard the term facha?

Interviewer: No, I don't, I haven't heard that before, yeah.

D: I'm gonna get too much into politics if I get into that but, yeah I guess it is and it isn't a box. It has the potential of being a box if it clicks with a certain person. So if me(?) encounters someone who has those views about Andalucians and has those views of like, it's not really an entity, we should all be Spanish, this and that, then that can clash, so I wouldn't say it's an automatic box, it's a more of like, once you get to start talking to the person.

Interviewer: Oh, ok. So what was the term you used? Facha?

D: Yeah, it's, we, it's almost like we still live in the politics of the war

Interviewer: So it has to do with fascism, and like the Franco, kind of, that, because Franco would have been...

D: Yeah, it's like you don't, you don't have to directly support Franco but because Franco was so much about centralizing and you know he wanted to get rid of Catalan in Cataluña, and like he didn't want Andalucia to be an entity as much as it has the potential to be and all of that, and wanted to get rid of cultural traits that were different. That's why you wouldn't (leave someone who?), but there's so many other things to being a facha, like usually it's linked to right-wing politics and there's so much that's associated to that.

Interviewer: So I mean like it's

D: And like there's fachas within Andalucia, as I said, but but a lot of people from like higher socioeconomic status would be of that ideology, kind of.

Interviewer: Oh ok, I mean like it's fair to say that, just because you speak the same language doesn't mean that you're gonna get along with the people you're talking to, you know. There's other things involved in establishing some kind of relationship, you know. If you're not gonna have things in common, you're not gonna wanna talk to that person even if you speak the same language, so. Yeah.

D: But yeah, I definitely, I don't want to mislead you into thinking that that's a huge part of the language, because, as you said, like at the end of the day kind of narrows down more to like people's values and beliefs and that kind of stuff. So yeah, I wouldn't want to like, mislead you into making that a kind of like big thing, yeah.

Interviewer: Ok, no like, yeah this is why we're talking, making sure we're clear on all these things. Um, I didn't think that at all, I think it was more just the way I phrased it, because when I was putting the notes down, I, you know I could have expanded upon them a lot more, it's just I was trying, kind of, I didn't wanna like, give you like 10 pages of



notes for you to read through. I was trying to just like pick out the more salient points and just, um, and present them to you, because obviously, like, you know, based, over like an hour of conversation so many things can pop up and, so I was trying to just kind of pick out the bigger things. I think there was more.

D: No, there's definitely a point in um, the regionality of language, there's definitely an importance in that, um, particular accent or particular way of talking. There's definitely something to explore there, and it does mean a lot to a lot of people and it means nothing to other people. Um, but in terms of gettin along with others, I think maybe it's not as strong.

Interviewer: But like, these accents, it seems you're much more attuned to it in Spanish, of course because that's your home, that's where you're from, but as far as the English side, here in Ireland, I mean, you've been, have you been made aware of like, the kind of, um, there's some similar stereotypes when it comes to accents here in Ireland. I mean, I've only been here like three years but I've heard a lot, you know, and um, I think...

D: Yeah, you have the culchie, you have the north Dublin, yeah

Interviewer: And even in Trinity, for example, like, it's, I was at an, um, a couple years ago there was a seminar with an academic and she mentioned it was very rare for her to hear a non-Dublin accent in Trinity, that there's something...

D: A non-Dublin?

Interviewer: Yeah, like there was, there was actually someone else from, what county was it, I can't remember which county this person's from but, like it was a small seminar and there was someone from, uh, one of the western counties I think, oh no, from the midwest, it wasn't quite like, fully on the west of Ireland. Yeah, I can't remember. Anyway, um, so it wasn't a Dublin accent, it wasn't like an accent from the east or from this area, um, and um, and at the end of the seminar, this one participant told the other, you know, it was, she said it was very rare for her to hear, um an accent from that part of Ireland at Trinity, that Trinity tends to pull people from certain areas of Ireland and not from other areas of Ireland, so, um.

D: Do you know what they also do though? And it kind of goes back to, remember when I was saying how some politicians from the south of Spain, like from Andalusia, when they make it to like national parliament, they speak differently, um, because of what's attached to that accent, like it makes you, it makes people think you're maybe less literate or less knowledgeable or something. I think they do that here as well because we, there's been a couple of lecturers where people are like, the lecturer is speaking in certain way and all of a sudden a word slips out in a different accent, and they're like oh, like trying to conceal it, em, so I have noticed, now personally maybe I wouldn't be as good at identifying it, but I think it's that whole thing of certain accents end up considered to be associated with you're more knowledgeable or like if you're in a position, a higher up position, you have to speak like this because speaking like this implies that you're qualified for the job kind of a thing. So maybe that's what the lecturer

was trying to do. She maybe thought that her accent, which was more of a like countryside accent, um, was going to make it seem as though she was incompetent so she acquired, or something like that. And that's pretty universal, isn't it? I think it, I feel like it happens in a lot of places where like one becomes the, this is how you speak if you want to sound like you know your stuff.

Interviewer: Oh yeah like there's, there's a lot of that and there's actually like people who are doing research on that now and how like there's, um, discrimination based on accent, and even in like, like especially when it comes to like English learning, like learning a language but especially like, you know, because English is such a big language, you know in English learning there are the two main accents which are, like the, "American" accent and the "British" accent, but you go to America, you can go like 5 miles down the road and you'll have a different accent, and the same thing in the UK, in England you know, there's like the standard, I guess the RP, received pronunciation accent that you might hear on television or movies or things like that, but not everyone there speaks those things, but it just so happens that that's the accent that kind of gets out and then people...

D: Yeah, yeah, same way, for example there's that, you know the way Adele or like Amy Winehouse used to speak, they have a Hackney accent so they say stuff like, ef or something like that because that's coming from like a lower socioeconomic background, they associate that with like, oh that's like talking trashy or something like that, so it's definitely everywhere, unfortunately.

Interviewer: But like it's, but it's interesting that you're so interested in these accents, too, and then you're, you know, you're still kind of coming to terms with your own English accent, like the accent that you use to speak English, that you're still, kind of, trying to figure it out. But like, so one of the things I put in there was like, it seems as though it kind of figured it out on its own without you kind of, having any say in it. That it just kind of, that like at that time, years ago, you said all of a sudden you just started speaking with a Clare accent, and you didn't know where it came from, you didn't know, um, how that happened, and that's, because of it now people have, you know when you meet people here in Ireland they, you know, have certain expectations of you, they think of you in a certain way, they automatically put you into the Irish, they say you're Irish even though you don't think of yourself as Irish, and so, like it's, you know, it's, so this whole thing about accent is something that you know, it's, it seems to be a huge concern for you.

D: Yeah, and I think it fits into, the way you put it, as like it has to be cohesive, it kind of fits in with what I was saying about, I wouldn't want to adopt something just for the sake of it because I respect it enough to know that behind all of that, there's a culture and there's a, you know certain things and, an identity, so there's an identity to go with it, and if I don't identify as such then it feels weird to use the accent of that identity, if that makes sense. So it's kind of like, where was I, I was trying to make a point and now it's left my head. Em, yeah it's that thing of, it goes back to what you said about the fact that I speak in a certain way makes people think, oh, so you're Irish, that's your identity therefore you know about Irish culture, you know about, maybe, historical things, you

know how society works here. Where, it's like, but I didn't, I don't have that identity and I don't have that full rounded circle of cohesiveness that goes along with that, say with the accent or something like that.

Interviewer: Yeah, so but, it's, so what I'm kind of thinking is it seems as though, like, there are things that kind of happen without somebody's control, without you know, your own control, without you intending for that to happen, and so, like I guess one of my follow-up questions was gonna be like, you know, well actually it's not really a question but more kind of a reconfiguring or like an extension of some of the things I put up, I put in the report I sent to you was, it seems like there's, like, it kind of, I don't want to say it bothers you but like you do think about things that happen without you having any say in it. What I mean is that there are certain things that like, when you're learning a language or you're speaking a language, you spend enough time in an area, you just kind of unconsciously start to do things, you start to mimic the people around you. This is a thing that, I'm not fully aware of the research on this but I have seen some reports, some papers on this, that this whole idea of like mimicking people around you or kind of taking on the speech qualities and not just the way they act but also the way they talk, of the people that you surround yourself with that you just kind of unconsciously mirror them, and it seems that when you become aware of the fact that you're mirroring these actions or you're mirroring this language, then you start to wonder if you really should be doing that. You become, like you're unaware of it and then as soon as you're aware of it you're like, wait a second, slow down, you want to kind of figure it out, it seems, and decide if that's the way you wanna go or if that's something that you need to stop doing before you get into trouble.

D: Yeah, especially, I think especially me because of that whole, like, I like things to be organic, I don't want to sound like something that I'm not. Um, sorry but you were saying something else, I feel like I cut you off there a bit.

Interviewer: Oh no no, I was, that was, that was kind of the end, I wasn't saying anything else. It seems like you're trying, you get to a point where like, at first you don't notice it, then all of a sudden you notice it, and then you're just wondering, should I be doing this? You know, and then, and then, so it's like you want to make sure that these decisions are conscious.

D: I think when it was really triggered, because once you mentioned the, I don't like this, I don't, I think, you see I don't know if it's because I use my English a lot more whereas when I was back home I'd use it like once a week or something, so I wouldn't, you know I'm not really going to be thinking like, oh what does my accent sound like? this and that. Um, but I think it, there was definitely a triggering point when I came over here and that whole thing of people, of me, or of them being like, where are you from? And me saying Spain, and it's like, ah no, you're trying to sound interesting and this whole like people deciding what I was, I think that's where it started annoying me really, um, I feel like I didn't have that big of a...I was curious, I was kind of like, how have I acquired this accent? How am I talking like this even though I haven't, I'm not living there, I was curious but it wasn't something that bothered me as much I feel like until I started living here and

I started introducing myself to people and they started telling me, no, you're Irish because you speak like that. And it's like, but no I'm not, like, do you know? I think that's, um, and it also, it went even further. Like, I feel like it's made me even reject a bit of, because yeah, undeniably I am part Irish, like my dad is Irish and I have experienced a bit of Ireland, you know, I have come over to visit. I'm not trying to say, oh I'm 100% nothing to do with Ireland, that's not what I'm saying, but what I was trying to communicate to these people is that's not really a huge part of my identity and I'm okay with exploring it, I'm okay with, um, exploring, let's call it like my Irish side, but I feel like as soon as people started telling me this is what you are, I started getting like, okay well maybe I want nothing to do with Ireland. You know if this is the way it's going to be, maybe, you know, fuck this, I'm Spanish and I want nothing to do with Ireland. And I don't want that to be my attitude obviously, but I think it's something that really bothered me when I came over here.

Interviewer: Do you think they, they meant it, or at least they were presenting it as a compliment? Almost as if they were trying to say, oh you know you're just like us.

D: No, no, they were presenting it as, you're a liar. That's how they were presenting it. And there was, like even, um, particularly, I won't forget this girl who, um, went behind my back talkin to one of my friends because she'd heard me talk in a tutorial or something and I'd mentioned something about Spain, and she asked my friend oh, where's she from? And my friend said, she's from Spain. And she said, ah you don't actually believe that, do you? Like obviously she's just trying to sound exotic or something like that and that type of stuff like, either, maybe to a lower degree or just in the way that people, um, would by the end of the conversation, even though I'd explained my situation, they'd still be like, ah, but you're just not, you're just not. Or maybe they heard me three months later on the phone speaking Spanish and then maybe they were like, oh do you know what? Maybe I kind of believe you. And it's like, so for these three months you fully believed I was lying. So those, all those encounters, I feel like they've made me angry and they've made me turn to that point where you've mentioned not liking acquiring something that doesn't, um, let's say connect with my identity. I did have some notes written here. I don't know if, um...yeah, ok no that, that has nothing, sorry, yeah. I had stuff written down that I was thinking of after I sent you the email but it wasn't on anything to do with that, so that's all I can say, I think it was definitely that moment where it became annoying for me was moreso when I started living here.

Interviewer: The reason I asked that question is because, you know sometimes when you're in a new area and, you know, like people are very much like, oh you know you're getting adjusted so well, you're just like us, you know, oh you know...like I've had that happen to me before. Like you know, when you're in a, like, for example the US, Americans like to do that as well. They're like, oh you know, you learned how to do all these things, you're an American now. That kind of thing. Like if you, if in their eyes you successfully assimilate, then they kind of mean it as a compliment. Now, I kind of, I feel similar to the way you feel where it's like, I don't necessarily see that as a compliment because I feel like that's kind of, you know, not giving me a chance to say, or to be, to

represent who I want to represent, you know, that kind of thing. Um, like perhaps in some sense I do feel like an American, I mean, I am an American citizen, you know, there's no arguing that, but like, you know, it just does that, you know sometimes they do mean it as a compliment but clearly that's not the case with you. For you it was more, they meant it as if they were, like, you were lying and they were calling you out on that lie.

D: Yeah, don't get me wrong, like I do think there are ways to, um, phrase it as a compliment, I definitely think there's ways of being like, oh, if someone was like, um, oh but sure your dad is Irish so you know, feel like one of us or like feel like this is also your home or something like that. That would obviously be a compliment and I'd have no problem with that because they're not telling me what to be or what I am and they're not calling me a liar, you know. So, there's definitely different ways to kind of say that.

Interviewer: So what were the other notes that you had? Let me hear what you had to say.

D: Let me check. So, ok, in terms of, because you kind of did mention that you found it interesting maybe that it's such a topic that I feel strongly about, um, so in terms of, again I didn't want to like mislead you for your research and stuff, so I am in general a very um, how would you call it, I'm very aware of like, social contexts, it's something that really interests me. I feel like I'm very much a sociologist when it comes to that. So I kind of just wanted to point that out in terms of if maybe you thought it was linked to the fact that I was bilingual. Now I don't know if it could be linked, but I did kind of want to clarify like, in general I'm very like. I don't want to make you think, maybe the only reason why I think of these things a lot is because I'm bilingual. Em, the other thing I wrote down was, um... oh yeah actually my second point was what I said there, that it started bothering me once I started living here and people just couldn't accept that I was a Spanish girl who could speak English fluently, not the other way around. Um, and then the last thing is um, remember when you were trying to kind of maybe figure out why I took up the accent, you know why I did that mimicking, I guess, (inaudible) just taking off, and you made a very good point in saying that I'm kind of like getting closer to my family because obviously I always felt like the outcast one because they all, you know all my brothers and sisters have the same mother and they have that background and all that, and then I was kind of like this other one, um, and I definitely, you know the way I kind of said I value, like, I'm very aware that people who are very close in language are easier to get close to. So I, when I see, for example, couples where one person is fluent in a language and then the other person is kind of like, not too much, I'm always kind of like, how do you guys do it? Like I personally couldn't. I feel like through language I can connect so much with someone, em, so I think I realized that when I was very young and I realized that I wasn't, when we were all in a group maybe for like Christmas or something, I think my ten year old subconscious little Dara was, like, you're not connecting to the same level that they are, you're not having, you're not getting the jokes, you're not engaging in the same kind of banter and all of that. So maybe seeing that and seeing that in general maybe I wasn't as connected to my family as they were, that could be a good explanation to why my

brain maybe subconsciously started being like, ok how do you get closer to them? Maybe I thought a good route would be through language. So I think more than a comment, it was like, thanks for pointing that out because I think that that kind of helped me understand it a bit, of what could have been going on.

Interviewer: So but, you mentioned that you didn't really change any of your normal habits when this happened, which, that's kind of interesting. Like it's not like you started listening to more music through English or watching more television or like, you said you weren't really calling your father all that more often, you know, there wasn't, your habits didn't change but all of a sudden this changed. So like, I mean, as far as I know, it has to start with the habits, the things you do, that's where it usually starts. So for me it was interesting to hear that as far as you know, you didn't change anything, it just all of a sudden...

D: Yeah it's all just so subconscious, that's why it's weird.

Interviewer: But like, you know, I'm guessing that's the accent you would have heard when you were still kind of learning language at a very very young age, you know. Even when you're a baby, you're not conscious of anything, you're still picking up things, you know, you're still actively learning. You don't remember the stuff later on, but you know babies, they learn language as soon as they're able to hear. As soon as you're out, you're picking up on things, and obviously you know, like physically you're not able to mimic the sounds yet but you're learning all these things. So, if that's the accent you heard then, that's the accent that would have been, kind of logged away in your head and then maybe it just decided to bare its head eventually, um.

D: Yeah, it's mad, really.

Interviewer: So like, I was kind of interested as well, in the last comment that you made, um, when you sent it back to me, you said kind of, you sometimes feel like maybe you're putting too much on culture to express your identity or something like that. You use that, that you depend too much on culture to express identity and that it's this, you mention that it's, you know, this, that you want this kind of complete circle of not just language but also culture and not just any language but this specific accent or the slang, like these really, like the things in language that you only really know if you're there a long time, um and you're, it's not like always learned, you're not gonna learn this in a classroom, you're gonna learn it just from being in that area. Um, and then you talk about like, with, but you put this, you say this when you're talking about like, possibly learning another language in the future, and you're not sure if you'd have that same connection, like, but, do you think that would put you off? Like, so you still want to learn a language even though you're not 100% sure that this kind of connection is going to happen?

D: Yeah, I was thinking about it as I was writing it. I was kind of, because I guess I haven't given it too much thought. I've always been like, I've always thought for my career I should probably learn more languages, but I've never really thought of it in depth. Um, I don't know because I have this thing where I feel like it wouldn't be a problem in terms of identity because I'd just be a, say I were to learn French, right? You could probably tell

from my accent that it's a foreign person learning French. So I wouldn't have that whole problem of people being like, no, you're French, what are you talking about? Do you know what I mean? I wouldn't have that. But then at the same time, I'd have that thing of, going back to how I feel so strongly about the fact that you have to be close in language to connect to people sometimes. Now I think I could be wrong, I think you can but I always see it as a little bit of a barrier. So if I were say, to go to France and learn French, it's like, would the friends I make there, would I be as close to them as my other friends? Would I have that connection if I don't have that other part of it? So I don't really know, it's a bit of a kind of unknown territory, I don't know how I'd react, I don't want to predict anything. Um, I don't think it would get to the point of putting me off from learning the language, I'm always open to you know, if it ends up being annoying then it ends up being annoying, but I don't think I'd stop learning just because I've had that kind of experience. And in terms of the culture thing, it's definitely something that you helped me realize as well, just by how, by talking about it and I realize how much importance I put not just to the language but to little elements of the language that reflect the culture. So, as you said, accents, slang, certain ways of, like expressions, things like that. And I was like maybe if I didn't link, if I didn't link my identity to the culture as much then I wouldn't have all these other problems with language, I'd just (inaudible) like sure, I'm speaking this, that does, you know if I based more of my identity on like, how I act as a person individually outside of a societal context. At the same time that's a bit impossible, to think of yourself...I feel like you'd have to be extremely, like, introverted and you know, one of those people who's like really inside their head to be able to, um, see yourself only through those lenses as opposed to what you are within a bigger context, yeah.

Interviewer: So like, because culture, you know, it's not just learning the language, it's learning the little bits of the language that are linked into the culture, because, and again please correct me if I'm wrong, it seems like, you know, all of this is so that you can find a way to show your true self, to express your identity and that, like, you know even if you learn a foreign language, you're not going to be able to do that off the bat, it's going to take time and everything. Um, that, clearly for you, you know, English and Spanish are much more tied into your identity than a possible foreign language such as French. You also mentioned Italian before as well. So for you, kind of you want to, you want to be able to show yourself, you wanna be able to show yourself. So like, I was, when I was thinking about that, I kind of connected it back to one of the first things you talked about, which was when you were, uh, when you were speaking Spanish for the first time in front of your half-sister and that, like, you were kind of nervous to show your full self, so it's kind of, it's kind of interesting that like, for you, it seems like you want to show your full self and you want to show the self that you want to show, that you don't like it, you don't want other people to make judgements on, based on what they see, you want to be able to show, to show yourself as you see yourself, but then you also have this kind of nervous moment when, when you're finally able to kind of show your full self, because not only was your half-sister, you used English but now you have English and Spanish in common, and you were gonna, you know, you were gonna expose things that you hadn't exposed

before. So it's kind of, so you've got this kind of like, I'm nervous but I still want to do this kind of thing.

D: Yeah I think, in general, I'm a very, like that's one of the first things I value, firstly in myself but also when I'm making friends, I want, I like people who are transparent and genuine and there's nothing, like, being hidden. Now in terms of why I felt like that, I think, I think I do want my sister to know how I truly am and I'm aware that if she hears me speaking Spanish she's gonna see things that she hasn't seen when I speak English, like she even pointed it out herself, she was like, you curse way more, you're way louder, you're way more, like, em, how would you say it, vulgar and stuff like that, which are not necessarily great things, I guess, but I also not entirely ashamed because like, that's who I am but I guess it's kind of, it's kind of like cursing in front of your parents, if you get me. A bit, like, it's because of the person, it's because she's my older sister and she's probably always viewed me as, you know, this little innocent girl and now, all of a sudden, she's hearing me speak like this and, I think, um, maybe that's where it was coming from. I would still have that inner desire for her to fully see me, but I think the first few times, you know we still don't really do it often so I haven't gotten used to it, um, and it's still weird. The fact that, I guess, you want it to happen doesn't mean that the process is not gonna be a bit strange.

Interviewer: Just talking about like being vulgar and cursing a lot, like even in our opinion, like, people from Latin America think people from Spain curse way more, curse a lot. Like we curse too, but there's no competition there. Like even when we say, we're like, wow. So, um, I think that's just a cultural thing. (D: My housemate's laughing.) I think it's cultural thing, though I do.

D: Yeah, I think it's just overall we're very rude, like...

Interviewer: It's not, I don't, I mean yeah you could say it's rude, I think it's, but it's kind of the openness. Like you were saying, you tend to be much more expressive. I mean, it's, but it doesn't seem, like it seems vulgar but at the same time, like, it's, if you say it enough it loses its edge, you know? It just becomes kind of very tame language and I think that's, that's what I would think. I would say that it's probably just, in the context of being in Spain, it doesn't sound like a curse, it just so happens that it's a word that in some contexts you wouldn't necessarily say it on television if you're, you know, in a political debate but people say it all the time anyway. Well we think the same, like we think the same of pretty much anyone in continental Europe, like Italians, French, lots of cursing. They're, even when they speak English, like, I've heard Italians and French people speaking English and they curse a lot in English as well, so I think it's just a...

D: Yeah, and it sounds so weird, doesn't it?

Interviewer: It's, it's it is kind of, it took me a while to get used to it. Now I'm used to it, now I'm used to it. But it took me a while to get used to just hearing like every third word be just, you know, like, I just had to like, wow, but like then I know if I understood them speaking in Italian or speaking in French, their language patterns would be the same, they'd be using the same types of language. It just so happens that it's in English and it



sounds a bit jarring because, I think you said this before that like, Irish culture and even like British culture and American culture, much more conservative than the other cultures, like the continental European cultures. I think that's more of a, like you said, a cultural thing. So, like, and then you mention as well that you kind of want English to, you want to become more comfortable in English, you want to kind of complete this circle, like. Is it gonna take anything more than time? Like do you think it's just going to be a matter of time before this happens? Do you think you'll need to put in any effort on your side? Or is it just something that you hope will happen with some time?

D: I guess, if I'm being completely honest, before talking to you I wouldn't have thought about it too much, I would just be like, sure look, we'll see what happens. Um I think after reflecting on it a bit more and realizing how, um, like going back to if I wanted to feel more comfortable I'd probably have to start accepting maybe more of, like, what could potentially be my Irish side, not even just, it's just the fact that my dad's Irish, just living here for a longer time, you know like people, when they live in a certain place, they might be like, oh but it feels like home to me, and when they start saying that I can't really relate to that yet, it doesn't feel like home at all, but maybe in the future it will, and I think for that to happen, for me to kind of, start to maybe look at the more, um, positive traits of Ireland and wanting it to kind of be a bit more of a home, I need to forget about that moment where I switched and I was like, I want nothing to do with Ireland because people are telling me I'm a liar and you know when I was talking about that and how that's kind of made me angry, and that's made me reject that Irish side of me because, like, people were trying to impose it on me and calling me a liar and this and that. I feel like I need to get over that and I need to not care what people are saying and just explore what I like and kind of, yeah, accept the culture a bit more. Em, I think I also need to learn that they can be compatible, like, being a bit more Irish doesn't make me less Spanish, you know? I feel like growing up they always ask you, like, oh do you feel more this or do you feel more, like they make you choose when in reality it shouldn't be a zero sum game, it should be like one adds to the other. So, um, yeah, I think after thinking about it more and realizing how, what's holding me back is actually the fact that I'm angry at people for saying that for me is probably not a good idea, so, I'd hope that in the future, as I accept, um, an Irish identity, or partly, it doesn't have to fully represent me, but as I accept that a bit more, I would hope to feel more comfortable in the language as well.

Interviewer: Alright, well, there was one other thing I wanted to ask that, actually I probably should have asked this before, I felt like that was a good place to end but, um, I was just curious like, when you were in school, did you ever get, because you mention, this was when you were talking about like, um, in English class, for example, at first you were used as kind of a pronunciation model, and then later, you know, you were happy that your teacher kind of just let you off the hook and let you do other work in English class, did you ever get friends who were asking you for help with their English homework? Like, did you ever get people who were like, you know, asking you to do things? So you didn't really give them help?

D: Oh, I did, yeah I didn't care about that, like, I was, I'm very, especially if they're my friends, like, I'm very happy to help them with all of that and like, I'd let anyone who wanted to sit beside me during exams to, if they wanted to copy, and like, I'd even help them copy my exam, like, yeah I never really had a problem with that. I was happy to help anybody.

Interviewer: It was more being kind of, put on stage in the middle of the class that bothered you, it wasn't like...

D: Yeah, I think no one really, especially me, I was very, I wasn't very compliant with authority, let's say. So I think no one wants to be, like, the teacher's pet in a way or something like that. And they're also kind of, by doing, it's not even just being the teacher's pet, but they're pointing you out as different as well, I guess.

Interviewer: Yeah, ok, yeah that's, oh that was the other thing I was going to ask, I'm glad you brought that up. Like, did, so you mention like here in Ireland you have these feelings, did you ever have a similar experience back home, where people kind of, they never, like, for them, you were always Spanish, like it wasn't an issue.

D: Yeah, yeah. I literally only got one comment once when I was like, 8 or something and someone, like we were arguing in the classroom or something, and they were like, oh go back to your country, and everyone in the classroom was like, what are you, like literally, you just said that because you had nothing else to say. Like there was no, do you know what I mean? No one, apart from like the usual stuff, like oh, you're so pale, and this and that, and my friends would like, you know but that's nothing really, there was never any questioning of what I was really, no.

Interviewer: There's pale people in Spain, thought. That's not a.

D: Yeah, they get made fun of as well. We're all in the same boat.

Interviewer: That's not really something to, to criticize someone over yeah. Alright, that's pretty much all I had to follow back up on...(explanation of the next steps)

### *Interview 3*

Interviewer: Anyway, um, so did you get a chance to look over the copious amounts of notes?

D: I thought it was really good because I, I was just kind of like, how is he going to put all of this together because I struggle with this when writing essays like, I have all this info but it's like how do I kind of make a structure and when I saw it I was like, wow. And I made some comments just I guess more regarding in terms of what might apply to me or not, obviously keeping in mind that it's written based on everyone, um, but I didn't, nothing jumped out that I was like, oh that would be inaccurate, it was more stuff I didn't relate to. I was like oh that must have been someone else's experiences. I, so yeah I did make notes, I have them here, let me just roll them up. But I guess it's probably, do you want to maybe ask me some stuff or would you rather I kind of read my comments?

Interviewer: Well I, I, I would like to give you the first opportunity to say whatever it is you want to say, I mean, if you have notes, if you have comments, um, like I said in the intro there, I'm interested in hearing what it is you have to say not necessarily on the things that apply to you, but also, as you just said, the things that didn't apply to you or don't apply to you or maybe didn't realize they applied to you but then reading it you said, oh wait a second, maybe there's a little bit of that as well or, I'm just, because, so right now, and again like I said on that preface as well, it's still in the process of being finalized, these are things I'm trying to work through and seeing what seems to be more relevant, more important as compared to others. You know, to be honest, a few of these, I already kind of predicted would come about, and some of my questions were aimed at getting this kind of information but the depth and the extent to which they came out depended on what all of you guys told me. And, so, and, it's, you're going to get different experiences, you're going to get different stories, everyone has their own, everyone's life is different, that's the whole thing, and trying to get everyone's perspective and everyone's point of view, trying to see what they see.

D: I wish we could do like a meet-up afterwards.

Interviewer: Unfortunately, unfortunately, ethically that's kind of hard.

D: I imagine but I was like oh, there's other people going through the same things as me. Um, one of the things I, when I read it, I was like, oh my God. When you pointed out how we keep bringing up the negative sides of our language learning and we never bother pointing out, you know I never made a positive emphasis on the fact that my English had gotten so much better. And I was like, why am I, you know, and I am generally quite a pessimistic person, but then when I read that this seems to be a common thing, I thought it was interesting. Like, why aren't we pointing out when, when we're getting better but we immediately realize when things are going downhill?

Interviewer: Or even not realize, you just kind of, you sense it or you, even if you have no proof it seemed as though, like I said there, it seemed like that expression, I feel like I don't speak as well, i feel like I'm getting rusty, even if, just because you haven't used it,

just the fact that it hasn't been practiced, it makes you feel like, I must be losing it. It's like you're expecting it, even though you have no proof, but on the other side, with the positive stuff, you're almost surprised by progress, and that seemed to be common across many people, when all of a sudden when things were clicking or things happening and you were kind of, oh wow I did that! It was almost like you were surprised at yourself, not realizing, maybe all the work that had gone into it. So I thought that that was interesting, that commonly, yeah, it just seemed as though there was, and I wouldn't, I personally wouldn't say optimistic pessimistic in that way, I just, that, I guess that um, that phenomenon, I guess you can say, was quite interesting. Oh I haven't used it, I must have lost some of it. I must have lost some.

D: It's like we're very insecure about it, I guess, or something. We're very, I guess it's something you're very afraid of losing as well because of how we see from other people how hard it is to learn a language so it's definitely something you don't want to have to redo again, but on that kind of new language thing, remember we were talking about how, would I consider maybe studying another language and it was very interesting for me to read, um, stuff from other people how that might have, how like their teachers in school might have encouraged them to learn another language or how they might have been doing it themselves. And I was reading a bit of like self-teaching yourself a language and I was, I really admire people that do that. Um, and I went back, this was actually before I even read your notes but I've been doing French on Duolingo during quarantine and stuff, and remember how I was so like, oh I haven't learned any French, my teachers were so bad, the method was so bad, but I actually can't believe how much I remember. Once I started doing all the, I've just been skipping through the levels and skipping and skipping and skipping and skipping, but I never would have thought that like if anyone would have asked me I said, oh I know two words of French, but in some way that, it really stuck in my brain, and I still think the methods we used were bad because they were very grammar-based, and I guess the teaching was still very, like, teachers would come and go and disappear for long periods of time. But maybe the fact that we kept repeating the same level year after year, um, at first I thought that was bad because I was like we're not learning anything new but now it's made me realize that maybe at least it really ingrained a particular level. Maybe we didn't go too far but maybe if we'd gone further, I would have forgotten a lot of the things whereas maybe if I'm repeating it year after year, the same kind of curriculum, it actually stuck, and I was really surprised, and it kind of really makes me want to keep trying and learn French. So it's something new for sure. Um, okay I'm going to start from the beginning. Oh yeah, that's also something I found interesting when it came to the first part being about relationships with others.

18:32 Um, because as soon as I saw family, teachers, and I think you said peers, and like my immediate thing was, oh no this is not relevant to me, but then I was like, hold on a second, I don't just learn a language out of nowhere, and the teacher side probably wouldn't really have been much in my life, and then the family side, I was like, I can't ignore that, like the sole reason I speak English is obviously because of my family, so, it was something, I just became more conscious of it. Em, especially like what you'd mentioned before, the fact that me adopting more of an Irish accent was a way to try and

get closer to like my siblings, um but then hiding it in school because I didn't want to like stand out. Um, so that was kind of like, I need to be aware of that, I think. I can't just think that the language came out of nowhere. Sorry I'm just reading through this again.

Interviewer: No, no. As you're talking, I'm taking notes because there are some things I might want to follow up on later so this is all helpful, like there's nothing here that's not going to be helpful so.

D: Yeah, it was quite relieving to see that other people also had different perceptions of self and I was very relieved when I saw how people embrace it as more as a hybrid and just decide like, oh, just embracing it more than seeing it as a curse and that's something that I think, if I want to come to like peace with not believing I have two personalities then that's something that I should probably do. Um, there's something I have here in red. Yes, so these sentences I copied them because I was like wow, this couldn't be further from the truth. So you wrote "one language context...(see file)". So I guess that's the freedom I get when I switch back to Spanish and that's the restriction that I feel in, and yeah that, all the description you made about like freedom and, kind of having more space in the language and that was, so true. You also mention authenticity, that's a big one as well. Kind of like you could feel a bit of an imposter in one and more authentic in another. Um, now in terms of how I think this was maybe more for people that learnt it in school, when you said that it gave you a sense of you as a student, like the way that you learn languages formed a view of how you saw yourself as a student, I think that was maybe more people that had learnt it in school.

Interviewer: Yeah, because again, you know, speaking, part of or one of the experiences or one of the types of experiences of becoming bilingual or becoming multilingual is, you know, formal education, formal language education, and so some of the people I did talk to did, you know, study and are still studying languages now. Um, even through college. So um, and, you know, at this point, they're at a fairly high level, they're fairly comfortable and so, um, and it tied in very much with where they're planning to take themselves, you know, with their future plans, there are people who study other languages for, I think you mentioned in our first interview maybe or maybe in the second one, that it did cross your mind to perhaps continue learning French because you think you might need it in the future. There were some students who have actually done that, they've taken on a language specifically because they see themselves or they want to get a job where they have to use that language so, yeah. So their whole reason for studying, part of them being a student is studying a language because they're preparing themselves for the future, that kind of thing.

D: Okay, yeah, that's true. I did say that and I do think that still and obviously that's the motivation.

Interviewer: For you I guess, yeah for you it's not as big or maybe it's very minimal if at all that this type of motivation, because for you, I do think for you it's more about personal, a personal thing. Like for you it's more this personal aspect and motivation to kind of, this whole thing's about motivation, like continued learning, continued using, and you know,

for you like, the way I'm kind of envisioning your story is, you know, you're Spanish but you're, I don't know if this is correct but would you consider yourself maybe a Spanish speaker of English? At this point, you're not considering yourself fully participatory. You said maybe in the future you might get there, right now you seem to be working through your own, maybe identity things and the identity that's tied into language, but not just language, national identity as well. So, um, you still seem very, like, you're Andalusian, you're Spanish, and you happen to speak English for familial reasons. And maybe at some point in the future there might be more of an internalization of the English but at this point you still feel a distance.

D: Yes, yes. Ah yeah, that was a really good, when I read that I was like, that's a very good word. It's almost like, you know, I, with, how do I put this in maybe a better form, with Spanish it's like a hug, whereas with English it's kind of like a handshake, which also ties in with cultures and everything but that's a very good way to look at it. And yeah, a Spanish speaker speaking very good English would also kind of be good. Um, where is it? Oh yeah I also thought it was very interesting that I wasn't one who was so interested in the social, political and cultural parts of the languages that we're linked (?) to and everything. Um, I don't, now I know you gave a few possible reasons, um, I think I read one that I was like that could be close and then two were different because I think they were more for people who had kind of learnt them in school and things but I think I probably don't know what...all I can say is that I became more aware of that once I left Spain, the kind of social political cultural everything, I just kind of started realizing that more when I left but I can't really pinpoint why, I guess. Um, oh I think I have it written here.

Interviewer: If I might offer a guess, I mean, one of the things you did talk about at the beginning was, I mean one of the things you first emailed me about was that, in your first email you said that you really miss speaking Spanish and this was one thing, and then you talked about trying to find people to speak Spanish with and then you thought you found someone but then you found that you really didn't have much to talk about, you didn't have much in common other than the fact that you spoke Spanish, and one of the things you mentioned about that particular person was that there seemed to be a kind of a, this kind of, maybe, you wouldn't run in the same social group if you were back home basically. And maybe like, there's that element to it as well, I don't know, you know with um, because you're attending Trinity as, I mean technically, do you have an Irish passport? Or not at all?

D: No, because I'd lose my, uh, Spanish one and

Interviewer: Oh you're not allowed dual citizenship? Oh because, I guess it's an EU thing. Because, I mean with one European passport you can go anywhere anyway so.

D: I don't know if it's an EU, because I know people who have like an Irish and British, I think it's more Spain, they do allow, if you're Spanish, you have a Spanish passport, you can get your Latin American passport, so for a Latin American country, you can have both, but that's the only countries that they allow dual citizenship with.

Interviewer: Well anyway, I mean, because you're an EU citizen anyway, you're allowed to attend Trinity as an Irish student, essentially, you're not considered an international student really, um, but you do have people coming on Erasmus, and the Erasmus group as well is, from my limited experience with the Erasmus program, that also tends to be, you know, the people who can afford it basically are the ones who get to come on Erasmus, and if you're coming to Dublin, which apparently is one of the most expensive cities, or was, or I think it still is one of the most expensive cities, now in the world I think. It's up there along with, which, I found this very interesting, and shocking really, that it's up there with New York, almost, in terms of cost of living and rent, and I'm just thinking, I mean Dublin's beautiful but there's no comparison there. It's like, you're not really getting as much for your money if you're paying the same that you'd be paying in a place like New York or I think even Paris is meant to be cheaper than Dublin at this point, which is, I mean again Dublin's a great city but it's not on the same level as some of these other cities with 10 times the population. I mean, NY has 11 million people, Dublin has what, Dublin County has like 1.5 million. You know, it's like, and that's without, everyone, now I'm sure it's less because everyone's gone home. All the people from Europe who were here working, Google, LinkedIn, Facebook, they sent all their people back home. So who's living here now?

D: No it's absolutely crazy. It's such a big problem like.

Interviewer: So I think that was part, that might be part, that might be one of the things that like clued you in to the socioeconomic thing maybe, that you didn't notice it back home but you noticed it here because the other people who, you know, you might be able to speak Spanish with, they're coming from a different, and even if it wasn't a different economic class they're still from a different social group kind of than you would have maybe run with back home, so.

D: Yeah there is this girl that I talk to a little bit more, um, she is Spanish but, and she's, I think we're just friends because she's, you know when you just know someone's a good person, so you can kind of overlook everything else, and she's just lovely, but I always remember, sometimes when she says certain things or something, I'm like, yeah, we really probably would not have been friends if we'd met in Spain. That was, very, oh I actually did write here why it might be...um, what I wrote when I read the whole like being interested in the other aspect, I wrote, "When, I guess when you're surrounded by everyone being the same, it seems easier to know who you are. However, once I moved here it seemed like understanding, sorry, because I was feeling lost in who I was, language in a way helped me understand who I am or why I do things in a certain way." That's I guess the first thing that came to my mind when I read that. So kind of using, I guess I have had of a bit of, I'm not going to say an identity crisis coming over here, but it did kind of seem to stir up things that hadn't been stirred up before and that, kind of being rooted in the language and understanding, especially understanding, um, how the language makes us act different, so you know the way we were saying like, we're more open, we express more emotions, we're this and we're that, thinking about that could have maybe given me a peace of mind and kind of being like, maybe you feel frustrated

because in English you're not able to express this and you felt freer in this because there's a cultural side to it that, you know, everything just becomes, it comes back to identity I guess. That's kind of the only thing I could. Um, yeah, I found very interesting the distinguishing both, the fact that some people have to wait to be told by an external source that the languages that they're speaking are two different languages, um, I think I was very aware of that from the start because like, in one country I speak one and in another I speak another, and one parent is from this country and they speak to me in this language and, but maybe at some point when I was very very young I maybe didn't know.

Interviewer: I think I mentioned that, like for, in families where if you have one parent speaking one language, another speaking another, you probably learn to distinguish, you learn that there's a difference earlier. But you know, if you've got, and part of that, it's also coming from my own experience where I came, you know in my household we'd speak, really depending on whether or not we were with my grandparents because my grandparents only spoke Spanish, they didn't speak English, we'd spend a lot of time at my grandparents', so then like I'd come home speaking a mix of languages because that's what, because my grandparents didn't speak English but they understood English, and then my parents, you know, they would speak to my grandparents in Spanish, then they'd speak to me in English, but then they'd also mix in some Spanish speaking to me, so I didn't realize that they were different, I mean, I think at some point my mother eventually started saying, ok, this is what you need to do here and this is what you need to do, like she had to take charge, I think she started doing it before I even went to school, to make sure I knew the difference.

D: Imagine you start speaking, throw in a bit of Spanish here and there to your teachers.

Interviewer: Well I've heard other kids, like I, this is not part of this research project but, um, I was talking to another PhD student who had a friend, and the friend's family, I guess the friend was married and it was a, one parent was Japanese I think and the other parent was, I can't remember what the other parent was, but they were speaking Japanese and English at the home, in the home, and the kid would always talk to my, my colleague, in a mix of languages, using Japanese and English, and then when my colleague wouldn't understand, the kid, she said the kid would look at her like, like she was stupid, like she couldn't understand what the kid was saying because, the kid was clearly saying something that made sense, it made sense because the kid understood both Japanese and English, and they were like mixing things in. But then obviously if you don't speak Japanese you're not going to figure out what those Japanese words and phrases are. You'll know the English parts but you won't know the Japanese parts. But the kid was looking, because the kid wasn't distinguishing between the two, just speaking all the words that the kid knew, and my colleague was kind of dumbfounded and the kid looked at her like, you know, how can you not understand me? Everyone else understands me because the parents spoke both languages, you know?

D: Oh that's gas, I would have never thought that. That's something that never. And you know what would be interesting to look into there, um, it'd be interesting to see what words or what feelings that kid chose to express in one language, you know, because



you're probably not like saying one word in Japanese, one in English, one in Japanese, it was probably like certain things, that would be interesting I guess for other people to look into. Um then the aspect, the last thing I have here is about...

Interviewer: I was just going to say, we do that, I know in my household too, we do that as well. In Spanish too there are certain words that they have meaning, and they don't translate to English, so we just use the Spanish, you know. I have a niece now, and you know my mother will look at my niece and say, *mira está enfogona'*. You know, using that, because there's no word in English that encapsulates what it means to be *enfogona'*. It's got a, you kind of know what it means in English, like, how can you explain that in English, you can't. You know it's...certain words.

D: So true. Yeah that happens to me so many times where I'm like oh, I wish you guys knew what this word means because it's so much more accurate. Oh, that's so real. That's so real. Um, I think that's kind of the end of my, yeah I saw you said about comparison with siblings which was definitely a huge thing for me probably in terms of trying to imitate them to kind of get closer to them. And definitely that my relationship with language has changed over time. I'm much more aware of it now. Um, but it's been gradual. I can't really even say that it's been a jump of once I moved here I became aware. I think I, as I, it was something I was always aware of. Um, and oh yeah when you said that we're kind of always told, oh you could pick up languages so quickly and so naturally, and that can frustrate us when we're in the process of learning. Now that I, you know I'm looking back and seeing how much I've retained from French, I'm kind of thinking maybe I was picking it up quite well but because the expectations put on me would be that after a year I'd be fluent because it's like, oh you're bilingual, you know, you're going to pick up any language. Maybe I had that high mark that obviously just can't happen and maybe I was a bit better than I thought. Yeah that's all my notes there pretty much, because the rest are just kind of saying like oh I agree with this, I agree with this, um, so, yeah.

Interviewer: That's a good way of putting it, the expectation is that because you're bilingual, you'll learn more, you know, you'll learn a language more quickly and then when you don't or when it's taking more time than you think it should or that others expect it should, you know, you, maybe that's where the frustration's coming from. That's interesting to...

D: And the truth is that maybe you did, maybe I did if like you compared it to someone else, maybe I did, but because the bar was so high where it was like, oh yeah after a year you're going to be fluent, and that wasn't met, then I would tell myself like, oh you know, there's no difference in learning language if you're, but maybe there is and I'm pretty sure there is studies that say that. I don't know, you probably know that much better.

Interviewer: I think also, like for you, I mean with vocabulary like and with Duolingo, you know, it's, you know learning the vocabulary and learning the stock phrases and things like that, that's all, I even find that kind of easy too, like when you start learning, because you know, no matter what language, this is kind of your own personal opinion but you know,

a language is a language and there are certain things that are constant across any language and one of them is vocabulary, you know, you learn the words and you kind of learn to put sentences together and things like that. But you know when you're in a conversation with someone and you're trying to use that language, there's a lot more going on up here trying to kind of put your own sentences together that aren't ready-made, you know, and you might try to, you might use some of those ready-made sentences to start but eventually you get to the point where you want to do things on your own and not rely on the stuff that you memorized, and that's where you really kind of test your knowledge, and if you don't have those opportunities, yeah, if you don't have those opportunities to practice it that way, to practice the creative aspect, then you know, you're probably going to feel that you haven't learned anything even though you've learned a lot. I think, and for you it seems like you probably know more than you think you do or you think you did, you thought you did, but at the same time you're still, uh, you know, there's still a way for you to go before you might consider yourself at that kind of an intermediate level of proficiency in French.

D: I think even that word of creative is a very good way of describing it. There is a part of it where it's like you're creating the own way you speak and how you want to express, and yeah no, that's so true, that's so true.

Interviewer: So, I mean, you brought up a couple things and towards the end you started to talk about like, you know, again relating with, relating to your siblings and things like that. I'm just wondering like, because I want to go back to like school experience, and I know your experience in school with all the different languages, you talked about in Spanish you know you'd learn kind of the, you know you did Spanish grammar in Spanish classes. And then English for you, there wasn't much for you to learn so you kind of did your own studies and things like that. Um, I'm just yeah, and with French you know you had your disappearing French teacher and things like that, so like, but did you ever compare your, like did you ever talk to your siblings about their school experience? I'm wondering, like you know, them going to school in Ireland, you going to school back in Spain, you know, the systems are different too and the way that the systems think of languages and think of foreign languages, it seems to me from what I've heard, again I've heard just a few stories about schools in Spain and then, of course saying schools in Spain is also problematic because I know each region in Spain is fairly autonomous and I'm guessing with education as well, you know there are going to be different requirements and things like that, I know that in certain, in the regions where there is a regional official language, like up in, in Cataluña you know you can learn and you're expected to learn Catalan, if you're in País Vasco, you know you're expected to learn Euskera, you know they teach these other languages, in Málaga, I'm guessing there's no regional, I mean I know there's kind of a, I've heard, it's more of a dialect, it's considered a dialect, it's not its own language outright in Andalucía. But like, from what I've heard, you don't have the opportunity to learn these other regional languages in Málaga. Like if you wanted to learn Catalan you just couldn't because there's no, there's no teacher there or anything like that.

D: I think the system was very strongly designed to discourage, it's funny now because there's a lot of political stuff like, oh are you just trying to teach too much Catalan and you know it always comes back to the more kind of right wing politics are very much like let's make everyone castellano and everything is uniform and let's get rid of the different, the folklore of the different regions and you know now there's this kind of thing of like stop teaching so much Catalan and almost that, so I would have been extremely surprised if they would offer you know people outside of that region but still from Spain to learn Catalan or Euskera, I would, I'd say they try and surpress as much as possible. Um, yeah, but, sorry I did mean to let you finish.

Interviewer: Oh no, that's alright, so there's that aspect but there's also, from what I've heard, even foreign language education, aside from English, isn't really emphasized all that much, and even English education, you said that it was very basic, it was very simple, so it seems from your experience at least that, you know, other languages, aside from castellano weren't really emphasized or like prioritized at all in education, um, and I'm just kind of wondering if you ever kind of, if for some reason, I don't know why this would be a topic of conversation, but if you've ever compared your school experience with your siblings, finding out their school experience in Ireland. Because from what I've heard in Ireland, at least now there's a big push towards foreign language education, and of course you've got that strong Irish component that, you know, outside of the school system, you love it, you hate it, there's people who don't use it even after learning it for however many years, there's people who use it or try to use it a lot, but they still have to learn it, it's still prioritized in schools, and you know there's still, you still have to learn a foreign language throughout the schools, and they're trying to, it seems that there's a bit more, it seems that there's more emphasis on foreign language education. I'm just wondering, did you ever compare, like you said, you said your sister speaks Spanish as well, she learned that in school I'm guessing, you know, and so...

D: Oh no no, that was a kind of crazy I'm 25 and I'm going to move to Spain for two years and learn Spanish. That was such a random thing. But we definitely have had conversations comparing, um, and I would think the closest comparison would be the way Irish, okay maybe not exactly but, in terms of, Irish is very much prioritized here in the sense of people want to maintain the language, they want to make sure, you know it's so important for the leaving cert and all of those things, yet the experience of everyone seems to be I know fuck all, I can't speak Irish. All my sisters say I can't speak, I don't remember anything, the way it's taught is like, and I would say that's pretty much the same in Spain. English, I think everyone has, at this point has realized you need English, especially you know if you're going to move out because economic reasons and stuff, and even in university, to graduate any degree, whether it's medicine, art, history, whatever, you need to achieve a B1 in English, so you can prove that you have, sorry B1 or B2. Could be B2 actually, they might have moved it up to B2, you have to prove a certificate in that to get your diploma, which, I get the point but at the same time, well if you can't afford to do these, anyways that's a whole separate thing. But it is prioritized and we do spend, like for example maths, we did 4 hours a week and English we would do 4 hours a week. So it's just, it's very emphasized but the result is the same, people

come out without a word of English. Like my friends who graduated secondary school and can just about say 'hello', 'how are you' and 'how much is this'. Very basic. So we always kind of compared that. When they'd, you know they'd make fun of all their Irish learning days and I'd be like ah sure that's all my friends in school with English. So it seems like education systems really fail at teaching languages from what I've, my experience and my siblings.

Interviewer: That's interesting that your sibling just wanted to move, so was it because of you? Like did...

D: Oh sorry, I should have explained that.

Interviewer: Like was it because of you? Or, you had no, like it was, it had nothing to do with you.

D: No, it was actually so funny because it was like, we've always lived separate and all of a sudden I'm 16 and my sister decides she's moving to Málaga and I was like, what? So what happened was, her mom, um, has owned a language school for years because her mom is amazing. She speaks like, this woman speaks Russian, Mandarin, Spanish, Italian, everything. Um, so my sister, first she went and did her own kind of career things, and then she kind of came back to her mom's business to kind of help her, um, I guess make it more profitable and things. And she started linking with a lot of, they started to see that there was a big market in Spain that wanted something cheaper than what was being offered in English in terms of like, exchanges, because they work on a lot of exchanges and stuff. Um, so she decided that in order for this to work out properly, she was going to have to learn Spanish and she's definitely one of those adventurers so she said what better way than to just move to the country and make sure I learn it, and she was also, there was also an element of she'd be better able to start building the contacts over there in Spain to then create, you know, merge it with her business and everything. So it was definitely a business motivated enterprise, let's call it. But yeah it was very much like, wow this is kind of destiny in a way.

Interviewer: So she did that, you were saying, she was 25, you were 16, so, there's an age gap there, so

D: Approximately, yeah. Yeah it's kind of rough ages but yeah, that kind of age gap.

Interviewer: So it wasn't really like, yeah...

D: We've always been, you know, had a good relationship, so it was, it was really cool to get to spend that time with her during that time.

Interviewer: So like, do you feel, compared, I'm just, because you know we started talking in March, that's kind of when we first, that was our first interview and even before then, you know, you were talking about how you were still coming to terms, do you feel more comfortable now speaking English and being here in Ireland? Do you find that you are finding yourself I guess? As opposed to where you were like 3, 4 months ago. Like you said that you started noticing things a little bit more, or like your progress, or your own

feeling towards your progress I guess, do you feel like you've become more comfortable being here? Because at the beginning, you know, when we first met, there was a bit of discomfort there, you know, you did seem kind of reluctant in a way, to, to kind of take on what was being pushed onto you in some way. Do you feel more comfortable or are you still...I mean obviously you're still going through it but do you notice that you feel less uncomfortable? Has time helped you? Yeah. I mean you don't have to answer now, like if it comes to you later, even though this is the last like formal interview, there's still going to be an opportunity to check, I'll have to check in with you, I'm going to send you kind of my write-up of my case study, so my case study that features you so you can kind of confirm and can add to it. I'm just curious like...

D: I guess a quick answer, like if I'm going by instinct and not overthinking, would be no, nothing has really changed. Em, I don't think I have, um, I definitely, by speaking of this, I've definitely realized how much I'm almost actively rejecting my English-speaking, Irish culture, Irish heritage side, um, I think, you know that was obviously a reaction to the response I got when I first got here about people trying to tell me what I am and like no, leave me alone, like...(inaudible). But I think talking about it also made me realize a bit how stupid it is for me to do that. Like I shouldn't be rejecting a side of me just because I got pissed off at some people. So it, I think going forward it'll be something in that I'll be more mindful towards, um, maybe wanting to learn more about like Ireland and just feeling, you know I feel like as we've kind of established it's just intrinsic, I'm not going to feel close to the language until I can feel close to the country and the culture and that side of my identity. So, yeah, talking about it, still it hasn't changed but I think like moving forward, the way in which I act, I'll be more mindful that, um, I'm programmed right now to reject it and I need to unprogram that and just embrace everything about it.

Interviewer: I'm kind of thinking of your case but I've talked to other people as well who come from, you know, families where the parents are of different nationalities and, you know, I think what you're feeling is probably similar, you know probably to a different extent obviously, but I think this feeling of kind of being, you know when you're bicultural especially, I think moreso than bilingual, you know when you're bicultural, for me it's different because I was Puerto Rican growing up in the US, so in a sense there's that kind of bicultural as well where I've grown up in a culture that is very different than the culture, the culture outside the house is very different than the culture inside the house, so I kind of have to adjust to both cultures, I have to kind of do the outside thing which is the New York American culture, and then the home thing which is much more influenced by the Puerto Rican tradition, and so there's that kind of biculturalism, but then there's also like you where you have parents coming from two different cultures, two different nationalities, um, and, and kind of the things that come along with that, you know, the things that come along with that...

D: I think the thing there is, you know, when you said bicultural, I think a problem would be that I don't feel bicultural

Interviewer: Exactly, I was just about to say that,yeah, you're much more, you're Spanish

D: I don't feel any of that, yeah,

Interviewer: You're Spanish who happens to speak English with an Irish accent, um, you know

D: So I think that kind of mixes it all up a bit because if it was kind of, like say even if I grew up in Spain but my dad was in the house and you know, I came home every evening and I don't know, he was watching hurling and this and that, I feel like that would have made it much easier to just be like, oh I'm both, that's it. But I think that whole like growing up in one and then coming here and being like, I should but I don't kind of a thing, it should be my culture but it's not, and then, yeah I, yeah.

Interviewer: So like the expectation versus the reality. So the expectation placed on you is you should understand both these cultures, but the reality is no, you've only had the experience of one, you know, so you're not really, yeah that's ok, yeah.

D: That's I think, I mean for most people that, um, say for example, children from immigrants, that's obviously something that happens, they have one culture on the outside and then another at home, and obviously that's also something hard to navigate, but at least they can say they're present in both, whereas here with me, it was kind of like expected but that wasn't really the reality because it was really just a growing up in one.

Interviewer: Almost like you kind of had these things that, like when you talked about your accent as well it was kind of like, you were surprised that it came out, you know, you didn't know where it came from and it was just all of a sudden, you just, it felt like something so unlike you, but it was coming out of you, you know, I'm sure, you mentioned that, I'm sure it was a jarring experience and, so you did say, you know, when you were back in school that there were times that you tried to put on like an extra Spanish accent, kind of. You did that.

D: Yeah, I think it was, yeah, it was always, um, I guess if we put it on a scale like very very young, my English was with a Spanish accent, then gradually it started neutralizing, so it wouldn't be an Irish one but you wouldn't straightaway maybe tell, but that was already too much for the classroom, if you get me. (inaudible) was already like, oh she's showing off, um, regardless of people, which is funny when you think about it because it's like, if you know that person has a parent, like you'd kind of just expect them to speak differently to you but it was still, um, a matter of like, oh, there's (name) showing off or whatever, so I even, that neutrality turned into an adding a little hint of sounding like everyone else.

Interviewer: And then like, you mentioned coming to Ireland is when you started kind of just questioning, or not questioning, you felt that shock, kind of, you know, you felt kind of jarred. I just wrote a note that it feels like or it seems like, you know back when you're back home, you never really questioned anything, you didn't question who you were, you know, you didn't have a need to question it, but then when you came to Ireland, you still, you didn't question it but other people to question it, and it forced you to react kind of. You had to, and that reaction is the thing that you're still working with now. It's that you

still have, and like I said before, it's this, the tension between I guess the expectations, and not even expectations you put on yourself but the expectations that other people are placing on you, and what you feel is, and what your reality is, and that's still something that, you say you're working now, like do you ever, I guess it wouldn't be an issue that you know you'd come across at work, I'm sure you don't, you mentioned you work with customers, I don't think the customers are coming up and asking you where you're from or anything like that. I'm sure they probably assume you're just from up the road or something like.

D: Yeah, it has happened that, yeah, thankfully because it's not a Dublin accent then, if they want to ask stuff about Dublin I kind of, they probably can hear quickly that I'm not. I haven't really, um, I have had situations alright where, so my manager, she's from Croatia but she's lived here for ages, so there's been a lot of situations when maybe like someone's asked something and I just turn my head and look at her and then she answers because I just kind of don't know but that is also kind of more Dublin-based things as well, so. It happened more in my previous job, I was working in a restaurant and I had actually, it was often Americans would kind of comment on, um, I, you've probably noticed a lot of the service workers in Dublin are immigrants, whether it's, um, especially like in restaurants or, basically just harder jobs that Irish people I guess don't want to do. Um, so I did have a few occasions where, you know, they commented oh we're finally being served by an actual Irish person in Ireland. Um, I wouldn't saying anything because me, knowing me if I started that conversation, God knows where that would go, um, but I just found it ironic. I was like, that's funny because a lot of these immigrants are probably more Irish than me. So yeah it did arise there but not really at my current job because we don't have tourists really or anything.

Interviewer: Did you ever like, in your previous job or in your job now, did you ever just, you heard, maybe a customer speaking Spanish and then you went over to help them, and you went back and you spoke in Spanish with them as well? People get surprised...

D: No I actually...

Interviewer: Oh you haven't. Do you avoid those situations?

D: I actively, yes, I actively avoided it, but nothing to do with the language, just completely to do with how we as Spanish people are. If I spoke to them in Spanish, you bet every time I would walk past that table they would ask me for something, they'd maybe be like, or even just comment, like ay la servilleta this or like, I'd be like look, I'm under pressure here, I don't have time to make conversation and Spanish people as customers are much easier to deal with when they can't speak English properly, so, but yeah, yeah when it was very relaxed and I knew I wasn't going to be under a lot of stress maybe I would kind of speak, you know, would say like, would start speaking Spanish and then we'd kind of get into conversation, but generally I avoided it.

Interviewer: I'm sure, also, even if you spoke English with a Spanish accent, they'd probably be able to pick up on that and they'd still be bothering you. Like I think maybe

your accent maybe saved you in those situations as well, speaking English with an Irish accent, so.

D: And the looks as well, yeah, it's very, and I won't like, sometimes as well, um, you know when some people look particularly like they're going to say something, so I was like I'm going to keep this to myself just so I can kind of spy on what they're saying about us and um, yeah it's, I never caught a customer. It has happened though in the gym, in Trinity gym actually, um, I was fixing my hair one day and there was two Spanish girls and I was wearing a pair of kind of plaid trousers and one commented to the other, she said like oh, imagine wearing, she said it in Spanish, she said oh imagine wearing those trousers, and I turned to her in Spanish, oh are you, I said to her in Spanish, oh are you saying that they look uncomfortable? The girl, no, I actually can't even describe her face, she, her jaw dropped like. She just kind of mumbled something like oh yeah, something like that and they just got out of there. So that was a beautiful experience.

Interviewer: That's always fun. That's enjoyable as well. So for you, I'm just kind of jumping off to something else, you mention, you never really I guess were in a situation where you were kind of mixing languages, code-switching, that kind of thing. For you, it was always either an English-only environment or a Spanish-only environment kind of. You never had that issue. Ok. Even now too? You don't find that, like, uh, that like you can't remember the English word so you'll throw the Spanish word into conversation and...

D: Oh I'll throw it in, knowing well, like I'll kind of throw it in just to let my friends know that I'm trying to say a word that I can't come up with and obviously, they won't understand, it's more a way of, when they hear me say something in Spanish, they're like, ok she's trying to say, and you know it's kind of, it doesn't really, it's just kind of a way of saying I don't know how to say that in English. But, yeah that's about, I mean with, um, one of my Spanish friends, she, you know the way a lot of, let's call it like meme culture or certain phrases that we only use on the internet and these, they're in English and maybe we'd throw that in there, but that's more of like an internet thing I guess. We wouldn't speak like that in real life.

Interviewer: How about like, I don't even know if this is relevant, I'm just curious because I find this too, like when typing, not necessarily texting, but when typing, do you find that you misspell a lot or you kind of, your fingers don't go where you want them to go? Do you ever notice that? (No.) Because I've noticed that, when I'm trying to, like when I'm working between languages, when I'm switching languages, I might have to, because I teach some Spanish as well so I might have to like plan a lesson in Spanish and put all my materials together in Spanish, and when I switch over to doing some English stuff, my fingers will continue doing like Spanish things, or like I'll forget to switch my keyboard, like because I have to switch, you know you switch the keyboard settings, like when you have to use the ñ because the ñ doesn't exist on the English keyboard, you have to switch it off.

D: I can't believe I bought an Irish laptop, I'm so annoyed that I don't have the ñ, but...



Interviewer: But like, you can set up the, if it's Windows, I don't know about Apple, but I know with Windows you can set the settings so that it goes back to, even though it's not showing on the keyboard, like it'll do the Spanish keyboard. Yeah like you can do keyboard settings, like on Microsoft Windows. So you can do that. But like I'll forget that, because then I'll be typing and I'll forget that I've switched to Spanish and then I'll need a semi-colon and then I'll put an ñ there by mistake or vice-versa, I'll put a semicolon where I need an ñ and then, so like I find that, for me that's something that's also kind of a thing. But I don't know if you noticed it or if it was an issue for you. I was just curious if that was a thing.

D: No, not really but maybe it's because I don't have to switch. I kind of do when I'm texting though, you know I'll be on WhatsApp and one message I'll be replying in Spanish and then the next chat I'll be replying in, but I haven't noticed that yet, no. Maybe in the future it might happen.

Interviewer: With texting I don't find it, because with texting the, it's easy enough to see. I just use the Spanish keyboard because all the characters are there anyway. But like with typing, because I have to switch keyboards with typing, and um, and I'll find that, because the keys are in different places, too, so then, I was used to the English keyboard but then because I was doing a lot of Spanish stuff, I switched to the Spanish keyboard and I memorized where everything was on the Spanish keyboard. But then, when I switch to the English one, my fingers will go and then like, you know how, I can't remember, like the star is on the 8, but in the Spanish keyboard it's over by the P or something and then, so you have to like, it's in different locations, there's different characters in different locations, so I often have to remind myself and kind of remind myself where the keys are when I'm typing. With texting it's not a problem. I was just, yeah.

D: Ah, that's because I don't switch my keyboards then.

Interviewer: Yeah no, oh yeah the other thing, I just wanted to kind of confirm this with you, because you said that you're in law and political science, right? Yeah. So, there's no, for you there's no requirement for studying Irish? Because I know in Ireland, I thought if you're going to practice law don't you need Irish proficiency? I guess not, because you seem very surprised by this, so I'm guessing. I've talked to other people and I mean no one has ever mentioned an Irish requirement to study law at Trinity, but I know, I've heard that if you're going to practice law, that there's an expectation that you'll be able to do it in Irish as well because, you know, here, if you provide certain services, you're expected to be able to provide them in Irish as well. And so like law...

D: That just triggered another memory, um, because there's this kind of joke, right, where, um, if you don't want to be arrested or something, you could tell the cops like, read me my rights in Irish, and then it's like if they can't then they can't arrest you, but you know it's kind of more of like, oh what do you call it, a myth or something. Obviously in real life that's not going to happen so maybe it's what you're saying, it's more of uh, expectations that people that work in very public charges or for the public and stuff. I could be wrong now but I'd be very scared if they did because I have no idea of Irish.

Interviewer: They would have told, I would hope they would have told you like during orientation or something that, or like on your course schedule because you're, you're going into your second year now? Or you're going into third year?

D: I'm going into third year now. Now, I do know that, um, Irish is a requirement for the leaving cert, you'd have to get an exception, but as far as law goes I had no idea of this at all.

Interviewer: I mean, I know, like, I've talked to some Erasmus students who have come over to study law, and obviously if you're Erasmus coming from like Germany you're not going to be expected to study Irish for a year. But I was just curious if you're studying law from the beginning here at Trinity, if there was any kind of requirement. But I also guess it would depend on what kind of law, like if you're, or even where you're hoping to be. I guess if you're intending to be I guess, I'm not completely familiar with the terminology is it a barrister, the one who actually gets up and is in the court, I guess that person would be...

D: I don't think so. My housemate is, um, training, she's doing the course that you do before training for barrister, and she, you know, she's kind of made that joke of like I did Irish in school but I have no clue. Um and she hasn't mentioned anything about having, that's so, I have to look into this now but I really have never heard anything like that.

Interviewer: Alright. Well if you haven't heard it I'm guessing it's probably not a requirement. (I hope.) I would think that they would tell you. By your third year, you'd think that someone might have told you, oh by the way you know, you might have to do a couple of modules in Irish or something. But if you're going to do law in Irish, you're going to need more than a couple of modules, I mean, that's um, yeah. Alright, I was just curious if that was, because that would be another issue, a language thing for you, but if that's not something that you've come across then, it's not something that you really have to worry about then. Yeah. No I mean, like listening to you there were a couple like, actually some things that, I don't know if I, I might even have to cite you because you made some very interesting observations about your own experience but also the experiences you noticed other people having. The whole thing, like what you said about the fear, like I wrote this down, being a bilingual you have expectations of learning the language, or learning languages more quickly or maybe more efficiently than other people, than maybe monolinguals, and maybe that kind of causes that kind of frustration or feeling of urgency, like you have to get to where everyone else thinks you're going to be. Um, but also that thing about the fear of losing it because you know how hard it was to get there but also that you've seen other people lose it and maybe there's a, I don't know maybe like for bilinguals it means more to lose a language.

D: Oh, sorry, sorry, I think what I meant there was that you see people in, you know, because like say in Spain, people are learning English and me, just seeing how much they're struggling to get it into them and how much they need it and it's such a kind of a problem that follows them for their whole life that you, you kind of realize like oh, this is really, this is a gift from God, you know, um, let's make sure we keep it. That's, I think

that's kind of what I meant more, but you're definitely right in saying that you know if I were to lose, um, let's like, it's pretty obvious that it would really hurt me to lose my Spanish but even if I were to say move back and lose a bit of my English, like that would be very hard and it's because you know, what we've been saying, how tied it is to you. Now I don't know if that's coming, if that would be the same as if I'd learnt it. I guess if I'd learnt it it would be more of a thing of like I've worked so hard to get to this level, um, you know I can't go back more than that connection with, oh this language is part of my family on this or this language is this side of my culture so I guess in both scenarios, whether it's because of family reasons or you actually took the time to learn it your self, it's, I think it's very, it hurts a lot more to lose a language than say, lose flexibility or something else.

Interviewer: I feel like there was one other thing I wanted to quickly ask, I'm trying to remember what it was. Oh yeah, I mean, because again one of the things I'm curious about, because other people have mentioned it too, you know, the whole thing about learning a language in school, again for you this wasn't as big an issue but I'm just wondering like if, you know, what kind, you know if you're going back to English and, you know, if you had had an effective English class when you were back at school, in your head what would that have looked like? What would have been a good English class for someone like you? Do you have any idea? Like how, like what kind of stuff would you have liked to learn? Knowing that you already knew more than most of the people your age, you know?

D: Yeah, I think what would have been really helpful, or the way they could have built on it and it's something that I'm working on now, is how to write not necessarily formally but just express yourself properly while you're writing. So I'm really struggling now with academic English, um, with writing structure, you know having a nice structure for an essay, having enough adjectives to express emotions or, um, you know so, I really am, I'm trying to read novels to see if that type of writing, I can kind of develop that so I think it would have been helpful to do maybe literature, poetry, those more kind of creative styles of writing where you can learn much more detailed vocabulary that really expresses things more concretely. Sometimes I kind of wonder like, when I say oh English isn't as expressive, I think there is a bit of truth to that but I also think a percentage of it is I don't know all the right words, so I think that would have been helpful, if we, if I could have maybe you know, dug into more literature, more extensive vocabulary and stuff like that, because that is still a comment I get back on my essays like I need to improve my English and obviously what they mean with that is academic English and structuring things. Um, I always run my essays through with my dad because a lot of the structures I use in creating sentences are from the Spanish language. So you know the way we have so many subordinadas, whereas that in English looks so bad so I really had to keep reminding myself when I'm writing, I'm like, make them short, you have your verb, your this, your that, don't start putting commas and including you know all of these because that's not as common or it gets confusing so, yeah. That would have been helpful.

Interviewer: Now you saying that, I don't think I do it frequently but I do do that where I'll have very long sentences that I notice myself and just say, well I have to break this up because like, you know, because I've gotten that comment as well that this sentence is too long, and then I'll look at it and say like, oh wait, this sentence is a paragraph and I've seen, you notice, there are some places, there are people, maybe it is a Spanish thing too because you said, and when you read books in Spanish, like Latin American authors, I'll read Marquez, García Marquez and he writes long long passages and the sentences are just like pages long, and maybe that is a thing. I didn't realize that that was from there. Yeah.

D: Yeah, I think I realized it from the trauma of doing grammar and how you know they try and come up with sentences that would have like four subordinadas within the big one, um, you know the way we have to like divide it up like that and at the same time you'd read it and it's like, and they actually took it out of a book or out of something, um, but not even just the length but also the order in which I say things, sometimes I seem to follow the Spanish order of how you build a sentence so I have noticed that as well and that's probably from not reading as much in English.

Interviewer: That's funny because when I'm listening to you talk, it doesn't sound like, and then when I've transcribed your, you know, I've transcribed these scripts and everything, these dialogues and, you know, I mean when you're talking, you know, you don't always speak in very short kind of direct sentences or anything like that, but when you're saying that order or word order, I haven't really heard anything that sounds you know odd so

D: Maybe it's more when I write or maybe I'm just being paranoid.

Interviewer: No, like I don't know, I haven't heard, I haven't really heard anything like that, I mean, this has nothing to do with this research I'm just letting you know that I don't sense, at least while I'm listening to you talk, I don't notice kind of, like an awkward syntax or awkward word order, um.

D: Yeah I think it might just be when I write, um, and in fairness it has just been a couple of times where it's been pointed out, you know, it's not a systematic thing, thank God.

Interviewer: Okay, um, yeah I mean like, so again this is just an opportunity to listen to what you had to say, you gave me a lot of good stuff as well. Um, yeah I don't really have anything else to, I'm looking over the notes I have prepared but I think we kind of covered everything I was hoping to cover, um.

D: Yeah I'm just kind of looking through the notes here and it's all just kind of agreeing with what you sent us, I think.

Interviewer: And you still, you still miss like the, because you're saying you're going to try and go home in August hopefully, so you're still missing the Spanish speaking environment where you can just go anywhere and just hear, like you still, has this kind of, if the virus hadn't kind of thrown, gotten, or put everything in this situation, um, you

would have been home by now, no? Like you would have gone home at the beginning of summer?

D: Yeah. If, my initial plan was, I'd gotten an internship in June for like the month of June, so my plan was to do the internship in June and then quit, well I would have quit my job before because they wouldn't have let me go for a month, so I would have done the internship and then spend July, August, and as much as possible of September in Spain because, yeah I think I do still have that mentality that fun and summer and holidays is there, that I can't, you know, as I said I haven't really built, you know there's no reason why I would rather stay here than go over there and (Everyone else goes over there).

Interviewer: Everyone here goes there so yeah, why would you stay?

D: Yeah, yeah. And I definitely, I've been reading a bit of García Lorca, I don't know if (Yeah I know), um, and just that kind of, that nostalgia and just the, just remembering things, even just the stupidest stuff, like the bringing, you know someone brought the little thing, what do you call it, the little like refrigerator to the beach but they've forgotten to freeze the icepack so now it doesn't even work. Those stupid things, all of a sudden you're like, I could write a whole poem about this. So yeah, the dream was to go back but, um, you know and I obviously, if it wasn't for the virus, losing a job doesn't really matter because there's so many jobs in Dublin but now it's kind of like you have to really be responsible because you don't, you know, I don't know if even this place will stay open or not so. Much riskier.

Interviewer: I think that's enough for today.

...

D: Sorry, just because I definitely can't come up with an answer but the first thing that came to my head there, in, when we were talking about French and how then you moved on to like how different it is to then create your own sentences, maybe as, um, being say bilingual, we value so much the use of the language versus the actual like, oh you formed sentences but this is the way the verbs are made, you know we see it as so much that this is how I use it, that for me a language that I wouldn't be able to use with my friends, with my family, you know if I were to move to France it's almost like, we feel like, well this is for nothing, and you kind of lose that motivation, whereas maybe for people who are used to like, they see that degree of like, oh first I learn this, then I'll learn this, then I'll become confident in that and I'll be able to express myself like that, whereas we maybe start like, well if I can't use it, there's no, I'm not getting anywhere with it, you know, it's always like, it's not about the language but it's about the purpose of the language, if that makes sense, I think.

## Participant A

### *Interview 1*

Interviewer: So, just to kind of go over, I want to review the basic information that you gave me. Um, on the survey. So you say you were born in Asturias, actually

A: Yeah.

Interviewer: But then, um, I guess you moved here. At what age, I'm guessing...but you did all of your schooling here.

A: Yeah, so my parents, like, already lived in Ireland, but then my mom just went to Spain, like, so that I would be born in Spain.

Interviewer: And then she came back.

A: Yeah, so I was born in May, so like, we spent the summer in Spain, like the summer holidays, my parents are teachers, and then we came back in like September. So, you know, I spent the first three months of my life in Spain, but...

Interviewer: But, I mean, but your life has been spent here.

A: Yeah

Interviewer: It was just, you were born there.

A: Yeah, literally.

Interviewer: But then, I guess, but you mention also that you've been speaking Spanish and English, they're both native languages of yours, so is your house kind of a bilingual household? Do you like, switch back and forth between the languages? Or...

A: Yeah, we pretty much switch, definitely in like one conversation and sometimes in like the same sentence. It's very like Spanglish, it's very mixed.

Interviewer: And then, so you studied French starting in primary school, and Irish, of course, since you were here, it's compulsory. And then you've been doing some Italian on your own. Any more than that? Because I only had room for 5, do you have any experience learning other languages? Or...is it those 5 basically are the, the ones that...

A: I did German for a few months very briefly when I was, I think I was 11. Em, but just because of timing, like the classes were on at the same time as something else so I just had to quit. I mean, I would have liked to continue but I've never got back into it.

Interviewer: Can I ask, like, this is also kind of personally interesting to me because, you saw my name, ---, so like, I grew up in a bilingual household as well, back in NY, and so, I'm just wondering, what was it like? What is it like? Kind of growing up in that environment. Is it something you enjoy? Or like, how...?

A: Em, I've never really thought about if it's enjoyable. It's definitely beneficial, em, for learning other languages. I think, sometimes it can be like, not an issue but kind of like, like, sometimes I know the word in Spanish, and I know it in English as well, but I can't think of either because of like, or, you know, when we were small, em, we used to mix them more because you know, when we were like 2 or 3 we couldn't necessarily distinguish between them, we just knew that both were understood, kind of. So we would say things like, like "let's go to the beach and look for cangrejos" or something, just mix it, and then we mightn't necessarily associate the word cangrejo with the word crab, kind of. Obviously now I'm older so yeah, I know. But I think when we were younger that mightn't've been the case. Em, it's obviously beneficial when you're learning another language, especially something like French or Italian where the grammar is very similar to Spanish. Or, um, yeah sometimes as well, like if you're reading something in French and there are words you've never seen before, it's kind of fun to be able to guess what they are based on things.

Interviewer: Because they're similar, they look similar. So both your parents speak both English and Spanish, right?

A: Em, yeah. My dad's Spanish isn't amazing but he can speak it. So my mom is Spanish and my dad is Irish, but my mom studied English in college. Like that was her, so she's like completely fluent. Em.

Interviewer: But he can get along well enough in Spanish.

A: Yeah.

Interviewer: So then, alright, and then, so you started studying Irish in primary school. Irish first and then later French, still in primary school. Was, and you took them both up through your leaving cert right?

A: Yeah.

Interviewer: So okay, so, um, so then how about learning French? You mention that like, it was kind of fun, and you know, very helpful to be able to kind of guess the word because it was similar to the Spanish. So what was, can you tell me a little bit more about what it was like learning French? In primary school, like how much of it did you actually get in primary school? Did it kind of kick up later on?

A: Yeah, it's kind of, it's kind of a funny story. So we had, we started French, it was compulsory for everybody from fourth class onwards. Fourth class is like, age 9, 10. Em, and we had it once a week on a Monday, for like, 30 minutes. And basically this, like, former nun came in and like taught it to us, because she had lived in France or something. So the classes themselves weren't very well structured, like they weren't great. And you know, because it was compulsory, there were a lot of people there who didn't want to be there. And so, it was kind of a matter of like, the general attitude towards the class was like "oh, I don't want to do this." But I actually enjoyed the language part, as opposed to the class part. So I knew that, you know, that I wanted to continue even if it wasn't like in this way. Like I wanted to do French anyway. Em, so in

terms of how much I learnt, we did like, very basics, as I said. We did maybe like, the most, the four most common irregular verbs. We didn't learn how, like, we didn't learn how to conjugate regular verbs or anything, we just learnt to be, to have, to go. And we learnt some vocab, but like vocab lists which I don't like doing in general, because I don't think it's...so yeah, it was very, like, forced kind of. So I didn't enjoy that. And I actually didn't like the way French sounded, but I think it was because we were being taught by someone who was Irish who had lived in France, and it wasn't like, it just didn't seem that we were being taught properly or something. So, in that sense, I, em, I just wasn't too keen on it, but I knew that in the future, if the circumstances were different, I would like it. Like it wasn't the language that I didn't like, it was more the way we were taught it.

Interviewer: Because you mention, like, when, because part of the survey was describing a language and you chose French and you said now, it sounds like music to your ears, so I guess at that point, like that teacher specifically, or that experience didn't get that. And then writing, you say, like consciously trying to sound eloquent, so there's, this came later. Was it, again, so you're, so that was primary school, and when you got to secondary school, was your teacher, were your teachers more, did you have native speaking teachers? Or did you have again, like Irish teachers who had lived there perhaps, or studied the language?

A: All of my teachers, I think, were Irish, yeah, and then we had, like, a language assistant, em. I've just finished secondary school, but last year we had a language assistant from Brittany and she was like, we had extra classes with her and stuff, but, yeah, no, they were Irish, but I just feel like, because they had studied French in college, they were more able to teach it in a structured manner, instead of teaching us random words and stuff. Em, yeah.

Interviewer: So then, so it became more enjoyable, when you got to that level, and had those teachers teaching you.

A: Yeah, it was just more practical. Not even practical in the sense that it wasn't theory, but practical in the sense that, like, they know the way language should be taught, or they know, maybe not should be taught, but they know what's effective, so that was just more comforting for me to know that, or more reassuring.

Interviewer: So, they, did they do vocab lists as well? Or, not so much?

A: Not so much. We used a lot of, em, quizlet, I don't know if you know quizlet. Yeah. So we did that a lot, or like games for vocab, as opposed to like, memorizing lists and then having tests, which I didn't think was useful. Em, the grammar, I mean the grammar, a lot of the stuff you usually have to learn, but I think they made it clear what you had to learn and what actually made sense in how you could learn something and then apply it to something else.

Interviewer: And you said the teaching assistant was from Brittany.

A: Uh, yeah, I think so.



Interviewer: Because they have their own, like, minority language as well.

A: Breton, yeah, em

Interviewer: Never brought that into the class?

A: I don't think so. No, because we, a lot of us, well, I'm super into languages. Like I'm studying languages now in college. But a lot of us just wanted to, em, like, you know, do well in our leaving cert. So, everyone was kind of focused on just doing either the bare minimum or doing, you know, enough to succeed in the exam. But not really interested in like, regional languages or dialects. Yeah.

Interviewer: So then, this is, it sounds like quite a positive experience with French. How did it compare with the Irish learning then? Were the methods similar?

A: (Laugh) No, not at all. For Irish, what they do is they, we have for leaving cert for example, we have to study five poems and five pieces of prose. So they're either, actually no, one film and then four either short stories or extracts. And you just memorize essays on them. And then you write an essay on the day about a topic that you've memorized essays for, because they don't teach grammar properly, because it's, you know, it's not as methodical as other languages. So they can't necessarily teach you a tense and then you apply that to other things because every verb is so irregular that like...so it just wasn't as, there wasn't as much a focus as teaching, on teaching the language as much as passing the exam. Which I, I mean, if you're interested in the language, which I am, it was fine because you could learn the language through the literature. But if you didn't like the language you didn't need to know how to speak Irish to do well in the exam, which I don't agree with.

Interviewer: Like you, so, the, so your ability in Irish has no real relationship with your performance in the exam. Like, your real ability in Irish, to be able to go out in the street and use it, if needed. It's not as indicative your possible performance on this exam.

A: Kind of. I'm trying to think. For the modern languages, the leaving cert exam, there's an oral component which is worth 25%, but for Irish the oral exam is worth 40% of the overall mark. Em, but as I said, part of the oral exam is learning off these picture series. There's twenty of them and each of them has six pictures, and you basically learn off how to describe them. But everybody in the whole country memorizes those sentences a year in advance and says them, and that's worth like, 10% of the oral. But like the idea is that you're looking at it and making up the sentences and describing what you see, but everyone learns it off in advance. You know? There is a conversational element which is obviously more, em, spontaneous I guess, but you can still guess what they're going to ask you.

Interviewer: And then, kind of, plan ahead. And prepare. I think I've seen a couple videos, there's that comedy troupe, Foil Arms and Hog, and they have a couple of these weird little, like, you know, the leaving cert Irish kind of parodies and things like that, so, um. So it's mostly, it's directed specifically for the leaving cert. It's not really...so, compared to

the French, do you feel like the French instruction was more geared towards getting you to use the language rather than Irish.

A: Yeah, definitely. Or at least it gives us that, like, option, kind of. Even if they know that not everybody's going to speak French outside school, like it encourages us to, you know, form our own opinions in French and how to say certain things that you can then, you know, use in several situations as opposed to learning off a picture series about someone's pipes in the attic breaking and then, like, it's just not.

Interviewer: So then you, did you kind of supplement your own Irish learning because you felt that it was lacking, like what you were getting in school was lacking? What did you do? So you read, so you mention that it's possible to kind of approach it or get into it or kind of engage it through the literature if you're interested in that. Was that one of the ways that you tried to supplement or complement your Irish learning? By reading more?

A: I think what I did was kind of read things more closely. So in our textbook there would have, you know, descriptions of the poem we'd just read or whatever. And I would, like, go through it, look at every word, and then in Irish there are loads of cases where you have, genitive cases or possessive cases, where you have to add letters or take away letters, or make a word slender or broad or whatever, and I would like, look at the word and ask myself, like, okay, why is it this way and not, you know, the root word? I would always have questions for my teachers about like, specific grammatical things that they wouldn't explain to us because as far as they were concerned it was too complicated to explain, so they were like, just learn it.

Interviewer: Why do you think you wanted to go beyond like, was there something about Irish that kind of, just pushed you into trying to learn more than what the school was giving you? Do you know? Or do you, was it just something that kind of sparked one year and you just, kind of, rode that wave? Like, do you have any idea why?

A: I think I've always been like, a perfectionist, especially when it comes to languages and speaking correctly as much as I can. Em, so I remember even in primary school, if there ever mistakes in textbooks, I'd be like, why is this like this? Or, you know, I was very sort of, focused on words being correct, especially in like, other languages because if you, if it's incorrect you're going to learn it incorrectly and then you're going to use it incorrectly. So it was more trying to be as precise as possible. I think that's what caused me to try and learn things more accurately.

Interviewer: So, would you, with Spanish though, you haven't really learned Spanish, oh you did, it says you, you, started learning. So you've been studying, oh though because you're studying Spanish now.

A: Just now, because I want to be a Spanish teacher so. French and Spanish teacher.

Interviewer: Oh alright. And you can do, here you can teach two subjects, right? Is that like if you're...

A: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay, um. But before this year, then you didn't do any formal education in Spanish, like through primary school, secondary school, it was always,

A: No.

Interviewer: But you've had it at home, obviously.

A: Yeah. I did my exams in, because you don't have to take the class to do the exam, so I did the exam just because I knew that it would be you know, an easy, well it's called an H1 but like an easy A basically. Em, you know, and I didn't really have to prepare for that, I just kind of went in and did it.

Interviewer: Did you, did, kind of, your mother teach you at home as well? Or like, because you mention that you had this interest in being correct, do you find that you do the same thing with Spanish and English? Are you, like, really, like, are you really focused in on accuracy?

A: Yeah, very much so. My mother is always actually, like, em, complaining

Interviewer: Well she's an English teacher...

A: She's, she's a Spanish teacher, actually, in secondary school. But em, she's always complaining because she's like, she's saying that she's the one who's Spanish and she's the one who's a Spanish teacher but sometimes, because of her dialect, or because of other reasons, she says things that are like, not technically correct and like, no, that's incorrect. She'll be saying it this way and she's always like, you know, annoyed at that. But em, she always has answers to my grammatical questions, which I used to ask a lot when I was younger, em, now I'm obviously in Spanish grammar classes in college, so I don't necessarily have to ask her. But em, I guess I mostly learned grammar from speaking rather than asking her. Some things that are more difficult I probably would ask her. But, yeah.

Interviewer: Like here when you study Spanish then, this is, this is only kind of partially related to this interview, just, when you do like, Spanish grammar and stuff like that, is it, it's European Spanish, right? They don't really, do they go into the different varieties? Or is it focused more on like, what you'd hear in Spain, for example.

A: Um, yeah it's focused on Castellano as opposed to Español, like as a, yeah, I would say.

Interviewer: And the others in the, in the, are they, so the others that are in this course would have, kind of, studied Spanish in secondary school and come through, and did their leaving cert and everything. You didn't have to do that but they kind of had that different, a different path into this.

A: Yeah, so they've had other Spanish teachers in the past whereas I've never had another Spanish teacher apart from the ones we have now.

Interviewer: What do you think of the Spanish teachers here?

A: Very good, actually.

Interviewer: They're good?

A: Yeah. They're all Spanish, so.

Interviewer: Yeah, I sometimes walk around on the fourth floor and I hear them talking on the, yeah that's good to hear. Um and, and you're doing French as well. Are the French teachers here also mostly French?

A: Not as much, em, our lectures for French are mostly Irish or British. Em, all of the language assistants are obviously French but for my tutorials, I mean for my grammar tutorial, and my literature one, and my, what's the other one? French and Francophone cultures, like he's Scottish, you know? So, that's fine, but, it's just, like it's, I don't know. I'm not saying their French is incorrect because it isn't it's fine, it's just, if it's a French person they probably have a better insight into nuances and stuff like that.

Interviewer: So then with Italian then, are you still, you're still kind of doing Italian but it's not, like, a priority right now.

A: No, it's very on and off. Em, last year as I said I had my leaving cert, which is a huge set of exams, so I kind of had to leave it for a year, and I wanted to get back into it this year, and then it was January and now it's September, so I'll see, but probably over the summer I'll get back into it. Em, vocab is kind of the thing I want to focus on more than grammar, because the grammar I kind of have learnt over the years. But it's just a matter of keeping my vocabulary up. And not just, you know, speaking Spanish with an Italian accent, because that doesn't, that doesn't really fly.

Interviewer: It goes both ways, because there's, like my mother had learned Italian as well, and she was told by her teacher that the best and worst students of Italian are Spanish speakers because they end up doing exactly what you said. And I think it, the opposite is true as well, because I'm doing a bit of teaching here as well in our modules for Spanish, and I have an Italian student and she's always doing kind of the same thing. Kind of saying things with the Italian accent.

A: Yeah, so like the "ci" instead of the "ci" (th) and that kind of thing. Yeah my mom has some Italian students and yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah so it's a, that's a fun exchange there. Um, actually you answered one of the questions I had that I was really interested in finding out but you already answered that. Talking about accuracy and things like that. Um, Can I ask you, like, I was interested also because of your name. I mean it's clearly, you've put both surnames. Like have, did you ever have any kinds of issues or anything like that in your schooling because of your name? Like, I'm just, like, do you remember anything like that? Or not so much?

A: Not really. I mean in primary school, on like the register and everything, my name was down as -- (no Spanish surname) just because, that's just the way it was. I don't think there was, like, anyway. And then in secondary school, we, like, my parents had to send in a copy of my birth certificate, like when they registered, and they sent in a copy and on my birth certificate it says --- (full name) because I was born in Spain and that's the way

they do it, like, father's name first. Em, but then on the system for a few years it just said --, because I think with most people, they just took one surname. And then a few years ago, I was like, wait why don't, aren't both surnames on there? And so I inquired and they just changed it so then, everyone just called me, referred to me by both names. And then on lists it had both of my surnames.

Interviewer: And registered here you're under both surnames. Like at Trinity.

A: Yeah.

Interviewer: Do you prefer one or you just like the whole thing?

A: I like the whole thing.

Interviewer: Are you very happy to have both of them there?

A: Yeah, because I think it shows that like, I mean -- is very Irish, -- is very Spanish. So I just, I just think I shouldn't have to choose one over the other. I think it's good to have both.

Interviewer: With your, with your first name, then, do you have a preferred pronunciation? Because you can say it in a couple different ways depending on the accent. You know, it's -- or -- or like --, or like, it depends yeah like.

A: Yeah, so my mom calls me -- and then my dad calls me -- (different pronunciation), so it's the same apart from the "r", really, the actual, like, stresses are the same. My friends...

Interviewer: I guess -- would be like an American way of saying it.

A: Yeah yeah, -- we always say. And then my friends all call me --, just, so that doesn't really change either.

Interviewer: Did you ever, um, so, have you visited Spain after having been born there and then moving here? Like do you visit and how often do you visit?

A: Yeah, like four times a year.

Interviewer: You still have family there, I'm guessing.

A: Yeah.

Interviewer: A lot of family, probably.

A: All my mom's side of the family, so. Em, we go for like 2 months in the summer at least, and then like, 2 weeks at Christmas, 2 weeks at Easter. Em, and then, like, a week or two here and there. So about three months of the year, we spend in Spain. Which is 25%, so.

Interviewer: That's pretty nice.

A: As I said, my parents are teachers, so we have family holidays because, obviously when schools are off they're off, so.

Interviewer: Oh that's lucky.

A: Yeah.

Interviewer: How about like, um, other, have you been to France at all?

A: Yeah. Em, I went with my parents when I was, like, 9 or 10. Em, the most recent time I was in France, uh, was with a, we did a school exchange when I was in 5th year, which was 2 years ago. So the penultimate year of secondary school. Em, we did like, so there was basically a class from a school in Paris called Lycee Richelieu 23:37 and they came to our school for a week and stayed with us in our homes when we were partnered up. And then we went to France two weeks after that and we spent a week there and in their families and in their school and, that kind of thing, so, yeah.

Interviewer: And then, for, like, then, how about the Gaeltacht or anything, have you spent any time out there? Or not so much?

A: I actually haven't because, I actually received a scholarship to go to one of them when I was in second year, so most people go in second year and fifth year because they're the summers before third and sixth, which is junior cert, leaving cert years. Em, I received a scholarship to go, actually, but first of all, I don't know, we had already booked our flights to Spain, and I was kind of like, I'd rather be in Spain for three weeks than be in, you know, Galway for three weeks.

Interviewer: Fair enough.

A: And also, if I hadn't got a scholarship, I just think it's unnecessarily expensive. I think it's, you know, some of them can go up to €1300, which is a lot for what it is, and depending on how strict each individual course or college is. Like, half the time, people don't even speak Irish, which is just not what you want if...

Interviewer: Is it a one week thing?

A: Three weeks, yeah.

Interviewer: 1300 for three weeks, wow, okay.

A: The idea is that it's full immersion into Irish, which in some one's, like Colaiste na bhFiann, em, which means "college of the knights", actually, but, in that one they're super strict and if they hear you speaking English, you get a strike, and if you get two strikes, they send you home. Like there's no, like which is kind of what I think is more beneficial. They have ones like Arranmor which is up in the north, it's in Donegal, em, and loads of people go there because it's like the most fun, but, you know, they're not strict about you using Irish. So, if you're going to pay that much money I think it's better that you improve your Irish rather than have fun. You can have fun anywhere, without having to pay that much.

Interviewer: So now you're studying uh, French and Spanish, planning to become a teacher, um, so the course now, what does it look like? So do you do languages, I'm assuming you do language based courses straight through for all four years, you have

some culture courses as well. Um, and then of course the teaching stuff and everything like that. Like, and then here in Ireland, you can teach two different subjects, uh do you have to teach? Like if you had to choose one of those to teach, which would you choose? Would you prefer to teach Spanish? Would you prefer to teach French? Which would you feel more comfortable actually teaching?

A: I've always envisioned myself teaching both, so I don't know.

Interviewer: Well if you, if they said you could decide how many, like, would you spend more hours, if you had the choice, would you prefer to spend more hours teaching French or more hours teaching Spanish? Like even if you chose, like where would you prefer to kind of tilt the balance? Do you have a preference? You might not have a preference.

A: I don't think I do. French, I actually teach grinds, which is like tutoring, for secondary school students. I do Spanish, French, Irish and maths. Em, I think I have, I used to have more French students, now I have more Spanish students and it's just very different because when I'm teaching grammar, when I'm teaching French grammar I understand if they're confused or why they're confused because I was once confused while learning the same grammar, and learning the steps. Whereas when I'm teaching Spanish grammar, even though I can explain it and I can understand if some things are confusing or not, I've never actually felt that confusion myself. So that can be maybe a source of difference between them. But apart from that, I mean, the actual explaining doesn't really change from one language to the other, I still try and do my best to explain it as clearly as possible.

Interviewer: So you kind of teach, you said you do grinds in all the languages, you said Irish as well. So you, when you're teaching you kind of teach them all kind of in the same way, it's just the language is different. Oh okay. Well because the students, so you're teaching, are you doing grinds for leaving cert students? Or junior cert?

A: Em, junior cert and leaving cert, and then I have some fifth years and some second years as well. I have quite a few actually, but yeah.

Interviewer: But they're doing the same languages. Did you do transition year?

A: Yeah.

Interviewer: You did. And during that time, are there, did you do any language courses at that time? Not so much?

A: Em...

Interviewer: Was that the German you said? No German was a different time.

A: German was when I was in like fifth class. In transition year, what tends to happen in transition year is people forget their languages altogether, and they get to fifth year and they're like, I feel like I've never studied this language before.

Interviewer: They have to start again, yeah.

A: So I had this really good French teacher, em, who just basically didn't want that to happen, so she had, like, she divided us by sort of ability or level, or whatever she thought was, you know, best, and she organized for us to do DELF exams in fourth year, basically so we would have something to work towards, em, at different levels, so either A1 or A2 or B1, em, so that we weren't just, you know, sitting around doing nothing for a year and then getting to fifth year and not having done a French exam in...So, that was the only kind of language based thing that I did in transition year that was different, em, in transition year, yeah.

Interviewer: Have you done the DELF then? Have you taken the test?

A: Yeah.

Interviewer: Is it, how does it compare to, like what you would do on the leaving cert? It asks you to do different things, right?

A: Um-hm. The main difference is that in the DELF, everything is in French, because it's for, not necessarily for speakers of English learning French, it's just people learning French. Em, the leaving cert has a mixture of English and French and, you know, translation. Not, in like, not word for word translation or anything like that, but more like, comprehension, answering in English.

Interviewer: Oh, alright, so you read, like you read a text in French and then the questions are in English, or you'd have to answer in English.

A: Em, some are in French, some are in English, yeah. That would be the main difference. The oral as well, is not, you can't, rehearse it as much as you can rehearse for the leaving cert one. Em, the listening is quite similar. Actually, no, it's not similar because in the DELF, you hear it in French and you write the answers in French. So you can kind of hear, write what you hear in a sense. But for the leaving cert, the answer, the questions are in English, so you have to hear what you hear, then translate it and then write it, so that's kind of different. The written is very similar. Em, yeah.

Interviewer: Was it a requirement to get into the course to take that exam, the DELF?

A: No.

Interviewer: Or was that just for yourself?

A: Just for myself. Em, the requirement to get into my course was

Interviewer: Just the points on the leaving cert.

A: At least a H3, no the points were like, very low, like 357, and then a H3 or above in French or a language other than English.

Interviewer: And it would, it would be the same for Spanish but you kind of, get exempt from that. Is that how it worked for you?

A: Em, so...



Interviewer: Well you said you took the test in Spanish just to get the H1.

A: Yeah. Exactly.

Interviewer: And that fulfilled the requirement to get into the course here.

A: Yeah, for Spanish...so, in every secondary school in Ireland, French is offered. Like that's a thing. But not, Spanish isn't offered everywhere. So the thing is that if you want to do Spanish in college, you can even if you've never done it before. There's beginners and non-beginners, because it's not offered everywhere, so it would be unfair to, like, make it a requirement.

Interviewer: To expect the students to come in with the, yeah

A: So generally the requirement is, for languages, a H3 in the language you want to study or a language other than English. So even if you did French and you got, say, an H2 in French, then you can still study Spanish as a beginner. For French, you have to have done it because it's available everywhere. So it would, you know, they expect people to have done it.

Interviewer: But in your course, then, are there any beginners, like people who just started, so there are a few who've just started...

A: Yeah, we're split into different classes for grammar, so I think they have more grammar classes a week than we do, and they, it's more fast-paced and everything. Whereas ours is more kind of like filling in gaps before we go into second year. Em, our lectures are the same, though, like our literature ones, and our history ones are the same because they're taught through English, so, yeah.

Interviewer: And the texts are in English, then.

A: No (laugh)

Interviewer: So you read the stuff in Spanish, talk about it in class in English

A: Yeah.

Interviewer: And these students who've never taken it before are expected to keep up with, with the texts.

A: Yeah, don't even ask. Don't even ask. It's not, I just don't really agree with the system.

Interviewer: No, no, that's okay. Like this is, this is good information for me, this is very helpful information for me because this is part of what I'm trying to figure out and understand. Like what happens to the students, yeah, like...

A: I mean, the idea is that, because of their, because of how fast they're going that they'll be at our level by next year. That's the idea, okay. But what I don't understand, like, in our literature class, we're studying, you know, poetry from the Romantic period or we're studying plays or whatever. And you know sometimes they're going, like, "oh well, I've only just started Spanish so I can't read it" and the lecturers are going "oh it's okay, just

look it up in English." But I'm like, you can't, like you can't read, like, Federico Garcia Lorca in English, it's not the same, the same way you wouldn't read Shakespeare in Spanish. It's not the same.

Interviewer: Yeah, exactly, it's very different.

A: So, I don't agree with that. But, em, we'll see next year how their Spanish compares to ours.

Interviewer: Yeah. Wow that is interesting, that they, like, that's, very strange. Especially here, because, I mean, like with all the stuff, like my school is, you know, linguistics and we know that that doesn't work.

A: Yeah, it doesn't.

Interviewer: Like that just doesn't work.

A: Especially with something like poetry. It's like, poetry is so based on the individual words and why they chose those individual words. If you translate it, it loses that specificity.

Interviewer: Yeah, you can only do so much, yeah exactly, so it's, oh wow that's...those are some insane demands put on the students.

A: That makes me quite angry.

Interviewer: But I'm sure, like, when you're doing, then, but like, you knowing all this now and you're thinking about becoming a teacher, and you're also doing these grinds, like, you, I mean, you see what doesn't work, right, and then you can kind of figure out, well I can't do that anymore, because that's just not going to be very effective....34:49 Aside from these languages is there another one that you have on your wish list?

A: Em, I'd love to get back to German at some point. Just because you know, if you're thinking European languages. Portuguese, I guess, em, again, then I'd have to probably master Italian, not maybe master but like, advance with my Italian before I try and start Portuguese, because then I'll probably get confused, because they're both, you know. Em, I'm not sure if I would go near Asian languages, to be honest. They just seem very different to what I'm used to, em, that's quite general to say Asian languages, but, I don't know, different

Interviewer: Like East Asian languages

A: different, like, alphabets. I'm not sure how that would work. Em. Russian, maybe.

Interviewer: That's a bit of a different alphabet, too, so. But it's close enough.

A: That's probably as far as I'd go with, like, different alphabets. I'd probably say Russia, and that's about it.

Interviewer: That's the border.

A: Yes.

Interviewer: And of course there's no more Irish. But you're still kind of keeping up? Because I think you, you found out about this study through the Irish society here, right? Is that how you did it? So you're still kind of keeping up with it and using it as well even though it's not part of your course or anything like that. But like you said, you really enjoy languages and you mention very high levels of enjoyment for all your languages.

*Interview 2*

Interviewer: You mention that you had some time to kind of read through, so I guess, so the purpose of this is just to kind of check in and see if there's any comments you had on my commentary, on my reading, on my notes that I sent along. If I kind of got something wrong, you know just let me know if I got it wrong, if I'm kind of close but not quite on the mark, you know, just kind of guide me in the right direction so I can kind of see it the way you see it.

A: No just, in your notes, I highlighted a few things just, em, where you had said that you were wondering things or where I just wanted to clarify a few things.

Interviewer: Yeah, like I, so those were some questions that I still had after kind of reading through the transcript and everything. I, you know, got more curious afterwards so, yeah if there was anything you wanted to comment on first, um.

A: Yeah, just, I think under the accuracy and propriety heading, em, you've interpreted something about how I am, I haven't yet met my ideal French teacher or something?

Interviewer: Yeah, that was just, yeah, like, that's, I think I said, I don't know, that might be a stretch there, but uh, yeah, I mean, just based on the other teachers that you mentioned studying with, um, your French, the French teachers that you've had, um, I don't know, yeah, I don't know exactly what's going on there so I guess, yeah if you want to clarify that, it'd be good.

A: Em, I think there was one French teacher, the teacher, remember I was telling you that I had in transition year. Em, I had her in second and third year as well but em, she, she was like an excellent French teacher, I think it's just that em, maybe the other people in the class prevented the class from being as advanced as it could be, if that makes sense. I think her teaching was right up my street, like it suited me really well I think. Em, and then oh also there under that heading it says, just, I don't know if I'm reading it incorrectly, but it says something about having good models for other languages, a Spanish teacher of Spanish for a mother, and then raised in Ireland by teachers of English and Irish.

Interviewer: Yeah. Did I get that wrong?

A: So, raised, so my mom's a Spanish teacher and my dad is, em, a lecturer but he lectures in business and that kind of thing.

Interviewer: Oh okay. Yeah I probably, I think I, I put it down in a way that, like, I don't remember you saying that they were specifically language teachers, I think I, I crossed something up while I was putting my notes down.

A: Ok, no that's no problem, I was just wondering. I thought maybe (?)

Interviewer: I think what, ok, I might have meant, wait let me see where it is, this is under the language model part? Towards the end?

A: Under Accuracy and Propriety.

Interviewer: Oh ok, um.

A: It's in brackets.

Interviewer: Yeah, uh, oh that's right, I think, that's right you said your mother teaches English correct?

A: Em, my mother teaches Spanish.

Interviewer: Mother teaches Spanish, yeah. Um, yeah what I meant there by raised was, I probably should have said educated in Ireland by teachers of English and Irish. Um, I think that's what I meant to say, yeah, no that's good, thanks, that's more of a typo than anything else but that's good to have that pointed out, um, yeah. Alright. Was there anything else you wanted to kind of lead off with? Or...

A: Em, I'm just trying to see here, I like color-coded all this so I could (inaudible). Em, yeah so again it's under, em, what is it, it's still under accuracy and propriety and it's in the, em, in the last paragraph of the second page. Em, it says that I recognize that we will all eventually be teachers, all of us, we might, we won't necessarily all be teachers, em, there are some people who just do two languages, I guess, because they don't know what they want to do and then they might go into translation or interpretation or something. So, in that sense, maybe I think the point was that, em, oh yeah beginners and not knowing, not learning it properly, so that might be true but I don't think they're necessarily going to become teachers, all of them, all of us. I think that was everything that I was just wondering about.

Interviewer: Yeah, so, um, I guess that's true, just because you are, so you're, so the major you're in, it's not like language education, it's just those languages, you're in French and Spanish. You're not doing French education, Spanish, it's not like education or second language education or foreign language education, you're just, through the, is it the, school of languages, right? So French and Spanish. Oh ok.

A: Em, and then if you wanted to be a secondary school teacher, you have to do a professional masters in education, which is two years after your degree, so, which I'm sure a lot of us will go on to do that, but just not everybody.

Interviewer: See, I think what the, yeah with that thing about being raised, I meant educated there, and like with the French, you did talk about that French teacher and the positive experiences you had there but I think what I was probably trying to comment more on is, from what I remember and from like listening to the transcript, to the, um, to the interview, the recording, um, like there was, not so much, I wouldn't say disappointment but, as far as, like, that you mention that you hadn't had a French teacher from France, and that was something you were looking forward to

A: Yeah, that's true

Interviewer: And you hadn't had that yet. I think that was what I was trying to get to but I didn't quite state it the right way, so I'll have to modify that. And so you still, that still hasn't, like how about looking forward, are any of your, any of the teachers you're going to be studying with, the lecturers you're going to be studying with, you know, in the next couple of years, are there French teachers from France who are in the department and will eventually be teaching one of your modules?

A: Yeah, there are definitely French teachers, em, so I hope to have more of them next year. Some of the lecturers I had this year were, em, British or Irish, em, most of the teaching assistants I had for tutorials and like language assistants, they were French, so yeah I do think there is a difference even though it takes more than just knowing a subject to be a good teacher at it, you could be amazing at maths and not be a good maths teacher, same way you could be a native French speaker and not be great at explaining, em, but still I think there is something about knowing, I guess, em, em like nuances and that kind of thing, or little things in your language that you mightn't necessarily know if you didn't grow up speaking it, maybe.

Interviewer: Yeah, that's true. I mean, uh, especially when you grow up, just from my own experience as well, when you grow up speaking a language, the way that younger people use the language, I'm sure you've seen this as well with English and Irish even, you know, um, you know, just slang for example, stuff like that, and just the way children talk and the way teenagers talk and moving up like, like obviously your language patterns and your language, um, the way you talk just basically is so influenced by the way you spoke when you were younger and the way you're educated, learning it in a formal context versus learning it, kind of, where you're surrounded by it all the time and, you know, growing up in that area, so, um

A: Exactly

Interviewer: Yeah there's clearly going to be differences there. Yeah, alright. So I guess that kind of leads into one of the questions, another question I had there that you didn't just, you didn't mention just now, but uh, one thing I was kind of thinking about was how, you know you said that you used to go, for example when you had questions about Spanish you used to run to your mother and ask her questions, and now you don't do that so much because, you know, you've got your own education, you've learned a bit about it, and so I guess my question was about like, dialect. I know in Spanish, you know like, probably, I would argue even more, moreso than English, like, the issues of dialects and accents is so, uh, kind of, it's so emphasized in Spanish, um

A: It really is, yeah.

Interviewer: I mean, and that's why I think during our first talk, I asked you about like what kind of Spanish do they teach you, and you said, you know, Castilian Spanish and, like, you know, because it's very different from, and even Castilian Spanish is very different from so many of the other types of Spanish you'll see in Spain, and then, as compared to, like in Latin America there's that much more variety as well. You know when you look at like the, the um, the Real Academia, they have, if you've ever seen like

a book, every country has their own academy of Spanish because there's that many dialects, and I was just wondering, so does your, like when you were growing up and speaking, like, does your, does Asturias have like a strong dialect? Do they have, as far as you know, like are there features that, kind of your mother used to use and you started using but then you learned they were a dialect and not like proper, like how did you feel when you found out it was a dialect thing and not "proper" (air quotes used) Spanish?

A: Yeah, em, to answer your question I think, people from the rest of Spain like to tell us that they can tell that we're from Asturias even before we tell them. Em, I think, see there is a language, Asturiano or Bable, em, Bable isn't an official language in Spain but it is, you know, it's not one of the four official languages but it is different from Spanish. Em, most people don't speak it in everyday life but what happens is you tend to mix the two a lot, em, so for example, just in the verb 'to be', instead of saying 'es' a lot of, we always say 'ye', well not always, we tend to say 'ye', just y-e, which is 'es'. So we would say something like, em, I don't even know, 'Ye miercoles', or something like that. Em, it's all, yeah, we always say 'ho' at the end of sentences for emphasis, that's another thing, h-o, em, it doesn't really have a meaning, it's just for emphasis, that's unique to my region I think, em, also we don't use the preterito perfecto compuesto, it's all 'hoy fui', 'hoy hice' and it's never 'he hecho', 'he ido', em, I mean I, I use it but most people don't, and then I usually get, kind of, em, made fun of for using it because they think I sound like I'm from Madrid or something, you know, there's a bit of that, because I think it sounds almost, em, pretentious or, yeah.

Interviewer: I mean, my own view is like, because we also don't really use that that often, we'll say like, you know, we'll just use the preterito and say the past, you know, so it's just very, kind of, unwieldy, I guess, it's cumbersome, it feels like,, you could do so much, you can say so much more with fewer words and syllables and, for me that's the thing, it's more of a, just, it just it feels weird to have to say that much just to say, you know, I went to the store or something, so.

A: Yeah, I guess. Like I didn't notice it before, I only really started using the preterito perfecto compuesto, em, when I was maybe 14 or 15 because that's when I realized I have some family members who live in Madrid and stuff, family members who are from Asturias but have moved to Madrid, and when they came back they were speaking so differently and they, I just noticed the difference more and I thought okay, well technically that's the way it's supposed to be said, so I started speaking like that. Em, I'm trying to think of other things. I guess, I'm sure you, you know about the whole laísmo, loísmo, leísmo, so Asturias tends to be leísta as opposed to loísta. So my grandmother for example, she uses le for both direct objects and indirect objects where it's supposed to only be for indirect. Em, that's kind of technical but, other things, um

Interviewer: But I guess, like, so you, when you found out, like, you noticed that you started changing the way you spoke because of, like, the new things you were learning, and what kind of reaction, you said like, is it that your family members from Asturias then, do they comment on it repeatedly or was it just in passing? Oh you sound like you're from Madrid now.

A: Yeah, just sometimes, sometimes if it, if the sentence was particularly, em, as you said cumbersome, or just long, or it sounded very kind of, pretentious in a way, they'd comment and they'd be like wow, like you sound different. Em, if it was just one or the other, if it was just like, say, once in a sentence or here and there they wouldn't really notice it because it's not like nobody in Asturias uses it, it's just, it's, people tend to fall into the habit of just using the simple preterite.

Interviewer: So you're, it seems like you're trying to use the more, I guess we can say standard version

A: Yeah, standard, yeah.

Interviewer: But that's also because, in your course as well, that's what you're being taught and what you're expected to show, right? When you do your assignments and things like that. Are your assignments through Spanish as well? Like do you have to, like, write essays and things like that in Spanish? Or...

A: Em, yeah, not that many. We usually have kind of short opinion passages and that kind of thing. Em, our history module and our literature module are all through English anyway. Em, normally, see when I'm writing it's easier to make sure that what I'm writing is standard, I can read it before I submit it and that kind of thing. Em, in our oral classes, if we're speaking in class, you know sometimes I'll say something and then I'll be like, oh wait, people aren't gonna understand that because it's very specific to my region, like saying *ye* or something. Another thing that we do when we mix Bable and Spanish is, I don't know how to explain it but, instead of saying like, *te has caído* or *te caiste*, we would say, or like, instead of saying *se ha caído* or *se cayó*, we would say *cayose*, we put it at the end, and it sounds kind of funny if you do have like loads in a row and that's obviously not correct in Spanish. It's not that it's not Spanish, it's actually incorrect, it's incorrect in Spanish and it's correct in Bable, so I can't say that in class because, you know, people will know that it's wrong. Em, yeah, that's another thing.

Interviewer: So like, you can't say it in class, you say people will know that it's wrong. They won't like think that, oh because, you know, you're from that area, you know, you're actually saying it correctly, like they, do they look to you as kind of an authority then? Do you ever get that, like let's ask ~ because she should know.

A: She, yeah they ask me a lot, um, for homework and stuff which I don't mind because that's what I, I love explaining things and everything, em, but, I just, I know, I think I'm quite good at distinguishing what people can and can't understand based on what knowledge they have of the language. So just how I wouldn't use complicated idiomatic expressions or anything if I'm trying to explain something to someone, em, I wouldn't use a dialect that to them sounds incorrect because then they might try and mirror that or something, and they might try and say *cayose* instead of *se cayó* and then that's, you know if they use that in an assignment, that will be wrong, you know?

Interviewer: Um, yeah, I guess like, for, then on the other side then, with French, I mean you wouldn't want to be on the other side of that too, like when you're trying to learn a



language and if there was someone who was using a dialect and not really telling you the difference between the standard and the dialect, you know, I guess, I'm guessing you wouldn't want to be on the other side of that where you're the one trying to learn and they're kind of teaching you in a way that's not gonna be so helpful for you

A: I wouldn't mind if they told me that it was a dialect and they told me the difference, like that would be fine because I'm all about learning different ways of saying things but I think, learn the standard first, know the standard and then you can incorporate other things if you want to or if you think it's fun or, that's how I see it. Some people don't care about what standard is or...

Interviewer: So then, um, and just kind of remind me, so your high school then, your secondary school was, it was an English-medium school right? it wasn't an Irish school. Or was it an Irish school?

A: It was English, yeah.

Interviewer: But then again, like you, you mentioned again like, you know, really enjoying learning Irish and you're still, are you still, like how are you still using it now? Are you still trying to like, you mentioned that you did some teaching, like you're doing grinds and things like that. Were you able to still do the grinds even with everything that's going on now? Were you doing that, are you doing that online? Or...

A: Em, yeah, em, I was up until they cancelled the Leaving Cert.

Interviewer: Oh that's right, yeah.

A: Em, but I was, I was doing, I was doing classes just on Zoom. It would cut out half the time but I did try to do classes on Zoom. Em, I stopped those now but yeah, I was doing them.

Interviewer: How did, like, what was your, when you heard that like, because first they cancelled the oral exams and then they cancelled just, the entire Leaving Cert, like, how, like did you have any kind of reaction to that? I don't know if this is, I was just curious all of a sudden. How did you, when, like, when, because, you did this last year, right? This is, you just finished your first year of college, so this was you last year, you were getting ready for the Leaving Cert and everything, and now this next group of students, they don't have to worry about any of that. Like, but meanwhile like you, you remembered you know, preparing for the Irish part of the, the Irish oral and all that stuff, um, like, that experience itself, like, the lack of that experience, what do you think that might have on this next group of students? I'm just curious, like, because obviously it was a valuable experience for you and now that they don't have that same experience, like, I'm just wondering if you have anything to say about that.

A: Yeah I mean it is kind of, it's hard to know because these circumstances are so difficult so I don't necessarily think that the current sixth years are in a, are lucky to have their Leaving Cert cancelled, I don't think it's a good thing, I feel quite bad for them because they have been working, most of them, for two years for this exam. Em, and now to have

that kind of taken away and have them be predicted grades, it is kind of hard, em, with the orals, when they cancelled the orals they said that everybody was getting 100% in them, and I thought that was a terrible idea because I know, in my class last year, the week before the orals, there were people in my class who, in my French class, who didn't know how to say 'I have two brothers', they didn't know how to say anything after 6 years which is embarrassing in itself but also to think that people like that would then be getting 100% in their language oral is really just wrong, I think. I think it would have been better if they had to cancel the orals to remove it as a component of the final mark, because it's 25% of the grade, so they could have just marked the exam out of 300 instead of 400 or something. Em, now, because the rest of the Leaving Cert is cancelled, the orals are no longer automatically worth 100, they also have to be predicted grades, which is a good thing I think.

Interviewer: Yeah but that's, um, yeah but they still don't get that, like that whole kind of, that prep experience and just having to sit there with the examiner and kind of carry on some kind of conversation, even if it was a learned off conversation, even if it was like, kind of robotically going through the answers, that whole experience is out. But I guess with like, the predicted grades, because it's going to be based on the work they've done so far in class, right?

A: Yeah, and most of them would have done mock orals as well. Mock orals are generally in February or March thereabouts, about a month before the actual orals so I think a lot of them would have been lucky enough to have that out of the way before lockdown started and then their predicted grade could be based on that maybe.

Interviewer: But like it has such, like, far-reaching effects, thinking about like if these students also, coming into college, if any of them are planning to study languages as well, um, because I would assume that there are students who maybe don't perform well on a daily basis but then, you know, they're kind of like saving it up for the Leaving Cert and then, you know, doing their best at that point and then that's kind of the, that's, that's the dealbreaker, that's the dealmaker right there, that's, you know, that's when everything is decided so then all of a sudden, you know, those options are not open to them anymore, that kind of stuff happening so, um,

A: Yeah, I think, I would hope that if a student is hoping to go into French, that they would have spoken to the French teacher, their French teacher or another French teacher in the school to kind of, I don't know, just talk about it in advance. Same if you wanted to study something like, something more specific, let's say economics, I would hope that you would have spoken to the economics teacher at some point and tried to, even ask them about modules or ask them about something, em, so hopefully, students would have already opened that line of communication and now they'll be able to talk to their teachers more, I don't know, hopefully.

Interviewer: Anyway, getting back to you then with, I'm guessing you know, just yourself as a student of French and Spanish you're still obviously using those languages actively, and again because, you know, your family, half of your family is Spanish anyway, you've

got that taken care of. As far as Irish goes, though, do you find that you've been using Irish less as a result of what's going on now, are you, are you actively trying to find ways to use it? Are you reading books or engaging in other ways? Have you, like how has that changed for you?

A: Em, I feel like I've lost a lot of my Irish which is really sad. Em, I don't like, I still can speak it and I can still explain grammar and everything I just, I don't think it comes as naturally or as easily as it would have come this time last year. Em, so I guess, when, over the summer I don't know how I'm going to do it, I guess I can watch TV shows and that kind of thing, em, but when college starts back I'm probably going to attend more events with the Irish, em, society and that kind of thing, just to keep it, like keep hearing it because otherwise I will forget a lot of it and I don't want to.

Interviewer: I mean it's, it's kind of, as we're talking now I'm just also thinking in general, with languages in general, you kind of have to have them around you in order to exercise them really and you know, with Irish in Ireland at least if you're out and about or you've got a circle of people who you use it with, but you know, you've got some kind of support, you've got some outlet for it, but right now, because everyone's so closed off and everyone's kind of become compartmentalized and you're only within a certain unit or whatever, um, that uh, obviously the opportunities to practice are not going to come as easily, as frequently, so you kind of have to try harder, that's what I was thinking, you have to try harder to find ways to, to use it. Alright, um, yeah I mean I had a couple things to ask but we've kind of gone over most of them. Um, I guess, oh this was one thing, I don't know if we talked about this last time, but you mentioned that you want to become a teacher and I'm not sure if we got to it but like, did we talk about why you wanted to teach? Let me see, like why that was a thing for you? I mean obviously, you know, why, you were very clear about why you wanted to work with languages and you had always been interested in languages as far as you can remember, but the teaching aspect, you know, that also is quite, you were doing grinds so you were teaching even before you were a licensed teacher, kind of, like this seems to be something you enjoy. I'm just wondering, is there any specific reason? Is it because, you mention, and your parents are also in education as well. Is this a family thing? Like does it go back further than just your parents?

A: Yeah it's funny you ask. I was only talking about this to my mom yesterday, but on her side of the family, she has like 3 or 4 cousins who are teachers, two of her aunts are teachers, one uncle, em, one of my cousins is studying to be a primary school teacher, so I don't think we choose it because it's in the family, I think it's just, I don't know, I think it's a coincidence maybe. Em, but I've always wanted to be a teacher. I think, when I was in junior infants, when I was 4 years old, I wanted to be a junior infants teacher, and then all the way up through primary school I wanted to be a primary school teacher, and then when I got to secondary school, I wanted to be a secondary school teacher, em, and then for a while I wanted to study psychology and be like a psychology lecturer, but then that, I didn't do that. Em, so it kind of, it fluctuated between languages and science for, languages science and psychology, for about two years when I was like 15 maybe, 15, 16,

but it always kind of came back to languages. Em, teaching was always what I wanted to do. It didn't matter so much to me, when I was younger, like what type of teaching, but I knew that I wanted to be in a position where I could explain things and have kind of, one on one with students and be kind of, not like a role model but someone that, like, they could come to and someone who they knew would be able to help them with problems or that kind of thing.

Interviewer: The other teachers in your family then, are they mostly, are any others language teachers? Aside from your mother.

A: Em

Interviewer: Or is it a variety of subjects?

A: A lot of them are primary school teachers. One of them is a music teacher, em, no I don't think any of the other ones teach languages.

Interviewer: Like, would you say that most of the teachers that you've studied with then, were they, kind of, that kind of teacher that you just described? Someone who you can kind of go to if you're having problems or something, would you say that most of the teachers you've worked with, you've studied with, they've been kind of that kind of teacher for you?

A: Yeah, for sure, I had a really good relationship with my teachers in secondary school, em, with almost all of them. I mean, we were quite close, especially in sixth year, because it's, that's when students and teachers tend to, you know, talk the most and chat the most because it's, we're that bit older and also it's a stressful year so I had, I just formed really good relationships with my teachers and I just thought it was really admirable, I guess, to be a teacher, em, and that's been my ambition ever since.

Interviewer: I mean just, as an aside, I know that the, like the, Irish teachers, teachers from Ireland, are highly valued. Like, you always read about how, how well trained they are, how skilled they are, how good, just the fact that they're just good teachers overall and, um,

A: They are, yeah. I found that they really care about the students, em, now I don't know, I have friends in Spain and their school isn't the best school and I've never been so I can't compare it, but based on what they've told me their teachers don't care that much about the individual students as my teachers cared about us I think.

Interviewer: Yeah I mean, yeah, I don't, I've heard rumors about Spanish schools, I don't know that much about them

A: They're not great.

Interviewer: They're not usually good rumors, yeah, um, and even in like, the US for example, where I'm from, it's, it really depends a lot on what state you're in and kind of the system, every system, there's like stereotypically good systems and then systems that are not so great and then, uh, but like as far as Ireland, the, I guess, the national

reputation that it has for teaching in general is quite good, so, um, so that kind of makes sense, what you're saying, that you've had good relationships with your teachers. The one's I've dealt with have all been, you know, quite, like, that kind of teacher or they were on their way to becoming that kind of teacher who cares a lot about the students and things like that, so, um, yeah. Ok, um, I think, um, yeah I don't, let me just take one last look at the notes and see if there was anything else here, um, that I kind of directly asked to see if there was any, anything you wanted to add there.

A: Oh you had written, em, that you were curious to find out about how my family responds when I visit Spain

Interviewer: Yeah, like with your, but I think you kind of talked about that where, like when you're using the standard I guess versus the dialect. Or does your family like, because you're, you grew up bilingual, um, does, do you ever find that you kind of have like Englishisms kind of infect your Spanish or vice versa. I use the word infect, I don't like that word

A: Yeah, I know what you mean

Interviewer: Yeah, with the mixing kind of, and not so much the words mixing but like phrases that, you know, the transliterations of phrases that, you know like, you know what I mean. It's a bilingual thing.

A: Things like, puedo tener whatever, yeah. Em, no I don't think so, I think, from when I was about 2 or 3, when I was quite young, I tended to distinguish them. Not the, sometimes, it wasn't that I knew that it was correct or not but I knew that I had never heard anybody else say it that way and so I didn't say it that way. Em, my brother's, my brother sometimes he, um, he does what you're saying there, not that often, but just sometimes I think.

Interviewer: Yeah, no I mean that's one thing that just kind of, that everyone deals with that differently, or kind of, everyone enacts that differently. My own experience with it is, because I grew up in a household where we were just mixing all the time, like there was no, we didn't even distinguish among ourselves what was what, it was just like one, and then that's why you get this idea of like Spanglish, that's what we called it over there.

A: Spanglish, yeah, we get all that.

Interviewer: Where it's just, yeah it's just, there's no separation of the languages whatsoever, everyone kind of understands everyone else, and you just have this mix match, mish mash of languages going on so, yeah I'm finding it, as I grew up, yeah I tried to separate it as well and I don't think I was as successful as you're saying you are, um, with the separations, because I'll still find that, you know, I'll have like some English things coming into my Spanish and vice versa, so, but for us, like, it's not odd, like it's weird, it's not strange for us to do that but, um, I get it more from the Spanish-speaking side of my family where if I do have that kind of weird formation or whatever, um, they'll bring it up so.

A: I think maybe what helped me to distinguish is the, em, we spend a lot of time in Spain, I think roughly 4 months every year and so when I'm in Spain it's mostly Spanish that I'm hearing and speaking, em, and when I'm here, it's not that I don't hear Spanish when I'm here but it is mostly English because I go to school or college here so, there was always like, kind of a switching between languages, em, at different points throughout the year, so maybe that helped. I don't know.

Interviewer: Like I do, it does get easier like you said if you're surrounded by it, it's just, there's a bit of a buffering period but it does start to leave you once you're forced to use only one language, and I think that's the, that's the key. Yeah, no, that was more of an aside again, that was just uh, I was curious. This is, you know, bilinguals and multilinguals and the way they deal with language is really interesting, so, yeah.

### *Interview 3*

Interviewer: So was there anything that, I guess, uh, kind of jumped out at you? Was there anything that, just like before, just like the last interview as well, I want to kind of give you the opportunity to kind of start, so, is there anything that you wanted to bring up first?

A: Em, yeah I went through it and I kind of highlighted things that I either related to or that I had things to say about so, the main thing that kind of stood out to me that I don't think I really mentioned but I presumed other people mentioned it was the, em, associating languages with different personalities almost. Em, so you've written, I have it here so I can refer to it, em, yeah so thinking that you should act or speak differently depending on the context in which you found yourself or, em, changing what aspects of yourself you chose to amplify or felt the language allowed you to amplify. So, I think, in English, because I've always been in school here in Ireland, and I don't know, maybe I've been perceived as, in school, as being like a goody two shoes student and speaking a particular way, or not em, not swearing and maybe using extensive vocabulary someone might say, I'm not sure, em, that kind of things, whereas when I went to Spain, when I go to Spain, em, because I haven't really been educated through Spanish and I haven't been exposed as much, maybe literature and that kind of thing, maybe my vocabulary isn't as extensive, and so I might not come across as, I might come across as less intelligent, I'm not sure. Em, and also I swear a lot more in Spanish. I don't know why.

Interviewer: I was going to ask just now, um, it was at the tip of my tongue and I can't remember what it was. Um, yeah, I'm sure it'll come back to me in a second. But you never really noticed yourself kind of being different, or like having a different personality speaking in one language versus speaking another. It was never, you never really consciously noticed that you yourself kind of felt this way. Or it wasn't a big issue, maybe you kind of felt it but it wasn't so pronounced that it was memorable? Or it was something you couldn't really relate to? Is that what you're saying? Or just the extent that you relate to it, it's not really to a large extent really, it's kind of to a smaller extent?

A: Yeah, I think it was just little things that other people would notice more than I would. If I was talking to my friend in Spain in Spanish, you know, whatever, then all of a sudden I got a call from, a phone call from like a friend in Ireland and I picked up the phone and I was talking to them, and they could tell, and they were like, "why are you acting so differently in English?" But I wouldn't notice and I wasn't consciously making that decision. To them I just seemed different.

Interviewer: Alright, okay. So it would be more reflected back at you. You wouldn't feel it, but other people might notice it and bring it up when talking to you. Oh okay. I just remembered what it was I was going to ask you, because this has come up quite a few times, and um, like, it's just, I think probably during the first interview you, maybe you didn't use this exact word but you kind of hinted at it, that you were kind of, like a

perfectionist almost, or like you're really, I don't know if you used that exact word but that was kind of the general theme of some of the things you said, and just now you mentioned being seen as a goody two shoes in school, um, so like, you don't really curse that much in English you say, you curse more in Spanish than English, um, so like, I'm just, is there a reason why you have tried to be this kind of person at school here? Is it because, like, well, I mean, you have teachers in your family, you want to be a teacher, do these connect to you? Or are these things separate to you? Like you being a very good student, then, you know, thinking of yourself as a teacher in the future, like is this, I don't know if there's a connection there, I'm just wondering like if you've got a reason why you are a perfectionist. Or is it something you always were and you don't really know why you are like that?

A: I think I always have been even before I even was thinking about being a teacher or at least connecting the two things. Em, another thing that I actually think is kind of interesting is that my, so I said I curse more in Spanish than in English, but em, my mom, who's Spanish, never swears and my dad, who's Irish, does, so I don't know. So at home, I curse when I'm like, out with friends and stuff but I do so more in Spain which I presume is that because they also do so, I'm not sure. And the perfectionist thing, yeah I don't know, it's just kind of always been like that, I think.

Interviewer: Because it comes through in your language. You mention, you know, you're very interested in learning, you kind of have made a conscious choice to speak more of the standard type of castellano rather than the dialect that your family would speak. Like, you've kind of made these conscious choices to adopt these more, I guess, the standardized versions of that language, and you just mentioned that you try to use a kind of a, you try to really exercise your vocabulary, the extensive vocabulary in English as well, and that was the question I was going to ask, do you kind of find yourself trying to, like, use English in the same way, you know, kind of like, trying to, I guess, speak English at a level, or I guess speak a standard type of English rather than a more, um, what do I want to say, a non-standard dialect of English, like even among Irish English, like you find yourself using the more 'standard' version of Irish English.

A: Definitely, yeah. Em, in written, when I write, for sure, and then when I speak, I try to as much as possible. Em, I haven't met one person yet who's Irish, like within my friend group or anything, who doesn't say 'youse' instead of 'you', like for 'you' plural. I refuse to say 'youse' because I don't like the way it sounds, em, I'd rather say 'y'all' or 'ye' or something. That's one thing. Is that kind of what you mean?

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, just like, kind of, like I'm just trying to kind of, I guess my interpretation of you, from what you've told me, of you, like you and your language practice, I guess, is that you consciously try to, you know, what do I want to say, adopt what might be considered a more standard language in the languages that you speak. With French, obviously, you know, because you're learning it in school you're going to learn that kind of standardized for school purposes French. Um, your Irish, because you attended an English-medium school, your Irish would be the 'standard' version of Irish



that is taught in schools here in Ireland. I've heard that they also kind of teach you some of the

differences in the dialects, but in general they expect you to produce kind of the standard version. And you're doing this with even the languages you consider your mother tongues, you know, with Spanish and English, you're kind of consciously, you consciously try to use a more standard version of these and, I don't know, for me, I just thought that was interesting, that this is, that you are really, that this is a goal of yours, to kind of really adopt as your own speech the standard version and um, but then it kind of goes along with what you just said, with your personality of maybe being a perfectionist, maybe that kind of falls in line with it. But I would also think that, if you're aiming to become a teacher, you know, maybe there's this expectation that as a teacher you're expected to show this kind of, to be this kind of model I guess. To be this kind of like, I don't know, this is what I'm trying to figure out.

A: That's certainly possible because I visualize myself teaching quite a bit, so, and as I've said before I teach grinds and that kind of thing, so I, I'm quite aware of the way I say things and how that might come across.

Interviewer: So you're very careful, like when you're choosing which words to use and things like that, do you find that you're...ok.

A: Yeah, even when we had to write English essays for the leaving, I would spend hours and hours and hours and hours on the essays, or even on one paragraph, you know, making sure that all the words were exactly the words I wanted use and, you know, making it concise but not too terse, that kind of thing, so.

Interviewer: Okay, so anyway, back to you, was there anything else there that you maybe had anything to comment on?

A: Em, there was one thing, it's a bit kind of loosely related to something that happened to me but, em, it's under the navigating relationships with others theme. And it's about being used as a language or accent model within your class which might have been (inaudible) peers. So, em, at one point, I was maybe 14 or something and I was in a French class and I had a substitute French teacher, and she asked like an open question or she asked me a question or I can't remember and I answered in French with what I thought was a good French accent, like I tried, you know, and she was, she asked me if I was French, and I was like, "no", and then other people kind of felt, I don't know, threatened or something by it because they were like, well she thought you were French but you're not French, so what does that say about her, and does that mean, do you know? I just, that was one thing that I was kind of freaked out about at the time. Em, and then another thing as well, it's more, it happens more with Spanish than with French I guess, but, certain words, em, Spanish words that are used in English that are often pronounced incorrectly, em, if I say them correctly I feel really pretentious saying them.

Interviewer: Like you say them with the, you say them like the proper Spanish way, but you're speaking English otherwise, yeah.

A: Yeah, it almost sounds like I'm being pretentious or I'm showing off or something, but em, but I can't bring myself to pronounce it incorrectly just because that's how English speakers pronounce it. I'm trying to think, like em, oh I don't even know. Some people say "fa-jee-tas" and I'm like "fajitas", um, yeah, just that kind of thing. It makes me sound odd if I, if that's the only word that I pronounce with a Spanish accent.

Interviewer: Just out of curiosity have you ever heard anyone say "qweso"?

A: "Qweso"? No. Some people say that?

Interviewer: I've heard that, yeah. Like when they're talking about, because now they have, and I don't even know where this came from, I feel like it's a, it's an adoption, it's the, if you go to a Mexican place they have the, like the, it's queso but it's not just the cheese, it's like, it's some kind of, I can't even remember what it is, I think it's like, on chips or something

A: ...like a dip or something?

Interviewer: Yeah, something like that. So they call it, they just call it queso, but I've heard people who don't really speak Spanish refer to it as "qweso". Maybe that's an American thing. I haven't really heard it here but I have heard it back in the US, people pronounce it that way and it, it does kind of break my heart. But I know what you mean, like with my name too, like if I'm speaking to someone who doesn't really speak Spanish I will say my name is Carlos, but if I'm speaking to someone, like with my name I do kind of, follow the accent of the people I'm around. But if they're people who speak Spanish I will say Carlos.

A: With me, it's because my name ... like they're very different so, if I'm speaking Spanish I end up saying something like ... like they're just, I don't know. It pains me a bit to say it, not incorrectly but with an accent that isn't the natural one maybe.

Interviewer: Alright, so going back to your experience with the French thing, did you, did you like that you got that kind of that comment, that you sounded like a French person? Was that something, when you heard it were you kind of glad to hear it? Or did it make you self-conscious? Like what was your reaction? Do you remember your reaction to it?

A: Yeah I think I would have liked it if it hadn't been in front of the whole class. Because it made me self-conscious because then it kind of, people then thought that I sounded French and had a good French accent and so then from that point on that was what was expected of me, like to speak (inaudible) accurately, you know, correctly, from a phonetic sense. So, yeah, I wouldn't say self-conscious but I was kind of taken aback.

Interviewer: And then you mention like, your classmates also kind of, they didn't take too kindly to your, yeah, alright.

A: To be honest, it was a teacher we had for maybe two weeks as a substitute so it wasn't that big a deal but em, yeah it was just a little strange.

Interviewer: Was that really the only time you were used as like a, as like an accent model?

A: Em, yeah I think so because I never went to Spanish class until college, and in college my teachers are Spanish so they wouldn't need to use me, em, but two of my friends in school, em, are also half-Spanish like me, their mothers are Spanish and their fathers are Irish, they actually went to Spanish class, they didn't just do the exam, they went to class as well and they were used as accent models and they had to do one-on-one oral practice with the rest of the class and that kind of thing.

Interviewer: Even though, so as students they were expected to, kind of, be assistants? Okay. I mean, this isn't really, it's not really related to you but did they tell you how they felt about that? Did they think that was good? Did they enjoy that? Or did they kind of tell you "I can't believe our teacher's making us do this kind of thing"?

A: Em, to be honest I think they kind of knew what they were getting into when they signed up for the class. Em, and both of them kind of regretted choosing Spanish because they were like, this is a waste of time and I could be doing something else. But no, I don't think they were annoyed about it.

Interviewer: Any other things that you want to bring up here?

A: Em, yes there was thing near the end about time and expectations, yeah so it says here, "this affected your expectations for your own language learning and seem to affect how motivated you were to study that language," em, regarding the age. So I think with Italian, I started learning when i was 14 but at that stage I was, in the back of my head I was like, I'm quite old already so I'm not going to get to the same level as I am with French or, so that definitely affected my motivation because I can't remember the last time I studied Italian actively, so.

Interviewer: So even at 14 you felt, oh I'm too old?

A: Yeah, just because Irish, em, English and Spanish have been from when I was really small and then Irish, I was four, and French I was nine I think, so 14 just seemed like a huge gap, which it wasn't, it was 5 years ago, yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah, talking to other people too, they've mentioned the same thing and it's always surprising, I mean, there theories that talk about, you know, when you should start learning languages and things like that, but they're just theories and a lot of people kind of just listen to them and say, oh well this means I'm not going to be able to learn this language, but it's always surprising to hear at what age people kind of make that decision, often it's like you just said, um, you're still a teenager and you're kind of giving up, oh, nothing's going to happen, I'm not going to get to the same level. So it does kind of temper your expectations a bit and affect your motivation so I thought that was, that kind of came across. You know we hear about it with adult learners, and when I say adult I mean like, proper, like mid-twenties on kind of adults, but hearing it from people who made that or who kind of felt that when they were so young is kind of, it's a bit surprising honestly, it's a bit surprising to kind of make that decision from when you're young.

A: It's also interesting I guess because those theories that you've mentioned, I'm not sure if they take into account whether the person is already bilingual or multilingual or, so if you're 14 and you already speak four languages, not fluently but you know pretty well, picking up a fifth language for you might not necessarily be the same as a 14 year old who only knows one language picking up a new language. So, but I don't think I took that into account at the time. I was just thinking, oh I'm 14, you're supposed to learn languages when you're young, I'm not young anymore, so.

Interviewer: But that's also kind of ironic, I guess, because you are, you know, you're studying to be a secondary school teacher right now, which means that your students will be beyond that age, you know, they're not going to be 14 probably, right? Well I guess if they're junior cert they'd be around that age, but if you're dealing with leaving cert, so they're going to be that age and above and you're hoping to teach them some French, or some Spanish, and so it's like, I just wonder, does that kind of, how does that make you feel that you at that age decided I don't want to learn this, I'm not going to learn this anymore, but then now you're planning to become a teacher who will be teaching students that age? I'm sure you want your students to be engaged, you know. Yeah. Could you discuss, one thing that you mentioned before was kind of the, the attitude of the other students in French class, that they didn't seem as interested in learning as maybe you, maybe you felt that there was a small group of students who were interested in learning but for the most part not many took it seriously?

A: Yeah, there was definitely mixed opinions. Em, I think a good teacher is able to change their students' minds about language. Not just language, any subject. I mean, a student who's seven years old and who hates maths and can't do it and then you get a really good maths teacher, I think they can change their opinion. So I think it's the same for languages. Em...

Interviewer: And that happened to you with French, I mean, you mentioned that that happened to you with French kind of, you met that really good French teacher in secondary school, didn't you tell me about this? There was one teacher of French who, like at the beginning, when you first started learning French you weren't really impressed with it, you didn't really care the way it sounded or anything, and then later on, um, you know there was a teacher who, maybe not fully but, you know, helped to change your mind, so.

A: Yeah definitely. I think it was because it was so clear how much she loved the language and that kind of thing, um, and she was very good at teaching the more advanced students specific little grammar things that she thought we would find interesting which I did find interesting, and I think you mentioned that as well in your, em, in the document, specific grammar rules, yeah. Em, also she kind of, she created situations where we could use French more, like more, in ways that were more advanced than what we would be using in class. So we, em, she led us to do DELF exams, like she prepared us for those if we wanted, em, we went on a French exchange to Paris, em, we, em, we took part in the national French debating championships in the Allians Francais, em, so that was good, that was fun.

Interviewer: I noticed also when you emailed me that your email settings are in French. Well it was like, at least like the date, the date line of your email reply was in French. Is your gmail set up in French?\

A: Um, my phone is in, my phone is in French. I think I have my all my devices in different languages. My phone's in French, my iPod may or may not be in Spanish, my computer's in English, but then I have different, some different language settings as well.

Interviewer: Like your Trinity account, when you log in to Trinity, is it, what language, do you often log in to like the Trinity, like the Microsoft Office offered through Trinity or? I mean you use the gmail, the Trinity email which is gmail. Is that setting set in French?

A: Em, I normally just use the mail app on Mac, like the, yeah, and that's in whatever language the device is in. So if I'm on the computer mail then will be in English, whereas if I'm on my phone the mail will be in French.

Interviewer: I see, ok. So you kind of, you, do you consciously do this or is it just like what you're feeling at the time? Like when you get the phone you're like, oh I'm going to put this in French and then you just leave it alone and don't bother changing it at any time.

A: Em, I think my phone's been French for years, for a long time. It's because the teacher one time suggested that it would be good to pick up random vocabulary, like the verb "to delete", the verb "to save as a draft", that kind of thing. So I thought it was a good idea. Em, and now I find it very easy to navigate my phone in French so I don't feel the need to change it back to English, except for maybe in specific apps where I feel like I need to be, like if, I don't have a banking app but let's say if I had a banking app I'd want it to be in English just in case. Em, but I can change individual app languages, so I don't have to change my whole phone.

Interviewer: How about when you're typing? These questions right now I'm asking more just out of curiosity, my own curiosity, rather than based on my research. Like when you're typing, do you find that it's hard, like sometimes, like your fingers don't always go the way you want them to go? Like they're kind of typing out a word in one language when you're thinking in a different language? Do you ever kind of get that? I don't know, I get that sometimes. Like I'll be typing and like I'll, I'll be thinking in English but like my, I'll be typing in a different language or something. And then I'll have to go and look and check my word and say, oh wait a second that's not English, I have to delete that or what not.

A: It doesn't really, like, I consider myself quite a fast typer and I can type without looking so I only, that only happens if I'm speaking in Spanish, having a conversation, and typing a different conversation, then I might mix the languages up, but not, not if I'm looking at the keyboard. I have the three keyboards, French, Spanish and English keyboards on my phone and I switch between them. Em, but I guess one thing is the French keyboard isn't QWERTY at the top, it's AZ. So sometimes that gets mixed up, like the Q and the A are different, em, I think the (inaudible) is in a different place as well, so. In that sense, yeah, but in English and Spanish the keyboards are pretty much the same apart from ñ, so.

Interviewer: Ok, so, um, getting back to the actual project, I was just like, I was just thinking out loud there, um, was that it for your own comments? Was there anything else that you wanted to mention?

A: Another thing I have highlighted here is an awareness of when it was important to abide by the rules of language but I think we've kind of covered that. Em, There wasn't much else, I don't think.

Interviewer: Have you found at all like you're, I guess, how should I put this, that your, the way or I guess the frequency of your language use, maybe like how often you use French versus Spanish versus English versus Irish, how has it been affected by the lockdown and everything? I mean, we talked last time about not having, not feeling like you had many opportunities to practice your Irish, how about the other languages? I guess at home it's not a big deal with English and Spanish but with French then, like, has it been more difficult kind of, doing French to the same extent that you would have been doing it had you been actively attending classes and going out and doing that kind of stuff? Or has it been harder to practice or to use French since being home?

A: Yeah, I guess it has been a bit harder. One thing I have started doing though is if I look up anything on line, em, the first article, the first Wikipedia version is the French one, and then the English and then whatever language, so I try and just read the French version of anything, em, because it just forces me to understand, not to understand but it forces me to try to understand, whereas if I just took the easy way out and just looked it up in English or Spanish, then I wouldn't really be engaging in French at all.

Interviewer: Another thing that was mentioned there is, like, because this was something that came up, was like comparing, kind of thinking about other family members, especially like siblings, you don't have...do you have any siblings? I don't know if we, if you mentioned that at all.

A: Yeah I have one brother who's two years younger than me.

Interviewer: Younger, um, oh I think you did mention this before. And, do you notice that your, I guess your, the way you use your English and Spanish, is it different? The way you use it versus the way your brother uses it. Do you notice a difference even among yourselves?

A: Yeah. Yeah. There are a few things that are different but I'm not sure how many of them have to do with the people we surround ourselves with and how many of them have to do with our actual competence in the language, competency. My brother, for example, in Spanish, the, he doesn't always use the subjunctive correctly. That's one thing.

Interviewer: That's not fair, that's the hardest one.

A: Yeah, so that's, yeah in terms of speaking the language more or less correctly from a grammar perspective or whatever, em, that's one thing that comes to mind. Our accents

are very different in both languages. Again I think that has to do with the people we (we're friends with?) and stuff.

Interviewer: That's interesting that you use, that was the first thing you thought of, the subjunctive, which is probably like, that's like the hardest thing in Spanish, most people who learn Spanish that's the point where, that's like the make or break point. Like everything else is fine up until then, and then once the subjunctive gets introduced, that's what I've heard, that's probably the hardest thing to make sense of. But, I mean, it exists, in French there's a subjunctive mood as well in French, right? Yeah.

A: It's not used as often as in Spanish. Em, like you, you still need to know it to navigate the language but in Spanish you can't really

Interviewer: You can't do anything without it, yeah.

A: Yeah you use it for so many different instances. You know, in conditional clauses and everything, whereas in French, you need to use it but you can usually find a way around it somehow. Not usually, sometimes you can.

Interviewer: I had this one question here, I'd like to hear what you have to say about it. You know, from our discussion so far, it seems like, and again you can let me know if I'm off the mark here, but for you right now the concern is, you know, obviously, because right now you're doing, in college, you're doing French and Spanish right? Is that what you're doing? Ok you're doing French and Spanish. Um, but like, because of your background and, Spanish is a mother tongue for you, with French it's a little bit different and I'm wondering at what point do you think, do you feel, or I guess will there ever be a point where you feel, do you think there will ever be a point where you feel as comfortable in or as close to French as you do with English and Spanish? Is that even possible? Do you think that's possible? Is that something that, like what is your goal with French I guess? Is it just to be, to know enough to be able to teach it or is there more to it than that?

A: Em, I would hope that I will eventually be as comfortable with French as I am with Spanish, so, and I do think it's possible. Em, the goal, I guess the goal would be that, to be as comfortable speaking French as speaking Spanish, where I don't have to, you know, just in case change my app settings to English, just in case I can't understand something in French. Like I'd want to be able to comfortably only have French and not have any problems. That's a very specific example but em. My grades in French have often times been better than my grades in Spanish. I don't know if that's normal or interesting. Em, because I prepare for the exams more.

Interviewer: I mean that could explain it, but then, you know, at the same time, when you think about a grade for example, a grade is graded according to a standard and you know, what are the standards for French versus the standards for Spanish? I don't know, because you said really your only formal education in Spanish has been in, at college, right? In secondary school you didn't really, you took French, you know? And maybe, this is just me offering a guess but, maybe you just got used to being evaluated in French and

you haven't really had that evaluation in Spanish until college so you're not really sure what evaluation means. Your Spanish also, even though you've tried to adopt a more standard version of it, um, this is kind of my own opinion but it's also backed by some research, it's hard to get away from a dialect, you know? It's very hard. When that's what you start with, or, I shouldn't say, it's very hard to move completely from one dialect to another dialect. Now whether that dialect is a standard or not, well a standard's a dialect as well, like it's hard to kind of remove yourself completely from one and put yourself completely in another. Especially in your case, I'm assuming even when you're, I don't know you might have mentioned this, but even when you're actively using the standard version of castellano some of the asturiano could, kind of comes out, right? Like it just comes out without you thinking about it, you know, that's just the way

A: Especially if I'm tired or if I'm around people from, like my friends and family from there, em, yeah it tends to come out more then. It's almost like I'm going back to a habit or something.

Interviewer: It's the part, it's the one that you don't have to try. You have to try with the standard, you don't really have to try with the dialect. It's also, like I said, used to being, used to being evaluated. And also, who's evaluating you? I mean, you know, your grades, well you said you're being evaluated by people from Spain, Spanish speakers, and things like that but um, it might just be that you're more used to being evaluated through French than you are, this kind of evaluation, through Spanish. And like you said you put more effort into French too.

A: When I say I get better grades I mean by like, a percent if even, like I don't mean like big gaps. Em, but the one thing that I, it's not like French is behind Spanish (evidently?) or anything like that.

Interviewer: So like, to put it one way, based on your grades, you're at about the same but your own feeling is, you've probably got a little more work to do with French than for Spanish.

A: Yeah, for sure.

Interviewer: Simply because French is not a native language for you. Yeah. Ok. But that's kind of interesting too, that what's kind of judged from outside doesn't really meet up with your own evaluation of your own kind of, not just your own ability but your own comfort with these languages. They're kind of judging you similarly but you yourself judge these things differently. See that's the interesting part right there. The disconnect, not really, well I guess it's a disconnect, or the disagreement over your view of yourself versus what other people think of in terms of your language ability.

A: Yeah because, often my grades, my Spanish grades are ones that I'm expecting, like if I'm, if I get, well this is more secondary school than college, but like let's say I was expecting to get 98, I'd probably get 98, whereas in French I might be expecting to get 88 and then get 98. So, even though, I might have been more prepared for the French exam



but just in my head I'm thinking, surely I should be doing worse in French. But then I don't do worse in French, or I don't do much worse.

Interviewer: Sorry I'm just thinking right now. The screen is not frozen or anything, I'm just thinking right now, yeah. It kind of goes, does it go along with this? I'm just trying to, it's, because someone else mentioned, I don't know if it was in this document I sent you but someone else did mention something about the different expectations you have depending on how you got that language and what language it is and things like that. Maybe there's more of a pessimism, maybe not pessimism but kind of, I don't know, maybe you judge yourself more harshly with French than with Spanish. Do you ever disagree with the grades? Like do you ever just look at it and like, just you know, not necessarily how did I get that kind of, they judged you much higher than you judged yourself but was there ever a situation that was reversed where you got much lower than you think you deserved? Did you ever argue that...you never kind of got...

A: No, I generally get higher if not a lot higher than what I think I deserve, especially in French. Em, because I, I don't know, most people would say I'm an advanced French learner but I don't think in my head I've made the switch between intermediate and advanced, even though my secondary school French teacher would disagree with me there, but, I don't know, in my head I don't think my French ability is as good as my Spanish but it is closer than I feel it.

Interviewer: See and that's the thing, that's one thing that's kind of come out in common among several people is, kind of, similar to what you just said, that, um, that you don't feel that you deserve that particular grade or that mark or that assessment, that somehow you feel like the other person, whoever's grading you or whatever, has kind of overestimated you, and that's interesting that people feel that way, they judge themselves more harshly than they're being judged sometimes. That's the, that's one thing that I think is kind of interesting that's coming out is kind of what you just said, that, um, it's always kind of, that you always think that you did much worse than, than what you end up getting. At that moment, for that particular assignment or whatever, that performance wasn't your best but you still got much higher than you expected.

A: Because in my head I'm still a learner of French and there's so many things I don't know, so when I get a high grade, when I know in my head there are things that are incorrect in that, so I'm thinking that should be lower, I don't know.

Interviewer: Unless it was a mistake that was so natural that, you know, it was a mistake that someone who was born in France would make, you know, that kind of thing. Um, yeah. I'm not going to figure it out now but it is something that I just, I'm saying out loud because I'm recording this and I want to make sure I come back to it later on. But that is interesting that people tend to be much harsher on themselves. And it's not just because of, this may just fit in with your streak of perfectionism but others who are not as perfectionist as you maybe have said similar things so it's something in common among a lot of people so it's something interesting there, yeah. Do you, I don't know if we've just mentioned this, but do you think, do you feel that there is more kind of an expectation,

do you put higher expectations on yourself because you're already bilingual? I mean we kind of mentioned it briefly earlier when we were, when you were talking about the whole age thing. Do you maybe like expect more of yourself because you're bilingual? Or does that not really factor into it so much? Like do you think you should be better because you're bilingual?

A: I think I do, yeah. Growing up teachers always said, oh you're bilingual it will be so easy for you to learn languages and all that stuff so then, I feel like it should be easier for me to learn languages. But in thinking that I then work really hard so that it is easy, if that makes sense. I mean it is easier than it would be for a monolingual person, I guess, but, yeah.

Interviewer: Alright, ok. Yeah. I don't think I have anything else to go over with you at this point.

Participant N

### *Interview 1*

Interviewer: So just to kind of go over some of the information you mentioned in the survey, so you mentioned you speak...one thing I kind of noticed as well is when you addressed your emails to me you actually addressed me in the Irish, a chara, so, um, I was curious. And you, and even though you didn't make note of Irish in the language profile I asked you to fill out, you do describe it, so I'm guessing you spent some time learning Irish while you were here.

N: Yes.

Interviewer: So in addition to the languages you mention, French, Moroccan Arabic, English, standard Arabic, Spanish, and Irish, are there any other languages that you have proficiency, any kind of proficiency in?

N: I have a beginner proficiency in, uh, German. And some notions, not really notions, in Berber language. It's a local language in Morocco.

Interviewer: Oh, alright. Okay, interesting. Quite a, I guess a broad array of languages. And you spent, so you spent just one term, one semester here.

N: Yeah, one term. Michaelmas term in Trinity.

Interviewer: So, but your education would have been mostly in France? In Morocco?

N: So my education until the leaving certificate was in Morocco. And my further studies were in France. So my bachelor and masters have been done in France. So university in France and elementary schooling in Morocco.

Interviewer: Okay, so elementary, secondary schooling in Morocco, and then higher education or third level education in France.

N: Indeed.

Interviewer: Okay, um, so you're a masters student? You said you're doing your masters, or you did a masters in France.

N: I am doing a masters in France. I am in my final year project. It's my last term.

Interviewer: Oh, so you can do an Erasmus even in your masters?

N: Um, actually what we have, what we call in France (inaudible) school, and the, we have some equivalence (inaudible) but it's a five-year program, where at the end you get your masters. And we don't get any bachelor before. And we can do an Erasmus during the last three years of our curriculum.

Interviewer: Oh, so you just go directly to a master's degree? There's no bachelor's before.

N: Yeah, so we, in France in normal universities we have three years of bachelor's and three years of master's, so this is some equivalence (inaudible) if you want to give some information from first year to fifth year but actually in my program I just get a masters.

Interviewer: Oh alright, ok. Interesting. So, uh, just wanted to clear up those things. Most of the interview now, so I'm saying it's an interview but really it's more just a chat. I'm just going to be asking you about your experiences learning and using all the different languages that you've learned and used. Um, so, and there's no, obviously there isn't going to be any right or wrong answer, it's just whatever it is you have to tell me. If there are any other questions that either you don't know the answer to or you, uh, you do not want to answer, that is perfectly fine. You don't have to answer anything that you can't answer or do not want to answer. Um, but, yeah so it's more just like, I'm going to ask you mostly just about your story and your experiences. So, um, well let's start with Irish, since you described it. So how much Irish, how many classes in Irish did you actually take while you were here?

N: So it was two classes a week for an hour, so two hours a week during how many weeks do we have in a term? 12?

Interviewer: Like 11?

N: So 11 weeks. So, twice eleven weeks.

Interviewer: Was that part of the program here?

N: Not at all. I just wanted, I wanted to do some Irish and just know something about the Irish language while I was in Ireland.

Interviewer: Ok. So what did you, uh, how did you feel about it while you were learning it? And not just learning it but leaving the classroom, what did you notice? What did you observe?

N: So what I observed, first of all, I was happy at the end of every class because when I came to Ireland for, it was really frustrating to see some panels, public signs in a language I can't even read. And this annoys me whenever I go somewhere I can't read what it says

although you have the English language. But you don't pronounce, you can't figure it out, it's a mystery for you. So it was frustrating me, and at the end of the Irish class, every time, things got less of a mystery. So I was happy about that. And it was also funny that, so since I have studied Arabic before, I noticed that there are many similarities between the Irish grammar and the Arabic grammar, which is clearly different from Romance and English, Romance languages and English. So it was quite a bit funny and weird and I don't know.

Interviewer: Would you be able to give an example of a similarity in the grammar? Is it like the word order? Or the...

N: The word order, yeah, the word order for example. The word order also, you have the verb, subject and object in Irish as well as Arabic. Uh, sometimes you've got, for example, for, you only have got definite articles in Irish. No indefinite article. So it's the same as in Arabic. And many similarities in constructions, constructing the sentences.

Interviewer: Oh, okay. Did you, when, did you let the lecturer know that there were these similarities between the two languages? Did you tell them anything?

N: Yes. Because I also found a video about that so it was no mystery to linguists about this feature, and we were talking about it, and so I shared the video with him.

Interviewer: Oh okay, nice. And what did the lecturer say? Had the lecturer been aware of these similarities before?

N: No, he said that he was surprised. So he was like, so I heard that there was some influences from English, from Latin languages, from French, but Arabic, how ...(inaudible)

Interviewer: Oh yeah, that's interesting. Oh wow, that's quite interesting. I guess you wouldn't think that they're related, but I guess...well not related but that there would be similarities but, I guess, um, there's only so many ways that you can put words together, you know? Did you find that it was, so, because you had studied Arabic, did it make it easier for you to kind of understand word order and how to put sentences together?

N: Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: Um, so have you tried keeping up with it? After leaving here? Have you, maybe, like watched videos or do you have any materials?

N: Yeah, so I bought a book, I bought a grammar book and also (inaudible) which was advised by my teacher. And sometimes, yeah, I still look at these books and I, I kept in touch with an Irish friend who will (inaudible) sometimes. Irish sentences. Yeah, so yeah, I'm trying to keep up with it. It's also interesting because it helps you also, having access to an understanding of Irish culture you can't just have with English.

Interviewer: Yeah, that's true. Alright, interesting. Um, so then some of your other languages then, um, so from what, so my understanding of Arabic is quite limited, and since you say there's like standard, and I know, this is what I know of it so you can let me

know or help me understand a little bit better. So what I've heard is, so there's the standard Arabic which is kind of the literary Arabic, I guess you could say.

N: Yes, somehow.

Interviewer: Or is it more religious, kind of, like there's that high...the way I've often heard about it I've read about it is that it's kind of, so there's the standard that you'll see more in reading, and then the regions or areas, the countries that speak Arabic, obviously, are going to have a wide variety, or many differences between them.

N: Yes. It's, for me, it's a wee bit more complex than that. So the simple explanation is, so yes, what you have for Arabic speaking countries that the official language is Arabic, standard Arabic which is the language of religion, the language of politics, of written stuff, of, if you have any news broadcasted in Arabic, and schools, so when you go to school you learn Arabic and you write in Arabic. But it's like using, it's like if we're still using Latin in Europe. And people, and people in their daily life are speaking French, Spanish, Italian, etc. So we, the Arabic speakers, are not native in standard Arabic but we're native in Moroccan Arabic, in Algerian Arabic, etc. And it can be quite different from standard Arabic depending on the regions and especially Moroccan Arabic is totally different so I consider it as a separate language.

Interviewer: It's a different language altogether. There are some similarities but...

N: Yeah, there are similarities, it comes from Arabic but still you feel that they are too different to be considered as one language. And many people would call it a dialect but for me it's ideology, it's more an ideological problem than a linguistic problem, to say dialect or language.

Interviewer: Well, I mean you do, you do mention you study computer science and linguistics so it seems like you have a, a little bit of a different understanding, or different appreciation of these differences, the nuances between what's a language versus what's a dialect. So then standard Arabic you would have had to learn in school, like if we want to learn Latin we'd learn Latin in school, that kind of. Okay. So how was it taught? Was it taught more, like, when we learn Latin, it's very much, you know, memorizing verb conjugations and declensions and, uh, and things like that. So was it taught like that? Was it taught more like what you'd find in a more quote unquote communicative classroom? Like how was standard Arabic taught in your experience?

N: I don't know how, how you learn languages in Ireland or anywhere else. But you know the French (inaudible) are quite the same, so you have the grammatic bases, the rules they have to, the syntactic stuff. And also you have some communication parts because you have to know how to write in Arabic, so you have to know to communicate at least verb, at least in a written matter. And also you have to, to speak it somehow. And we've got to learn, we've got to discover literature. Old and modern literature, and we do do grammar for 12 years and everything. It's like learning English, learning French more than just Latin.

Interviewer: So then, are you, do you have examinations in Arabic when you're done with your schooling?

N: Yes.

Interviewer: Oh, okay. And do you, like, is it, are you writing essays? Are you, is there an oral element to it as well?

N: Um, so the Moroccan schooling doesn't assess you on oral, on oral matters. Normally it's always written matters, whether it's Arabic, French, or whatever it is. Um, so normally you're assessed on reading, speaking, sorry not speaking, reading, grammar and writing. And conjugation and all that stuff, so you've got a full exam of two hours where you have to do everything and, so you go from short writings when you're a little bloke going to primary school, and then you're, yeah you've got to write some essays. And you've got also to use it in other matters because history is taught in Arabic so if you do an essay in history, it's got to be in Arabic. An essay in philosophy has got to be in Arabic, and everything.

Interviewer: So standard Arabic is a spoken language as well? It's not just, like Latin is mostly a written

N: Yeah, it's spoken. Like maybe, if things, it would be like if Latin was still in use but, yeah it's still a spoken one because of its religious value. It is still in use. So yeah it is still spoken. But it wouldn't be natural, I wouldn't go to my parents or friends in Morocco and speak standard Arabic. It would be unnatural for either me or them.

Interviewer: So then, in school, and again I'm focusing primarily on your primary and secondary schooling, so, obviously you just mentioned you would have learned Arabic, but you also learn French and English in school as well. So the French, you've studied 15 years so that's pretty much all of your schooling through French and now you're doing university schooling in French as well. So is the French there, is it because of the history, the history of colonization and everything?

N: Yes, so we're a bilingual, yes, so yes, and we remain bilingual and we're still using French in administration and it's still taught as a second language. So, when we go to school we learn both languages since the beginning, and normally if everything goes fine and if you're in a good school, and you have good teachers, you end up being bilingual.

Interviewer: So, do you think you had good teachers?

N: Yeah, I believe so. I was lucky with that.

Interviewer: So you'd consider French almost like another mother tongue as well?

N: Yes, I, I always say that Moroccan Arabic and French are both my native tongues.

Interviewer: So then, with learning French then, is the, so I might have missed it at the beginning, the, the education system is similar to the French education system, modeled on each other?

N: Yes.

Interviewer: So then, um, so then was it that when you were in the schools then, were you kind of doing it in a way where some subjects were taught in French and some subjects were taught in Arabic? Or was, or was French like taught as a language through Moroccan Arabic? So you said it was taught as a second language, so like when we learn English or when we learn Spanish or whatever, is that what you mean?

N: So also I don't know, I don't know about Ireland or anywhere else but in France we used to have classes of French, even in France, in primary school in France we have class, you go to class of French. And so in Morocco we go to classes of Arabic and French, six hours a week of each one, and yet, and also...so it's two subjects in school, and then other subjects are either taught in French or Arabic, it depends.

Interviewer: So it's taught as a subject but also it's used to teach other subjects as well.

N: Yes.

Interviewer: And then English would have been taught as another foreign language, basically.

N: Yeah, yeah. It normally, it comes by the end, by secondary school but also, um, I also went to what we call language centers for I'd say 9 years I'd spend there, I'd spend there 3 hours a week of learning English.

Interviewer: So all of this language study, then, it would have started around primary school then, right?

N: So for French and Arabic, even before primary school, I'd say kindergarten school. English started by the end of primary school. Yeah.

Interviewer: So what was it like, kind of having to juggle between these languages? I mean, because that is one of the concerns that some other countries that mainly operate through one language have, you know, how do we

N: France, for example.

Interviewer: Yeah, how was it? How did you feel going, going, being educated in that way where you kind of had all these languages going around?

N: It was just natural for me.

Interviewer: Just natural. Nothing special.

N: I was a kid, nothing special. Classes in French, classes in Arabic, I could use both without problem. Even at home I could use both languages and, even I would see my grandmother speaking to my parents in Berber so I was in a multilingual environment, so it just felt natural. And I often had this debate in France, where we have (18:36 ...?) the right wing say, "Yes but we need to teach French before and then see other languages," and sometimes people think, I'm just like, I went to school, I learned two languages at the same for the same amount of time and I do master French and I do master Arabic and

even I end up being asked by my, by many friends in France, by many French friends, to correct their texts, the texts they're writing in French, their native language. It's doable to me. It's not an issue.

Interviewer: So then how, I wonder, how do you feel I guess when you see these other environments where the languages are more limited than what your experience has taught you? Like these kinds of quote unquote monolingual environments, like. Are there any thoughts that pass through your head when you kind of come to that experience? When you were in Ireland, for example, you said that you saw the Irish in the streets for example, you're hearing English 99% of the time, except for the tourists. So, um, was that odd for you to hear, growing up in an area where you have all these languages being used kind of equally and in parallel, was it odd for you to be in an area where one language kind of reigned supreme?

N: Not all that, say, I felt lucky somehow. You know, you feel lucky, you have something good that other people don't have. (inaudible) So I had no problem to integrate in France, to understand the French language, culture, usages, customs, whereas they have more hard time of learning other languages, of understanding other peoples, and sometimes I feel lucky. About the Irish language, so, I'd say it was both good and bad, because yes, nobody speaks Irish in the world, so if I came to Ireland and just had to deal with Irish I don't even know if I would have done my Erasmus in Ireland. But also it is sad because you see that even if they have, Ireland has got its freedom from the United Kingdom, it's, the culture is still, the language is still struggling to, to affirm itself in front of English even if it's the first official language and everything.

Interviewer: And so I suppose that, like, you know, back home, Moroccan Arabic has no problems, doesn't have the same, what do I want to say, it's not in the same kind of, in a position of so much less power than French.

N: No, no, because Moroccan Arabic, actually, as it is used, is not even a written language. It's not normalized for the moment. So it's more of a spoken language. So, yes, we use it in our daily life but we have no official use of it, even sometimes just in speeches between people, so it's alright. It is the first language of Moroccans, and it does live and it, it won't die. But maybe the Berber language, which is the, the language of the, the original language of North Africa, which is (inaudible) maybe has, have the same struggle as the Irish. It has got the, it has got the official status in 2011 in Morocco, but it's still struggling to find itself like the Irish.

Interviewer: Oh so then when you said that you used both Arabic and French in school, you meant standard Arabic, so then the subjects were taught through standard Arabic.

N: No, no it's a little bit crazy, so when the teacher explains things to you and talks to you, so he would use Moroccan Arabic. But when you would write the lesson on your notebook and, when he would write something on the board, or you would have to use a book, then it's standard Arabic. So it's a mixing of everything. It's a bit crazy to explain sometimes.



Interviewer: I'm just also looking, when you marked, uh, because one of the things I asked was about the enjoyment of the language, and you marked for standard Arabic, just about a 5 out of 10. Um, so, did you feel like, in school, when you had to operate through or you had to use standard Arabic, did you feel, did you ever question why? Did you ever kind of have a bit of a disappointment? Like why can't I just do this in Moroccan Arabic, like? Obviously like you said that it's not standardized so much, there's no writing system that goes along with it, it's more spoken dialect, but.

N: Yeah, you can use the Arabic alphabet, but it's not standardized...(cut out)

Interviewer: Oh right, so you mention that it's not as enjoyable for you, for you to use as some of your other languages, um, is there a reason for that? Was it because it was...?

N: Just didn't like how it sounded, the, its grammar...it's just not natural for me to speak it compared to Moroccan Arabic and for identity matters, I preferred, I always preferred Moroccan Arabic to Arabic. And for formal matters I, I have a better level in French than Arabic, so I, I actually preferred using French than using Arabic. And for example, when it came to reading books...(plugged phone in)

N: Also when I, I was reading a lot of (inaudible) books when I was young, I'm still reading a lot, but whenever I'm reading my, I would always prefer to read in French rather than Arabic. I, I hated reading in Arabic, and when it comes to French or English, I still prefer reading in French.

Interviewer: Alright, so French, so you did mention for French, ten out of ten, so yeah.

N: It's my, the the best language for me.

Interviewer: The best language for you. What do you like about it? Just, it's just, is it, sometimes people say they feel at home in a language. Is French like your home language?

N: For me, it's like home. I can express myself in French whenever I want. Whenever I want go for some deep thoughts and talking about my emotions, or anything, I'm using French.

Interviewer: You're using French. Does it, you feel like it does that better than Arabic, than the Arabic that you have?

N: Yes, totally.

Interviewer: So then, is there something that, because again, since you're bilingual, at least, you're multilingual obviously but like, you have two native languages, um, uh, is there something that Arabic does, is there something that you prefer to use Arabic for rather than French? Or is French still like, when you put them together, is French just going to win all the time?

N: I think French might win all the time.

Interviewer: Oh okay.

N: I don't know, maybe, um, maybe for administrative matters. If I want to write some official letter or something like that. Nothing more. And sometimes because, so, I have, which is crazy, I have a good handwriting in Arabic so sometimes when I miss just seeing letters in Arabic I would visit (inaudible) just like that. Otherwise, no French would always win.

Interviewer: Okay. Is that why you chose to do your university in France? Is that part of the reason that you chose to do university in France?

N: Well, I wanted to do university abroad. That was, I wanted to do that. So I could choose between Switzerland and France on the first instance, but then I attended in France because yes, the Moroccans do love the French degree, so my parents were like yeah, France is better so, naturally Moroccan people would send their children to France and also because it's the least expensive good quality for the studies. Whereas in Trinity I don't know how people pay every year. In France, my studies cost me six hundred euros a year. You get good quality for that amount of money so it's a natural choice for Moroccans to send their children to France, whereas Switzerland would have been much more expensive. We did not even think about the UK or anywhere else.

Interviewer: Alright, so, most of your languages then, most of the languages you described were compulsory because you had to use them for school or because you grew up with them, including English, but then you also mentioned, you said you studied a bit of Irish while you were here. You mentioned earlier German and a bit of Berber as well, and on the language profile you put Spanish. Um, so, but you only did a bit of, like 6 months of Spanish. Was that back in school or was that in college as well?

N: It's in college. So in my university we have, we have to do 2 languages, courses. So the first one is always English. My level did not evolve in this class, not at all. And we had to do a second language, so I chose to do German because I had some basics when I was just reading about it, so I did German for a year. But at the end I didn't really enjoy it because in second year, the professor, the teacher just considered that we have a B2 level and ordered us to do presentations about politics in Germany, so I was like I'm not learning anything, I don't like that, I don't want to talk about the internal points in Germany when I still cannot have a normal conversation in German. And then I, for the last semester before coming to Trinity I could choose, I could take Spanish so I asked to take it. And I, I always wanted to learn it because it does sound good for me and its grammar is near to the French one and also I with my family we travel a lot to Spain and there's always this language barrier in Spain because Spanish sometimes, especially in the South they don't really speak English, so it's always a struggle to communicate with people. Spanish sounded good, I was like, I want to speak this language. I tried to. Maybe I will come back whenever, as soon as I have the occasion to.

Interviewer: So then, so then German was the first language that you really kind of like chose to learn. And then Spanish was another one that you chose to learn.

N: Yes.

Interviewer: And right now you're not studying Spanish at the moment, right? Or are you still studying?

N: No.

Interviewer: But you just said that you might come back to it at some point.

N: Yes.

Interviewer: Are you, so, are there any languages that you're currently actively studying? Trying to learn?

N: Trying to learn, I'd say Irish, Spanish. Yes, and at some point when I was in secondary school I had some interest in Hebrew as well.

Interviewer: Hebrew? Ok.

N: Yeah, but it didn't go very far. Someday I might go back to it.

Interviewer: Okay. Are there many opportunities to learn Hebrew, um, around you?

N: Just through books, you know.

Interviewer: Just Google?

N: Yeah, just through books because, um, so I looked for opportunities to learn Hebrew but the problem is just, it's just for Jewish people who intend to immigrate to Israel. I'm not Jewish and I don't intend to immigrate to Israel, so. There's an intensive class to, to get ready to go to Israel. Not many opportunities right at the moment. so it was, it was, there was no point of going into such classes.

Interviewer: So yeah one of the questions I'm asking is, uh, like one question I'm actually quite curious to find out is, do you happen to have any particularly memorable experiences learning any of your languages? Perhaps a teacher that, uh, that you really enjoyed learning with? Or, um a particularly memorable class or maybe a moment or an event that had you using a language, that just really, like a language that you had been learning, that really really kind of sticks with you? Is there anything that kind of, kind of just remember?

N: I had many teachers I really loved. I had many good teachers in all languages I did. But the most memorable moment for me is that once in an English class, there, the teacher, the teacher tried to, in order to make us learn English properly, she just asked us, buy a fully English dictionary, never translate. Whenever you learn a word, draw it, look for different definitions, look for synonyms, but never try to translate to French or your native language, and I'm still doing that whenever I try to learn something. Avoid the translated part to properly learn the language and not have any dependence on any other language. And this is something that was, I think it was the best advice one could have ever given me.

Interviewer: So then like now, so even when you were learning Irish, for example, you tried to get it through the Irish as well?

N: I tried although the class was in English, so it was kind of hard to do.

Interviewer: So then, when you did Spanish, for example, was the class taught through Spanish? Or was it taught through French?

N: Unfortunately, it was taught through French because French people learn language like this way. That's why they're bad at it.

Interviewer: That's why they're bad at it.

N: They're really bad at languages.

Interviewer: Are they? From what you've seen? So like your classmates now, they wouldn't be able to operate outside of French. In Lyon, I mean

N: Maybe in French accented English, I would say, yes. No, I (inaudible) in another language that French.

Interviewer: In your opinion then, this is my own kind of experience. Well, not even experience, this is a stereotype that kind of goes around. Like, especially when it comes to the French and their attitudes towards English, it's not so much that, like, so what we think, this is what we think and you can let me know if I'm kind of on the right track, what we tend to think is that French people, they know how to speak English but they prefer not to. Like they'd rather you try, they'd rather not have to deal with anyone who speaks English, kind of. There's a bit of that. We kind of get that from them. But then when I talk to people, other people from France it's not so much that, it is more, they're a bit more, but then again it also depends on which part of France they're from. It depends. If they're from Paris, for example, this is what I've heard, they won't even bother with you if you're not speaking French.

N: This is really funny because it's the, we have the same stereotype in Morocco about Spanish people.

Interviewer: Really? About Spanish people?

N: The same. He would understand French and English and he wouldn't talk to you unless you speak his, his language. But actually, I would say, so yes the French are really proud of their language. It's about their identity and they're mostly proud of French, French language, above everything it's the most beautiful language, it's the language to speak or nothing. So this, with this mentality, so it has some impact on the, on the language policy and the education policy, so they have, they have had bad language...English is badly taught in France. So yes, people would be proud about the French but when you come to English then, because of this policy, this pride and everything, they would become bad at English. They would be bad at English. They would be bad at any other language. And especially about the sounds of French (inaudible) you have many sounds in French that you have in no other language. So they wouldn't be able to learn them later somehow.

There you get the problem. Also it tends to change because now, for example research now is done in English. They're trying to do classes in English although it's a disaster. We just have our lecture and said, please go back to French because this is a disaster. And also there have been some changes because all the signs in France are in French and everything is said in French but just, when I came to France, when I would take the bus or the tram line, metro line, everything would be said in French and nothing more. And just the last, this year, everything has changed and now, everything is becoming bilingual. Now I'm hearing the stops and the indications in the metro, the metro line stops, the underground stops in English as well. This has changed actually.

Interviewer: That's interesting.

N: Just two years ago, everything, but everything was in French.

Interviewer: Wow, that is interesting. The attitude is slowly changing there. Hmm. Alright. It's just interesting as well because you mention that you think, other languages in France are badly taught, but then your own education, through a system that's modeled on the French system, and you came out with pretty good language abilities. Especially in English as well, so it is interesting that you can kind of see that but, um, but you kind of, I don't know, it's the same but I guess it's not 100% the same.

N: No it's not 100% the same.

Interviewer: As far as language education goes.

N: It's conceived on the French system, the programs are almost, like, the same, unless when it comes to language education. And also, so in Morocco, because of this plural identity, plural language identity, we don't have the pride that the French have. And actually, even historically the Moroccan pride is to be able to speak many languages. The philosophy in Morocco is like, ok so, learn as many languages as you can. They're not like, this has to come first or this is the language of anything. Since the mentality is different, so yes. When it comes to learning languages and teaching languages, they, in Morocco they do better.

Interviewer: Interesting. Interesting. So just to clarify then, Morocco is, so right now it's independent, it's no longer

N: Yeah, it's independent

Interviewer: Linked in with any, yeah it's an independent country but it still has that history with France but it's technically an African nation, correct?

N: Yes.

Interviewer: It's not in Europe at all, it's

N: A north African nation.

Interviewer: A north African nation, ok. Yeah, oh interesting, so like, that's pretty cool that, you know, the idea is, speak as many languages as possible, um, alright, ok.



## *Interview 2*

Interviewer: Thanks again for looking at that. I thought you had sent me back your comments, but I guess you were just gonna...like I didn't say you had to send me back anything, but, yeah I think you...

N: Yeah, I was about to comment but at the end I didn't have time so I just, to write that and I, remembered what I heard (?)...

Interviewer: Oh, no worries. Yeah, no, so like, I mean, as I was going over it as well, I think it was, uh, you know I went over it a couple times and I started looking at things and thinking about things and um, it was interesting to kind of go back to it after our original talk, to kind of work through it more slowly, you know, as you're transcribing it and reading through, um, so yeah, I, I did my best to kind of identify things that I thought were particularly interesting and particularly relevant.

N: That was very interesting, actually.

Interviewer: Yeah, so, how'd I do? What do you think? Do you think I was, um, I was close on some of those things?

N: Uh, I felt like those, you, you pointed out some elements that I have never thought about them, but after thinking about them, I would say, yes you're right.

Interviewer: Alright, that's good to hear. Um, yeah so, I mean, I think the biggest thing was, I tried to put them in order of um, what I thought was most prominent to least prominent, um, and even like that last one, I thought I might have been stretching just a little bit, about the whole, the power relations and things like that. I do know, like just from my own experience as well, that language is...

N: Maybe it's, maybe, you know, I liked it because maybe you said this is not a major theme, maybe I didn't talk much about it, but I am aware of it and for me it's an important part of my thoughts as well. So yes you did well imagining it.

Interviewer: Oh alright, ok. So, um, I mean, is there anything you want to start talking about? Um anything that you had, any comments that you wanted to let me know before I start? I'd like to give you an opportunity before I start kind of...

N: So comfort in knowing and curiosity, you're just right. I, indeed I used the word mystery a lot, especially for Irish, it was really, really a mystery, it was, like, what the hell is this? It was more a mystery than any language, you know? I go to Spain, I don't really speak Spanish, I have just some basic knowledge but I still, since it's like French I can, I can do, I can imitate the accent, it's alright.

Interviewer: Exactly, there's like little, of course if you look at the words, there's parts of words that are very similar too...

N: The first time I went to Spain, we even used GPS, I would just read it, for example, the signs, puerto, centro~ or something like, like ok, I know what this is. I get it, I can pronounce it so, alright. But Irish was like, what the hell is this? So yes...

Interviewer: I was just gonna say, even in, uh, like if you're in an area where there's multiple languages being spoken, like you talked about in France now there's a little bit of English coming in in like public areas such as on the Metro and things like that, you're able to understand both of them, but like Irish was like the first time that like, there was something there that, it was next to a language you understood and there was another thing that you just couldn't understand, that, so yeah.

N: Yes, it was weird, I didn't like it. It's like in Morocco, the signs are in both Arabic and French, I always read both the information, I always read some information twice, I have to (inaudible) something.

Interviewer: Yeah, and do you ever notice that there's, sometimes they're slightly different? Like there's some slight differences in the way that things are translated perhaps.

N: Sometimes, yes. And sometimes you don't have the same information, maybe you might have more information in one language than another.

Interviewer: Exactly, yeah. Especially like, I find that especially true, like in um, like if you go to a museum, for example, and they'll have the explanations, and they're in multiple languages but the information that they have in each language is gonna be different. Um, yeah. Ok, alright.

N: Um, you talked about also enjoying the similarities with Arabic. I wouldn't call that enjoying, just like, someone pointed out, I was like, that's interesting and it helped me understand the logic without being just like, what the hell? What the hell is this again? So, yes, but I wouldn't call it to enjoy something. Um, so, and then the feeling of being lucky. So I know I, I'm aware that in my speech there are contradictions because I come from a country of contradictions. This is no secret for anyone. So yes, when I say normally if everything goes good because it's also a country where inequalities are really, really present and really pronounced, so yes the main policy is to learn as much languages as you want, there is no, it's not an issue, people are open to that, the system is open to that as well but you have, you have differences in qualities between schools depending on the city, on the neighborhood, whether it's private or public, so yes, you might have a bad schooling and end up, and end up with nothing actually, even if the system in its principles is open to this and wants to achieve this, this multilingualism and this luck of multilingualism as I call it. Uh, I do prioritize or categorize the languages depending on how I (inaudible) them. Yes, you're totally right, so yes, when you said also that I wasn't, I felt distance from Arabic although it was no mystery to me, yes it is indeed because of the power relation to the Moroccan dialect.



Interviewer: Yeah, I mean, that was, yeah you were very clear about that, saying that for you, for identity purposes, Moroccan Arabic is the Arabic that you choose to identify with, so that was pretty easy, yeah.

N: Yeah, especially that in Morocco back then, the Arabic teachers or many people would repeat that the mother tongue is Arabic, so yes, there is some sort of resistance, symbolic resistance for me. Uh, multiplicity, complexity, comfort in your languages...(reading)

Interviewer: Like, I mean adding to that, you just said that, like, your country, your country's a country of contradictions and I think that just kind of adds to the idea of complexity and things not, kind of, not organizing themselves into nice, neat little categories or, not easy to kind of pick things apart, it's all kind of a jumble there and, uh, yeah so.

N: Yeah, so many powers, many powers interacting with each other and you know, there were many influences and they, you can't go to a part and let alone the others because there are many interests and... Power relations, so, yes these are for me, this is a major theme.

Interviewer: Ok. It's not not a major theme, it is a major theme, ok.

N: Yeah, it is. It is an important theme for me, it's worth mentioning language and power. (Reading) Yes, so, yes, Standard Arabic for me is an archaic language but yes, it is used, it's not a dead language properly. It has, for me or many would say it has no native speakers. It doesn't make it for me a dead language since it's still in use. Even some linguists maybe would say that Latin is not dead, it's still in use somehow, between scientists, for given names, and in the (?) as well, for their...so they would say, yes, it has no speakers but it's not dead as nobody uses it anymore.

Interviewer: I mean, it's still a ceremonial language, I know Trinity, when Trinity has their graduations, their graduation ceremonies are conducted in part in Latin, and the degrees, many degrees, I know the Trinity, the diplomas you get, the degrees, everything's in Latin. Um, and even, like, um, and my undergrad too, when I did my undergrad I went to a Jesuit university, and because the Jesuit university is linked in with the Catholic church, it's very ceremonial, yeah so there, so my degree from my undergraduate school is completely in Latin as well, so. It still does hold some significance, so I kind of agree with you that it's not dead dead.

N: Must be a nightmare to translate.

Interviewer: Yeah, well I mean, yeah I mean luckily no one's asked me to translate the degree just yet but I imagine that if I do get that, yeah that's gonna have, that's gonna take some, uh, take some effort to get that translated as well.

N: And some money as well.

Interviewer: Yeah, that too, yeah.

N: I just know, in France they give everything in French and French is part of everything and no Latin, no English, nothing. Maybe, maybe a bit of English, because I have worked on a project, on an IT project based on generating degrees and so we ask for the model of the degree from my university, so it's all in French but the information we have (gard du master - check), master's degree, it's written in both languages, but everything else is written in French. But it's an ugly diploma, it's not as classy as Trinity's (?).

Interviewer: So then the, so that, the power relationships there, the power relations and everything, so you're mentioning what's in Arabic, but you don't feel the same thing with French then? Like is French not...

N: There is.

Interviewer: There is? Okay so you do feel...

N: Actually there, I wouldn't, there is a sort of victimization from many sides, you see. For example, yes, so there's some resistance to French before some Arabic defenders, that would say yes, it's a non-native language, it's a colonial language, and yes it's been, since '56 we're independent and yet we're still using it for administration, for, as a language of instruction as well, so yes we should stop that. There has been some strict policies of Arabization, which have somehow failed or caused many problems to, for public school. But they're still happening and now we're coming back to French, however, especially for science and technical stuff, so yes there is a sort of resistance and people complaining about that, and yes French does have a power above Arabic, and then, yes, and even Moroccan Arabic, it, um, compared to Arabic, yes, the power depends, if you talk about the status and the domains of use, so yes, Arabic is considered to be prestigious and Moroccan Arabic is to be the street speech, but at the end the most spoken one remains Moroccan Arabic, even if it's of no official use and nobody's defending it, but it's the most spoken language all around the country, so, there are some, and also some, some people, especially in the north and in the western Sahara, which is administered by Morocco, they would call that, French has succeeded in getting power compared to Spanish because the north and the south were under Spanish occupation and the center, it was only the center that was under the French occupation, and after the independence, so the administrative language became French everywhere, and the second language of instruction became French everywhere and Spanish started to decrease or just to be spoken in an informal way, or people sending children to Spanish school. So yes, France and, France could maintain some relation, good relation or some power in Morocco, and yes French is still spoken whereas Spanish has just been weakened.

Interviewer: Does, um, so does Moroccan Arabic then, has it adopted some like French words into it? Like is there more of a...it's adopted a lot of the French kind of words?

N: Um, what, actually, Moroccan Arabic, no, I said that before, it's not standardized, so what I like about it, it's not necessarily a bad thing because it makes it flexible. So yes, we have, in Moroccan Arabic we do have Berber, French and Spanish words that entered into it, and even the grammar is, it's actually some Berber grammar using mainly Arabic vocabulary, so it's, so (?) and stuff. And when you talk about, yes, so we have words that

come from French and even they are, which can be Moroccanized so we can take a verb from French and conjugate it in Moroccan structures, as well as for Spanish and also you might, I don't know if this is called codeswitching but we also might speak in both, two languages in one word naturally, so using French then Arabic, Moroccan Arabic, then going back to French easily, we, the other speaker, as long as he understands French, which is the main case for many people would understand without problems, so yes.

Interviewer: Interesting, so it's like you said, more flexible because it's not, there's no standards that it has to, that are applied to it, doesn't have to abide by any rules, so (inaudible) bit more flexible. Oh ok.

N: Yeah, as long as it's logical, as it obeys some grammar stuff, you can add whatever you want.

Interviewer: So as you're saying, just from my own perspective that does kind of give it a certain power, like going back to that whole thing of power relations, that it has these, this quality that those other languages that are standardized don't have. Because they're standardized, there's rules that you, you're expected to follow but because those rules don't necessarily, uh, like they're not imposed on Moroccan Arabic, you can be a bit more creative, I guess, with your language. So that's interesting. Ok.

N: And also, since we're in the Covid crisis, what, there was something interesting I have noticed also. I've talked about the institutional behavior towards Moroccan Arabic, it was just the language of the streets and we're not going to use it, and now, because of the Covid crisis, so there are many communication campaigns and uh, many many shows to explain to people what's happening, what to do especially with the rules evolving every day. And all the communications are being done either in Berber or in Moroccan Arabic and not in standard Arabic. So yeah, the institution recognizes that it is the language to use if you want to speak, if you want to talk to most people and make them understand what's happening.

Interviewer: Ok, yeah, so like even though, even though it's not like a standardized, kind of, official, but it's not even the official language, right? It's the vernacular, it's what everyone speaks, it's the...ok, but yet all these announcements are coming through in the vernacular rather than in the more administrative languages. So that is very, that's a very interesting environment that you've got going on there. Um,

N: So we have the laws, you have the laws and everything written in Arabic, but maybe in French as well, in Berber, but once you, yes, once they talk to people, once they go to announcements, anything, even in the parliament, they are debating in Moroccan Arabic.

Interviewer: Wow. And you're keeping up on this even though right now you're in France and France is your, that's where your immediate concern is. You're still keeping up with the situation that's going on in Morocco, very, it seems as though you're right on top of it.

N: So yes, I talk almost everyday with my parents, so they keep me informed about what's happening, and as well, on Facebook, I'm both following French information and Moroccan information because I get to know what's happening. So usually, for example,

yes sometimes I, I am keen on following what's happening there because I have an opinion about what's, what is decided not only about Covid-19 or anything, just the news, the politics, what's voted, what's not voted, what people are against, how it's evolving, so yes, I keep, I keep track of everything that happens there and I notice what's happening.

Interviewer: That is interesting, the language and everything like that. So then, um, and then of course, in France, everything's coming through in French. Do you notice if they're making any announcements in English for, for people in France who might not necessarily speak French? I don't know if there's a huge population but...

N: So, um, there is, there would be English speakers, not really because they're coming from Ireland or the UK or the US but just non-French speakers, so you have them, so yes, um, actually on the TV on the street or whatever, so you won't hear or you won't see any English (?) announcements. On the, but if you want, for example, you have to go on the government website and really look, look for English information, sometimes it's kind of hidden so it's, it takes an effort to find the information. And also because we are in, we're in the country of paperwork, I don't know if you heard about how the lockdown is done but um, whenever we need to go out for, to do our groceries, we have to write, to write or to print a document that we fill, I (hereby undersigned), Mr. ~, living in the following address in this country, born on...fill in the information, I'm going out because of this and this and this, as allowed in the decree or whatever. And we have to do this everytime we get out. And at the beginning, during the first week, the document was only written in French, and two weeks after, because they have to, they have done an English version, but you have to look, really look for it. And we were, we had to do that on paper and smartphone documents were prohibited at the beginning. And now they're allowed, but it only works in French, and there's no English. So yes we have, it takes an effort to find information in English from French officials.

Interviewer: Yeah, like I know for the, like, I heard that that was happening in Italy, Italy you need papers to leave your house. An dl think in Spain as well, in certain parts of Spain, you're also expected to have papers. I didn't know it was happening in France. I guess it is.

N: Yes, it happens in France, it's happening in Morocco as well but it's, the way of doing it is a bit different. Here you just write your paper and you go out. In Morocco, you get, you fill your paper, there's the local authorities that sign it and authorize only one person from each household to get out for anything so one representative for each house but you don't have to write it every time, so it's, it's a bit weird.

Interviewer: So, um, alright but I want to go back to like the languages and things. Uh, so just, I want to go, and and, I wanna follow up a little bit on the French because this thing about power and identity, once again you're saying it's a major theme, um, you talk about Moroccan Arabic being the, the type of Arabic that you use for your own identity purposes, but you also mention that French was the language that you find yourself being best able to express yourself in and so I wondered, do you, do you feel a contradiction there? Or like, are you comfortable with that, that like, is French also, knowing what you

know about the history and everything like that, and these, uh, these efforts to, I guess Arabize, or re-Arabize Morocco, like obviously you feel very comfortable in both these languages, both these languages have important value for you, meaning for you, do you ever at all, do you ever feel kind of weird using French even though it's the language that you're best able to use to express yourself? Does this ever, kind of, pose a concern for you?

N: I would say not really because I consider, however the history, that French is also part of my identity because, um, what I say is also that there has been occupation or protectorates of France so French is present in Morocco because of that. But whatever happened, French is now, for me, has become a part because of history, of Moroccan culture. And when I've been raised, so I have, my family is Francophone, my grandmother has studied in French and is mainly fluent in French rather than Arabic so she used, whenever I talk to her we do speak French, I've been raised somehow in both languages and when I went to school, the, my, I was in a Catholic school that was bilingual and enhanced the French teaching so I, but the teachers were Moroccan so I learned French from Moroccan people. I didn't learn it as the language of occupation or the language of foreigners (?), a foreign language, so yes it is written there because of issues, because of history, because of occupation but I, it became a part of culture. And I've been raised in that even at home, so it's a part of my identity as a Moroccan, as an individual as well. As long as I'm aware of why did I, why I was raised in French and how did things happen, so it's not a problem for me but, why I'm having some resistance towards Arabic, just because, I wouldn't say re-Arabization but just Arabization because before occupation there were not, the use of Arabic, so it was unoffic- there was some official use and evidently it was not a strict policy of Arabization in schools because it was a modern state and all these ideas came from the Middle East once the independence movements came in and some Islamist movements came in, that's why, and so, we sort of imposed something that we say that happened, was there before, was the norm before, but actually it was not really. That's why it's somehow crazy, and you feel that it's some, Eastern influence that I don't feel right with.

Interviewer: It feels almost like, would you say it feels almost inauthentic? What they're trying to do.

N: Yes, yes. And sometimes like, for example, sometimes I've been attacked for, sometimes by my Arabic teacher because she knew that I had such issues and I did not really like Arabic although I was good at school, good in her class, but she was just like, yes, you're ignoring your mother language, you don't want to speak it, you're ashamed of it, shame on you. And I was just like, how can you, just how can you call it my mother language and, I have never been raised in that language. Just, even now talking to you and you talking to me, you use Moroccan Arabic, so you just teach me some grammar and you call it my mother tongue so, there was some, like, there is some issue with it. Yeah, it's, it's especially the inauthentic stuff that happens.

Interviewer: These are like a lot of, these are some loose ends I want to tie up. I was going to ask you about, like, your teachers of French, you just mentioned that they were all Moroccan teachers of French.

N: I had a French teacher just once, for two years but really late in my life, when I was in secondary school actually. I was already able to speak French and (?) in French, it was just a class of French and literature and everything.

Interviewer: And then you mentioned your family language is French, um, last time you mentioned that one of your grandmothers also spoke Berber, one of the Berber languages, because I think, Berber's a family of languages right? Or is it...

N: Yes, it is just my mother's part of family that speaks it but I've been mostly raised with them because we live in the same city, my father's family is not from the same city so I've been seeing them a lot more than my father's family so, yes they do speak Berber but they don't really use it on a daily basis. Maybe my great grandparents used to speak it and I've had a chance to know them when I was young so yes it was a present language that I heard but once they died, just between my grandparents, my mother and her siblings, they're mainly using French and Moroccan Arabic more than Berber, and they would speak Berber with other Berber speakers and not within the family unless they want to tell some secrets or something like that that I should not understand.

Interviewer: And that's why you kind of compared it a little bit with Irish where it seems to be the older generations who are able to speak it but it's kind of been, uh, kind of been taken out of the common languages of people. Alright, ok. Um, alright I mean that, I just wanted to, so this second chat is mostly just to kind of check in and catch up and see what it is, if you had anything to add, if you wanted say anything else, and I did, these other questions I have, I had just a couple questions to ask and I kind of asked them all. Um, just a couple more because these are questions that I intended to ask during the first time but because I didn't want to stop you as you were telling your stories and things, I didn't want to kind of change tracks or anything, but since we have an opportunity now I think I'll bring these questions back. Um, yeah, no, I think, so, like, it as interesting to me when I asked you about, um, you know if you had a kind of very special language learning memory or anything like that, you mentioned an English memory, so I wonder, like, does English at all play a part in your identity? I mean, now we're speaking in English but I'm assuming that, uh, you know when you do your course back in France you know, you're doing it in French, you're not doing it so much in English, um, so I'm wondering how big is English in your own world I guess, in your own, as far as identity, you clearly say Moroccan Arabic and French are your two big identity languages, is English in there at all? Or is English, like I mention that it seems to be more like an academic language for you, is that a correct...

N: At the beginning it was academic, it was an academic language so I learned it as an academic language at the, what we call the American language center in my home city, my home town, for three hours a week, so I've done a lot of English. Then, like everyone else, I started watching TV shows in English, um this, I think because I had worked enough

and was somehow good enough, so I could, for example, even notice the differences between British English and American English and maybe show some preferences toward British English rather than American English, although it is somehow some nonsense but it's just my own preferences. Um, even the way of writing and how I use English for reading sometimes, watching shows, talking to people, now um, since I came to Ireland so I became more confident speaking English rather than just having formal conversations, so I wouldn't say it's improved my level of English, just my confidence in speaking English and I'm more confident in codeswitching, even with English, and sometimes now, even with my friends in France, I might use English just out of nowhere, out of the blue, I might give an answer in English or ask a question in English and, what just happened? just like that, so yes. But yes, at the beginning it was an academic language, now, yes it's a lingua franca for me.

Interviewer: And, so you seem to be kind of unconsciously allowing to work itself into your normal language practices, ok, that's, um, alright so, so yeah that was one thing that I wanted to kind of follow up on. Another is, yeah so this is a question I kind of wanted to ask all of my participants just in your head, obviously my study's on bilingualism, multilingualism, I just wonder like, for you yourself, what does it mean to be multilingual? Like, do you know, it's kind of a broad question, like in your head, like what does multilingualism mean to you or what does it mean for you? Like, could you give some kind of statement like, what does it mean to you to be able to use multiple languages?

N: To use multiple languages, to be able to understand

Interviewer: Yeah to be able to understand these things, to be a multilingual, like when you hear the word multilingual, like, what does it mean to you? Kind of.

N: I would say citizen of, being a citizen of the world. Feeling more, having the feeling of being a real citizen of the world. Um, being able to embrace the, some cultures easier than just through reading about it in a foreign language, and as you say once again I will go back to confidence knowing and understanding. Also I have more facilities understanding many kinds of conversations and, you know, like, I might have some, you cannot hide much information through language. I don't know if you know what I mean. For example if I'm with many, if I'm with French people, if they would talk French or English I would understand everything they say and without problem, once I use Moroccan Arabic if I want to say something, I never do that and I hate doing that but I feel that if I wanted to have some, to pass some message without the, I can express something without them understanding it's like a sort of weapon somehow, but I, I wouldn't consider it a weapon because I would never use it and I hate doing that.

Interviewer: But you could still, like...

N: And having flexibility as well.

Interviewer: Yeah flexibility but it's kind of like, you can control how much you know and how much other people know, kind of

N: Somehow

Interviewer: In a way, ok.

N: Somehow. It's always a good, a good way to shine in society somehow. It's always, I speak more than two languages, Oh My God! How come?! That's so amazing! So it's a gift, a source of confidence as well. And also it's rewarding when you're able to speak, even when you have just a wee bit of the other people, other people's languages, whenever you just use one word or two they're just happy about it so there's some satisfaction in that kind of behavior as well.

Interviewer: Yeah, I mean that's true, even just like please and thank you, you know, they do go a long way. That's been my experience, I don't know, even just saying thank you in a language often gets a good reaction, yeah, alright. I think there was one more thing I wanted to run by you or ask you, let me see. Give me a minute, I'm trying to remember. oh that's right, um so, no no I got it. So like, I know that you were intending to, um, did you mention that you were going to try and study Spanish this coming term? Or was that going to be on your own?

N: It would be on my own but, or maybe next year if the lockdown is finished, if I could spare some money I, I was thinking about enrolling in some Instituto Cervantes classes.

Interviewer: Like how, yeah no go ahead.

N: Because just maybe traditional classes are more efficient with me than just learning alone.

Interviewer: So like I was gonna, one thing that, I mean, because of the situation, and because, I'm asking people about their language learning plans, not just what they've done before but like how, like what they're thinking about doing in the future, um, like what do you, it feels like there's, there's going to be a push towards increasing the amount, the number of options that people have for online learning and, um, like if the Instituto Cervantes, they had, they had like online lessons, would that be something that you would consider doing or do you really, would you prefer the more traditional in-person classes?

N: Honestly, I do prefer the traditional classes, although the online classes can be good because, after the lockdown I've been able to come back to the Irish class the last week so...

Interviewer: Oh you've been doing that online?

N: Yeah once again but, with the teacher just on video classes, I would say yes and no. So maybe distance (?) classes or through video, video chat or anything, video conversation, I would say, it's not that good but it's alright because there's some real contact, some instant contact with another speaker who explains you stuff, but if it, I would, if it was, so yes it's an online course so we just have all resources, listening (?) resource, grammar resource and you just read and do the exercises, I would say no. It would be easy and through the power of deduction I would, I would get all the answers correct. I just get bored so easily and it feels awkward for me. Yes, I do prefer the traditional classes.



Interviewer: So you've done a couple of the online lessons with your Irish teacher then? Over the last few weeks. So was that through, Trinity was offering that? Or was the teacher doing that on their own?

N: It was through Trinity gmail, the class was the Trinity class I've taken in the first semester and since the college was closed everything became, done remotely, and I, he kept sending me the emails he was sending to the students so the, all the notes I was getting them for the whole term and when he sent the email, yes so the class is going to be done remotely and if you have already left and you want to come back, come back to the class, just email me and you'll be able to join. So I sent him an email and said yes, ok, of course.

Interviewer: That was nice.

N: Yeah it was so nice of him. So it was through Hangouts and yes. But he's a very welcoming teacher and especially, I think when, in the case of Ireland when you speak Irish and you teach Irish and you have foreigners interested in that, he was just so motivated to feel (?) that so. It wasn't an issue. But normally I'd always prefer a traditional class.

Interviewer: Alright, um, I think, um, I think that's all that I had to ask.

### *Interview 3*

Interviewer: So again, so the whole purpose of this is, just like last time, just to kind of, have a chance to meet up and see if there was anything you wanted to, any further comments you had, anything...you said that you found it very relevant, what I sent, the notes that I kind of picked up from, picked up on across the different people I was, I am interviewing and talking to. Um, so just like last time, you know, maybe give you an opportunity to start the conversation, to lead the conversation. Was there anything that kind of jumped out at you? Was there anything you wanted to bring up first?

AN: Yes, so um, I liked how you pointed out also the relationship between family, peers and teachers, especially with peers, which might have a tenuous relationship as you said. Especially, I identified with such a situation where I could refuse to learn some languages because of that, but also, sometimes their mockery as well can be a kind of motivation, it has been for me, especially with English somehow, with British part of English, British aspects of English as a dialect of English. Um, also I liked how you pointed out also about the freedom notion. So yes, I think, I think there is something you can do with the notion of freedom as a very important part of what you're studying because yes you have some freedom between a language and another, um, as you say, some freedom between some native languages and other languages. There is some freedom in the native languages when you have to express yourself fully, your emotions or something, also with other languages where you can discover new notions, or even how you also, what you're being taught for example. Um, if you, I think if you're, for example, a French speaker natively and you get to do science in English since the beginning, you're not really able to speak about science in your native language actually. Into technical stuff, you need this foreign language but you're, somehow, your language of instruction or your natural language into specialized and technical stuff. Um, also about freedom, nothing to have with freedom, I had a feeling, an experience a few weeks ago and I think it should be interesting to mention it, um, also foreign languages might be a way of protecting yourself also. Um, I think, because it was something that happened to me, so I had a tenuous conversation with a lady a few weeks ago which was Moroccan, trilingual as me, I had some feelings I needed to tell her, and somehow I was, I was leading the whole conversation in English, not in French, not in Moroccan Arabic, my native languages, my most natural, as I said before my languages of emotion and of expressing myself in all the ways I could, but this because it was some complicated conversation to have, I couldn't think in any other language than English. I think I was like, is it some self-protection way of thinking? Is it because things might be more objective, more sensible rather than sensitive. I didn't know why I could not use either French or Arabic at that moment. I was only thinking in English, writing in English, speaking English. Maybe. Maybe there's something to look about that.

Interviewer: Interesting. So you really couldn't think

N: I could not

Interviewer: You could only think of it in English. That's interesting.

N: Yes, I could not think about it and because she knows the kind of person I am, and she knows also my relationship with the French language, which is the language I am most comfortable with, and I could not type anything in French or in Moroccan Arabic. I couldn't even think about it. She made, I remember she made the observation that, why wasn't I speaking French. I can't, now I cannot. There is something blocking my mind, in my brain, I don't know, but I just could not make a sentence in French. Everything was coming in English. It became natural, all of a sudden.

Interviewer: So this is a couple weeks ago. Even after that, you still don't know why you couldn't think of it in French. Wow. Ok, interesting.

N: No. I just, I just said maybe it's some self-protection mechanism I cannot explain but I don't know why I'm, sometimes it happens like that.

Interviewer: That is interesting. I mean, yeah, that's obviously very, that must have been something, like, I'm guessing that at the time, you didn't notice it until she pointed it out, and, or did you notice that you really couldn't put it in any other way?

N: A few minutes before I noticed it. Because at some point I got an answer in French or in Moroccan Arabic and I just kept answering in English. Like, it's not happening. So yes, I noticed that, but I could not do that.

Interviewer: Did you feel anything about it? Were you feeling confused? Kind of shocked? Did you have any kind of emotional reaction to not being able to say these things in French or Moroccan Arabic?

N: Just surprised, but not shocked, not in any...so, just surprised. I didn't know what to think about it but I was like, also, as long as I could express myself in any language, so it was fine. At least I could say something, so.

Interviewer: That's, that's an interesting thing, that no matter how hard you tried you just couldn't do it in another language.

N: In what I call the most natural language, the ones I'm most comfortable with, the ones I've mastered most, so. Something happened.

Interviewer: Well you said maybe it was protection. You said, you know, protecting yourself kind of, trying not to get emotional about it maybe? Maybe? Possibly?

N: Yeah, maybe building somehow a sensible, sensible speech. Going rather with reason, rather than with emotions maybe. So. So then with freedom, you put that. Also, escape from another language, yes I do identify with that, I've talked about it many times. Um...looking into possible careers related to languages, so this is what I'm currently doing, I couldn't do that before, but this is, it's a good point. Um, also you talked about self and identity, so yes, for sure, bilingualism, multilingualism is a part of identity and sometimes you said about not fitting neatly into more common conceptions of national identity. I think, when you come to Irish, French, Spanish, yes, it might be easy not fitting into that. When it comes to some, by nature multilingual identities, it's just too complex. I think I, I'm conceiving my Morocannity [sic] as some way, and people, and it's just

different to everyone, it's too complex to define because it is way too tenuous and complicated a matter.

Interviewer: Well, I mean, you did mention that, you know, in Morocco it's completely normal to use and speak at least three languages, you mentioned French, Moroccan Arabic, you've got English in the education system, you know, and then of course people speaking some of the Berber languages, so it's, you mentioned that it's a multilingual nation to begin with, so

N: Yes, it is. But sometimes, you know, people, because of some ideologies, would not accept that, calling it an identity than just a skill or some heritage because of history, nothing more. So yes, this is why this is complicated, it's just a matter of admitting what we are, what we want to define ourselves as. So the roles of emotion, what did I point out, yeah feeling a duty also, I pointed out that, feeling a duty to the language of people speaking it to learn it better, so, um, this is happening to me, especially with Berber language, where I have really beginning notions, but it came from a rejection of the language and I am somehow feeling a duty so I'm definitely into that. Um, also, somehow, yes, feeling does influence the experience of learning. I know that there are people that choose a language because they're interested in it, it's the case for me, as there are people who choose languages for pragmatic reasons, for utility maybe. But I'm not really into that for a number of reasons. So, for example, I chose, when I was in Ireland, to take classes of Gaeilge or I have expressed some interest at some point of Hebrew. I didn't go really too far into that but, um, my peers would always find it weird that I do choose such languages rather than most common pragmatic useful languages like German, Spanish, even if I have some knowledge of Spanish, um, what we would call international languages. I think, um, making such pragmatic uses just, it's not, it's interesting for economic reasons, for your career, for everything, it is indeed useful but you, you quickly lose the motivation once you see no real interest just rather than material interest. So I'm more into feeling rather than pragmatic choices.

N: So yes, like, um you pointed out at some point, "while all of you admitted to understanding the potential social and economic of speaking a foreign language or languages, those benefits did not seem to register as highly on your list of priorities," so yes, that's definitely what I'm talking about.

Interviewer: I mean, that was, and that was fairly common across all the people I interviewed. I mean, there were a couple who didn't really fit that, but many of the others like yourself mention that they understand that there are these other benefits, but for them, there's more personal reasons involved than just, it's purely kind of, like you said, I like how you put it, material motivation kind of.

N: Because I had this debate also with my parents, when I told them, so I'm going to Ireland, I'm doing Gaeilge, so they were like, "Yes that's a good idea (inaudible) but why not spending some time also learning Spanish?" Yes, I wanna learn Spanish but it is not something to (inaudible), I'm going to Ireland, I'm interested in Irish, so, otherwise I would have gone to Spain if I wanted to, so.

Interviewer: Right, right, yeah.

N: Yeah, it's, it might be more useful, yes it will be more useful, I know that, but this is not what motivates me to learn languages and to understand how Irish or anything works actually. So yes. Um, on different emotions when you, I don't think I approached the topic of emotive words or swear words but I think, um, they are most impactful when it's in your native languages anyway. And, I have some, I have in my mind, how would I say, a ranking between languages when it comes to the effect of swear words. For sure, it is not objective, for me, yes, insults in Moroccan Arabic are more expressive than French, which are more expressive than the swear words in English or Spanish or whatever and, it's, it is, yes, it is something, how do you say, the impact of swear words is something you cannot really get if you learn a language, maybe when living in the society for a long time, a lot of years, for example in French, even if I am a French speaker since the beginning but when I was, when I use swear words in Morocco I would use Moroccan Arabic but, whenever we would use French swear words it would sound, uh, soft somehow. Just, just on the tone of a joke rather than a real insult. And when I came to France, so the transition between understanding or getting, feeling, or even using these French swear words as a joke rather than an insult was somehow, took some time from getting the context of each use. Even if French people use swear words all the time and on different tones and different uses, going from the joke to the (inaudible) actually. But I don't know, for example, sorry for the language, if someone would tell me "fuck off" in English or in French, it wouldn't have the same impact for me. So, what did you talk about? Yes I think in classrooms we discussed nothing about the issues linked to the language. This is, that's a shame somehow. It's sad, but no we just get grammar, communication and nothing more. I, we talked about culture, we talked about single country (?) so yes, English people eat fish and chips and they have (inaudible) and they have, which have many girls with the wierd hat and that's it. That's it for the culture and that's it for the history, all good, all good in English. So yes, nothing is discussed about language issues. I think, I read that in a book, I think it should happen, um, that, how do you say, um, there should be in classrooms in secondary school some time just for, say, linguistic or language, how do you say, problematics and language understanding. More into society, how language works, how we would feel about languages and all the issues that go with it rather than just learning the grammar and the text, speaking about nothing interesting really.

Interviewer: Kind of like, sociocultural issues that arise in the places where that language is used kind of thing. Ok. Yeah.

N: And especially because I also live in a, so France is a tenuous, also, language area where people are really keen about the good use of French, good spelling, good grammar, I was that kind of person before, but given some authority or legitimate, some authority, some people who don't deserve it and would be more on to the some rules we don't understand, and we get into fights, and we would not even respect some variations or some different uses. For example, we, in Lyon, I could pick it up but it is part of the Lyonnaise French, to use some pronounce that are not in use in the standard French and, with many friends from Paris we'd have some very complicated debates and, maybe

some understanding must be, some understanding classes should be done in classrooms. When it came to dialects, also, what did you have apart from me? As observations discussing dialects and accents?

Interviewer: I mean, like, these weren't, some of these weren't specifically about you yourself, they were again just coming up in common. I mean I don't remember, that was one thing, I don't really remember you mentioning too much about, just now you did say, at the beginning you mentioned something about UK English and um, you know peers having some kind of a, tenuous relationship with some of your peers due to mockery over the kind of English and that could be considered a dialect issue. Um, as far as the other languages you speak, you really haven't spoken too much about dialects and just now you mentioned the Lyonnese dialect versus kind of the standard Parisian dialect, um and, uh, aside from those, you personally, from my notes and the scripts that you, the transcripts I have, I don't think you mentioned dialects all that often. So maybe for you it wasn't as big an issue until you saw it just now. It wasn't something that was on the top of your head maybe, so.

N: It was on top of my head, it is a question that is very important for me and that I fully understand

Interviewer: In terms of Classical Arabic versus Moroccan Arabic, in a broad sense they're different dialects but

N: Even in Moroccan Arabic you'd have many dialects but I also have the privilege to come from the region where we'd speak the standard Moroccan Arabic and have no, what we consider no accent or a slight accent. It was not really, it's, I would say that my way of speaking or my accent would be the reference when you compare to other regions and you wanted to mock other regions' accents but I, so yes.

Interviewer: Even though things like that weren't directly taught like you mentioned you think it would be good to have people, you know, students take courses in the social and cultural issues, even though a lot of the people I talked to didn't get that instruction in school, they did have quite a lot of knowledge about those issues that, somewhere they learned, you know, somewhere, maybe they took it upon themselves to learn, maybe just being people who are interested in the world, you know, reading the news and things like that, they did develop a knowledge of a lot of those issues even without having direct instruction in schools.\

N: Yes, yes so, indeed when you are interested in those issues, so you are going to, you are going learn or going to get some knowledge about, um, those kinds of problematics, those kinds of issues actually, and yes you'll understand many things. Also I think, maybe, the people you interviewed might be people who are bilingual by birth and who would understand what happens to them especially if they are living in a monolingual, within a monolingual society so they would have a better understanding of that and they would not need to understand because it's somehow a part of their life. But for example I have seen also people getting mocked because of their accent, because of their way of speaking, especially when in my city we'd have people come in from some other region

when they would even speak Arabic natively and they would be mocked for their accent. Or even mocked for their French actually, since this is some heritage from the French, from the French way of dealing with, with learning language. So maybe for monolingual people who do not really express some interest into that to still have that knowledge and maybe understand what's happening around them.

Interviewer: Yeah, I mean, yeah that's a fair point. If you're bilingual you kind of have to know these things, yeah.

N: Um, also when you talk, there's something you pointed out at me also, but it was funny somehow, when you talked about assessment or the desire to be a good student, so um, I wouldn't, I did not say that and I do not think that but assessment was important because, somehow, so I was keen on learning languages and I, and I was considering myself to be good at learning languages, to having them and understanding them easily. So I was keen also on having good grades because of that point and just for my ego I wanted to be the good student when it comes to languages and not get bad grades. It was not the aim for me but getting a bad grade was something, would be something bad into languages. Just to keep that observation, good at languages, somehow. Especially it's somehow, grades are mattering for the people around you, even for your teachers to qualify you as good or not good at something, so just you, you want to earn and to keep earning your status somehow. \

Interviewer: So it wasn't so much the grade it was more, you wanted to know how well you were doing with this language kind of? Is that what you mean?

N: Could you repeat the question please?

Interviewer: Like, you're saying, assessment, for you it wasn't specifically that you wanted to be a good student, that you wanted this grade, it was more to have an idea how were you doing with that language.

N: Yes.

Interviewer: Ok, alright.

N: To have an idea how I was doing and to show also the teacher or the one who was correcting that yes, yes I'm good because somehow, in some classes I would behave like making the less, some less effort in whatever I was doing so I wanted to point out that yes, I'm a good student, I'm good at learning your language even if I don't care about it. It was more about that. But yes, it was, but working for assessment was never a motivation for me, especially when it comes to language. Um, also it came, when you say, "you may have felt that you had to learn to be monolingual" so yes, it was weird for me, as it came really late in my life, I had to learn doing that at the age of 18 actually, not before but yes, it's, it's, it was an important effort actually. It was not easy to do on the first, at the first time. It's, how would I say, when you're used to code-switching, it's not really easy to abandon that and to stick into one language. At the beginning you would look for your words in one language and it might be tougher because when you do code-switching, code-switching is also a good way to avoid looking for your words when you lose them so,

and once you have to abandon that it might be a weird feeling. You feel like losing something that would make life easier for you.

Interviewer: Do you find that you're, like this is another thing, I didn't put it there but it, this is something that has come up during the third round of interviews now, you know, some people have mentioned being careful about their words, being careful, like feeling that they take a little longer to put sentences together when they're talking because, um, you know, they're just very, they're, they find themselves being very careful about choosing the right words. You find that yourself as well?

N: Yes, I must be, I have to be careful now when choosing words because, first of all you get to, to choose the right word especially when you stop doing that code-switching sometimes you have to avoid translating from a language to the other because sometimes, the translation never works actually. So yes, and also, I feel like I'm evolving now in a society that is more keen about what is politically correct rather than where I was before, so yes, I think yes, since I changed the site I am living in, yes I have to be more careful about choosing my words but now, I'm used to it so I'm less careful, or it's more natural for me now, it's not an issue anymore. I could easily stop thinking also in two languages, for example now if I would speak French I would not even, the Moroccan part of my self, the Moroccan Arabic part of me would not even interfere in that process, and vice versa. Not really, once I go back to Morocco I'm more into code-switching. It's something good, something I like, so I don't want to abandon that there. Also in English I try not to think in French and really build my, how do you say, my speech fully in English in my mind so. In English, actually, in English it was more easier for me to be monolingual rather than French, finally. Because it's fully a foreign language so you go, you discover from zero and which was not part of your learning since the beginning and it has never been, also it has never been a part of my code-switching processes. So it was easy, it was something apart since the beginning so it was, it was alright.\

Interviewer: It was really foreign. It was very foreign.

N: It was really foreign. Then I came to Ireland and it became less foreign. Um, also, another part, yeah, not mentioning where you were satisfied with your (inaudible) language use, yes, I think not only language but it's always easy to notice negative change rather than positive ones, because, I don't know, because when you, first of all I would consider myself as being, I would consider I'm tough on myself, I'm, how do you say, I expect too much from myself and I'm not really rewarding (?) myself, yes I did something that I'm proud of, I really must, I always have to progress, and also because progressing in a language is something that is normal, something that is expected, that's what you want to do, and negative change, it's something that you do not want to happen and you do not expect to happen so once you, when you see it coming you feel it more and it's more frustrating for you because this is not something you wanted to happen and it's also, how do you say, involve some more work you didn't expect to do. Not even with my proficiency in English I didn't notice how, how good I was evolving through the years, I think til I took the CAE exam, the Cambridge Advanced English exam, that's where I could assess how good or not good my English was, it was good actually, but I could not, I could



not really notice the change over the time. Yet once I feel something wrong it would be more, more observable and more of an issue as well.

Interviewer: More of an issue? Like it would deserve your attention? You'd want to, you said more of an issue so I'm just trying to

N: More of an issue so yes, if there's a negative change yes I have to correct that, I have to find why it is, why this happened, what I have to do to correct what is happening. Um, then you say you tend to have lower expectations also for the language you learned later on as compared to the language you learned earlier on in education, perhaps at home, um, I would say yes and no. So, I think it depends on the language and also the objective you put yourself on the language yourself, I think yes, even though I expressed some interest into Irish and into Hebrew I think, it's discovery (?), I know I wouldn't have the occasion to practice it too much so yes, I don't expect much from learning Irish, unless someday I decide to stop everything and go to Donegal and live in some Gaeltacht village so maybe it would change anything in my life but I don't think that, yes because I'm starting a language that later in my life, I wouldn't be able to have the same progress I would have earlier or just because it's not native, no, I believe I just have to go on and see where it goes. But I don't really, I always have the expectation that someday I will be able to speak it without a problem, and that's it, so it would go, it will go to the objective or no, I don't care, so I'm not having lower or higher expectations. Even yes, if studies say yes, some studies apparently, I'm not sure, that if you learn a language later in your life so you would never get to some native proficiency, it's alright, but

Interviewer: So your expectations are always the same, like, you just, whether or not you meet them it doesn't matter too much to you, you always have the same expectation you're saying, they're not higher or lower, oh ok

N: Yeah, just, they wouldn't be the same expectations of me reading literature or understanding poetry, just being able to speak and write the language with people, and to maybe at some point get the, some nuances or to, how to say, to notice some common mistakes and nothing more. That's it, that's all I know, these are the important parts I wanted to talk about after reading your

Interviewer: Quite a lot, there was a lot there, thanks. I'm glad that you found it kind of interesting for yourself and you had a lot to say. It kind of covered, there were a few points that I was curious about as well, curious to find out your opinion and your understanding of things, but you already addressed most of them. The only one that I kind of, would like to just kind of clarify a bit and maybe get a little more is, so at the beginning I mention relationships with different groups of people, so teachers, family, and peers, now with family, you spoke quite a lot about teachers, even you mentioned some teachers because I asked about them, peers, you didn't mention as much as some of the other things that you talked about, uh, today you did talk about how again, that kind of antagonistic relationship, so, was it that, so the style of English you learned I guess, would it have been the UK/British English and you received mockery because you were using that language? That style of English? Or

N: So what happened is that I was learning English in two, in two ways. So my parents, like many people, have enrolled me in a language center where I could speak English freely the way I wanted and to discover all the nuances before in American English and British English, and I have chosen somehow to make some effort to, to write, speak, to speak to the standard somehow, to standard British English and to write in to the British standards. For example, -isation would be with an "s" rather than with a "z" or anything, all those nuances, because I found it somehow classy, some more sophisticated, it's really subjective, it's not saying that American English or any other kind of English was something, was not English or not proper English so it was a personal choice for me, and I also had for my, a part of my normal schooling, the government schooling somehow, 2 hours of English a week with a, with very simple, actually the hardest thing I would have learned in high school or secondary school would be the present perfect continuous, so it was nothing, it was really some beginning level, but my teacher was somehow keen on the American spelling and he would, and whenever I would use British spelling or trying to pronounce things with the RP pronunciation or some British way I've heard on the BBC or whatever, he would be somehow, he would get some mockery comments and even the people would go into some mockery because they found the American English to be more easier, more natural. I just didn't care about that, actually. I just went beyond that and I didn't care because, so yes, he would, for example, he would make example sentences and say, "Look at this, American English is more logical, for color you'd remember, you'd remove the 'u', who pronounces the 'u' anyway?" Would not comment when you speak French and you know that French spelling is just the weirdest thing ever, it just, they are just conventions and choices. Yes, realization, it's with a 'z' as he would say, not with a 'z' (zed), "it's with a z, it's more logical, you pronounce the z", so yes you know that in English and also in French, an 's' between two vowels is pronounced as 'z', so, it's not less logical or more logical, just a choice actually, so just be fine with it and go beyond that. People do their choice and then, don't mock them, how they would write or speak, so, but I was fine with that. And sometimes he would point at me when I was speaking, "Yes, I mean go on with your magnificent British English." Yes, go on, whatever you're on, whatever he'd say.

Interviewer: And even now you prefer the British style. Do you kind of, consciously choose not to use American, Americanisms kind of thing or...?

N: When I am writing, yes, I'm consciously choosing not to, not to use Americanisms and sometimes if I'm confused I would look into a dictionary to, also because when I took the Cambridge exam they were like, use any kind of English you want but be consistent...so I'm always looking, if I have some doubt I'm going to look into the dictionary. I think when speaking now I'd have a sort of melting between, a merging between British, Irish and French English somehow, I don't know. And yes, I don't think, now that I'm capable of imitating any American accent, not New York-ese or Donald Trump type things or any, you know, United States is a big (inaudible) so there's no one accent, even in Great Britain you have so many accents so, I've tried normally to work on the RP English.

Interviewer: I mean, even when you say, like, British, I'm from New York and I say British, but you say kind of, maybe not the RP but you say "Bri'ish", kind of like, you kind of pause with the "t"

N: The glottal pause

Interviewer: Exactly, yeah, you say it that way, so I mean, it's coming across, you clearly have that influence there so that's, right,

N: Other British people would say "British", pronouncing the "t", so it's a choice

Interviewer: That's a different accent

N: Choices and once you get something, you get used to it and that's it.

Interviewer: But that's definitely more of a, like, you'd find that more on the island of Britain rather than somewhere like in the US, for example

N: Indeed

Interviewer: Well that is interesting that, I do kind of agree that it's odd that they would, that you know, that they would, I guess value American English over British English there, in your school, especially with French present

N: And that was crazy because it happened in high school, it was just a private high school belonging, which was teaching the Moroccan government programs and in the, in the center where I really did learn English with good Moroccan teachers actually, and discovering all the nuances of English, was called actually the American Language Center, which was founded by American people, which has some funding, little funding from the American embassy, and we'd have switching books, sometimes coming from the United States and sometimes coming from Great Britain and I did not have that problem there, where they were supposed to teach American English, because in my city we wouldn't have the British Council. It was not an issue, but it was an issue, what happened in, just in secondary school, where they, I would learn about the simple present and simple past, thank you I have learned about that five years ago.

Interviewer: Yeah the only, as far as peers go as well, the other time that I remember you talking about peers is you mentioned with French that sometimes you would, like, check your friend's work in French and that you would be able to, your French was good enough that you were able to kind of spot errors and things like that and actually kind of do that so, um, like that was the other mention of peers but aside from those, you're, you focused mostly, you were more about personal things, more familial things, uh, Moroccan things especially.

N: I think I didn't, I did not let, somehow, or maybe consciously somehow I could not assess peers to influence my way of learning. And also with the French, I was somehow privileged to have very high proficiency in school as well as at home because, um, my grandmother would have learned, would have gone to French school before, or Moroccan school, when it was controlled by the French, whereas most people would

have grandmothers coming from rural areas and not, and actually just being illiterate and not being able to speak French or whatever. So I had that privilege and I could learn it, so I had an environment that made me, that made things easier for me and sometimes my peers would look at things like I was somehow bragging when I was just speaking French the way I do normally would somehow feel like bragging and it was not the case and at some point I stopped just letting them influence the way I am thinking. Although, you would do nothing actually, so, especially with children, we're all kids and you should not really follow what such people say, when it's negative especially. It's positive so you say thank you and that's it.

## Participant S

### *Interview 1*

Interviewer: I guess, just first, before we get into experiences, I was just looking at the way that you describe, so you mention that you speak, or that you've learned, or that you have, we'll say you have, four languages, that's what you say, so English, Irish, Polish and French were the ones that you mentioned. Um, and, so you were born in Poland but you did most of your education here.

S: Yeah, I was born in Poland, I moved here at age 6, I started learning English prior to that because my mother was anticipating the move for a long time. Um, upon arriving in primary school I wasn't in Irish classes, I was in learning support for a while, then subsequently I got moved into regular Irish classes once learning support was no longer needed. And I've been doing, I did Irish from then until my secondary school leaving exams, my leaving cert, and I did French throughout secondary school.

Interviewer: Okay. So when you say learning support, you mean like language learning support? English support or...

S: Uh, it's a mix, in our primary school it was a mix of students that were from different countries and students that required additional English learning support due to dyslexia or other learning disabilities.

Interviewer: Okay, alright. Um, so before we get into that, I wanted to ask, kind of, the way that you described, because I asked participants to describe a language, and, so you picked Irish, and like the language you used, the metaphors you used to describe it, quite, just in my head, quite artistic. I mean, you mentioned, even learning is kind of like painting

S: I've been told I'm a dramatic writer.

Interviewer: Well, no, there's nothing wrong with it, I'm just curious, so you mention, like, learning a language is like painting. Speaking Irish is like construction, writing is like creating an image. So I'm just wondering, what was kind of going on, like, what were you thinking about when you wrote these things? Did you have a specific, were you trying to communicate something? What was the, kind of the thought process behind it?

S: On the construction point, writing in Irish, it's about the way we learn it I guess. Like we get a lot of lists of phrases, for example, and then we're told to put them in with our sentences while we're learning, so, it's...you can write a story as a series of events that happened, but then we'll learn phrases to throw in there, right? So, if you say that, "the car hit me and Mammy called the ambulance", you'll throw in "without delay", "without a moment's delay", and we have lists of whole phrases like that, lists of alternative vocabulary to use. So it's putting together a lot of elements that we pick up from

different sources, and to me that feels like a bit of a jigsaw puzzle, just building on things constantly.

Interviewer: So, you take something simple and you kind of elaborate on it by adding phrases

S: Yeah, like filling in a frame, I guess. And a lot of the time we were expected to have a lot of Irish coming in to secondary school, but we usually don't actually. So, it'll be kind of filling in the gaps on things we don't know, because we start out getting corrected every single word, like, little tiny details, and you learn later that those were some part of some grammar rule that you weren't actually consciously taught. I didn't learn the genitive case in Irish until sixth year, quite literally when like, noun cases are usually pretty fundamental to a language, like in German you'd learn them the first few months, according to my friends at least. I don't speak German myself. But in Irish we don't actually learn what the genitive is a lot of the time. It's not expected of anybody doing it at ordinary of the leaving cert. Right. It helps if you know it, but it's generally considered high-level knowledge. So you might know that some words change for different reasons but you might not know that it's due to the genitive so you're just fitting things into those gaps.

Interviewer: That makes a bit of sense. Because I'm also studying a bit of Irish and the teacher is always, most of the other students are Irish. I'm not, I'm from New York. And the teacher always makes it a point to say, well, by the way, this is you know, the genitive case, and is always pointing it out, so now it makes sense that like, it's considered kind of a high-level skill.

S: Yeah, um, it's actually fairly easy to break down, but there's a good few elements to it. Kind of mathematical in a sense. So, um, there's like five declensions of nouns, and you have to learn to categorize them, then you need learn some other spelling rules that are involved with that, and how to use the definite article properly, because that changes in the genitive, there's loads of elements in it. It's just putting them all together that a lot of people wouldn't really notice since we learn Irish as a second language essentially. Like for me it's a third, but, yeah.

Interviewer: This is actually linking in to the main focus of this, which is describing how you learn these, and you're already kind of talking about it. You mention that like, when you go, so between primary school and secondary school, and you just said that when you go into secondary school there's this expectation of you to actually have more Irish than you actually have.

S: Yeah, um, I guess in Irish secondary schools, the standard is to do a higher level of a subject, but, and like, most people are capable of higher level English. Like you'd get 4 to 2, maybe in terms of how many classes do higher and how many do ordinary. And then, maths is usually half and half, whereas Irish, there's, some of the higher level classes will be actually very low level, and like towards the end of it I think there are only two full higher level classes in my leaving cert year out of maybe 6 classes there at the start that would, like, we started out fairly even balance and then by the end there were only two

classes worth of people, maybe 60, 50 people doing higher Irish. And very few would be achieving, like, top marks. That's in our school, which is through English instruction. There would be other statistics in Gaeilscoils, or in private schools, but, yeah. And obviously in Trinity you're going to get a weird sample, because there's a lot of people from private schools, a lot of people from Gaeilscoils, yeah, and the people that do get in from other schools will likely have, have fairly good Irish, too. And Trinity has, like, this weird sub-culture of the, there's, if you talk to Cumann Gaelach in Trinity, there's a strange mix. There's, like, the Irish people from Gaeilscoils, and then Dubliners who are really into Irish, like culturally, but they wouldn't necessarily have gone to a Gaeilscoil. It's odd. I know some of those crowds.

Interviewer: Is that how, that's how you, kind of found out about this project, right? Through that...

S: I think so. Or maybe the notice board. Not sure. I think it was the notice board actually. I cannot remember.

Interviewer: That's, kind of what I'm learning, you know, that the communities of Irish speakers are, it's a very contextual thing. Like contextually decided thing, and contextually dependent.

S: And outside of those groups, you have to be kind of lucky to have good Irish. Like I got lucky with some secondary school teachers who really encouraged it. And had like very different teaching methods from what I saw from other teachers in my school.

Interviewer: Actually, that was my next question. So can you, do you, what were some of the methods that you found effective? Like, what worked for you? What were the teachers, you said you got lucky with the teachers,

S: Yeah, there was a teacher that we had as a substitute in sixth year, that was actually very methodical in his teaching, um, he'd give us whole essays or whole booklets of different answered questions based on something. So, for Irish, we study several pieces of literature for the leaving cert, and he gave us like whole booklets on the ones that he thought were going to come up of that selection with several answered questions that could come up based on those, like sample answers, and we'd go through them a sentence at a time, and he'd be like, "why is that h in that word?" And we're like, "it's because it's tuiseal ginideach" or "because of the article that's there" or "because it's a feminine word with this", x, y, z. And he'd try to remind us every time that's how that grammatical construction works. So we'd be able to identify them, and then apply it. It's kind of trying to absorb that, and a lot of the words there weren't words I would have known. So I would, every time there was a word or a grammatical point, I would write it out in a separate booklet, not even like write it...I'd write it on the page, I'd write the words separately, keep them in a separate booklet, I'd learn off those words, and then, after that he'd give us a different question, slightly different one from the ones we'd answered, to take home, to write our own essay based on that, he'd correct it and then we'd be tested on a very similar thing.

Interviewer: So a lot of modeling, kind of, like giving you good models.

S: A lot of modeling, yeah. Like giving good models, I think, is important. That kind of immersion learning. He ran his classes mostly through Irish, which I found really valuable. So that was very helpful in terms of writing and being able to actually assess what grammar takes place. And for the Irish oral, which was the other major component, he had us practice with each other, it wasn't a particularly big class because a lot of people from our class had dropped to ordinary. Um, but he'd put us off into pairs, and every day he'd tell us which questions we were covering. Then we'd go through them with each other and every time one of us didn't know a word we'd be allowed to go on our phones, check the word, write it down in our copies, and that way we'd be able to develop that talk, and after a while once we'd gone through the question we'd continue talking, we'd have our gossip in Irish.

Interviewer: Okay, so it was very conducive to actually using it and not just with the texts in front of you and everything like, even just asking questions about...

S: The oral often goes off the rails kind of, so like, if the examiner can tell that you're interested in something, they'll ask you more questions about that, just to make it a good experience for everyone, which I really appreciate, y'know? But, yeah, I found it really valuable to get that kind of enforced immersion.

Interviewer: Even in an English-medium school, you're able to get this experience. Okay. This was sixth year, you said.

S: Sixth year, so it was fairly late. Throughout primary school I was okay with the Irish spellings, we weren't really examined on our Irish properly, it was just like spelling tests. And then, for junior cert, I did okay, but mainly through rote learning, because you could get away with that at that stage. As I mentioned earlier, the car crash, Mammy called the ambulance, learnt off stories, because they ask you about something surprising that happened, or, yeah. When you went to a concert, it's predictable.

Interviewer: But then by the leaving cert you're expected to be a bit more flexible and creative in your answers.

S: Yeah. A lot of the essay titles that come up are topical, so we would have discussed, in class, healthcare and written essays on that. So, for like, or like gangland crime, I remember one of my best essays was gangland crime, and the comments were like "you could probably look up the Irish for Kinahan and Hutch". So that kind of minutae. So I think that was a great time for me personally. I actually enjoyed learning Irish at that time, and I was learning French in parallel, which I was supposed to have at a similar level, but doing all that stuff for French just felt, we weren't doing the same things in French. We were still, like, learning grammar in sixth year, um, because we had only started in first year. I didn't do transition year, which is fourth year, so I only did five years in secondary school. And my French was not up to Irish level, by any means. I got the same grade in both French and Irish, which was ridiculous to me, but I had mainly just rote learned for French and got away with a lot of points in the listening.



Interviewer: So you think they expect you to have the same level of French as Irish at the end of secondary school, for the leaving cert

S: Like, a top grade in French and top grade in Irish are both supposed to indicate fairly fluent speech. Like, not necessarily knowing every word, but being able to construct sentences that will be actually correct.

Interviewer: Even though Irish, you've been learning for, since primary school, and French you've just started.

S: Well Irish you're expected to be able to know more subject matter specifically.

Interviewer: Oh, more subject matter, okay. But the actual, like, the fluency I guess is expected to be somewhat similar.

S: Somewhat similar. Like, uh, with a similar skill level you're supposed to be able to achieve similar grades. But then French, the way it was taught, was fairly tedious.

Interviewer: Was it, like, rote learning, kind of, almost the same, like the same way you did the junior cert Irish kind of, you learn phrases and plug in phrases

S: Um, yeah, like the, a lot of the French leaving is reading comprehension, listening comprehension. The oral for French is very structured. They wouldn't really go off as much as the Irish ones. Since you've had less time learning so you don't know as much subject matter, specific words. But then on the other hand it just, everybody still rote learns for French whereas for Irish you're more likely to talk about things you're interested in. Like, uh, in Irish we practice linking in things that we know we're interested in from other questions. Like, if they ask you "are you interested in sport?" you can say, "no, but I'm interested in music," x, y, z, and then talk about that for a while. And then in French, we just, yes or no answers, or mild elaborations for most things.

Interviewer: But you've said also that, um, like Irish, so, even though you learn it for this long, you said that they taught it almost as if it's a foreign language, but there's still all these differences because of the amount of time that you're exposed to it, and then the things that you're expected to do in it. So after leaving, so after doing your leaving cert, like, have you done, or have you used a lot of Irish? I mean, you just, like, you kind of say...

S: So I teach Irish to my younger brothers. Um, since they're in second and third year respectively, so one of them is doing his junior certificate this year. So I've been doing a lot of Irish with them. Um, so I'd keep that up. And me and some of my close friends are decent Irish speakers, so we'd have a bit of banter.

Interviewer: Do you, so, do you find yourself using some of those, the things that you found effective when you were learning Irish, are you trying to use that with your siblings now?

S: Yes, I would, yeah.

Interviewer: Well, they're doing, you said the junior cert right now, so it's a little less

S: So it's not the same stuff, but I would try and get them to put together their full sentence in English (Irish?) and then try and pick out as many elements in Irish as they can. And then fill it, I'll help them fill in the gaps. So it's not like they just restrict themselves to what they know in Irish, they're actively picking up new vocabulary, yeah. And I'm trying to cover more grammar with them than is usual for junior cert, not necessarily learned all off, just so they have it as a reference. They know vaguely where it's coming from.

Interviewer: And then maybe they can use it later with their leaving cert as well.

S: Yeah, so when they cover it in class it's not entirely new. And then I make an active effort to read things in Irish, if there's two language versions. So like, the SU email, all those. Just to keep it going at least.

Interviewer: So is that when, was it secondary school? Was that, like, was that class that that teacher, was, did, they kind of...did that teacher kind of, make you...that teacher made you enjoy Irish more? Than you had before?

S: Yeah, I would say so, yeah. Like, it's not that it wasn't enjoyable before, it was just a bit tedious. It wasn't outright unpleasant. Like a lot of people did find Irish very unpleasant. But it was just, felt like a chore. I was actually enjoying myself. There was constant learning and development going on I felt like every class did actually bring something new to the table.

Interviewer: So, with the Irish...you came in later. You were born in Poland and, do you think maybe, like, kind of coming in later to it, and maybe being introduced to it later, did you, do you think that might have affected the way you felt about Irish and the way you studied it? Or, like, do you think maybe you felt different about Irish than other students who maybe started school here and continued on. Because your home language is Polish, right?

S: We'd speak, I'd speak Polish at home to my parents. I would speak mostly English to my brothers if my parents aren't around.

Interviewer: Do your parents speak anything else besides Polish?

S: My parents both speak English, and they both have some Russian. And my mom speaks a bit of German as well.

Interviewer: But when you communicate with your parents it's mostly through Polish.

S: Mostly through Polish. I'll throw in English words if I can't remember the Polish.

Interviewer: And they understand.

S: Yeah. They'll also sometimes throw in English words if they can't, don't know the Polish one either.

Interviewer: Because one thing I've heard is that, like, with learning Irish, especially if you're Irish and you learn Irish, there's this kind of baggage that comes along with it.

That's the way it's always been described to me, as baggage. Do you think you have less baggage with it? Do you think that maybe that has made you enjoy it more than another, than someone who maybe was born here and had to learn it a little more...

S: I'd say I wouldn't have that much less baggage.

Interviewer: Because, I mean, you went through the schools the same as they did too, so

S: Pretty much.

Interviewer: You would have learned the history

S: Like, I started a couple years later because there was learning support.

Interviewer: But six, I mean, still, like that's pretty much when school starts, right?

S: I was six moving here then year and a half of learning support, so, two and a half years less baggage. And as a child

Interviewer: But that's still baggage, yeah. Because you learned obviously...

S: It was still very tedious coming secondary school. I felt so behind anybody that went to Gaeilscoil. Because in our school there's two main feeder schools, there was the English language national school I went to, and then the Gaeilscoil which was like, smaller class sizes, and forced Irish. And our school had all the immigrants and all of them were like, very ... Irish learners(?). So we had far less Irish instruction and I was still put in a class with the Gaeilscoil kids because there's only so many of them, and anybody with a slightly higher Irish level...I don't know how I got into, like, one of the higher classes anyway but.

Interviewer: (fumbles)

S: So it was playing catch-up at first, then it gets competitive because we're all like, 12, 13.

Interviewer: Then you're all...but you're all kind of at the same level anyway. By that time you kind of even out and everything, so it all balances out.

S: At that stage most people are still rote learning for the purpose of the essays, so having an actual skill deficiency doesn't affect you as much.

Interviewer: So, and um, then with French then, you're not actively studying French anymore.

S: No, um, I left secondary school at H2, which is like 80-90% at higher level, um, I did not feel that way walking out of the exam. I thought I was going to get maybe an H4 tops. So, it's like, what is the marking scheme? Um, and my mam made me take another French class up in the Alliance Française last year, and I got my B2 certificate after that. And I really have not wanted to pursue it further. Um, I've never received like particularly good instruction in French, which, I guess, it's easier for it to lapse. Like, my friends, my closest friends would have done German, or else Italian. They didn't even offer Italian at my secondary school. So, it's not that, like, we were having a chat in French.

Interviewer: So, going back to Polish then, there were really no opportunities for you to study it formally then.

S: I did get a brief time there, in secondary school. Our secondary school, (?) Community College, has the CES, Centre for European Studies, because, right next, close enough to (?) is like some kind of EU facility for, like, food testing I think. And a lot of them moved from abroad and brought their kids. But the kids are usually like, a fairly rich crowd. Mostly. German, Dutch, a bit bourgeois (bougie).

Interviewer: The posh, kind of

S: The posh ones, but um, they did have facilities for a couple of Polish teachers, so the school kind of collaborated with them and I got a chance to do some Polish classes throughout fifth and sixth year. I decided not to sit the exam because Polish in Ireland isn't a taught second language, it's examined as a first language, so I would have had to learn literature, write essays, which, my Polish is fluent but I do need my mother to check my writing, for grammar and all that.

Interviewer: That stuff you kind of need instruction in, if you're gonna, like grammar, writing

S: Yeah, and it would have required a lot of effort on my part, like I was getting grades of H4s, H3s on past tests, and like I was doing fine in everything else so I didn't see a reason to continue it. So I did get some formal instruction, but not much on literature. I mainly wrote a couple essays, a few reading comprehensions, it wasn't really anything all that exciting.

Interviewer: So it's examined as a first language. So that, like, you can take your leaving cert in, or through Polish, if you, if you choose?

S: No, um, you can take all the leaving cert exams through English or Irish. And then some languages, some other languages like French, German, Spanish, Italian, Chinese, Japanese, those and a couple others I think can be taken as modern languages, so they're taught as second languages throughout secondary school. And then anything more niche than that, like Polish, Hungarian, Romanian, Czech, Lithuanian, Russian is also a second language examined subject, and several others are in the "other" category which are examined as first languages. So that there are like, there was like a Japanese guy in my year who went and took the Japanese exam and got like a perfect score, it's like somebody French rolling up and doing the French leaving, yeah.

Interviewer: So they're graded, so then when you take them you're kind of...they expect you to be a, like a native speaker of that language.

S: Yeah, it's mainly to facilitate native speakers.

Interviewer: And it kind of balances out if they had to take the leaving cert in English, is that

S: Yeah, more or less. Like, I could have probably gone off and learned Russian fairly easily and had that examined as a second language because it's close enough to Polish, and then I could have done fine, but then the Polish exam is like, first language. I would need, like, cultural knowledge, they'd expect that from me. I have a friend who moved to Poland, sorry, moved from Poland to Ireland at the start of secondary school. So she was never made to do Irish since she was past the age cutoff. And then she did Polish for the leaving and got like, H2, which was like better than all her other grades. And now she's doing like, sports therapy or something. Like, she got, she did like, fairly bad in everything else. But then like, the H2, that's worth 88 points, it pulled her up. Either way, yeah, the difference in examination was mainly wide and continued formal instruction, or get any official grades (?).

Interviewer: So most of the instruction is targeted towards the examination it sounds like.

S: And it's fairly rare to get instruction. Like, the fact there was a Polish teacher already there for the CES. It's mainly for children of those EU institution employees. And everybody else in there was a fairly different crowd to myself. Like none of their parents had moved for, uh

Interviewer: They moved specifically to work in that facility, kind of.

S: Yeah, none of them, like, moved to find work elsewhere because, you know, migration climates.

Interviewer: So for your major right now, your studies right now, there's no language requirement, right? You're doing law and business was it?

S: Law and business. Yeah, there was a language option first year, but I chose not to do it.

Interviewer: What were the, like, what were the options given to you?

S: Options? You could do a continuation of French, German, Spanish, if you'd done it in secondary school. There was Central and Eastern European Studies, which I presume is targeted towards, like, ex-Soviet bloc politics, which I could have done, but then they weren't running it that year, and I ended up in Quantitative Methods for Business, which was a stats module.

Interviewer: But so, but then it's optional, it's not a requirement.

S: It's optional, it's not a requirement. They do have courses like Law and German, Law and French in Trinity, and like Law and French was my third choice, but judging by what they do I wouldn't have been happy in it. They do have Computer Science and Polish, and Business and Polish, but then like some of the people in Business and Polish, it's a weird crowd.

Interviewer: Business and Polish?

S: Yeah. Business and Polish, I know one of the guys there and he's like, his dad is Polish but his mom's Irish, he was born in Ireland so he has like a Polish first and last name, but he doesn't know any Polish himself because fathers, fathers generally contribute less to

language instruction than mothers. I don't know if that's an empirical fact, but that's, that's what I find around here.

Interviewer: I guess it would depend on the family dynamics and you know, who's at home kind of.

S: Either way the father was working outside the home, he didn't know any Polish. I met him in like, a shared module that like both Law and Business and Law and Polish do, and it turns out that he's like straight up, white nationalist, believes everything like, major Polish political parties say about like, everything. And he's not even like, he doesn't even speak the language, he doesn't know, he knows less about history than I do, which, and it's like, okay, and I'm expected to get along with him because we're both Polish, and in Trinity.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah that's...

S: A lot of other, like ethnicities would have like, societies or like, student groups here and it's like, that's why there's no Polish one.

Interviewer: Yeah, that's true, yeah. There is no Polish one. There's a lot of others.

S: But there is, like, a big Polish community in my town, so I would have babysat for a, Polish adults with young children, and the young children, there's a few different cohorts in our community. Like, there's the older crowd than me, so like, they're, the children, so like they would be in their 20's now. Right? So, and they would have migrated here with their parents at an older age than myself. And, they would speak mostly Polish, their English would be more accented. Very much culturally Polish. Then there's like, my kind of cohort, then there's the crowd younger than me, which is why I speak English to my brothers. More comfortable with the English than Polish.

Interviewer: A little bit more removed from the...

S: Yeah, so like, I changed my name, for example. Like, my birthname is, Polish spelling, and like I changed it to my grandmother's maiden name, like my last name, because that's like the only spellable one in the family.

Interviewer: Oh, okay. Yeah, I was, when I saw your last name, I actually, before I saw your language profile, I saw your last name and I was thinking maybe you were like Portuguese, or like, Spanish, because -- is a Spanish name...

S: You want me to write down the birthname for you?

Interviewer: Sure, like, I mean

S: For your reference, yeah

Interviewer: If you just write it down up there.

S: Um, so, yeah, my -- spelled the Polish way, and then --

Interviewer: Oh, alright.

S: I had so much trouble with official documents never matching up that I, it was actually easier for me to go out and change it.

Interviewer: So you, now, so now this is a legal change, like this is your legal name.

S: Yup, legal change of name. Got a (inaudible) in the high courts, been approved by civil registry in Poland. Like you'd walk into banks and they'd be all courteous until you show them, like, the name on the card, the one past (inaudible) then they start treating you like you're thick.

Interviewer: Wow. Ok. So like...

S: It's not even like, they're not like consciously treating you worse, but they're like, slowing down their speech, it's...even though I've got equally fluent English.

Interviewer: I mean, just, this is kind of, like away from the interview, but like, I, I kind of understand a lot of this because I'm from NY but my name is --, you know, like, so, I've had similar experiences where they kind of think, they start talking to you, and then they see your name, and then they get these images of you automatically and they start treating you differently.

S: Obviously must be tougher for you, like, more obviously foreign

Interviewer: Well, no, no, no, like, in NY, even in NY, it kind of, it depends on who you're dealing with, of course, but like we've had, like I had recently learned that when I was in school, they tried to put me in a class like the assisted, the learning support, something similar to that. Meanwhile my parents had been teaching me, like I spoke English and Spanish at home, but like my parents had been teaching me English specifically to get me ready for school so that I wouldn't be put in that class, but they took one look at my last name, my full name, and they said ope, he's gotta go into the EAL class.

S: Yeah, that friend of mine moved, the actual principal of the school approached me and said that, sorry, your last name's Polish, can you please help her out. So they moved her into all my classes. Not a great idea since I was in all higher, but, yeah. And it's like the small things about the whole last name situation...

Interviewer: So you find it easier now just going with the, your name as it, the way that your name is presented now.

S: Yeah. I don't have to like, call out -- over the phone every single time. It's very cushy. I can just say -- and people will spell it correctly. It's not like my (inaudible) every time we go to Starbucks and it's spelled incorrectly. Like they're my pals, so it's all forgivable, but uh, after a while it does get a bit frustrating. Yeah. It's like something you accept.

Interviewer: Yeah, I can...

S: Like my brothers have considered it, like changing their names, because one's --, uncomfortable Polish name...

Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_, like...

S: \_\_\_\_ is a different name in Polish, \_\_\_\_\_. This is \_\_\_\_\_, so, very uncomfortable, and the other is like \_\_\_\_\_, but with \_\_\_\_\_, so, he gets a lot of stuff as well. So I've suggested to him, just call yourself \_\_\_\_\_, it'll be fine. With the \_\_\_\_\_. But he's adamant that he's fine with it.

Interviewer: Okay, yeah. I mean, like I have, it's been, there's a lot of talk about whether you should change your name to accommodate the other people, or you should make them learn your name.

S: Yeah, a lot of people say, that like, I shouldn't have done it. But it's for my own comfort.

Interviewer: Yeah exactly. Like, I mean, everyone has their own opinions on it.

S: They'll ask me if I really needed to, which, that should, I didn't need to. It's a matter of preference. Not actually that difficult to process here.

Interviewer: I mean, they also have issues with like if um, I've noticed if you, for people who write their names in Irish, there's issues surrounding that as well.

S: Yeah, I think they've only now let people put fadas on student cards.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah. Like, so, it's, just, it hasn't really been, there's really no preparation or, in any sense for names that are...

S: Foreign TAs are actually really not great with that. Obviously it's not their fault but, um, a lot of Irish names that are spelled strangely are fairly common, like Caoimhe and Maebh, those are actually like, very common in Ireland, so, yeah. Seán.

Interviewer: Yeah, I mean like I, yeah, I had to learn that as well. Like the names and everything like that.

S: Yeah. Then hearing TAs call roll. Um...

Interviewer: Yeah, that's um...that's always, that first day is always

S: Ordeal

Interviewer: An adventure, yeah.

S: I presume you've done work as a TA

Interviewer: I've done, well yeah, I've done work as a TA. I'm teaching one of the language modules too, and of course we, I get students who have their names, their Irish names. But like, I've been here long enough where I, I avoided making that mistake. I tried to learn the names before I went in there. Like, if I knew it was an Irish name like, I'd ask someone who knows Irish and, alright how do you pronounce this, and

S: A funny thing that law professors do, we had a panel for constitutional law was it? And the professor, if there was a name that was spelled strangely, in like a mainland Europe way, like my name, this was like, before the name change that the panel came up, he'd double check to make sure how it's pronounced, because they think it makes them seem



like culturally aware. But if it's like, Asian or African names, they wouldn't ask because they think that it would make them seem uncultured, very, very uncultured, so they think they're being sensitive and tactful if they ask Europeans because they think they're noticing something, but then for like Asian names or African names, they'd, they wouldn't ask because they'd think it makes them seem stupid or, unaware. And it's actually hilarious when you see the TAs looking at them and you know who's there because you know who's in the class and what the alphabetical order is. And they're just like, deliberating on it.

Interviewer: Like as if they should know this before, like they should have prepared the names before, kind of, they should know this.

S: it's a very Trinity thing. They want to seem so woke, culturally.

Interviewer: But they target it towards specific populations.

S: Yeah.

Interviewer: Um, so there's like no languages that you're studying now. Are there any languages that you want to learn? Or you wish you could have learned? You intend to learn in the future?

S: Um, my mom insists that I continue French. I've told her that ok, I might learn German sometime, because I really don't want to go back to learning French, um.

Interviewer: Was it just because the experience was bad?

S: It was just unpleasant and I'd be expected to continue at a higher level than I'm at now and I barely passed my B2 certificate. I don't feel confident going into it. I don't want to have to revise my secondary school materials going into it. It would be a lot of effort for a low payoff. I don't want to work in France just because of the cultural climate there. Quite possibly more hostile to migrants than...

Interviewer: Have you visited there?

S: No, I haven't but, uh, there's a lot of stuff online that circulates about it and, it's not great for economic migrants.

Interviewer: Have you visited like, has your family visited Poland ever since moving?

S: Uh, we used to visit every summer when we were in primary school. But the last time we visited, the last time I went anyway, was between sixth class and first year, so between primary and secondary school.

Interviewer: So quite a long time ago.

S: Yeah, so it's been a while for me. My grandmother would visit regularly. My parents have been back a couple of times mainly for funerals. I wouldn't have gone back for those, so I've never actually been to a family funeral. Um, yeah, and since then my mam has preferred to go on sun holidays, so. Yeah.

Interviewer: And you spent time in the Gaeltacht you said.

S: Yeah, I went for a little bit in sixth year. Like a quick revision course.

Interviewer: Was it one of those...

S: It wasn't one of those where you go for like three weeks in the summer and you're away from your parents for, yeah.

Interviewer: Was it, it wasn't mandatory, though. It was just because, to get a little revision.

S: No, optional. It was useful. That's where I actually, like, seriously took on the tuiseal ginideach. Yeah.

Interviewer: Which area? Up in Donegal?

S: Uh, Galway. Killkieran Bay. Killkieran is a lovely place, actually.

Interviewer: Good to know.

S: We're going back there, but not for Irish. We're going scuba diving next month.

Interviewer: Your family. Scuba diving

S: No, the club in Trinity.

Interviewer: Oh, the club here, oh you're with the society here.

S: Yeah. Loads of craic. They do take postgrads. There's tons of them.

Interviewer: They do, no they did. No, I tried, my first year, I signed up. I was all ready to do the certifying, the dives and everything, and I just wasn't able to find time to actually go out on the dives. It was a bit disappointing because I had done all the training up until the testing, and I couldn't get away from this to do the testing.

S: If you've got the logbook signed, you can get in touch with the training officer and she will take a look...

Interviewer: I can, I mean I can, I can ask them, like, I might have to do a refresher or something but I haven't paid my dues since then, so...but like I'm still.

S: You can pay, if you pay the BSAC fees for the insurance, -- will be happy to sign you up for the novice trip.

Interviewer: I'm sure like, I could get back into it. Maybe once this dies down. Once I kind of hit a lull and I have a little more time I may rethink it. The other thing that scared me off a little bit was the water, the temperature of the water. I know it's cold.

S: It's cold, but once you get in, it's fine. Irish beaches are just a little bit depressing. You learn to live with that. I've been surfing in Donegal in October. That's the Atlantic. There's cold currents up there. And I was fine. And that's surfing in a single wetsuit. For diving, we wear two of them.

Interviewer: That's true. I'll consider that.

S: Think about it. And no wind chill. So.

Interviewer: That's true. Just get under. And the water is beautiful. Just getting under the water.

S: The state of mind. You're not verbalizing anything. It's perfect.

Interviewer: I'm trying to think. I mean, we've covered pretty much everything that I wanted to cover. But again, this is more just, listening to what you have to say and seeing what I think, so...I think that's, yeah do you have anything else you want to add or like...

S: I don't know. If you want to hear anything more about the Polish community, because there's loads of different experiences. Like I have cousins in my village, and they're like way younger than me and my brothers, so like my youngest cousin was born here. His name on his birth certificate is actually in English. He's like 8 at the moment. He will speak English by default, even though my aunty and uncle wouldn't actually know all that much English. Yeah, like uh...

Interviewer: Well it's more, like this is more about you, yourself and your experience. I mean if, like, you said the Polish speaking community, what are your experiences then? With the Polish speaking community. Like, what kinds of experiences have you had with, like in that community? When do you usually come in contact with them? Do you spend a lot of time with the community?

S: I would. Yeah, um, like you can't take a step in a shop without meeting some Polish speaker.

Interviewer: So, and when you do, you, are you finding yourself, that you kind of mix your languages? Like speak a bit of Polish, a bit of English, or do you kind of default to one language or another?

S: I'll default to Polish with anybody older. I'll do a bit of Polish with anybody younger. But if it's clear that they're more comfortable with English, I'll go for English. If I'm babysitting I'll speak Polish because the parents usually want me, that's the reason they've hired me, as opposed to an English-speaking babysitter.

Interviewer: To reinforce the language at home. Ok.

S: It's that kind of climate.

Interviewer: Do you kind of, enjoy that, being able to contribute in that way? To the child's Polish language upbringing?

S: I hope it's, I hope I'm making some kind of difference there. Um, yeah. I used to work in SuperValu though, and I would avoid speaking Polish at all costs, even if like, the family that was there was like, speaking in Polish. I would try not to like, make them aware that I'm a Polish speaker. Just because it would be like, fairly awkward. Because usually they're not conscious that somebody speaks Polish. If I'm speaking Polish, and my mother

and I walk up to a till, with her while we're out shopping, I don't want people to make me aware that they know what I'm saying. It's like, that's just awkward. So I try not to do it to other people unless it's clear that they're having trouble communicating to me in English, again. I will prioritize my own personal comfort. Like, talk to them in Polish about specialized skill, too. Like, I teach maths grinds, and like, I'm fine teaching maths grinds in English but I wouldn't agree to teach it in Polish, even if like, it was a Polish speaker. Like, why would I do that to myself? I don't have that kind of specialized vocabulary.

Interviewer: So there's a lot of, like, you kind of pick and choose, but also, you look at the context, and decide.

S: Yeah, pros and cons to it all. It's a balancing act, as law professors love to say. Everything's a balancing act. Like you have to decide if you're going to put your own interests or somebody else's, you know?

Interviewer: Alright, um, I think that's good for today.

## *Interview 2*

S: I did get to read through those. The second one was more of a cursory read because it is a lot.

Interviewer: I mean, if you just kind of went over the main themes and then kind of skimmed through some of it, yeah. Um, but maybe we can start with the first group of observations and things, the stuff that's related specifically to you, was there anything there that maybe you wanted to clarify? Anything you wanted to add? There were a couple questions I had asked as well, just confirmatory questions, you know, does this make sense? Um, does this sound right to you? Is this...

S: Yes, I just pulled up the document there, I read a while back, but honestly the first time I read it, it was like, oh my God, he's looking right through me, Jeez it felt like I was in therapy.

Interviewer: Yeah, I'm getting a lot of that.

S: No, it's very observant I would say, um.

Interviewer: Well it's mostly what you told me, I just kind of organized it in a way that, kind of grouping together some of the different strands that were present in our discussion. You know this is all based on what you told me, I wasn't trying, especially at the first stage I'm not, I wasn't trying to go too deep into trying to figure it out for myself or interpret it at all, the interpretation will come later. This is more just, this seems to be what's going on right now. Um.

S: Yeah, um, the first two points you have listed in that document is filling in gaps and construction. At the end of both, that is really on point and observant there, I mentioned on both of those, it's not mentioned in relation to French or else Polish, English, reflecting on that, I'd say the idea of filling in gaps would occur in relation to French but there is no motivation to do it as such. French is kind of a closed chapter for me, I'd say, at this stage, and it's not so much filling in gaps as being aware that there's huge, gaps implies like a small break whereas the French knowledge is like confined to that kind of basic area. I'd have to like branch out into huge other areas of speech, topics, um, whole other grammatical constructions to be able to put those things together, so it's not really like filling things in so much as like trying to expand in another area entirely.

Interviewer: Like you feel complete, like your French language learning, for you it's complete, as complete as you need it to be at this moment basically.

S: Yeah, if I decide to go to France, I could order in a restaurant, I could maybe write a halfway formal letter, and if I tried I could probably get directions to the train station, which is entirely pretty much most of what they taught us to do anyway. So, yeah. Yeah. So that's kind of what I have a grip on and there isn't really much reason to venture out past that all that much. Yeah, and you say there at the end of the construction paragraph, where the Polish fits into this. I'd say that, in terms of like structure, I can speak Polish structurally fine, I still make like the same one or two grammar mistakes but it's kind of

like native English who still use the wrong "your" in sentences, like, I know what I'm doing wrong but it's like a force of habit. Um, yeah, I wouldn't say there's much like stuff to build on in that context. Like, um, I can construct things grammatically correctly, I can spell things fine most of the time, I can, um, sometimes it's just like hard to communicate what I want to say in Polish because the structure is very different from English and that's kind of the only barrier that's there. I wouldn't say it's a certain lack of something, just, um, my own discomfort, if anything. Um, just less practice on that. Yeah. And as for learning English, I don't think I'd remember anything like that. I'd say English is still my primary language most of the time, so I wouldn't have that kind of feeling and I wouldn't remember how I learnt it all that much. Um, yeah.

Interviewer: Like technically, like I guess, chronologically, Polish would have been your first language but English is now your primary language because of...

S: And I'd say primary not native, because I was like 5 when I started learning, that's kind of past the limit I'd say.

Interviewer: Um, okay.

S: Like I only really picked up some of the mannerisms of native English speakers here in Ireland within like the past 4 or 5 years. Um, like you'd hear native English speakers in Ireland say "innit?" "lads", all that kind of, the filler words are entirely different and um, yeah. Well not entirely but the go-to set of vocabulary that distinguishes say, that distinguishes like Irish people from people from the North or someone from the UK is, just slightly different, you know? Like a different choice of synonyms. Yeah. Um, yeah. Then you follow-up with awareness of variation and diversity...

Interviewer: I mean one that thing that like, kind of, in the second paragraph here, talking about just, it seemed, you did talk about, you know, the differences between yourself and your siblings, and yourself and other people maybe who were also, other Polish people who came maybe at an earlier age or at a younger age, and...

S: Yeah, you expand on that under awareness of variation, right?

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, so, and you just mentioned now, you know, being past the cutoff in terms of when you got here when you were 5, your younger siblings, they would have been, they would have gotten here obviously I guess younger (Yeah they were 2 and 3)...they were 2 and 3, so, so their experience even with like a, and it's only what, like a 2-3 year age gap, but you've already kind of noticed that there's a difference in that language experience as well. Um, so just, you seem to be attuned to these things, it did come up a couple times during our first chat, so.

S: Yeah, when it's part of like your home life, you tend to notice it. I don't know, my brothers are younger than me, they are turning 15, 16 this summer, respectively.

Interviewer: So then, are like, so their, so would you, like, do you notice that they, you were saying some of the filler words and things like that, are your brothers more likely to use that kind of language? Are they more comfortable using it? You say you just came,

you just kind of noticed yourself using those words within the last like 5 years or so, does it seem like your siblings are more used to using that kind of like...regional specific

S: I think they are, yeah. Definitely, I'd say. Um, like, they'd be more comfortable using like specific regional slang, they would've kind of copped onto it earlier as such, like, even like native English speakers here in Ireland wouldn't really be using them in primary school, children have a different set of vocab, but then transitioning to secondary they would have like started using that naturally from their parents, and I kind of copped on secondhand from them, whereas like my brothers would have had myself and would have been more in tune with their peers to pick that up faster. Or at least that's my estimate. I can ask them, they're just in the next room but I know, research ethics, consent and all that.

Interviewer: It's more that, I guess like your own, I'm more interested in you and how you understand this whole thing, so I don't really need to talk to them. It is, the research ethics is also part of it but, um,

S: You wouldn't enjoy it anyway. (can't understand)

Interviewer: Do you find that you compare yourself to them at all? Or not so much?

S: I wouldn't say so, no. I know like, there's that element to it, on speech and comfort levels, but also I know that I still write in English and at their age I was like far better at writing in English than they are right now and I know that because I write half their, like help correct half their homework. Yeah. Um, like um, I mean their writing is about on par from what you'd expect from the average Irish 15 year old but, um, yeah. I guess you'd pay more attention to what has to be written when you're learning something like, with intention as opposed to through like a more natural, native language learning process. It's like when you go on like Reddit or something and like you have the same as that, oh English is not my first language, and the post is either in absolutely rubbish grammar or perfect, perfect English that you can see in like literary magazines. Yeah.

Interviewer: Just kind of thinking about, you know, there's always that difference between, I guess, fluency in speech versus fluency in writing and one doesn't always guarantee the other (translate to the other), yeah exactly, so. That's interesting.

S: In general I just end up writing a lot for God knows what reason so, um, that's part of it as well. They don't voluntarily go out to like, they'll go on calls, they'll sooner call their friends on Discord or something than text them all that much, and the texts are atrocious, yeah.

Interviewer: Well I guess, because you're in law and, what was the other one? It was law and um, (business) business, yeah. I mean, you must have to write a lot for that, too, I mean.

S: Oh, lots. Like, there's an article in Trinity News last year that English, people studying English in first year, they only write like 9000 words of essays, we clocked in somewhere around like 13, 14 [thousand]. (Wow, ok) And that's people studying English. Yeah. You

just end up doing a lot of writing but even so, like I will go out of my way to text someone like something this long, like on a phone screen over like ring them to explain myself verbally.

Interviewer: Oh you prefer texting, even if it's a long, long text you'd much prefer to do it that way than to like, call up and, oh ok.

S: Yeah, you've probably noticed my reliance on filler words. I even put those in my text messages, it's just easier to express things fully when it's, when you have control over the pacing of your own expression of it. And like, I'm the type of person to like send 4 or 5 texts in a row if I think it's like, warranted, well not even like warranted but some people are so hesitant to double-text, I will put like 4 or 5 texts on several different topics if needs be, like. Um, yeah. I don't know how relevant that is but, um, verbal expression is always, becomes more difficult when you're trying consciously pick words and so much more pressure than typing out something.

Interviewer: I mean, it kind of, just because I mentioned, maybe it's a personality trait of yours that kind of comes through like when you're learning languages or using languages, I mention, you know, you seem to be detail-oriented, um, you know, there's a type, like a, you kind of value precision in some sense. I guess, I don't know, you can tell me if I'm wrong but that seems to be what's coming across.

S: That's very on, on the dot there.\

Interviewer: Like, and so you're attuned to even subtle changes or subtle differences and, like maybe, and that's why I kind of put that in in what I saw in your, in your stories about your own language learning. And then, um, you know, the thing that stuck out to me was, you know, when you were talking about that teacher of Irish that you had who, you know, you really enjoyed having those, um, those sessions where you take something and kind of practice it as is but then also change little things, like those are the things that appeal to you. And that seems to be not just within languages but just in general, you seem to be someone who kind of values that type of experience or even just kind of notices these things so.

S: Yeah, definitely. I enjoy working within a framework or constraints and working to do what I can within that. Um, I do a lot of translating documents for my mom, like she'll write an email in Polish and I'll write it in English and it's like, or else she's writing a text and she's trying to express something, I'll tell her, no this word in English better conveys what you're trying to say than this one. Um, like the more translation you do, the more it kind of sticks with you like that. Um, like it carries over right into say, writing in Irish, because okay, you want to put together this sentence in English, then in Irish it would be a different construction, and with that construction, it associates with a different kind of, subtext, or you'd say it with a different tone if you were pronouncing it like in a debate, so you want to kind of rephrase it and kind of, it fans out from there. Um, like, intentional word choice is something that is, like focusing on the intention behind a specific word is kind of key to getting that sort of expression across when you wouldn't. Like I'm pausing right now every half sentence to evaluate what I'm saying. I do that a lot in casual speech



as well, and trying to get, pick the right word the first time so as not to be misunderstood. I mean, that kind of sticks out from childhood, like, you pick out the wrong English word to say something you want to say in Polish, and then somebody laughs at you for it. Um, that kind of stopped happening after I was like 10 or something but it does kind of linger. Oh I got laughed out of the (incomprehensible) in class, in like second class, I was picked to read out loud, and instead of saying "Canada" I said it as "CanAda", um, yeah like

Interviewer: Is that the Polish pronunciation?

S: Polish'd be like flatter but "Canada".

Interviewer: Oh there's no real like accent or anything, like stress.

S: You wouldn't accent, you wouldn't stress a specific syllable. And like the letter, letters don't vary within different contexts as much like, "a" is always being pronounced "ah". Very flat vowels.

Interviewer: And you got laughed at because of this.

S: Yeah, like, we were like 8, so. Like, it's justifiable, but, um

Interviewer: Was this still in the, when you were in the language support, the learning support? Or was this

S: No that was after that.

Interviewer: After that, oh ok.

S: Like it's understandable that an 8 year old who's never had to, like, hear "Canada" pronounced before in one of two languages they speak at home and not, like my parents, I think if I ever had heard of Canada until that point it would have been on Polish TV. Either way, like, um, you tend to put a lot more detail and care into stuff like that.

Interviewer: It must help with law, too. I mean, like, because you're going into second year, you just finished your first year.

S: I finished second year.

Interviewer: You're going into third year. But I'm guessing with law that kind of, that level of precision is necessary in law, as well. I mean, especially with contracts and things like that, you know, you want to pick out the right words. Yeah like, um

S: It is very much picking out very specific differences in phrasing. Criminal law as well is like full of that, um, it does help with writing but um, I find that, when I'm very specific on like those things, some of the broader points I try to make get lost so my grades are like good but not excellent. Like either way, it does help to put things in very specific words the first time around. It like, helps me personally to not be like worrying about what another person might think of what I'm saying. Even if I come off as a little bit silly to pause in the middle of a sentence and start it again with a completely different word order.

Interviewer: Ok. This is, alright, I was just curious because we're talking a little bit about law and your studies, is there an Irish requirement for studying law at Trinity or is that not requirement? Like an Irish language requirement.

S: In Ireland there is, you have to pass Irish to get into college unless you have an exemption. Not all courses, leaving cert subjects are offered at higher and ordinary, maths is also offered at, maths and Irish are offered at foundation. Not all colleges accept foundation level Irish. Law specifically doesn't have a grade requirement for Irish, like there's a minimum of 60% in higher level English, but that's not all that hard to achieve because the grades fall in around there anyway. Um...

Interviewer: But you don't have to take, like, Irish for law (No, I don't)...oh, ok. Alright.

S: But Irish is mandatory unless you have an exemption for dyslexia or arrived to Ireland after the age of 12.

Interviewer: So it's mandatory to enter the course but in the course, while you're here, studying in the course (No, no, you don't need to take it) you don't need to take like modules in Irish or anything. Oh ok.

S: Trinity doesn't even offer law and Irish, which UCD does.

Interviewer: See, that seems strange to me because, from what I know, like, aren't lawyers, well I guess lawyers don't need to know Irish but, like, wouldn't it be useful because the laws are written in both languages and, you know, it would be useful to kind of

S: The laws are but they have to be direct translations like there's,

Interviewer: So that there's no ambiguity between like oh well (No, there isn't) the English version applies but the Irish version doesn't apply kind of thing.

S: No there isn't. Actually, we read about an interesting enough case, I can't remember what subject it was for, I think it was for constitutional, um, I think in one of the, in Montreal, like in the French-speaking parts of Canada, there's a requirement for all statutes to be written, to be accessible both in English and French, that would make sense right? And there was a traffic law or something, a man got arrested for, not arrested but subject to like some kind of high enough fine for infringement of a traffic law, and his lawyer in court argued that the law was unconstitutional because it hadn't been translated to French yet. It was a fairly recent enactment. So that was actually, and he succeeded, and the problem was, in Montreal they had tons of English language statutes that for like, on small scales, they hadn't been translated to French, like minor enactments, so this is important for constitutional law because the supreme court in Canada made a, made the first kind of effort worldwide, suspended declaration of unconstitutionality, so ordinarily the constitution is supposed to be like very high tier but, this was a breach, but to do that would kind of get rid of a lot of law across Montreal and French speaking Canada, so they made a suspended declaration, so they had like three months to translate all the statutes. And that's why we have suspended declarations of

unconstitutionality, God that is a mouthful. Because of traffic laws. That was a bit of a tangent, but, um, interesting enough anyway. But we don't have that issue here in Ireland because everything gets translated by default. Yeah. Yeah and the constitution was written by DeValera who did actually have good Irish so that's not a problem either.

Interviewer: I'm trying to, I'm just looking through the notes again and seeing, um

S: Yeah, you have more notes on comfort versus accommodation, you have, about a few lines in, "you still use Polish for babysitting, for example, so Polish does provide a sense of comfort in certain contexts." I would like to note there that I speak Polish when babysitting because the children speak primarily Polish with their parents and I was asked by the parents to do that. They would hire an English speaking babysitter if they wanted one to talk to their kids. It's easier as well. It's a contractual obligation as such. Yeah.

Interviewer: I'll amend that.

S: Further down there you have, "you use Polish in ways to make you feel comfortable, helping people when they need it or talking to your parents or other members of the community who feel more comfortable in Polish". Um, yeah again, I would have less interaction with members of the community now, um, as, I'd mostly do it if I'm babysitting or giving grinds for example. Um, I taught English lessons to someone for a while when I was in secondary school, so for that I would have used Polish to explain, um, and like talking to family is most of the time not for my comfort. I would talk in English to my brothers, especially now that we're home more often, just kind of defaults to English, like things that our mother would talk to us about are spoken about in Polish. It's like, oh, one of them has to do the laundry, I might have that in Polish, if it's anything like our shared video games or going outside or going to the shops, it'll be said in English.

Interviewer: So it's less comfort, maybe more, would something like obligation be a more fit description then? Maybe not obligation, well you mention contractual obligation for the babysitting thing but, when talking to parents

S: I'd say it's just custom (custom rather than comfort) yeah. Like, or habit even, to some degree, like, but sometimes it's like convenient, if I'm reminding them about laundry, I'm going to refer to the laundry program and what we're putting in the washing machine in Polish because that's what Mam says to him and he's not going to understand which laundry program I'm referring to when I say detergent in English because he's a 15 year old boy. So in that respect, it's, well it's more convenient, um, and like obviously I could discuss video games in Polish to match that, but again, it's more comfortable to do it in English and there's not really much of a reason. Yeah.

Interviewer: So, you know, this is kind of bridging over to the other set of notes I sent you, this, in that set I talk a little bit about distance, would you say that then, for you, English is the closest language for you right now? It's your primary language, it's the one that you feel closest to

S: Yeah, I would say that, for sure.

Interviewer: And then Polish, is a little further away

S: Like, my inner voice would be in English.

Interviewer: And Polish would be a little further away. Between Polish and Irish, which is closer? Like if you had to rank them, I guess.

S: If I was ranking them, I'd say Polish, just because I get more opportunities to speak it and um, obviously, native language, just, there's more of that, less of a conscious effort to speak it. Um, like no matter how often I might speak Irish, it's probably never going to be like at that level where every single sentence comes to me intuitively. Not that English is at that level either, because I sit there, like, with my mouth open about to say something so often, but that just, personality I'd say, not like language comfort levels as such. Yeah and like, French is dead last.

Interviewer: Do you, have you noticed your, I guess the, your patterns of language use, like how have they been affected by the lockdown? Do you notice yourself using your languages differently? Are you using, you mention, you know, I think you just said something about like using Polish a little bit less, you don't have as many opportunities to use it now.

S: Oh no, I'd say I have more opportunities to speak it at home, um, just because I'm sitting here.

Interviewer: Because you're home more.

S: Yeah, my mam's home a lot more often as well now.

Interviewer: So this, so this has actually affected the way, like your patterns of language use. The last couple of months, being at home and everything.

S: Yeah, I wouldn't say it's a pattern, I wouldn't say there's a major difference in how I use those languages, but just frequency, just because dad was home because his workplace wasn't Covid safe for, he was home for like a month and a half or something. And uh, even just that, the fact that he was at home and we were talking more often would affect how often I speak in Polish. But I wouldn't say specifically how I use the language would've changed that much.

Interviewer: Did it feel weird to use Polish more often then? Or, you didn't really notice any difference in your feeling towards it?

S: I don't think I did. No, um, no. There was an instant where me and my brother were going to Lidl and we were standing in queue and I said something in English when I meant to say it in Polish, and I didn't cop on for a while and it was like, a slightly, a slightly petty comment about someone who was walking past us, and that was like mildly embarrassing. But, um, I'll live it down. No if that's the worst that's going to happen, I can take that.

Interviewer: Alright, um, so how about the, the other, the longer set of notes, the ones that are more based on, that were based on a combined view of all the people I talked to,

including yourself. Was there anything there that in your brief read that jumped out at you? Anything that maybe you wanted to comment on or, um, you found interesting? Anything there?

S: Yeah, I don't think, um, all that much to say about the first section on relationships and people who exerted influence on language learning. I'd say that you've really got, you've really captured that, in the other set of notes as such. I wouldn't really, yeah, I wouldn't really say that there's anything there that really contradicts anything I've said. (Inaudible) fairly interesting. Yeah, the one you have about perceptions of self as a language learner/user, that's interesting I guess. Um, I wouldn't say, I don't know, I don't really think that all that much of it is particularly applicable to me, there is the paragraph there that starts "different perceptions of self which some of you described...", that one, "the situations in which you speak those languages are going to be different..." Yeah, um, obviously I do that, but, like, you're, obviously would project a different sense of self when speaking Polish because that's primarily to my family and people who are more connected (?) to my family than myself. Um, but then there's also the fact that in English I'd speak differently to the teachers than I would to my friends, and there's people who I would speak to in English with the exact same level of, like, like there's people to which I would be exactly as closed off to in English as I would be to my parents in Polish. Um, yeah and there's this like, the whole personality, personality is like a factor in that moreso I'd say than language, like I tell my parents next to nothing about my personal life, I will feed them gossip about my friends and people from my class so they would think they were like experiencing my life with me sooner than tell them anything about myself. Yeah, um, that's, yeah. I'd say, yeah you have language personality, I wouldn't really extend that to my own experiences.

Interviewer: You feel you're kind of the same person no matter what language you're speaking kind of.

S: I feel like it's the same library of personality, like projections or images that I would send across regardless of which language I'm using. Like there are, like my friends' parents would pretty much get the same treatment as my own parents in that, like, I'll be nice, I'll tell them what course I'm in, how college is going, and uh, basically nothing else. Yeah like, the cardboard cutout that goes to your parents, the cardboard cutout that goes to your teachers, it's the same way that I'm speaking to English speakers or Polish speakers. Yeah you have towards the end of that section "hybrid identities you felt not fit neatly..." that part is interesting but, um, I don't know if it's really all that applicable. Like I wouldn't call myself Polish as in, kind of, behavioral or national pride identifier, like especially now that there's some absolutely vile political things going on there, yeah, um.

Interviewer: Do you...oh no sorry, go ahead.

S: No to the point that my mostly conservative cousin has actually posted on her Instagram story about what's like, ok, you know there's something happening. Now, like, I introduce myself, people ask me where I'm from and I say oh I live in Meath to avoid that

question. Yeah, and that like turns into how long my commute is and all the rest of the questions. What were you going to ask there?

Interviewer: Oh no, I was going to ask, so is this even a thing that you even think about? I mean it's possible, there are some people that I talked that, you know, do think about this a lot, you know, who am I, the language is tied in to their national identity so, you know, so someone who might feel more Spanish than anything else or some people who feel they're between things. Like my own personal, I, a lot of this is also, I've reflected what everyone has told me but I'm also looking at it from my own perspective and using my own experience as well, and you know, I grew up as a Puerto Rican, kind of Caribbean, Latin American, in New York, so there's your American thing, so I'm kind of in the middle, you know, and it's weird because when I, like if I'm in New York, you know, I've been told to go back where I came from, but then it's like I go to Puerto Rico and they're like, well you're not really from here, so I kind of get caught in the middle, and other people have had this same experience where they don't really feel fully one or another, they're kind of in the middle, in between, or they have what's considered a hybrid identity. But it's also possible not to even think about these things

S: I would have thought about this a lot when I was younger, but I, I guess I've tried to consciously tried to disconnect myself from identity politics a good bit, for like a couple of years now, it's just, like deliberating on it was really not good for me and I'm kind of glad that it's not really something that occupies too much of my headspace as such. I would say that like hybrid identity, yeah, there's a certain kind of identity that comes with being, like, lower class, laborer, economic immigrant, Polish in Ireland, like that is, like Eastern European economic immigrants is like a whole social class here. I was joking, everybody was discussing Normal People, have you seen that debate? Because it's set in Trinity. And it's like, I was joking that the most unrealistic thing is that it's like 2011 already and Mary-Ann's parents hired an Irish cleaner. That's the kind of humor that we're talking about there.

Interviewer: Another thing that came up, it wasn't there, but like, this was another thing that kind of came out was, um, just in a couple people's stories, kind of expectations, like there's an identity sometimes placed on you that you don't necessarily agree with, um, or you don't necessarily feel like, um, you represent it the way that they think you represent it, kind of, and that's where, I spread it out to, like, um, earlier on in that document where I'm talking like, you know, your relationship with others and how you react to the way other people react to you and that whole, and that whole thing. So yeah there's also that possibility.

S: I'd say like stereotyping as like a broad umbrella, (yeah like stereotyping, like reacting to stereotypes) like me knowing what expectations there are of me, other's people's expectations of me and other people's reactions to me existing outside of their expectations. A lot of that is kind of, I'd say that's like a fairly big portion of what you experience here in Ireland anyway. Um, yeah like sometimes people would expect you to have a lower understanding of something, and like you walk in and it's like oh, this person speaks perfect English, I get that in hospitals and medical treatment a lot, um,

surprisingly. Um, some doctors are just like that. Yeah, um, it is, I wouldn't say it's a very frequent occurrence because a lot of people do have a lot less unconscious bias here in Ireland than they might have in America, I don't know if that's your experience, being far more visibly not Irish, um, but it's definitely like less than the UK, I've been there and, expectations there...

Interviewer: I feel like it, there's less, there seems to be a lower level of malice behind it is what I would say, like there's...it's not absent, but it's not as kind of in your face as some places in the US

S: And like the UK is not great for that either. Like, I know, when I walk into the banks, when I used to before I changed my name, the tellers would still be like, oh, giving me like a bit of a, baby talk equivalent, um, just being a little bit extra straightforward, a lot of shopkeepers do that to my mam still. It was very visible, and you can hear it, that she's foreign. Um, and like, it's not like intentionally, and it's not malicious, I think they're trying to be helpful but still like, very much an adjustment of behavior just because of nationality or perceived, or like what their perception is of your abilities. My mam can understand English just fine, she just can't speak like quite as eloquently as they can. She'll still omit articles a good bit, and that is a big tell, especially in Ireland, like when you've got a lot of Eastern European immigrants they will omit articles, like that's a big flag there. It's like running around screaming that you're foreign. Yeah.

Interviewer: So like, you said that, at some point this was a thing you thought about but now you've disconnected yourself from it. Was this during like, do you remember at which point you decided, well I can't do this anymore, I don't want to, this is not something that I want to kind of waste my energy on.

S: I think that it wouldn't have been a specific point about that specific thought or set of thoughts. (It was more of a process?) But it was like, it was like a lot of other things that I kind of like rejected thinking about towards the same time. Like it would've been around sixth year or so, I just started caring about a lot less things, I guess. Just became a lot more relaxed about others' perception of myself to some degree and also, like, what I'm really willing to put effort towards. And college as well has been like, a long series of that. Like, I started off wearing contact lenses back in first year for like, two months or so, and then a couple of days I forgot them, and then I just slipped back into wearing glasses because like, I wasn't quite as concerned about the way I looked, and like the first couple of bad grades I got in college were like absolute mental breakdowns and then, since then, it's been like, ok I didn't put all that much effort into this anyway, I understand why I scored lower. And it's like, a lot of other things fall to the wayside when you stop being so high-strung about everything else. That was just like, a lot of it was just me being a bit neurotic when I was younger about perfect grades and, um, making sure everything was just spic and span and that kind of fell away as part of it, too, like identity politics kind of fell to the wayside as well. And nowadays it's far easier to be aggravated by like rich Trinity kids being themselves, um, than like being concerned about being perceived as extremely foreign because, I see the same crowd nowadays in college as well and it's less of a concern than it would have been at the start. And now when I introduce myself to

people I don't come across as all that foreign, it's like hi, I'm \_\_\_\_, so I still look not Irish, um, obviously not as much as yourself or as like a lot of other people who have, other foreign people with physically different skin colors or racialized features, because that must be hell on Earth, like being constantly visibly, like parsing as foreign from the minute people see you and not just like having people subconsciously think, oh this person doesn't look like us. I cannot imagine what it must be like to exist in a public space like that. Yeah, no, I'm lucky enough that I can introduce myself and parse as halfway Irish nowadays. Yeah, so it kind of elicits less thought from me now after kind of settling into college and changing my name like that, yeah. I wouldn't say changing your name changes your identity entirely, but it's certainly been a big relief, that's for sure. Um, I don't, like when you look at the (...?) register list on the Irish courts website, you see so many people with outlandish names, like extremely, like names that you, names that I wouldn't be able to pronounce certainly without double-checking and like changing to baseline Irish names. Or just like plain old Adam, Jack, Lisa, all them. Yeah. And then there was this one guy whose first name was Robert, last name was something like (...?) in Irish, and all he did was like insert the middle name Maximus. You have to wonder what kind of person that is. Um, maybe he's really into historical roleplay, I don't know. Yeah.

Interviewer: I mean, this is an aside but you'd think, like, with all the stuff that goes around about like Irish names for example, you know you'd think they'd be a bit more sensitive to, you know, getting someone's name right and like, like all this stuff, like even if someone doesn't use Irish in their daily life but they have an Irish name, my experience has been that they tend to, you know, be very proud of that name and they want you to pronounce it correctly and if you don't pronounce it correctly they get annoyed. And you'd think that, you know, if that's your mentality, you'd be a bit more sensitive to names that aren't Irish because you get the same, you know.

S: Yeah, yeah. A lot of Irish people are like that, it's a bit silly, (Just because they're not English), and they think that just because it's baseline for them here, yeah, like obviously you get the TAs who will never learn to pronounce Aoife correctly, but um, they also don't make an effort to pronounce the TA's names. So. Yeah. You'd think that, you know, they'd be a bit more gentle at least.

Interviewer: Alright. I'm trying to think. I had some notes prepared as well, like some things to, but you know we're kind of already like in the middle of talking about a lot of those things, anything else there that kind of, in your skimming through, um, that you kind of noticed?

S: Yeah, um, you have stuff about emotions there, frustration, definitely, um, yeah, that's very relatable there, like frustration in the language learning context especially, very relatable.

Interviewer: That seems to be, that's a huge thing, people, everyone talks about frustration, how frustrated they are, like there's this expectation and, yeah.

S: In Ireland you learn a lot of languages like in secondary school, even your standard Irish person without dyslexia will be learning English, Irish, French, and so, I think even if you



ask like a regular Irish kid picked up off the street what their experience of language learning has been they will find a teacher to be frustrated about. I had one, two, three, four, five, six Irish teachers throughout secondary school, and three French teachers that I came into regular contact with, and out of those, I think three, maybe four, no I'd say like three were good educators in the first place, not saying anything about their language skills but, or like their process of conveying like grammatical information in language, but three of those I'd say were good enough educators that if we had actual time and resources allocated to language learning, they would have been good at it. Um, in context, only like two of them were actually good at teaching Irish in a secondary school environment. Um, no, frustration in Ireland in language learning, frustration and language learning go together here. Yeah. Unfortunately but...

Interviewer: Well it seems like you're describing frustration not just in the language but also frustration with like, I guess, not the language itself but more the lack of resources, lack of opportunity kind of, there's like, almost as if they're expecting you to do an impossible job (they want you to do some legwork (?)). Yeah, yeah, ok. Like learn this language, how, figure it out yourself.

S: Yeah, unless you're like, unless you've got background in trying to learn languages, like myself in picking up Irish, it's probably only happened (...?) because of the chance combination of teachers, me already having learned another language and my mam driving me in secondary school. Like, it was pretty much good luck that got me here.

Interviewer: Was your mother also very like, kind of, what do I want to say, supportive of learning Irish as well? It wasn't just English at the beginning. You mentioned her influence on you for just teaching you some basic English to get ready to move, but with Irish as well, was she also like, well you got to learn Irish?

S: Uh, she didn't really put all that much pressure on Irish in primary school. Um, like in secondary school it was just because like there were grades and she just like wanted me to rote learn things, um, she wouldn't really have cared all that much about Irish specifically in secondary school. A bit of a tiger mom, like grades above actual knowledge but um, yeah. Like not to the extent you might see in media but um, it was very much, yeah.

Interviewer: She was interested in your learning basically.

S: She was behind the wheel. Less interested, more invested, you know? Yeah. Um, you have a section there in that document about affinity or resonance, feeling closer to some languages than others. Um, yeah you have, uh, a number of reasons like tradition or family or pure interest...I don't really know (...?) all that applicable it is to me, I would definitely say I put more effort into Irish because it resonated as you said there more than French. Again, educators there was probably kind of the driving force behind that. I'd say that if you put it together, like framework of cause and effect, that's just an effect of all that language learning I had done until that point. Um, it's like an indirect result as such. Um, yeah you have an interesting bit there about emotive words, swear words and the emotional impact they had on you, um, the way people would express happiness or

excitement in different cultures, that's very interesting that a lot of people commented on that.

Interviewer: Well it wasn't a lot, there were a couple, I think

S: A couple that like, it was major enough you felt a need to comment on it in a document that's already very long, um.

Interviewer: Well I also figured that it might like, it might get other people talking about it and I'm just wondering if other people had that, the people who didn't mention to begin with, if this was a thing that, do you find yourself kind of swearing in one language versus another kind of thing.

S: I don't know, um, I'd swear in English about the same level as I'd swear in Polish in the same context, right? Like I'd swear to my brothers in Polish like I would swear to them in English but I would not swear, I just swear less in Polish in terms of frequency because there's often young children around in those contexts. It's like ok there's my cousins visiting so I'm speaking Polish today, but I'm not going to swear around them. It's just like a thing with frequency and um, I don't know, I wouldn't swear in Irish but that's because, like, in the kind of level of Irish that we use as young people to actually care about it, we will just throw in English swear words in there, like um, you know, Kneecap, the rap people, the rappers from Belfast, it's like, they'll say everything in Irish and they'll put in like "fucking" in English. It's like a very heavy Belfast accent, and it works, um, so yeah. That or they'll use like a blend of Irish and English, it's very interesting and I'd like to see some kind of linguistic study on that but um, I guess that's for another time. Um

Interviewer: Yeah, someone else, I don't know enough Irish to even start something like that, yeah.

S: Irish is very interesting, honestly. Um, there's only 11 irregular verbs, it's not that bad, you know? Yeah.

Interviewer: But the irregular ones are like very irregular, that's the thing.

S: I don't know, like most of them only have like one irregular tense. And they still follow the spelling rules, the spelling rules are very strict.

Interviewer: Oh no the spelling, like that's one thing that like once you associate the sounds with the combinations, because I've taken some basic Irish courses and, like that part is not hard, the spelling, once you kind of associate the sounds with the spelling, it's always, like they correspond for the most part. There's not many variations there but, um.

S: Like a common thing that Polish learners of English say is that the sounds don't match what's written because like in Polish it's all extremely flat, like I already said that about the vowels earlier, and then like English speakers say that about French and about Irish. And like, um, I don't know about Spanish but from what I've seen on like Duolingo and subtitles of the, like Netflix, it's far closer to what you would be reading on the page.

Interviewer: Yeah, no, most, a lot of other languages are much, like they're, like the spelling rules are more standard, or I guess, are easier to understand because the sounds, there's not as many sounds compared to English. English is a Frankenstein kind of language where they've taken so many words from other languages and then kind of changed the way they sound or like, and so you're kind of left with just a limited combination of letters to signify, to represent an infinite number of sounds. Other languages are far more systematic that way, English is probably one of the harder

S: No English speakers say that about French, even though French is actually quite straightforward in their spelling rules. They say it about Irish even though Irish spelling rules are actually fairly, like they make a lot of sense, coming from somebody who understands like Polish orthography. Like they say that "how come the 'bhf' makes a 'v' sound like, 'an bhfuil', the start of that second word there is 'bhf' right but, um, to me that makes sense because like in Polish you put together like 'sz', that makes a 'sh' sound, like it's simple, what's the linguistics word for them? Dia...I can't remember, but like putting two letters together to make a different sound. It should make sense, we're speaking English, you have the 'sh', you just don't get it because it's a different combination of sounds. Yeah. Like my brothers still read 'sh' in Irish as 'sh' sometimes. Yeah. It's silly but orthography just evades so many people when they just refuse to accept it. Yeah you have there next, desire for different types..., yeah stuff like pragmatic...all that, um, yeah I guess, I would know about the context of Irish and the context of Polish to some degree but I wouldn't say it's really something I've given much thought to. Like Irish, there's the whole big debate about whether it should be a mandatory subject in schools and there's like, it's a language and we should just let it die out, um, yeah, um. I try not to think about that that much.

Interviewer: Also there's, other people who I've spoken to here, they mention, you know, I mean, students compare teachers, and you know they'll talk to friends who maybe go to another school and have a different experience and maybe have better teachers or worse teachers and you know like, that's, and kind of, I guess the quality of teachers, the availability of resources and things, and how that affects how a student learns Irish. You mention, you just talked about it yourself a little bit, you know, out of all the teachers you had, you had just a couple who you thought were quite effective, um, and you didn't seem very impressed by the other teachers. It's kind of, you know that kind of thing is, and you can kind of tell by the school, maybe the school area, the school type, um and based on that the kind of education you're going to get at that school. And it's not just in Ireland, people I've talked to from other countries as well do kind of see how, depending on what school you go to, what area you go to school, you know you're going to have a different experience with the learning so. So they seem, there's, even without me asking there was kind of some comments on that aspect as well.

S: Yeah schooling just goes to hell if you don't do it right from the start and the system here has been ingrained for so long that trying to do any kind of meaningful Irish reform is going to fall flat very quickly. Like there's a new junior cycle, like that's not the school leaving exam, it's the one you take about like 15, 16, like halfway through secondary, and

my brother was doing, my brothers were doing like the classroom based assessments because they're like moving from final exams to continuous assessment, and like the requirements of them for like a lot (?), too much for students to put together independently, and teachers have not yet adapted to that. Ok, a lot of the stuff that we previously did were not good for students to do independently, but sorry I'm just going to plug in my laptop charger there, right, um, the new junior cycle, we couldn't put together like similarly themed things when we were at that age, like the picture sequences for junior cert were like next to impossible, but teachers had prepared resources for that that we could rote learn for example, and the problem isn't that students are rote learning, is that the level wanted is too high, so the problem is you shouldn't change what you're assessing because that's just going to make things worse for the next couple of years until teachers adapt to it. And instead change the teaching methods or the level required. But obviously that's not going to happen any time soon.

Interviewer: Are these things that you like, learn in school? Like when you're, for example, in Irish class, do they tell you about like the history of Irish and kind of the challenges it faces and, like is this something that you, I guess your teachers like actively told you about? Or is this something that you kind of picked up on your own?

S: I'd say this is stuff that I would have picked up on my own but a lot of the texts that we study in Irish class kind of revolve around different conflicts. Like at leaving cert, there's a handful of poems that we study and one of them is from the famine era, it's like an old song and it's about (...?), about like a working class, very much a lower working class man that's like traveling from town to town just to get a day's wage for a bit of work at like work fairs and all that like, for the tiniest wages, so there's that historical aspect, and obviously like that song is in Irish because that would be the language that he spoke most fluently and the landlords would have obviously been English at that time, post-plantation. Then there's a story that we read about like you know, normal man up in Belfast, works in construction, on his way out of the pub to go home to his wife and kids on the Friday night, he goes in to grab Chinese, but this is in the middle of the Troubles so he gets shot on his way home. Yeah very graphic images, like the story describes like the blood mixing in with the takeaway food, oh God, yeah very heavy stuff, yeah that was the kind of stuff we were reading at like age 17, 18. Yeah, and then, like one of the major texts that we did was \_\_\_\_\_, which was like an Irish language drama about like a young girl back when they used to, back when teen moms just got sent to the Magdalene laundries, absolutely brutal story, God, yeah when that first aired it was so controversial. It was a play and first aired on the radio so like there's a lot of political issues that get talked about through Irish so, and a lot of them do involve like class divides, where that's like Irish Catholics during the Troubles, or it's working class persons back when Irish was first being quashed down by English landlords. Um, like the changing context of when you had like the upper class speaking like very fancy English and then like, like even \_\_\_\_\_ (An Triail?), the one about the young girl who gets pregnant, in that one the priest, not the priest the teacher got that, that courses (?) her, he's like a new teacher in the parish, oh that's where I got mixed up because he was trying to be a priest beforehand, like he

speaks a very clean kind of English that you'd hear on RTE, whereas like the girl and her mother obviously speak very differently.

Interviewer: So like most of the texts, like, it presents the Irish speakers as of a lower socioeconomic class.

S: Uh, to some degree, yeah. Just the facts there. Um, the man was obviously like still Catholic because they met through like a church-sponsored dance but it's a very different, like speech was very much entangled with class in Ireland, whether that's like in Irish itself or like different mannerisms of English. It makes it all the stranger that Irish people today are so very fixated on asking you, um, what your accent is, where you're from, how your name is pronounced, all that, um, it's just...yeah. The cultural fixation on speech but they don't display any understanding of it.

Interviewer: I think that's why earlier I said, you know, I don't know I don't feel like there's as much malice, I feel like it's more just kind of curiosity, there's a bit of naivete there that's

S: Curiosity definitely, like they all, like when I was younger it was always like oh, maybe I'd met a 12 year old who hadn't spoken to someone Polish before and it's like, oh can you say something in Polish? Yeah, it's curiosity but it gets frustrating when you encounter that a lot. I wouldn't go so far as to say, like, microaggression but um,

Interviewer: I think it's kind of, um, the way I'm seeing it is elsewhere in that set of notes I sent I talk about being used as a model, and like there were a couple people who mentioned they were used as an accent model almost, if they were in a classroom where they spoke a language that was being used, that was being taught in the class, that the teacher would actually pick them out and say, well why don't you say this word so we can hear what your accent sounds like, because

S: Oh yeah we had that in our secondary school a lot

Interviewer: Like you were the "native" accent, you were the token kind of, and I'm guessing

S: Yeah like I wasn't but we had native French speakers who grew up with French parents who got picked on or like, there was a German family who like, all their kids kind of went through that in turn.

Interviewer: But like for the most part it seemed like that was not something that, as a student, you appreciate, you know, you don't really enjoy being put on the spot that way, most people that I talked to, which is interesting because when you're on the other side, as a teacher, one of the things that they, like when I learned about teaching, language teaching, one thing that they did say is, you know, find, if you yourself are not, find different models of accents, find different models of pronunciation even among your students, don't just be the only model as the teacher.

S: Students hate it. Every student I've ever met, they hate it.

Interviewer: Exactly and like the thing is, when I first learned that I was like, are you telling me right? Because I remember being the token Spanish person to pronounce words in Spanish and you know sometimes it was alright but like at the same time, to be that person all the time, you know, I'm just trying to be a student, I'm just trying to learn, why are you putting me on the spot, every single classroom, why do I have to be the one to help you, pick someone else, there's other people who pronounce this word perfectly fine, why you got to pick on me? You end up being that token kind of, so there were a couple of people who, there were quite a few people that I talked to who mention that experience, yeah, so. You just froze, I don't know what's going on. I don't know if you can hear me, you just froze.

S: I'm very sorry about that, my internet just cut out there.

Interviewer: No worries. Yeah, no I figured something like that probably happened yeah so, no worries. I think it's still kind of slow because you're freezing up a little bit.

S: Yeah it's still not great right now, um, yeah. Unfortunately it's just being uncooperative right now. That's what happens when you get 5 people in a household with multiple internet devices all at the same time.

Interviewer: Alright

S: Yeah I'm getting unbelievable lag right now.

Interviewer: I guess this

S: We should probably finish up at some stage soon.

Interviewer: Yeah I was going to suggest the same thing. I have another meeting soon and I need to get lunch before that as well.

## Appendix D – Thematic Analyses

### Participant K

These are the themes in your language learning experiences that I've noticed emerging from our discussion from a while ago. I've based them on what you said, specifically on repeated images, words or phrases that came up in that discussion. I've put them down in what I think is in order from most apparent or most supported by what you said, to more minor themes that don't have quite as much support. There is some overlap between some of the themes, and this is not a final interpretation. This is just the first stage, and in the next talk we'll try to better shape these interpretations. If you could read over these before our next talk (a transcript of our talk is attached) and have a think about them, that would be a good start. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask. Otherwise, we can talk about them during the next time we meet.

- **Feeling of limits/categories/areas for specific languages**  
 The theme of limits, categories, bounds, areas, restrictions is common in what you discussed. For example, you discuss how the measure of limits restricts what you feel you can do with a language: “제가 읽고있는 언어라던지, 뭐, 문법, 이렇게 굉장히 제한되어 있기 때문에, 좀 그런 부분에서 사고에도 제한 많이 받는다는 기분이 들거든요.” At several points you express that you feel different domains for your different languages, and that you use each of them differently.  
 You also seem to feel confident in keeping them separate, although you mention feeling differently proficient in each of them  
 You discussed as well how you balanced use of your languages: “학교 수업이나 과제, 발표, 이렇게 다 영어로 해도 책 이런거는, 한국 교육원이나, 뭐 이런데 가지고 한국어 책 꾸준히 읽었거든요.”  
 You also mentioned that you had not thought about learning certain languages because of the limited use you saw for them: “프랑스어는 제가 국제부(?)에서 일할것도 아니고 아프리카에 갈것도 아니고 제가 약간 쓸 경우가 없을 것 같은거예요.” The link of language to limited groups, like friends or parents, also emerges in your discussion: “많이 후회해요. 아 저는 지금 생각해보면 러시아어과에 들어갔던게, 아 친구들은 다 좋은 거예요. 언어 자체를 보면 러시아어가 가장, 지금 생각해보면 저한테 이득이 되지 않았을까...왜냐하면 지금 부모님이 Kyrgyzstan 에 가 계시거든요.”
- **Feeling of matching, distance from matching**  
 You seem to feel strongly about how well certain things match yourself or your perceptions. You use the term *진율*, similar to resonate or vibrate, which may be interpreted to mean that there is a feeling of connection with language, and how deep the connection is may influence how comfortable you feel with it. Korean, your native tongue, matches well: “그 한국어를 읽었을때, 문학 작품을 읽었을때 그 전해지는 그

감동? 그런 거는 다른 언어 했을 때 잘 못 느끼는 것 같아요. 그냥, 의미는 이해하지만 전을 인다거나 전 그런 건 없죠.”

**With Chinese, you didn't match:** “그니까, 막, 중국어가 그렇잖아요. 한 글자 안에 그걸 그대로 읽을 수 있는 게 아니고 그 글자의 음을 외우고, 의미도 외워야 하잖아요. 그러니까 저는 그게 너무 싫은 거예요. 그림 같아서 너무 외우기 힘들고 그 단어를 모르면 못 읽는다는 것 조차 너무 힘든 거 같아요. 그래서 저는 그게 너무 안 맞는다고 느꼈어요.”

**Another problem you had with matching was in matching the Korean educational system and its demands:** “이제 한국의 교육에 적응하는데 시간이 좀 걸렸다고요. 근데 첫 학기에 다른 과목들은 다 성적을 올리는 거 너무 쉬웠는데 중국어는 너무 힘들더라고요. 저랑 안 맞으니까.” **You couldn't match up with the tight schedule you were meant to keep:** “막, 저는 좀 오래 더 자고 싶은데 학교에서 왜 이 정도밖에 채우지 않은가? 거기서 시작해서 난 이 시간에 굳이 여기 있을 필요를 모르겠는데 왜 이곳에만 있어야 하는가? 뭐, 이런 것 되게 좀 짜증났고 그랬죠.”

**Matching also appeared in your language use while in South America. You discussed a “mismatch” between how you looked and the language you spoke, when you visited Cuba and spoke Spanish with the people there:** “스페인어를 할 줄 아는 동양인이 많이 없는 그런 거다 보니까 저희를 신기해 하는 쿠바분도 많이 있더라고. 마치 뭐, 약간 외국분이 한국어를 엄청 잘 하면 막 쳐다보고 엄청 칭찬하듯이 너 참 스페인어를 잘 한다, 뭐 이러면서”

- **Freedom:**

Similar to the idea of matching or not matching, you mention ideas about freedom at several points. You disliked the restrictions of the Korean educational system: “그런 게 딱딱 정해져 있지는 않고 그냥 수업 스케줄만 하고 방과 후에는 제가 하고 싶은 걸 하고요. 뭐 직감이 오면 그냥 놀고, 이런 식으로 자유롭게 방생 돼서 살다가...”

You discuss other limits to freedom, such as how economic concerns limited your choice of high school: “저는 약간 그렇게까지 돈을 많이 내면서 고등학교를 다녀야 하는 것에 대한 그런 의무감이 생겨서 공립 외고를 찾아보기를 했는데 집 근처에 공립 외고는 수원외고밖에 없더라고요.” However, this was a limit you put there yourself; you didn't want to spend money to go to a school, so you restricted your own search.

This also comes up when you talk about having your life so far set up to learn languages; when you finally had a chance to get away, you chose to do anything but languages: “왜냐하면 제가 너무 되고 싶은 게 없었기 때문에 그냥 언어만 아니면 된다고 답임 선생님께 말씀을 드렸고...” In a sense, you've been restricted by languages your whole life, and you wanted to get away from them.

- **Usage of language influences personality**

You mention that you believe your personality changes depending on what language you use: “제가 뭐가 이 언어로 말할 때, 저 언어로 말할 때에 성격 자체가 변하는 기분이고 사고를 할 수 있는 또 달라지는 기분이고 느끼는 감정도 달라지는 기분이예요.” You mention not only personality but also the feelings you feel differ. Could you discuss this more?

You mention that the change in personality might be related to how comfortable you feel in the language, and how much you know: “약간, 제가 이렇게 한국어로 말할 때는



이렇게 진지한 성격이다 하면은 제가 또 스페인어로 말할때는 딱히 그렇지 않고요. 그냥, 뭐, 근데 많이 학술적인 부분이 사라졌어요, 스페인어 말할때는. 제가 그쪽 부분을 많이 모르니까, 스페인어. 그냥 일상적인 회화를 할 수 있고, 그냥 뭐 성격부터 친밀해지는 것 같고요.”

You don't mention English or Chinese here; how about yourself in those languages?

- Influence of competition

While you only mention it once, this ties into the previous theme of freedom: a freedom from competition, which helped you “heal”: “[대학 가서 중국어를 들었는데] 기초적인 내용이고 뭐, 경쟁이 치열하지 않아서요. 그냥 healing 하는 마음으로 들었던 것 같아요.”

- Emotions

There are several mentions of emotions related to language and language learning, or just education in general. Your experience of learning Chinese, for example, was related to a school life that you felt restricted in: “이제 한국의 교육에 적응하는데 시간이 좀 걸렸다고요. 근데 첫학기에 다른 과목들은 다 성적을 올리는거 너무 쉬웠는데 중국어는 너무 힘들더라고요. 저랑 안 맞으니까.” Chinese didn't match well with you because of its timing in relation to your return to the Korean educational system. You met Chinese at a time of restriction: “그쵸. 갑자기 한국에 들어왔는데 이제 기숙사 생활 했기 때문에 학교에서 짜여진 일정이 있었잖아요. 근데, 근데 그게 너무 화가 나는 거예요.” You were angry about school life, and Chinese being difficult didn't help. You described how your choice of Chinese at first was based on your desire to get away from the alphabet; you had a strong negative emotion towards the alphabet after seeing it for three years: “약간 3 년동안 계속 영어, 스페인어, 알파벳만 계속 쓰다보니까 좀 싫증이 나는 거예요. 그럼 약간 동양의 언어를 배워보고 싶은, 그런 마음도 있었어요.”

You did not seem to mention strong emotions in relation to English learning, but Chinese and Spanish a bit more. You also described one emotional experience in Paris, and mentioned French not being an interest of yours, on several occasions.

- Physical shape of language

Related to emotion, you mentioned the effect the shape of letters had on you: part of your interest in Chinese came from not using the alphabet, a feature you later came to dislike: “그니까, 막, 중국어가 그렇잖아요. 한 글자 안에 그걸 그대로 읽을 수 있는게 아니고 그 글자의 음을 외우고, 의미도 외워야하잖아요. 그러니까 저는 그게 너무 싫은거예요.”

- Perceived influence of age and time

A prominent theme in your stories is that you have strong beliefs and opinions on the role age and time have on language learning and use. You mention this several times, such as saying that “for language, it's always too late”: “나중에 필요할때 가서 준비하려면, 언어란 원래 늦잖아요, 항상.” You also discuss how your parents' efforts to learn

Spanish were unsuccessful because of their age: “[부모님께서 스페인어 못 하시는데] 엄청 열심히 하셨는데 끝까지 잘 못 배우시더라고요. 나이가 있는 것 같아요.”

It's too late to become a multilingual because you weren't born speaking multiple languages: “모국어가 이미 현상 된 다음에 영어를 배우는거랑 모국어랑 같이 영어를 배우는거랑 그게 얼마나 다른지 알기 때문에 저는 제가 multilingual 은 아닌 것 같아요.” Timing is very important to you, it seems.

With school at large, you mention that you needed time to adjust, time that wasn't given to you: “이제 한국의 교육에 적응하는데 시간이 좀 걸렸더라고요.”

You also discuss how the time you have to learn and use languages is related to how much time you have outside of your normal studies, and you seem to believe that learning a language has a relationship with the age that you learn it. You compare yourself with your sibling, who has learned Guarani, and you attribute it to their being younger than you. How do you feel about this? Do you have anything to add to this?

- Feeling that language is product of environment

You do not have a special view of language, and express the idea that you have been fortunate enough to have been provided with opportunities to learn different languages: “내가 영어를 남들보다 잘한다고 하긴 하는데, 이게 진짜 내 적성에 맞아서 잘하는게 아니라 그냥 어렸을때부터 그런 환경이 주어져서 잘하게 된거구나 라는 생각을 많이 한 것 같아요. 그래서, 뭐, 언어가 제 특기라는 생각을 버리게 된 그런 계기가 된 것 같고요.” You comment on this again, discussing your parents' influence: “기회가 많이 주어진거죠. 왜냐하면 부모님도 뭐, 제가 어렸을때부터 미국에 살았던 것 아니지만 뭐, 영어 교육에 굉장히 관심이 많으셨고, 실제로 중학교, 초등학교 때까지 되게 좀 해외로 여행 많이 다녔고 중학교 가서는 거주, 체류 경험도 있고, 뭐 고등학교 들어와서 외고로 갔고, 되게 뭔가 너무 언어를 배우는데에 맞춰진 삶을 계속 살았던거 같아요.”

You also seem to have wanted to break free of this, to have more choice or to have the choice not to study or use your languages. You've made the choice to get away from this type of life. How do you feel about it now?

## Participant P

These are the themes in your language learning experiences that I've noticed emerging from our discussion from a while ago. I've based them on what you said, specifically on repeated images, words or phrases that came up in that discussion. I've put them down in what I think is in order from most apparent or most supported by what you said, to more minor themes that don't have quite as much support. There is some overlap between some of the themes, and this is not a final interpretation. This is just the first stage, and in the next talk we'll try to better shape these interpretations. If you could read over these before our next talk (a transcript of our talk is attached) and have a think about them, that would be a good start. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask. Otherwise, we can talk about them during the next time we meet.

- Culture as important to language, reflected through language;  
You mention your direct experience of living/study abroad as helpful in your realization that understanding culture is important to understanding language: “근데 그 전에는 뭔가 영어 배울 때 이해가 안 됐던 이런 말은 왜 이럴 때 쓰는거지? 이렇게 이해가 안 되는 부분이 있었는데 거기에 가서 직접 쓰는걸 보고 그 나라의 문화가 반영이 됐던 생각이 들었고...” This gets repeated in other themes as well.
- Noticing differences in structure, stratification, syntax, relationship to usage  
Related to the presence of culture in language, you mention the influence of culture on the way that sentences are formed and the choice and availability of words used. For example, you mention how age influences language use in Korean, while not in English contexts: “존댓말도 있고 그리고 비슷한 나이 또래하고 선배 후배 ... 같은게 굉장히 강한데 영어권 국가에서는 그런 표현이 별로 없는게 좀 더 수평적인 문화가 많이 반영돼 있다는걸 느꼈어요.” You also discussed how word endings in Korean lend a different “nuance” to how the language is received: “근데 약간 우리 나라 말은 좀 뉘앙스가 쓰는 글에서도 많이 반영되는 것 같아요. 예를 들어서, “습니다”, 로 끝날 수도 있고, 뭐뭐인 것 같아요 로 끝날 수도 있고, 근데 약간 영어는 딱, 그런 끝내는 표현에 따라서 뉘앙스 차이가 딱히 없잖아요. 그래서 뭔가 조금 더 객관적인 것 같다?” English doesn't have the same type of “nuance” in the words themselves.  
The way age affects language, especially word endings, led you to think that Korean is more strict in how it treats people: “우리 나라는 되게 직급에서, 직급에 대한 호칭이 굉장히 다양한데...”  
The structure of sentences also led you to think about what the language deems important: “한국어는 좀 문장 구조가 정예화 되어 있지가 않은데 영어는 어떻게 앞에 와야되고, 동사 어느 위치여고, 그래서 핵심 부분이 약간 앞에 들리는 언어잖아요. 근데 한국어는 문장에서 중요한 부분이 앞에 올 수도 있고 중간에 올 수도 있고 뒤에 올 수도 있어서 좀 제대로 끝까지 듣지 않으면 내용과 그 문맥을 다 파악하기 힘든데 영어가 좀 그게 structure 가 좀 다르다고 느꼈어요.”

You came to think that the type of structure is important depending on how widely the language is used: “확실하게 의사소통을 하려면 아무래도 그런 구조가 필요하겠구나 느꼈어요.”

- Noticing English is not just “English”  
 Your study abroad experience helped you see the differences in the kind of English spoken and gave you an opportunity to see the varieties produced. You noticed the way young men changed the language: “남자 애들이 좀 줄임 말을 많이 쓰는데...”  
 You also discussed how meeting people from other Asian countries affected how you thought about English: “[알바 하면서] 다 영어로 소통을 했어요. 근데 억양 차이가 심해가지고 처음에 엄청 알아듣기 힘들었는데 한 1, 2 주 지나니까 다 들렸던 것 같아요.”
- Usage and influence of non-standard language/taboo or swear words  
 You spoke at length about the influence of the phrase “I don’t give a shit,” and its effect on your life and life choices. English media was an escape from the stress of school, and this phrase was an escape from the stress of life: “학교 생활이 되게 많이 힘들었거든요. 좀 뽀뽀하잖아요, 스케줄이. 근데 제가 밤에...자야되는데 몰래 미드를 많이 봤어요. 좀 스트레스 풀려고. 근데 거의 미드를 처음 봤을 때, 막 Gossip Girl 이런 거를 봤었는데 근데 개네 되게 많이 하는 말이 좋은 말은 아니지만 I don’t give a shit 이란 말 되게 많이 하더라고요. 근데 저는 그게 되게 고등학교때 약간 충격이었어요...나도 그래도 되나? 약간 이런 생각을 했던?”  
 Can you speak more about this?
- Expertise as a driving force – Contrary to the idea that you don’t give a shit, you seem to value expertise in English, or see a value in it. Perhaps the value is your own, or what you see others want. For example, you wanted to attend a foreign language high school to “specialize” in English: “외고가 가고 싶었어요. 초등학교때부터. 왜냐면 외국어를 좀 전문적으로 배울수있을 것 같아서, 그래서 외고를 갔었고 가서 수업 많이 들은 (?)인데 대학교 전공 선택할때도 그냥 그나마 영어를 좀 더 배우고 싶어서 그래서 영어 관련된 과에 가게 됐고 그래서 지금까지 하고있는 것 같아요.”  
 With Russian, a language you weren’t interested in, mastery was not a concern: “근데 러시아 안 가봐서 문화까지 모르겠는데, 어, 제가 러시아어를 그만 둔 이유가 문법이 너무 복잡해서 그리고 그, 뭐지, 모든 단어에 여성형, 남성형, 중성형, 이렇게 너무 헷갈렸어요.”
- Conflict between societal view and personal view of language  
 Connected to the last idea of mastery, you have different views of language, especially English. You see a value in knowing the language well: “그래도 배워서 어쨌든 다른 어떤 걸 하더라도 영어 잘하면 큰 merit 이니까, 한국에서는 그래서 도움이 된다고 생각하고 있어요.”  
 But at the same time, you say that you don’t have to know it perfectly. It’s just a “means of communication”: “그냥 영어 실력이 어느정도 있으면... 사실 영어는 그냥 의사소통하기를 위한 수단이잖아요.” The things that seem to be valued, like accent or pronunciation, aren’t as important as being able to communicate: “사실 발음 이렇게

그렇게 중요한게 아니고 그냥 의사소통 가능한 정도는 자기 생각을 무리없이 표현하고 다른 사람 생각을 잘 들을 수 있는 정도면 나는 영어공부는, 영어공부의 종착점이라고 생각을 해서”

While at one time, English was special to you, now it doesn't seem so. What can you say about this?

- Empathy for others

You see a prejudice in the language, or at least a prejudice based on how well you know the language. English can be a source of stress, of a loss of strength or confidence, for others, but not for you, because of your experience with the language: “한국 고등학교 출신 애들이 되게 많이 위축되어 있어요. 자기 영어 못한다고 생각하고. 근데 잘하거든요. 개네가.”

You repeat this in talking about how the comment on teaching ideology affected you, about the other student's opinion on Korean education being about assessment rather than improvement: “좀 마음이 아팠어요.”

- Perceived need to maintain language rather than attain more of it

Another emerging theme is the idea that you have enough language, enough English and other languages, and you are seeking more to maintain than add (though there is some inconsistency here): “갔다와서 약간 감 안 잃으려고 그 다음에 한국에 돌아와서 영드미드, 이런걸 자막없이 보면서 좀 듣는 공부 했었어요.”

- Satisfaction

You seem satisfied with your progress, knowledge and ability. You don't see a need to be any better than you are now, to learn more languages than you know now: “계속 한국에 살거면 제 2 외국어까지 할 필요가 없는 것 같아요. 뭔가 전문적으로 그런 일을 할게 아니면.” Because you know English to your own satisfaction, you consider yourself bilingual: “그런 의미에서 [저는] bilingual 이라고 했어요.”

But you do say you'd like to learn another language if you have the time. However, it's not a necessity. It would be for your own satisfaction. So if you “don't give a shit,” it is about others, not yourself.

## Participant Y

These are the themes in your language learning experiences that I've noticed emerging from our discussion from a while ago. I've based them on what you said, specifically on repeated images, words or phrases that came up in that discussion. I've put them down in what I think is in order from most apparent or most supported by what you said, to more minor themes that don't have quite as much support. There is some overlap between some of the themes, and this is not a final interpretation. This is just the first stage, and in the next talk we'll try to better shape these interpretations. If you could read over these before our next talk (a transcript of our talk is attached) and have a think about them, that would be a good start. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask. Otherwise, we can talk about them during the next time we meet.

- Perceptions of rules, strictness

One prominent theme you mentioned was the differences in how rules appear in languages, and how speakers either follow or break the rules. There are times when you "break" the rules to tease your sister, when you "break" rules to get along with your classmates, and how some types of rules or features (like tones in Chinese) annoy or frustrate you, while others you are fine with following. You mention exceptions to rules, and what seems to be an apparent tension between "strictness" and "exceptions" : "뭔가 되게 예외가 많긴 한데 발음적인 예외와 문법적인 예외 둘다 있는데 근데 그럼에도 불구하고 뭔가 엄청 strict 하다? 그런 생각을 했던 것 같아요. 한국어에 비해서 뭔가... 점점 이 불규칙 함에 익숙해지고 있어요. 그냥 그런가보다. 외우라는걸 외워갖고".

You also mention a type of wonder at how people still manage to communicate despite not following the rules, or accepting that the rules don't need to be followed: "규칙이 많은 것 같고, 생각보다...규칙을 무시하는 한편을 납득하는 것 들으니까 다 조절해서 쓰는 것 같아서 저 신기해했어요". This is particularly salient for Russian, but still within that array of irregularity, you seem to think that it is more "regular" or unbroken than Korean, which you express as being "broken" through the English word rather than the Korean: "네, 러시아어에 비하면, 특히, 아 한국어는 문법 자체가 이미 broken 되어있는 것 좀 많은 것 같아요". It's interesting that you use the word "broken" to talk about your native language as compared with languages you learned later on in life. What do you think about this?

When discussing Chinese, a language you've studied but did not find particularly enjoyable, you mention that it was some of the rules that turned you off of it, specifically the pronunciation rules: "근데 성도를 신경을 안 썼던 말이에요. 한국말은 거의 없기도 하고 그게 재미가 없었어요. 왜 난 노래를 하고 있는 것 같은가. 러시아어 얼마나 더 편해, 그냥 말하다가 강세 부분을 딱 올리거나 길게 말하면 되니까. 근데 중국어는 그게 1, 2, 3, 4 다 있어야 되니까. 그냥 집에서 놀다고, 그냥 편하게 니하오, 아니면은 핸드폰 [중국어] 이러면서 [중국어] 굳이 고쳐주는 거예요. 그래서 '너가 중국어 박사'라고, 진짜 짜증난다고 ... 그리고 사실 한문 자체는 잘 알아봤는데 그냥 발음하기가 귀찮고 양사 외우기 싫고, 그냥 그정도? 그런걸 싫어갖고 하다가 말고".

Perhaps the need to get it just right annoyed you, as compared to other languages where tone and pronunciation, even when not perfect, can still manage to communicate what you want to communicate. What do you think?

- Interest and enjoyment of language and culture

There are several instances when you express joy or enjoyment of the language and the culture it's related with. This is particularly true with Russian, which you chose specifically because it was different from other languages you've tried or heard:

“[러시아어/Pushkin 을 더 배우려고] 그냥, 제가 좋아해서 찾아있다 보니까 알았던 것 같아요... [러시아어 반에 들어간 이유] 입시설명회 하잖아요, 학교에서. 그거 할 때 갔는데 좀 특이하고, 네 그냥 특이해서”.

You also mention growing interest in Greek (Ancient Greek, especially). You seem to enjoy things that are different, or that have a certain image to you: Russian gave you the image of a scientist, and it seems that that was, at some time, an idea or ideal for you and your future. Although you say that now it seems foolish, it was something that guided you to choosing Russian over the other choices in front of you. Even now, you mention that the languages you're studying or intend to study are generally different from those that others choose to study, and you find something valuable in that difference. What do you think?
- Ideas of matching and not matching, perceived similarities, perceived fitness for purpose

You appear to think there are certain language and cultural elements that seem like a comfortable fit, and others that are not so comfortable, or at least surprising in their appearance. The mention of a “posh accent” was striking: “네, 맨날 Shakespeare 올라갖고 보러갔다고 진짜 죽는 줄 알았어요. 다 엄청 posh accent 쓰더라고요... 동양인이 거기 앞에서 다들 서양 중세 의상 입고 다 이려고 있으니까 너무 (웃음) 재밌어요”. I wonder what you think of that accent or what it means, or what you think about where it's being used, and by whom.

You notice similarities and differences, and how different languages may present things similarly. You talk about how, despite differences in pronunciation, study of one language (English) has helped you with another language (Russian) because of similar etymological roots: “러시아어랑 영어랑 어쨌든 라틴... 키릴 문자도 비슷한 계열에서 오긴 했는데 근데 발음이 완전히 딱 달라보이는 것도 있고 그냥 한국인이 집권적으로 봤을 때 이게 이 단어한테도 비슷한 어원 있었고 어원 추측하는데에 되게 도움이 많이 됐던 것 같아요.” This also goes into how the similarities appear more similar when compared to something very different, such as Korean, your native language.

You go on to mention that for some things, you've started to notice that they make more sense in one language than another; you talk about how certain concepts you're studying make better sense to you through English than through Korean. This seems to be a comfortable development for you; you don't try to make sense of it through Korean, you accept it through English.
- Value of languages in Korean society: some are more “special” than others, some demand competition

You spoke of English matter-of-factly (perhaps because of the questions) while you spoke of Russian in a different way. You appear to think of Russian differently than you think of English, and other languages are different as well. Russian may be a “specialty (특징)” for

you: “특별한 경험을 잘 붙어 내기 하는 괜찮은 특징이 아닐까라는 생각을 하고 있어요. 뭐 그 중 하나가 러시아어일 것 같기도 하고 [디자인이랑].”

Compared to English, there is a relatively lesser value put on Russian in the school context, and so lower competition. But this led to an increased value that you put on the language, specifically because of the lack of competition that Russian provided in the context of school. English is a reason for competition, but Russian allowed you to have a more comfortable school experience without that kind of competition. You noticed that the environment of the Russian class experience allowed even those with “less” language ability to take advantage of the things they learned: “이런 애들이 러시아어 경쟁률도 그렇게 높지 않고 그러면서도 공부하기에 좋으니까 그리고 애들도, 애들 자체도 경쟁이 없고. 그래서 되게, 저희 반에서 러시아어 잘 못했던 친구들도 막 러시아에 나가갔고 말하더라고요.”

- Specialty has led to being seen as a source of special knowledge, intermediary, expertise, provider of a certain “image”

This specialty has made you into an “agent” of Russian knowledge for your friends and classmates. But they have an image of Russian that is different from your own, one that you sometimes provide for them. In other words, there’s a discrepancy between what your Russian study has meant for you and what it means for your current classmates. Part of this is due to the image of Russia and the Russian language among your peers (something that goes back to the theme of matching or fitting in). Although you say that playing the role has been fun, you don’t seem to necessarily welcome this role: “아 저는 잘, 재밌는 일인데 잘 모르는게, 저는 정규 교육 과정이 러시아어과, 배웠기 때문에 그래서 친구들이, 처음에 다 물어보잖아요, 야 러시아어 욱 뭐냐 물어보는데, 저희 안 알려줬어요, 쌤들이. 그리고 영인이라도 저희한테 안 알려주고... 진짜 특히 사회주의 관심 있는 애들 있고 KGB 약자, 무슨 약자냐, 아니면 뭐, USSR 러시아어로 뭐냐 말을 해서, 그러면은 그냥 약자를 말해줬는데 싫어요. 그래서 SSSL 을 말해줬고, 싫어요. 그래서 [설명해주는데] 이런 걸 말해줘야, “아, 멋있는데” 이렇고...”
- Role of emotion: anger lifted the gate, frustration/confusion over lack of explanation, enjoyment of differences and play with language –

As mentioned earlier, you talk about breaking rules and playing with languages, especially in how you use and mix languages to study or talk with your friends. You expressed some different emotions, such as frustration in translating for your mother when traveling, frustration (?) with how some things were explained (or not explained) in school: “물론 언어학 계보로 따지는데 이상한게 아닌 변화도 있지만 그런 게 고등학생한테 설명 안 해줬는데 맨날 이렇게 바뀌니까 외워, 이렇게. 그런게 너무 조금 힘들었던 것 같아요”, You also mention “fear” of things related to language, particularly a fear of your teacher. However, you also admit that Russian has taken your fear away when it comes to learning other languages: “이제 두렵지 않아요. 러시아어얼마나 발음 틀리는지 훈련이 잘 되어있어요. 저 러시아어 정말 다양하게 틀려갖고.” Not limited to pronunciation, the many difficult features of Russian (sometimes described as 산 or mountains) have prepared you for other sources of difficulty in learning languages. Related to emotions, you talk about the community you felt with your classmates. The lack of competition helped, as did a matching “code,” which again shows your attention to things that fit together, which circles back to another previous theme.



## Participant J

These are the themes in your language learning experiences that I've noticed emerging from our discussion from a while ago. I've based them on what you said, specifically on repeated images, words or phrases that came up in that discussion. I've put them down in what I think is in order from most apparent or most supported by what you said, to more minor themes that don't have quite as much support. There is some overlap between some of the themes, and this is not a final interpretation. This is just the first stage, and in the next talk we'll try to better shape these interpretations. If you could read over these before our next talk (a transcript of our talk is attached) and have a think about them, that would be a good start. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask. Otherwise, we can talk about them during the next time we meet.

- Power and empowerment –

A prominent theme from your discussion of your language learning experiences is the place of power and feeling empowered. You seem to have looked for opportunities to exert or claim power through your language(s), or have found power in choosing which language to learn or use. Russian provides a type of power for you that is difficult to find in Korean: “한국어는 타자 중심의 언어잖아요... [러시아어는] 화자가 가장 중요한 언어라 생각을...내가 원하는대로 표현하는, 제가 중심이었다고...” You carry this theme through here: “한국어로 말할때는 내가 수동적인사람...수동적인 언어지만 러시아어는 능동적인 언어라고...” Korean is a “passive” language, while Russian is “active.” Do you think this is a kind of power?

You also discuss how you were empowered by using English in the airport: “[스페인 공항에서] 그때 영어로 싸웠던 말이예요...그게 제 영어 사용에 있어서 제일 강렬했던 기억인 것 같아요...[처리] 해줬어요...그때 생각없이 말을 했거든요...그때 그 당시에는 뭔가 초능력이었는지, 화가 나니까...” Being able to argue through English was empowering in that it resolved the conflict in your favor.

- Search for freedom, choice, agency (작인)

Similar to power, many of your choices related to language seem to reflect a search for freedom or autonomy. You want to have choices, and you want those choices to be of your own free will. Being able to speak many languages could be seen as this search for agency and freedom, particularly in expression: “아는게 많아질수록 언어로 구사할 수 있는게 다채로워지기 때문에...” Korean, for example, allows you to express the most, so you feel freest in Korean: “한국어는 제가 어쨌든 모국어 화자 이기 때문에 무지개 색. 가장 표현할 수 있는...생각을 가장 표현하는게 적합하고 제일 다양한 방법으로 표현을 할 수 있으니까.” Russian, though you love the language, still does not allow you the same type of agency: “[러어는] 눈에 보이기 하지만 그게, 막 뚜렷하게 드러나는 정도는 아니라는 얘기.” Also, “이게 애증인데, 어느 순간은 엄청 잘하는 것 같다가 또 어느 순간 막힐 때 있을 때...잘하고 싶은데 마음대로 안되는, 그게 제일 답답하고 영어랑 다르게, 영어는 그래도 이정도, 오래해서 그럴 수도 있지만 이 정도를 하면 원하는 것들을 할 수 있는데 러시아어에 레벨이 끝이 없는 것 같다고 생각을 했어요.” Getting to the point of feeling free is going to take some time: “무의식적으로 맞게 말하기를 위해서 정말 내제화 돼야되는 것 같아서 아직 한참 멀었구나.”

Still, there is some freedom to be found in Russian's variable means of expression:

“재밋는 건 러시아어는...어순이 이제 다양해서 제가 어떤 거에 중점을 줄지, 내가 중요하면 내가 먼저 오고...”

Going to Russia allowed you to be yourself and more in control; in Korea, however, you find you have to “censor” yourself: “[교환학생으로] 다녀오니까 약간 자기 검열이라고 해야할걸요. 내가 남들한테 어떻게 보여지는지를 신경써야되는게 생기니까 그게 불편했어요.”

- Expression, making presence known

Similar to the first two themes, you have been motivated to learn and use languages in an effort to express who you are, or who you think you are. Part of this is showing yourself to others: “처음에는 백지인데 제가 언어 요소들을 거기에 쌓아가면서 그것을 장식한다? 그런 의미로 더 많이 알수록 다채롭게 색을 칠한다는 말은 다채롭다 해서 가져온 건데...” You carry this theme of “opacity” or, more properly, transparency, through here: “[언어의 채도/투명도에 대해 얘기하면서] 눈에 보이기 하지만 그게, 막 뚜렷하게 드러나는 정도는 아니라는 얘기.”

The especial ability of some languages to express certain things differently or more appropriately is also something you mention several times: “그래서 그 사람들만, 그 사람들의 말로만 표현할 수 있는 것들, 그 사람들의 생각을 표현하는 그 고유단어, 그 고유 표현을, 그걸 아는게 너무 재밋고...”

You enjoy languages and language learning because it allows you to discover and use new means of expression: “애초에 제가 언어를 좋아하는 이유는 제가 저는 살아가면서 제일 중요한게 저를 표현하는 거라고 생각을 해요. 그래서 표현하는 수단을 많이 찾았어요. 사진을 찍거나, 음악을 하거나, 이런식으로, 근데 가장 저한테 맞고 적절하고 재밋는게 언어였던 거예요.” The more languages you know, the happier you are, because you can express more: “더 많은 언어를 알고 싶은 거 하나가 그러면 더 잘 표현할 수 있는 방법 많아지는 거 같아요.” Does this seem accurate

- Disappointment with methods/focus of Korean language education,

This theme is present, but it is balanced by the influence it has on your language use, such as thinking about grammar first: “영어로 얘기할 때도 아직까지 그렇고 러시아어로 얘기할 때도 일단 제가 말할 문장을 먼저 생각을 해요. 그리고 이게 맞는 건가 한번 생각을 해요. 그리고 나서 말할 수 있어요.” You are critical of the Korean way of teaching languages because it does not allow you to feel like you are fluent: “한국에서 언어의 유창성 안다는게 되게 어려운 거 같아요. 한국인들의 외국어 학습법, 교수법과 학습법이 되게 다른 것들과 다르잖아요. 문법 중심에, 아직까지도 그게 남아있거든요 ...평가를 할 때도 일단 문법이 우선이 되고 내가 정말 이 언어를 어떻게 사용할 수 있는지가 학점 같은 거에 반영이 안 되는 거예요.” While you are critical of it, it has influenced your use in that you still think of grammar first when speaking English or Russian.

You received some instruction and feedback that helped you with fluency, but that was only a minority of your study experience, and only with native teachers: “원어민 교수님 수업은 빼고 나머지 교수님들의 어학수업에서 있을 때 어쨌든 문법을 가장 먼저 생각하라고 말을 하세요.”

You notice that there are some advantages to the Korean way, such as being able to learn linguistic knowledge, but there are also drawbacks, such as the lack of focus on fluency: “그래서 한계를 느낀게 어학연수를 갔다와서 더 강렬하게 느낀게 한국에서 막 공부를 하면 언어를 유창하게 하는데에는 도움이 안 된다고 생각을 했어요. 그냥 그 언어를 잘 알고 있는 사람이 될수있지만 그 언어를 유창하게 사용하는 사람은 되기 어렵다.” Still, by saying it is “difficult” to achieve fluency the Korean way, you seem to admit it isn’t impossible. What do you think?

- Uniqueness

Another theme that seemed to emerge was that you valued knowing something that not many others in a similar position know, but knowing it allowed you to still participate in something bigger. Choosing Russian, for example, was to do something that other people weren’t doing, but also to be closer to another large group of people: “일단 일본어와 중국어는 사용할 수 있는 사람은 한국에서는 너무 많고, 제가 큰 흥미를 느끼지 못하는...제가 제 생각에는 유럽언어에는 흥미를 느끼는 사람이더라고요. 그래서 프랑스어와 러시아어 중에 고민을 했는데 아무래도 그냥 뭔가 아는 사람이 적은 걸 하고 싶었어요.”

Also, the feeling that Korean is “out there on its own” influenced you to do choose a language that was unique but still part of a bigger community; you recognized the historic links between languages and saw Russian as part of a larger family: “유럽권의 언어들은 다 비슷하잖아요. 라틴에서 내려온 언어니까 또 러시아쪽은 키릴 문자 사용하는 슬라브 어족은 다 비슷하잖아요. 비슷한 것들은 많고요. 그래서 재밌는데 한국어는 동떨어져 있잖아요. 완전 동떨어져 있잖아요. 그래서 내가 유럽에서 태어났으면 어느 국적의 언어를 사용하는 화자였으면 다른 걸 쉽게 습득을 할 수 있었을텐데...”

Still, even though Russian seems connected to a larger family, there are some things about it that are unique, things that you value: “그러니까, 말하기가 어려운데 한국인들도 한, 이런거 있잖아요. 그런거 정말 한국인들만 표현할 수 있는데 재밌는게 러시아어로 ~~~<sup>1</sup> 라는 단어가 있는데 그게 한국인들의 한과 비슷한데도 약간 그사람들에 정석, 그런거, 그 단어밖에 설명이 안 되는게, 그런게 재밌는거예요 ... 그래서 그사람들만, 그사람들의 말로만 표현할 수 있는것들, 그사람들의 생각을 표현하는 그 고유단어, 그 고유 표현을, 그걸 아는게 너무 재밌고...” You enjoyed being able to share in the knowledge of a unique expression, but sharing it connected you to a larger community as well. You seem to value being both unique and part of something bigger. What do you think about this?

- Affect/emotion, such as excitement and interest in language and languages

You noticed that you liked language in general from an early age, without any special reason; you simply enjoyed it: “저는 외국어를 배우기 전에도 한국어 어렸을때부터 철자에 집착을 해서, 약간 전단지 같은거라도 뭔가를 읽는 기분이 좋았어요. 글씨를 그리고 그냥 언어 자체를 애초에 좋아하게 태어난게 아닐까...”

Your learning of Russian was also guided by an emotional, or maybe aesthetic, judgement. You mention how it was an “attractive” language: “제가 고등학교때 한 2 년반 배우면서 그 언어가 뭔가 더 알수록 더 매력적이라서 더 제대로, 더 잘, 쉽게

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<sup>1</sup> 러어라서 뭔지 몰랐다

말하면 더 잘하고 싶다는 생각이 컸어서, 그리고 또 제가 이 만큼 흥미를 가지고 할 수 있는 게 잘 없겠다라고 생각을 했었어요...제가 그냥 언어 자체가 너무 좋아서 계속 하고 싶었어요.”

Some of your choices in regard to language have been influenced by emotions like joy and pleasure; you started learning German, for example, because it “sounds good”: “독일어는 그냥 어감이 너무 좋아서 그리고 뭔가 새로운 거를...” European languages in general seem to attract you, excite you: “제가 제 생각에는 유럽언어에는 흥미를 느끼는 사람이더라고요”

But a strong emotion that is usually negative, anger, made it easier for you to use a foreign language, getting away from the conflict you feel in using a language and checking that you are correct when you use it. “그때 영어로 싸웠단 말이에요...정확한 내용을 잘 기억이 안 나요. 근데 그때는 제가 말했잖아요. 저는 항상 생각하고 말한다고, 그때 생각없이 말을 했거든요.” In sum, there’s a variety of emotional and aesthetic judgements in your language learning history. Do you think this is accurate?

- Influence of others

You notice what others think and how they act in relation to the same language(s) you use, and it influences your own choices. For example, you ruled out learning Japanese and Chinese because “too many people know them: “일단 일본어와 중국어는 사용할 수 있는 사람은 한국에서는 너무 많고...”

When you got to college, you seemed surprised to learn that others were not as excited about language as you: “제가 대학에 와서 느낀 건 어학을 전공하는 친구들, 외국어 전공하는 친구들 중에 그 외국어가 좋아서 아니면 잘하고 싶어서 선택한 사람은 정말 전체 10%? 밖에 안된다고, 저 그게 되게 신기했어요.” Is it possible that this was disappointing to you as well?

This is a quote mentioned before, but your view of Russian as “active” and Korean as “passive” seems to be due to how other people are treated in language; Korean, for example, focuses on the person listening: “한국어는 타자 중심의 언어잖아요. 듣는 사람에게 맞추잖아요. 높임말도 그렇고. 근데 러시아어는 물론 듣는 사람에 따라서...높임말도 있고 반말도 있는데 그게 사실 그렇게 중요하지 않고 내가 화자가 가장 중요한 언어라...” In Korea, there’s a focus on other people that you don’t always agree with: “[한국에 대해] 내가 남들한테 어떻게 보여지는지를 신경써야되는게 생기니까 그게 불편했어요.”

A positive view of others is repeated from an earlier theme: the sharing of knowledge: “그 사람들만, 그 사람들의 말로만 표현할 수 있는것들, 그 사람들의 생각을 표현하는 그 고유단어, 그 고유 표현을, 그걸 아는게 너무 재밌고 ...”

Overall, you seem to think about other people around you even when you don’t want to. While language is an expression of yourself, you still seem to want an audience that wants to listen to you. What do you think?

- Conflation of mental and physical / sense of urgency (절박함)

You mention physical elements (mountains, obstacles) and overcoming them, as well as the emotion of anxiety or frustration in not being able to overcome them; this is from your description of Russian: “러시아어에 레벨이 끝이 없는 것 같다고 생각을

했어요. 해도해도 넘어야될 산이 계속 있고 그런 느낌. 영어는 어릴때부터 계속 자연스럽게 많이 해왔으니까 훨씬 편하게 느끼는것도 있겠지만 뭔가 그 장벽들이 더 많은 것 같아요. 러시아어에서. 그걸 마주칠 때 답답하죠.”

There is a conflict you express between your desire to use the language and your ability to use the language, describing “blockages”: “어느 순간은 엄청 잘하는 것 같다가 또 어느 순간 막힐 때 있을 때...”

You mention “obstacles” when talking about how learning a language at a later age makes you feel as though the difficulty is overcoming obstacles that weren’t there at an earlier age; your brain is “full” of these obstacles: “어렸을때 그때 배웠던거에 어떤 장애물이 있어도 그거를 더 쉽게 넘을 수 있는, 똑같은 높이가 있어도 더 쉽게 넘어갈수있는데 이제 뇌가 거의 다 쓰니까 더 어렵게 느끼는거.”

Do you think this is accurate? How have you dealt with these obstacles?

## Participant H

These are the themes in your language learning experiences that I've noticed emerging from our discussion from a while ago. I've based them on what you said, specifically on repeated images, words or phrases that came up in that discussion. I've put them down in what I think is in order from most apparent or most supported by what you said, to more minor themes that don't have quite as much support. There is some overlap between some of the themes, and this is not a final interpretation. This is just the first stage, and in the next talk we'll try to better shape these interpretations. If you could read over these before our next talk (a transcript of our talk is attached) and have a think about them, that would be a good start. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask. Otherwise, we can talk about them during the next time we meet.

- **Newness:**  
 One prominent theme in your stories was that of newness, creation, and discovery. You talk about how learning and using different languages allows you to be new or different versions of yourself, even versions you didn't know existed: “저의 새로운 면은 찾게 되는 거 같아요. 예를 들어서 제가 한국어로 얘기할때는 되게 툐도 높고 약간 떠서 이렇게 high tension 이 되서 얘기를하는 반면에 영어를 하게되면 조금 제가 차분해지고 저의 진지한? 그런 모습이 더 많이 나오거든요...나의 또다른 면을 만들어 가는 과정이구나라고 생각을 하게 됐어요.” You also discuss how this is due to the learning of cultural elements embedded in the language. You are not only gaining a way of speaking, but a way of being: “그 말을 배우는 과정에서 그 나라의 문화도 같이 체득이 된다고 생각을 해요.” Do you have anything to add to this?
- **Matching or fitting**  
 Similar to above, you mention that you believe there are languages that better fit you, perhaps giving you the opportunity to be a version of yourself that you want to be: “저는 언어가 저와 맞다 안맞다, 저랑 맞는 언어가 있고 안맞는 언어가, 저는 있는 것 같아요.” You didn't believe that Japanese was a good fit for you, and preferred to take on Arabic for your KSAT. While studying it, you found it to be a better fit. Still, you came back to Japanese later; perhaps the fit wasn't so bad after all. What do you think about this?
- **Influence of others**  
 There seems to be a clear influence of other people on your language learning choices, such as your parents and friends, as well as other people who don't exist yet, such as your future students. You think or have thought of them in your decision making. The influence of others is especially clear in your use of Japanese, where your reluctance to use it is partly because others, such as your friends and teachers, have said you don't sound right when you speak it: “애들이 제가 일본어만 쓰면 일본어를 쓰지 말라고 그냥 너랑 너무 안 어울린다고 그런 얘기를 들었어요. 그래서 오죽하면 제가 일본어과였는데 일본어가, 선생님께서도 너는 일본어 하지말고 그 시간에 영어를 해라...” You also discuss how others describe your English voice and your Korean voice: “사람들이 그런 저의 분위기를 느낄때도 제가 한국어로 얘기하면 너 밝고 쾌한 아이

같은데 너가 영어하는 모습을 보면 되게 너가 한국어를 쓸때와는 다른 모습이 보이는구나...아랍어 배운 기간이 짧았는데 아랍어가 아나한테 맞는 언어다 생각이 [듣다]..." Also, your parents played a role in your English language learning early on: "사실 제가 처음 시작하게 된 건 제 자의가 아니었어요...저는 처음에 재밌어서 했던건데 부모님이 그때부터 살짝 욕심이 나서서 더 해봐라 이렇게 된것 같아요." Like this, there are several examples of how other people are included in your language stories. What do you think about this?

- **Duty vs. choice**

You discuss that you haven't always had a choice when it comes to learning language. This is especially true of English, as you said, "사실 제가 처음 시작하게 된 건 제 자의가 아니었어요." The duty or obligation to learn English led you to disliking the language and things associated with it. However, you grew to like it afterwards, choosing it as your major: "저는, 그때 당시에 싫었어요. 부모님이 너무 시키시는것 같고 처음에 제가 좋아해서 따라했던 것 맞지만 이제 부모님이 막 해라해라 하면서 하기 싫어지고 괜히 반항감이 들어서 그래서 그런 것 때문에 좀 싫어했었는데 지금 제가 영어영문학과에 있고 조금 크고나서 보니까 그때 부모님께 너무 감사드리고 영어가 지금 좋아요. 그래서 영어에대한 공부를 하고싶어서 제가 영어영문학과를 선택했거든요." There is a conflict here. Even within options for further languages, you see a tension between languages you want to learn and those you feel you must learn: "아니 프랑스어가 뭔가 고급스러워 보이고 이쁘더라고요. 발음이. 그래서 프랑스어 배우고 싶다...중국어는, 배우고 싶다가 아니라 배워야 되겠다. 배워야만 하겠다 라는 생각이 들었어요."

- **Influence of competition**

You discuss competition in relation to English; it was a significant force in your life. Competition can be about the influence of other people, but your mention of competition is more about how it made you feel. "한국에 있었을때 저는 되게 학업 그리고 무슨 각종 대회들을 시달리면서 살았어요...[미국에 있었던 1 년은] 되게 힐링이 되는 시간이었어요." You were sickened by the competition, requiring a period of "healing" to overcome its effects. Do you have anything to add to this?

- **Influence of feeling/emotion**

Feelings play a role in your language development and use. You mention how both positive and negative feelings, such as a feeling of "healing" and emotions to uncomfortable situations with peers have driven you to learn English. This is especially true of your time in Alabama: "처음에 좀 힘들었는데 제가 되게 친한 친구 한명 있었고 저랑 좀 잘 싸우는 친구가 있었어요. 근데 이 친한 친구랑 맨날 sleepover 하고 이러면서 영어도 배우고 근데 저는 영어가 확 는 결정적인 계기는 이 싸우는 친구, 사이 안 좋은 친구랑, 지가 막 뭐라고 하면 저도 대꾸를 하고 싶은 얘기가 안 나가는 거예요. 그래서 제가 화가 나서 맨날 집 가서 고모한테 가가지고 이 표현을 알려달라, 이 표현을 알려달라, 이러면서 영어가 확 늘었던 것 같아요." You mention "healing" here: "...[미국에 있었던 1 년은] 되게 힐링이 되는 시간이었어요." Your choice of English as a major was also based on a feeling: "아 나는 앞만 따르길 들어봐도 내 길은 영어다 싶어서 영어영문학과를 선택을 했거든요." While that isn't really an emotion, I wonder if there is something emotional there to explore.

- Criticism of methods

Another theme that pops up is that you seem to be critical of the way languages are taught in Korea, especially English: “솔직히 한국식 교육이 너무 싫었어요...우선 제 실력이 있어야 뭔가 저의 가르치는 방법이 생기는거고 여기서 차별화를 미치는거잖아요.” You mention wanting to change that somehow, either in your own classroom or on a system-wide basis. Your own experience in a different system has influenced your perception: “물론 시험이 있고 한국의 교육시스템 안에서 한계가 있는것 같지만 ...[수원외고에서] 정말 다양한 체험도 하고 영상자료도 보고 저희끼리 발표팀, 팀별 발표를 하기도 하고 ... 엄청 많은 경험을 했잖아요. 그래서 저도 학교에서...아이들에게 조금 더 영어를 공부 안에서만 말고 진짜 생활에서 쓰이는 상황을 체험해보도록 해주고 싶어요.”

- Search for power

Tied to several themes mentioned earlier is a search for power in your language learning journey. The power to talk back to the classmate bothering you in Alabama, the power to change the way English is taught in school, the power to say what you want to say, to help other people as much as possible. Language seems to be power for you. Speaking, and knowing, English well is a show of power: “전문적으로 들어가면 문법에서 약한 부분이 좀 많고 어휘력도 제가 생각보다 뛰어나지 않고, 왜냐면 쓰는 단어들만 쓰니까 전문적인 단어가 이런 단어는 모르는 게 많고 그리고 사실 제가 그때 중, 고등학교 1, 2 학년까지 해도 좀 free talking 된다고 나름 자부를 했는데 이것도 안 하다보니까 좀 실력이 없어지고 이래서 저는 미국 유학도 다시 갔다 올 생각이 있거든요. 그래서 좀, 어느정도 제가 공부를 해서 자신감이 생겼을때가 사심에서 다 따랐을 때가 아니라고 생각을 해요. 아직은 좀 자신있게 누구든지 막 앉았을때 헤원아나가 이것 좀 설명해 줄 수 있어라고 했을때 뭐든지 내가 설명해 줄 수 있어가 되는 실력이 아니라서, 네.” It's power, capability, confidence, things you find lacking or things you are trying to develop. Being able to swiftly and easily answer questions seems to be a source of power for you: “고등학교 2 학년이나 수능, 특히 수능은, 수능 같은 경우에는 언니가 이게 뭐예요, 누나 이게 뭐예요 딱 뻘때 제가 막힘없이 얘기를 해줄 수 있는 단계가 아직 아닌 것 같아서, 네.” How do you feel about this?

- Influence of perceived language differences

A final theme is how you see languages to be different. You discussed the differences between Japanese and Korean, explaining how Japanese “talks in circles” and is less direct than Korean: “일단 일본어를 배울때는 한국어가 약간 직설적인 면이 있구나, 왜냐면 일본어는 상대방한테, 예를 들어 배 불러서 음식을 남겨야 할때도 아 나 이제 그만 먹을래, 나 배불러라고 얘기를 하는게 아니라 정말 이 쌀이 고맙고 음식이 맛있는데 지금 제가 속이, 더 들어갈 공간이 없어서 지금 이것을 다 먹지 못하니 싸서 가겠다고 얘기를 하는 거예요, 이런 식으로 일본어는. 아 이것 엄청 돌려서 얘기를 하는구나, 이런 생각.” The differences you discuss may also be related to other themes, especially power. Perhaps the indirectness of Japanese that you feel shows a lack of power? Do you get this with the other languages you want to learn? You mention French because of its beauty, and Chinese because of how many people speak it. Could these differences also be reflected in power? Emotion?



## Participant R

These are the themes in your language learning experiences that I've noticed emerging from our discussion from a while ago. I've based them on what you said, specifically on repeated images, words or phrases that came up in that discussion. I've put them down in what I think is in order from most apparent or most supported by what you said, to more minor themes that don't have quite as much support. There is some overlap between some of the themes, and this is not a final interpretation. This is just the first stage, and in the next talk we'll try to better shape these interpretations. If you could read over these before our next talk (a transcript of our talk is attached) and have a think about them, that would be a good start. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask. Otherwise, we can talk about them during the next time we meet.

- Re-establishment of continuity (out of love? pity? duty?)

This seemed to be a rather important theme that presented itself at various points throughout our talk. I'm not quite sure how to phrase it or if what I've phrased it as here is completely accurate, but what it's getting at is that your languages, particularly Irish and French, play vital roles in connecting you to something larger than yourself, or that they are instrumental in helping you locate yourself.

You told the story of how you were the first person born in Ireland into the Irish part of your family in 200 years, and you also talked about how you, as a result of being educated in a Gaeilscoil, are fluent in Irish despite your parents not really speaking it. When you spoke about Irish, you talked about how its growth was "stunted" and that "it was beaten out of the Irish", imagery that has a strong impact. You describe its development as different from that of other languages, and that one thing that you found interesting is that it seems "cool" to use some English in places that use French or German, Irish is almost compelled to use some English in order to make up for this "stunted" development. You note that younger speakers of Irish may throw in an English word or two while speaking Irish, again because of the way the language has developed recently, and the presence of Beárlachas is an interesting feature of the language for you. You seem to understand that this aspect of the language, despite interesting you, has come about because it was "stunted"; you say that "you can't contain a language to just its rules", so you seem to feel that this kind of development away from the "rules" of the language just happens. That is the Irish language in its current state. Still, the reason it has happened, the stunting or the abrogation of the language via a rather violent process, is something that you seem to feel quite strongly. So it's not as "cool" as it is in those other places.

You take pride in speaking Irish and enjoy its benefits, such as allowing you to speak to your friends without others knowing what you're saying. It marks you as non-English. Although your family doesn't really use it, it still serves to locate you among your chosen group of friends and connects you historically to Ireland, partly in terms of a family connection broken two centuries ago that you've re-established. The question above is whether this was something you've come to do out of a sense of duty (familial, national/societal) or pity (perhaps empathy for the Irish language, helping it thrive by learning and using it yourself) or some other feeling. Moreover, I wonder whether you

had these feelings before you started to love the language (in year 5), or if they emerged at roughly the same time.

You commented on the typically poor instruction of the language, particularly in English schools, and you mentioned that you thought that part of the “resentment” that students coming out of the English-medium schools feel towards Irish is the fact that they cannot speak it well despite having studied it for so long. Your concern seems to be for both the language and for those students. It seems that although you value the ability to speak without other people knowing what you’re saying, you still would like more people to know what it is you’re saying (at least in Ireland). Additionally, your secondary school not being particularly racially or ethnically diverse was something that bothered you. So even though the language is a bit of a secret (in that it allows you to hide some things from people you don’t want to know), you do seem to think more people should be in on it.

As for French, one thing you mentioned that struck me was that, despite being overall confident in your French abilities (having spoken it since you were young), you admitted to being “self-conscious” at times that a language barrier was developing between yourself and the part of your family that speaks French. You noted that you didn’t really have a lot of knowledge of slang or more colloquial speech, and that you’ve felt that you’ve actually been speaking less of it lately, that you’ve kind of “stopped” (despite being able to pick it back up quickly when you do visit your family in France). You said that you brought this up with your mother, who told you not to worry about it, but you felt as though you couldn’t really keep yourself from worrying about it: “I get like a little bit embarrassed or like self-conscious about it which is really dumb, but, em, I can't really help it.”

When I asked whether you felt some kind of historical link with French, you said you didn’t really because it was different from what you felt about Irish. However, it seems as though you do worry a little about your connection to French fading; you’ve been able to re-establish one connection through Irish, and don’t want to lose another connection in the meantime. Your mother has been in Ireland for 30 years and has stopped using much French herself – she’s been an influence on your own language learning, not just with French but also putting you in a Gaelscoil – so I wonder if you seeing her not using French makes you wonder if you’ll stop using it, knowing that for you, the stakes are a bit higher. Still, you said that this feeling is not as strong as what you have for Irish, which took you longer to love and grow comfortable with. (Just as another note, although you mentioned that French is “romantic, poetic”, you also said you don’t always find that you can express yourself well in it, but your talking about Irish didn’t really have very many of these more personal negative perceptions or judgements. You seemed to express much stronger feelings about Irish, at least in a broader social context, and spoke much more about it than French.)

- Trying something new, different

This applies primarily to the course you’re currently in, where you’ll be learning Arabic. You talked about how you had been planning to study law, but this new course offering pulled you away from those plans. You said you didn’t want to do something conventional, and described Arabic as having “a bit of an edge”. So you value the opportunity to do something new, different, and relatively unique.

When I asked you to talk a little bit more about how languages are like windows, you said that “people who don’t want to learn languages are quite close-minded”, which I interpreted to mean that they are not willing to try new things or go beyond their

comfort zones. Different languages provide a “different perspective” to the one you’re used to.

It seems clear that you feel new languages (in this case Arabic) provide you with these different perspectives, and you enjoy seeing things from a different point of view. Part of your motivation for learning languages comes from an anticipation of this. Arabic is new and different, but it has enough of a global or “universal” presence where you may be able to experience a variety of perspectives or “windows” (related to the previous theme, it can help connect you to a larger group). In a more minor way, the distinctive way that Irish phrases things (when talking about Irish, you say that there are phrases that “are so unlike anything you’ll hear”) is something you enjoy about the language. And, while this might be a stretch, I wonder if not having a new teacher for German over the first 6 years of learning it may have reduced its enjoyment or impact for you. Compared to your study of Irish, which consisted of teachers you described as being somewhat unstable, your German study was much more mundane. Maybe this lack of upheaval led to a certain ambivalence about the language. Do you think there might be something to this?

- “Waiting for it to click” – key moments

Although you enjoy the newness of a language (as mentioned in the previous theme), you also seem to value moments when things in the language make sense, or when there’s a kind of payoff or moment when having learned that language becomes meaningful for you. For Irish, it may have been when you finally got a teacher that you enjoyed studying with, and that not only taught you a lot about the language but had a good attitude towards the language herself. You also talked about how much you liked getting high marks on the leaving cert oral, but it seems that your experience in fifth year was much more meaningful.

For French, perhaps there was no similar moment since you were born into a French-speaking family (at least via one parent). Or perhaps the moments where it “clicks” in French are not when you figure it out, but when you find out that you DON’T know something. Do you happen to remember the first time your mother or another member of your family corrected you?

You said that, for German, you were “still waiting”, so perhaps while you may have enjoyed learning German at first (you didn’t say – I’m curious if you remember feeling differently at first), it’s seven years later and you’re still wondering if your work will eventually pay off. You call it a “minefield”, which makes it seem as though you’re stepping your way forward slowly, trying to escape to a more comfortable location. Perhaps part of your motivation to continue is to not feel as though you’ve wasted the time before, or because you believe the payoff will eventually come (those are more of a guess, so I wonder what you think; what keeps you learning German? You said you want to study French and should have maybe done French in college, so why didn’t you?).

- Speaking “properly” – the rules

You seem to value the “rules” of language, but you also don’t mind breaking the rules in using the language – you feel comfortable mixing languages when the occasion calls for it. You said you started to enjoy Irish once you started learning the grammar properly: the teacher was a “stickler”, but you liked the way she taught. You said, “I feel like once I learn how to speak something properly, like I want to know the grammar inside out before I can actually like freely express myself”, so it’s clear that you have an interest in getting to know more about the language, and are not necessarily content to just learn

what to say. In other words, the “how” of the language is just as important (or perhaps more important) than the “what”.

You spoke at length about the different ways one can speak Irish, the various dialects, the idea of being consistent in a dialect being the norm rather than mixing dialects. (It could have been you trying to educate me on the history and condition of the Irish language so that I know it “properly” in order to understand you and your thoughts more “properly”). But again, you did say that a language cannot be contained to just its rules, which I take to mean that when you use a language, you are not necessarily bound by its rules, so there is this tension between knowing and speaking it “properly” versus not being “contained” or restricted by the proper rules. What do you think?

So, even though mixing occurs at times, even though you may have to use English at times when speaking Irish (or French, for that matter), you appreciate being able to express yourself “properly”. However, I wonder if this may be why you are sometimes self-conscious about your French – could it be that you worry that you may not be able to express yourself “properly”, and that although in general you just know grammar/syntax (you “have it on the ear”), you may be thinking that it’s slowly starting to drift from you? You mention not writing it as well as you can speak it and say it may be something a lot of bilingual kids deal with, and you do put some effort into it. (But again, much of this was less pronounced than Irish, maybe because you’ve actually learned Irish “properly” but haven’t had a chance to learn or study French outside of speaking it with your family.) In regard to learning German, you mention that during your first year in college, you realized that your secondary school German teacher did actually teach you things (although not all the things you thought you should have learned); there seemed to be a reevaluation of your secondary school German experience, however brief it might have been. You had actually learned it “properly”, perhaps better than you could have learned it than at another school (you mention how Irish helped you learn German). Do you think this is accurate?

## Participant D

These are the themes in your language learning experiences that I've noticed emerging from our discussion from a while ago. I've based them on what you said, specifically on repeated images, words or phrases that came up in that discussion. I've put them down in what I think is in order from most apparent or most supported by what you said, to more minor themes that don't have quite as much support. There is some overlap between some of the themes, and this is not a final interpretation. This is just the first stage, and in the next talk we'll try to better shape these interpretations. If you could read over these before our next talk (a transcript of our talk is attached) and have a think about them, that would be a good start. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask. Otherwise, we can talk about them during the next time we meet.

- Constraint vs. freedom – searching for a space

This is perhaps the most apparent theme in your discussion of your experiences with languages. The first mention of finding a “space” is when you say you wish there was a space for you to speak Spanish here in Ireland, and that the lack of such a space is a concern to you. Even when you thought you had found a space, by speaking to other Spanish students, you found that you couldn't really enjoy that space because of other reasons (primarily socioeconomic). This idea of “space” seems closely aligned with the idea of freedom from constraint. You say you feel freer, more expressive, more yourself in Spanish, while you feel “constrained by English”. English is where you feel as if you were “put in a box”, as if you are compelled to keep things to yourself. You mention this may be an effect of the culture of Ireland, which is typically more reserved than that of Spain, but it seems to stretch back even further.

You discussed being used as a “model” of English pronunciation in school, and not enjoying it; instead, you felt better when your teacher would allow you to study other things. You took on a stronger Spanish accent to avoid being put in this box. You kind of put yourself in another box to avoid being put in the English box. You are happy when you go home and are no longer put in the English box, since you're free to speak as much Spanish as you can.

The trap of a box comes up outside of language as well: you talk about social mobility, and feeling “trapped” in Spain, as in trapped in a particular socioeconomic class. While English was a box, it was also the key to leaving another box, since it allowed you to come to Ireland to work and study to perhaps escape that box back home. But in Ireland, you experience getting put into a “box” when people ask you where you're from but already have an answer in mind.

You mention having “done a separation” of your languages – you've put English in a box (academics, career) and Spanish in another box (home life, leisure), but the difference is you're free to jump between these boxes which you've made, while before, you may have felt as though you were put in boxes that were not of your own design.

Even in Spain, you can think of the image of Andalucians as a sort of “box”, as though being from Andalucia is limiting in some way, but you think that's wrong.

Back to languages then, it seems like you have felt that you've been kind of put into “boxes”, that there have been limits put on you, but you don't recognize these limits – you want freedom from these limits, and your languages allow you to be free in a way.

But the freedom is incomplete. English is limited in expression but allows social mobility; Spanish is freer in expression, but because of accent and regional differences, there is a social limit.

You didn't really talk about language learning experiences outside of English and Spanish. Your French learning was not great, in your mind. Perhaps this is because it didn't give you the sort of freedom of expression you feel you need in a language to feel comfortable, or that it didn't present you with a model to aspire to. It was fairly basic and repetitive.

What do you think of this?

- Real self vs. acting self / revealing your true self, reluctance to reveal

This can be considered a different interpretation of many of the things mentioned in the first theme. Again, you said that English isn't as expressive as Spanish, and you talk about speaking Spanish in front of your half-sister, someone with whom you'd only spoken English to before. There was an awkwardness there (you say you thought she must have thought you had a "personality disorder"), as if she was seeing something new that you hadn't been able to, or hadn't wanted to, show her before. Perhaps you were embarrassed that you couldn't hide things as you did before with her.

Sometimes, it's the people we speak with that influences the way we use our languages, and you say that English doesn't allow you to be as fully expressive as you would be in Spanish. While part of that could be because of the language itself or your comfort and ability with it, part of it could be because you may have felt some distance or gap between yourself and the branch of your family that is here in Ireland. English, as you describe it, is a language of academics, career, professionalism for you – you have separated it that way, and have made Spanish the language for your family and friends, but you have family in Ireland. So there's a conflict here, it seems. I wonder if you notice it as well.

Elsewhere in our chat, you talk about feeling like an "imposter" when taking on different accents or dialect-specific vocabulary, so there is very much an idea of finding a space for you to really be you: you're trying on these other things to see what fits your real self. You say you hope English can become a language of your real self at some point (it's not there yet). Even though your father is from County Clare, you admit your accent is not just a Clare accent, that you have had changes in your accent before; your Spanish accent, though, is very strongly a Southern/Andalucian accent – it's your "real" accent, and maybe you're looking for the English accent that will give you the same feeling of pride you have for your Spanish accent. Do you think this is close?
- Awareness of differences, changes, variety

You seem to be attuned to differences in language, so much so that at times you unconsciously take on features of the language you hear around you. You mention adopting words from your friends (Nigeria, Cuba) or changes in accent, specifically your accent when speaking English. As mentioned above, you are trying to find a comfortable "space" for yourself in English, but you do admit to worrying that they won't be genuine. One primary memory for you is the change in your accent to a more distinctly Irish English accent, specifically your father's Clare accent (now with some Dublin elements, possibly, due to your studying at Trinity). You want to know why there was this change, especially since you don't think there was any real change in the frequency of your speaking with your family here in Ireland during your teenage years. This curiosity or

wanting to know why may be that you are trying to construct an identity for yourself in English, an identity of your own making, because you felt for so long that you'd been put "in a box". It seems to you to have happened arbitrarily, and you are uncomfortable with that.

However, it also seems like you don't think you're ready for an Irish/English-speaking identity: "Like at the moment it's very hard for me to identify as Irish because it's like, I've never lived here". So even though you seem to speak like an Irish person (in that you speak English with a predominantly Clare accent), you don't feel as though you're really Irish, and that this aspect of yourself is not genuine or true. What you're showing and what people see of you is not what you think of yourself. And since your accent showed up without you noticing it, without you having a say in it, you seem to perceive that your language has gone ahead without you being ready for it: "it's all this kind of like circle that I just haven't formed in English. Like, it's not cohesive in that way". You're still being told that your English writing needs to improve, but your accent is giving away something that you don't feel to be accurate.

(As I said during our talk, I don't really have an answer why your accent changed, and it's not really part of my project. However, if I had to guess, I would guess it might have to do with the idea that when we're teenagers, we are trying to find out who we are, and we may be more likely to try to go away from some of the constraints of childhood, when we are told to follow what adults, like parents and teachers, say; you mentioned being held as a "model" for English early on, and you didn't like that, so you put on an extra Spanish accent to avoid it. Maybe when that expectation was no longer on you, you felt freer, and this accent just came out, especially since it would have been the first accent you would have heard. But your rejection of it, or rather your feeling that it's not quite genuine and your reluctance to engage in it, is something that might be worth exploring.)

- Separation vs. unity

This is a minor theme, and it could be considered in line with previous themes, but it's worth emphasizing. You discuss having performed a "separation" of your languages and how you intend to use them but together they provide you with all the things you need at the moment. You have a more "public" language, English (at least in Ireland) and a more "private" language, Spanish. You're keeping English at a distance for the time being, despite your accent giving you away. You seem to be reluctant to accept it while at the same time hoping that it becomes more comfortable to use it.

Another side of this is unity within each language identity you have or are building.

Above, I cited your quote about cohesiveness and forming a "circle" – what you value about a language is a completeness it can provide you, which is formed by "slang, accents", and culture. You have this unity in Spanish, but not yet in English.

Your French learning hasn't had that big of an impact on you, despite providing you with a fun story about teachers disappearing. French never was something you considered pursuing, since you never felt as though you progressed in it: "I don't think I've acquired any knowledge of French." The language options you had were limited. At the moment, you're not studying another language, and perhaps it's because you're still coming to terms with your English-speaking self. Maybe you feel that there is a value to English beyond the academic and economic aspects you cite, and that you want to explore this before taking on another language. Or maybe you feel that at this point in time, you have enough, your Spanish and English give you enough. At any rate, your French learning

experience did not seem to give you any hope or desire in this way. Do you think this is accurate?



## Participant A

These are the themes in your language learning experiences that I've noticed emerging from our discussion from a while ago. I've based them on what you said, specifically on repeated images, words or phrases that came up in that discussion. I've put them down in what I think is in order from most apparent or most supported by what you said, to more minor themes that don't have quite as much support. There is some overlap between some of the themes, and this is not a final interpretation. This is just the first stage, and in the next talk we'll try to better shape these interpretations. If you could read over these before our next talk (a transcript of our talk is attached) and have a think about them, that would be a good start. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask. Otherwise, we can talk about them during the next time we meet.

- Curiosity

This idea or theme features prominently in your description of your language learning and usage experiences. Starting with the metaphor you used to describe language learning, comparing it to “unlocking a new part of the world”, your description makes it seem as though each of your languages, and your language repertoire as a whole, have allowed you to experience new and different things that you feel you might not have been able to experience otherwise. When asked whether you enjoyed growing up in a bilingual household, you mentioned that you found it beneficial to use both languages to guess what things meant in a new language (referring specifically to Spanish and French). Even in your example of mixing, you evoke the image of “looking for” something (cangrejo/crab, in this case). You state that you were always interested in languages, more so than your peers, and that this interest spurred you on into studying languages more deeply than your peers. In learning Irish, you went beyond what was put in front of you, asking questions of the material, trying to figure out the workings of the language. When teachers wouldn't explain it, you took it upon yourself to find the answers. Passing the test wasn't enough. In French, you mention not really enjoying the language and learning the language until you started finding out more about why and how certain things work in French; the sound of the language, something that is typically mentioned as being attractive, at first was not enough for you; you only started enjoying the sound, calling it “music to my ears”, once you were more fully engaged in learning it. You also talk about asking your parents questions about grammar from early on. This curiosity is valuable to you and seems to be a primary reason for learning languages, especially French. Even if you felt confusion, you enjoyed it, and enjoyed resolving that confusion and satisfying your curiosity about the workings of the language. So, in my mind, it seems like learning languages for you is both about stoking curiosity, but also finding the answer, very much in line with what you mention about “unlocking” a new world.

This curiosity has a limit, though: you said you were “unsure about how that would work” when you mentioned that you weren't that interested in learning Asian languages, or languages that did not use the Roman alphabet. Russian was an exception, but only because the alphabet is somewhat similar. The curiosity is bound by a primary sense of familiarity. The letters look the same, but they do different things. The new combinations of familiar things are part of what interests you about the languages you've studied.

- Accuracy and propriety

You seem to have a clear sense of what you consider to be “good” teaching and less satisfactory styles of teaching. You mention being a perfectionist, and you seem to value structure. Your first experience of French classes was that they “weren’t very well structured” or properly taught (despite being taught by a nun) and that this style of teaching turned you off a bit. You mention not liking the way it sounded, perhaps because of who was speaking it. You go on to say that you eventually did have good teachers of French who helped spark your enjoyment of it but there was a sense that you were still unsatisfied or disappointed, possibly because you have yet to have had what you might consider to be the ideal French teacher. You may have had good models for your other languages (a Spanish teacher of Spanish for a mother, raised in Ireland by teachers of English and Irish), but aside from some brief experiences with tutors and language assistants, your ideal French teacher hasn’t yet been met, and you’re still curious to find out what more you could learn about French from this ideal teacher.

For Irish, you were not fully satisfied with the teaching either, leading you to take on more responsibility for your own learning. Your perfectionism did not allow you to rest with what the teachers were telling you to “just learn” – if you want to do something, you want to do it correctly, and you want to know why that is the correct way to do it. The effort to do more wasn’t necessary, but you still did it, partly because of the aforementioned curiosity, but also because of this perfectionism and attention to accuracy.

In Spanish, you mention your mother complaining about you correcting her or bringing to attention non-standard usage of the language, features of her dialect (I wonder what dialect this is – Asturian?). Did you ever use features of your mother’s dialect only now to find that they are non-standard? How did you respond?

You also find the methods of teaching in your current course unhelpful to students who haven’t studied Spanish before, putting undue stress on them to learn the language, but providing a mixed message (“just look it up in English”). This method, you seem to think, will not help the students understand the language better. You say, “you can’t read Federico Garcia Lorca in English, it’s not the same”; you yourself know that there’s a difference and that not everything can be easily translated, and knowing something correctly means having a more direct experience of it. Perhaps it is because you recognize that you will all eventually be teachers, and you have had both positive and negative experiences with teachers, and you have teachers for parents, that you have such a strong view on correctness, propriety, and knowing the subject well.

In relation to learning languages in general, it seems that for English and Spanish, you may have never felt much difficulty in getting your message across and that you were able to accurately and correctly express yourself, but in a language you had to work at, such as French and Irish, you worked harder to get it right, because this mattered to you. There was meaning and value in being correct. Learning a language means learning it correctly.

In relation to personal identity, there may be some element of feeling complete, whole, “accurate” in being both Irish and Spanish, and perhaps learning new languages, or rather learning French and practicing Irish, is a way for you to enlarge this sense of being

completely and “accurately” yourself. Or, perhaps trying to be more “correct” in Spanish, for example, is a way of keeping in touch with your Spanishness. These are a bit of a stretch, I admit, so I wonder what you have to say to these thoughts. I also am curious to find out about when you visit Spain, how does your family respond to your using Spanish?

- Effort – putting in the work

Continuing on from the previous theme, you seem to value having to work at something. Despite not always enjoying the mode of teaching of French and Irish, you like the languages and liked learning them, maybe because they did not come as easy to you as your first two languages and you had to take it upon yourself to work at them. Going back to the theme of curiosity and the metaphor of “unlocking”, you seem to like the act of learning and the act of working for something. You don’t want to just step into a new world, you want to “unlock” it. So you enjoy the challenges of learning a new language, and you don’t necessarily enjoy when it is handed to you (e.g., memorizing stories or answers to questions for the Irish exam). But again, just as there is a limit to your curiosity, there is a limit to what you are willing to work for, at least at the current moment. Some “worlds” are distant enough that you’re not sure how to go about “unlocking” them.

- Appreciation of good language models

This was mentioned before, but I wanted to highlight it. You have had various models of language users in your experience so far, both at home (raised by an Irish father and a Spanish mother in a bilingual household by two bilingual parents) and at school (the number of teachers you’ve had). Some have been disappointing (the nun), while others have been better for you (the French teacher in TY who didn’t want the students to lose what they had learned so organized extra practice). As an aspiring language teacher, you seem to be aware of what it takes to be one of the better teachers, or at least what appeals to students, and you seem to be considering this in your own studies. You don’t think the program at TCD is as conducive as it can be to training new Spanish teachers, since your experience tells you it doesn’t always work that way. While it is a criticism of the system, it is based in concern for your fellow students, because they will be language models for the next cohort of students coming through the education system. They need the expertise in the language in order to be good teachers, and you don’t think they’re getting that type of expertise.

You’re teaching Irish, French and Spanish now (in grinds), and you mention that, to some extent, teaching languages generally requires the same skills regardless of the language, and you might be worried that your fellow students are not being given the chance to develop those skills. Your own experience with language learning has taught you things that you’re not seeing being reflected in the language education course you’re in, and that is a source of concern for you. What do you think?

## Participant N

These are the themes in your language learning experiences that I've noticed emerging from our discussion from a while ago. I've based them on what you said, specifically on repeated images, words or phrases that came up in that discussion. I've put them down in what I think is in order from most apparent or most supported by what you said, to more minor themes that don't have quite as much support. There is some overlap between some of the themes, and this is not a final interpretation. This is just the first stage, and in the next talk we'll try to better shape these interpretations. If you could read over these before our next talk (a transcript of our talk is attached) and have a think about them, that would be a good start. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask. Otherwise, we can talk about them during the next time we meet.

- **Comfort in knowing / resolving curiosity**  
 When discussing your brief time learning Irish, you cited the desire to know what signs said as a primary factor. You mention that not being able to read the signs was “frustrating” and that with each class, it became less of a “mystery”. It seems that you have become used to knowing what is happening around you and when you don't know, it bothers you, so you try to resolve the issue. In this case, it was language. While the signs provided the English, it wasn't enough to “unravel the mystery”. It also provided comfort to you to see that Irish wasn't completely foreign in that it shared some formal qualities with Arabic, which you are fluent in. You seemed to enjoy the appearance of this similarity, and it perhaps helped make you more eager to keep up with Irish learning. You mention finding a video that described the similarities, and said that to linguists “it was no mystery”. You use the term “mystery” fairly frequently, so it is as if learning a language is unravelling some mystery. You prefer to find out these mysteries yourself: you mention a teacher telling you to learn a language through that language without depending on other languages by translating, so this idea of finding it out for yourself seems to be quite a strong motivating factor for you. What do you think of this?
- **Feeling of being lucky**  
 You mention luck first in saying that you were lucky to have had good teachers for your most used languages, particularly English. But you say this next to saying that in the Moroccan system, “normally” you end up bilingual: “normally if everything goes fine and if you're in a good school, and you have good teachers, you end up being bilingual”. So there's a contradiction here – is it normal? Or do you need to have been lucky to have had good teachers? The second seems more of the case, in the context of what you said. You also discuss luck when you're comparing your experience to that of people in France or Ireland: “you feel lucky, you have something good that other people don't have”. You seem to feel that you've experienced good luck, and that you perhaps don't want to waste or misuse that luck. So your learning of other languages is partly because you have been lucky so far in language learning, and knowing multiple languages is both a personal and a cultural value (for Moroccans), so you're getting the most out of your luck as you can. While you may have learned some languages you're not particularly interested in

continuing, such as German, the overall experience has been positive, lucky, something that you've seen other people not be able to take advantage of.

- Distance – close vs. far

You seem to prioritize or categorize your languages depending on how close you feel to them. Each language has a domain, although sometimes they overlap. You say that French is the most expressive language for you, and that Moroccan Arabic is more in line with your identity than standard Arabic. You talk about the Berber language and your grandmother and parents. Standard Arabic was/is an academic language, as is English to some extent. I wonder if French is closer to you, or rather you find it more expressive, because Moroccan Arabic hasn't been standardized. At any rate, you seem to engage in these languages differently while enjoying overall the ability to engage in all of them. Irish, in a way, felt "close" to you because of its similarity to Arabic. German may have felt "distant". Spanish is physically close to you, as you mention your family visiting Spain frequently, so that may have something to do with your wanting to study Spanish as well. This may relate to the "mystery" from earlier: these languages are less of a mystery to you, easier to figure out, and so may draw your attention. However, standard Arabic, while not being a mystery, feels distant, perhaps because of its position in relation to Moroccan Arabic. Do you think this is accurate?

- Multiplicity, complexity

You expressed a comfort with knowing multiple languages, but more than comfort, you spoke about these with a matter-of-fact tone. There was nothing special or unique about knowing multiple languages (until you started interacting with more monolingual environments, when you then reflected on your own experience as "lucky"). Your comfort with complexity perhaps comes from the situation of Morocco, where several languages are at play all at once – there are different domains for you for French, Moroccan Arabic, standard Arabic and English, as well as the other languages you've studied. You say that the presence of all of these languages is "not an issue" for you. You discuss the role of "pride" that keeps French people from learning other languages well, while your "pride" comes from learning multiple languages. One language does not necessarily define your identity, but being able to use multiple languages does. When talking about how teachers would teach, you say that it's a mix of languages, perhaps speaking Moroccan Arabic while writing standard Arabic: "So it's a mixing of everything. It's a bit crazy to explain sometimes." You think it's crazy to explain, but in your own thoughts, it makes sense, or rather, it's "doable...not an issue". What do you think of this?

- Power relations

This is not a major theme, but I think it is worth mentioning. Your language experience has made you aware of certain power relations between languages. You discuss the differences between standard Arabic and Moroccan Arabic – the former holds a sort of power in many domains despite it being somewhat archaic (you compare it to Latin, although you acknowledge that it is used for more modern purposes), while the latter, despite being more widely used in your experience, is limited by its not being standardized. You recognize the Berber

languages and their plight in Morocco, and compare them to Irish in Ireland. You notice that legislation is not enough, and that languages such as these might need more. You also mention that “Moroccans love the French degree”; despite Morocco being independent from its former colonizer, there is still some recognition of power there.

However, you enjoy another power, that of being able to use multiple languages. The idea of “pride” keeping the French from being good at languages (kind of “blinded by pride”) is a way for you to counteract that power. Do you think this may be close to what you’re thinking?

## Participant S

These are the themes in your language learning experiences that I've noticed emerging from our discussion from a while ago. I've based them on what you said, specifically on repeated images, words or phrases that came up in that discussion. I've put them down in what I think is in order from most apparent or most supported by what you said, to more minor themes that don't have quite as much support. There is some overlap between some of the themes, and this is not a final interpretation. This is just the first stage, and in the next talk we'll try to better shape these interpretations. If you could read over these before our next talk (a transcript of our talk is attached) and have a think about them, that would be a good start. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask. Otherwise, we can talk about them during the next time we meet.

- **Filling in gaps**

During the chat, you mentioned the phrase “filling in the gaps” a few times, both to refer to the process of your own language learning (i.e. when your secondary school Irish teacher filled in gaps in your knowledge of Irish from previous schooling) and also to your own teaching of Irish to your siblings. Alternatively, you speak of “filling in a frame” and “fitting things into gaps”. The idea of gaps or of filling things in can be interpreted to mean not only is there something missing, but you are made aware of the missing thing; in other words, there is something that is not whole, and you know what it is you need in order to feel complete or whole. This idea comes out primarily when you speak of your Irish learning. You carry it through when you say that you felt behind when going into secondary school (compared to students coming in from a Gaeilscoil), and the pressure to catch up to them. It seems as though you felt a gap there, and part of your learning was in filling in or bridging that gap. At least in part, Irish language learning for you was in getting to a sense of completion.

You don't really mention any gap with any of your other languages. Perhaps this is because it just didn't come to mind in our talk, or you don't notice any gaps there. Your study of French seems to be satisfactory enough for you to not pursue it anymore (at least right now), and you seem happy enough with your command of Polish and English, both of which may be considered your mother tongues, despite your having been in learning support early on because you moved from Poland at the beginning of school. This is not to say that you don't see any room for improvement in Polish; you do, but you don't use the idea of a “gap” to talk about it. Perhaps it has something to do with your involvement in your Polish speaking community, or that you didn't have the same sort of competition you had with Irish speakers from other schools.
- **Construction**

Not necessarily opposed to filling gaps, the idea of construction or building features prominently in what you say about your language learning experiences. Part of this may be a result of me asking you about the metaphor you used to describe speaking Irish, which was construction, which itself is a reflection of what you thought of your experience learning Irish. You describe the idea of building a sentence by adding clauses,

and this is one of the ways that Irish was taught to you. You also attempt to explain the rules for the genitive case by saying that they're "kind of mathematical" and that you have to put all the parts together to form the genitive.

This sense of building or construction provided by Irish (especially when you studied with the teacher you had towards the end of secondary school) was a source of joy for you: you mention enjoying the learning process because you'd learn something new every day, even in primary school where it was "tedious" (perhaps because the construction was so structured that it did not allow you a creativity you sought, which will be developed in the third section). So it's not just construction that you value, but a certain type of construction or building. You seem to have found some kind of meaning in the process later on that may have resulted in you enjoying learning Irish more than before, in primary school and for the junior cert, and that carries through into the present.

Teaching your siblings is a way for you to maybe transmit that joy to others around you. Again, your French learning experience did not seem to reflect this idea either. You mention several times that learning French was not something that you enjoyed, and that you have no desire to go back to learning it. You did not think it was taught well, compared to your experience with Irish. The tediousness that disappeared with Irish never disappeared with French. It was not the constructive process, of building towards something, that you expected, nor was it a completive process, of filling in a gap. It seemed unnecessary. Perhaps you were not satisfied with what you built or the way you built it – you don't think you deserved the marks you got on your French exams, you feel as though it was too easy, or that the scale did not accurately measure how well you feel you performed. What you experienced with Irish you didn't experience with French: you had a design or frame in mind with Irish that did not exist in French, so while with Irish you had a feeling of satisfaction and affirmation, you did not have the same in French. Still again, I wonder where your Polish fits into this. Do you have this feeling with Polish? With English? You might have been too young to remember now, but I wonder if you felt this constructive process when learning English in language support.

- Awareness of variation, diversity

This theme emerges in how you describe the more enjoyable part of learning Irish in secondary school. You mention how your teacher would provide you with model essays and questions, but then change just a few things and have you write new essays with the changes incorporated. You would still have an anchor or a center to work from, but you were encouraged to add variety. This is one difference between the strict construction of memorized stories you cited when talking about earlier Irish learning, and it was a key reason you liked Irish later. There's a kind of limited freedom here that echoes the theme of construction, in which you're building something new on an already existing base. When your teacher would pair you up and have you practice questions, but then you would continue speaking in Irish, was another positive experience. The learning that worked for you eventually allowed you freedom to use the knowledge you'd gathered in different ways. It seems that the joy was from knowing that the learning had taken hold and had actually been successful, in that you experienced tangible results. This is the general idea of education, but you had both a successful and unsuccessful example of this (French being the unsuccessful one), so perhaps part of what keeps you with Irish is this result. You mention "appreciating" the oral examiners going off-script with the examinees, as if your own self-assessment was confirmed by the examiners, and you



were maybe satisfied with the confirmation. Perhaps it was also partly because these experiences felt less like learning Irish and more like using Irish in real ways.

With Polish, this is a little harder to untangle. When you talked about Polish and learning Polish, you mentioned having taken classes at an external institute, but you did not find a sense of kinship with the others in that institute, the CES, due to socioeconomic factors – you mention them being “bougie”. You talked about one person you knew whose father was Polish but who didn’t speak any Polish himself, and of wondering why you were expected to get along with him when the only thing linking you was Polish nationality. You mention some language ability differences between you and your siblings, and you and other members of the Polish community who are slightly older or slightly younger than you. You seem to notice subtle differences in the use of English versus Polish based on age and time in Ireland. Here, you seem to notice the differences among the similarities, which again reflects what you prized in your Irish language learning: the ability to do different things despite starting with a common foundation, a progression from structure to (limited) freedom. There’s an element of being detail-oriented here as well: just like you were educated to understand subtle differences and complex rules of Irish, you pay attention to subtle differences within the Polish community. This comes up in how you notice the way lecturers will prepare hard to pronounce names differently depending on the origin of the person whose name it is. Do you think this is accurate?

- Comfort vs. accommodation

You mention that you will “prioritize” your “own comfort”, and that changing your name was not an effort at accommodating others who had trouble with your name, but rather to reduce your own frustrations at having people form judgements of you based on your name. The frustration perhaps stems from what you see as an image of Polishness that other people seem to have, and that causes them to react to you in a certain way that makes you feel uncomfortable. But you still use Polish when babysitting, for example, so Polishness does provide a sense of comfort in certain contexts. You talk about not wanting to make things awkward for others who might speak Polish, because you wouldn’t want to be put in the same situation. So it seems that your sense of comfort comes from an attention to others, and how others might act in that situation, or rather how you would act if you were the other person in the exchange. This seems also to be linked into your recognition of people as migrants, perhaps based on your own experience. You mention not having an interest in working in France due to their treatment of migrants, and while Ireland is generally better (in your experience), there is still some discomfort.

This idea might be reflected in your language learning journey. English was taught to you to make your life here more comfortable than if you had just spoken Polish, so your mother taught you early on. You use Polish in ways that make you feel comfortable, such as helping people when they need it, or talking to your parents or other members of the community who feel more comfortable in Polish. Your comfort is dependent in some part on the comfort of those around you. As for Irish, it became more comfortable for you, more enjoyable, when you were helped to understand why things acted the way they did and how you could make them act in different ways – when you learned the details behind it. But you never felt so comfortable in French. What do you think?

## Combined Thematic Analysis

Based on our interviews, I've come up with five overarching themes drawn from several, if not all, of your language learning stories. These themes are not finalized and are, of course, open to modification, interpretation, and commentary. As you know by now, my understanding of your stories is constantly developing, and it is our co-construction of your stories that will eventually be the output for this project. Again, the goal is to understand the student experience in growing and developing as a bilingual or multilingual individual, and how both formal and informal education play a role in multilingual development. The paths to becoming a bilingual or multilingual are various, and your stories have been just as diverse. Still, there have been some things that most, if not all, of you mentioned. Speaking with all of you has been helpful in getting a better understanding of the student experience in a language classroom. Here are the themes I've settled on: navigating relationships with others, perception of self, desire for several types of knowledge, the role of emotions, and the role of time.

Now, while I have divided the themes in this way, there are several connections and areas of overlap between them. Indeed, you might even see connections that I have not discussed. The themes here may apply to you and your story directly, or they might not apply at all. There might be a theme that, for you, is more important than any of the others. I saw this as an opportunity for you to see what other participants in the study talked about and, by doing so, you might find that their experiences and their concerns also relate to you, only that you didn't remember or did not think them important at the time of telling your story. At this stage, I have not only looked for elements in common among your stories, but I have also tried to interpret and make sense of the things you told me. As in our individual interviews, you may disagree with an interpretation, at least in terms of your own understanding of your language learning story.

For our third interview, I hope to discuss your comments and your reactions to these themes. In order to prepare for that, I ask that you read through these themes and have a think about them. For each of these themes, I'd like you to consider to what extent that theme applies to you and your story. When you think you are ready, we can go ahead and schedule a time for the interview, and we will hear all about what you think and feel in response to these themes.

### **Navigating relationships with others**

One common element in each of your stories is the presence of a multitude of actors. There are, in general, three distinct groups of actors (aside from yourself) that play a role in your

stories, although the distinct composition of each of these groups may differ. The three groups I've chosen to identify are family, peers, and teachers.

In each of your journeys to becoming multilingual, the familial influence has been an integral one. It may have been that one or both of your parents provided the foundation for your learning of languages. Obviously, one's first language or languages are most commonly learned from whoever serves as a parental figure or figures in one's life; in your individual stories, it may have been that your parents served as models for one or two languages that you developed even before you can remember, or, due to some kind of movement or migration, such as for employment, you followed along with your parents to a new country or new area that used yet another language. You may have grown up in a situation where you were expected to use a different language or set of languages at home versus outside of the home. Some of you had parents who motivated you or urged you to learn one of your languages. This influence is not limited to parents, however; some of you found that influence within your own generation, such as in a sibling or cousin. Some of you talked about teaching or studying with a sibling, which led to you seeing the language from a different point of view. Or, the influence might be found further back in your familial history, such as a grandparent or great grandparent. Some of you talked about family members that taught you a language or a language variety, such as a dialect. In short, many of you talked about growing up in an environment that was conducive to the learning of more than one language, and this seemed to make it easier for you to continue learning language until now.

Your relationships with your peers, both within and outside language learning spaces, have also served as influences, both positive and negative, upon your language learning stories. For some of you, it was that you wanted to better communicate with your peers that pushed you into learning a language. For others, you may have actually been turned off of learning the language due to a tenuous relationship with your peers. Perhaps, as can happen with schooling, you feel as though you did not get as much out of a language learning experience, like a class, because of the other students around you; on the other hand, some of you have found that the particular group that you were a part of helped turn your language learning experience into a positive one due to an emergent sense of camaraderie that was galvanized within the classroom. In other words, you evaluated your language learning experience in school, and perhaps even your feeling about the language, based in part on the other learners around you. Part of your evaluation of that group experience might be dependent upon your own place within that group; for example, some of you talked about being used as a language / accent model within your class,

which might have set you apart from your peers, and your reaction to having been set apart tended to negatively affect your experience.

The third group mentioned, teachers, also seemed to play a big part in your language learning stories. Of course, because some of my questions asked specifically about teachers, this statement isn't surprising. However, what was interesting was the difference between teachers that helped and teachers that did not help so much. Indeed, there were just as many memories shared about the teachers from whom you thought you didn't learn much, and the techniques that didn't help, as about the teachers from whom you learned a lot. Some of you talked about teachers who disappeared halfway through the year, or teachers who did not teach so much as just kind of chat about the language. Some of you discussed your frustration with some of the more traditional methods espoused by teachers, such as rote learning.

Among the teachers who seemed to exert a more positive influence on your stories are those teachers who not only explained how a language works, but also why a language works in the way that it does. Some of you expressed that learning a grammar rule helped you develop an appreciation for a language that you didn't necessarily like before. Some of you talked about how the teacher's sharing of more knowledge than was necessary at the time actually inspired you to continue learning and developing that language. In those cases, it seemed as though the interest that the teacher showed in the language was something that resonated with you. Still others discussed how a teacher's background and language learning story was something you found interesting, and that consequently motivated you to learn more about that language.

Many of you seemed to assess the value and positivity of your language learning experiences based at least in part on the other people that participated in that experience. Positive experiences were amplified by positive feelings shared by other students and the teachers in the classroom. On the other hand, more negative or un-motivating experiences seemed to come along with groups that were not interested in learning or teachers who, in your view, did not seem interested in teaching, or at least in teaching in a way that you thought would be helpful for you. However, some of you did describe moments where you "fought against the current," by which I mean you seemed to learn despite an unsupportive group or a method of instruction that you thought was not particularly effective. Both positive and negative experiences motivated your later language learning: positive experiences kept you learning one language to a higher degree, and negative experiences sometimes pushed you into learning a new language altogether. It's as if you wanted that experience of learning something new, and if you couldn't have the experience with one language, you searched for it in another.

Aside from these three distinct groups, there are other “others” within each of your language learning stories. These “others” may have taken the form of imagined “others,” such as the members of the language community that you hope to communicate with at some point. They may also take the shape of another “you”, like a future or past “you.” In a more abstract sense, your languages may have been considered “other” by you because they were, to some extent, foreign to you (perhaps even one of your native languages seemed foreign!). The main point is that although it has been you that has been learning, developing, and using the various languages and varieties that you know, the progress you have made in your language learning story has not been made alone. Your relationship with those around you, and your reaction to their thoughts and actions have, at least in part, brought you to where you are at this moment.

### **Perceptions of self as language learner/user**

Another theme that emerged from many of your stories was that of language learning and development as a process of self-discovery or, to put it another way, self-construction. In other words, there was a kind of building or edification happening throughout the process of learning and development. Some of you discussed this in terms of intellectual growth, but what was more common was a sense of personal, emotional, and perhaps cultural growth. More will be explained about the emotional and cultural aspects in later sections; here, we will focus primarily on personal growth and development.

Some of you discussed feeling different depending on which language you use, and that learning a new language allowed you to either build or explore your “self,” or maybe develop a new “self.” For some of you, existing through a different language allowed you to explore a type of freedom that you did not seem to feel in one of the other languages that you speak. You may have felt this freedom through a foreign language because you felt restricted by your native language; for others, it might have been the opposite, where a lack of freedom in a foreign language was countered by a fuller freedom enjoyed in your native language or languages. This freedom may not have been a direct consequence of the language itself, but rather of the context where you used this language; perhaps you believed that the society that used this other language was a freer society than that of your native language or languages. There might have even been a tension between feeling limited in the language versus feeling freer, perhaps socially or economically freer, in the society.

Along with freedom, some of you saw one language as a means of escape from another language. Again, this is not necessarily limited to the language itself, but can also extend to the area where the language is used. Thus, one language context served to let you out or release you from certain demands you felt were placed on you by another language context. So, one goal you had in learning one or more of your languages was in looking for some type of freedom.

The different perceptions of “self” which some of you described may be partly a result of you thinking that you should act or speak differently depending on the context in which you found yourself. The people with whom you might speak Russian or German with, for example, and the situations in which you speak those languages are going to be different from the situations in which you speak, for example, English; perhaps you were changing what aspects of yourself you chose to amplify or you felt the language allowed you to amplify, and this in turn caused you to notice yourself behaving or acting differently when speaking that language. You found yourself in a different context and had to act and react differently because of it. For some of you, you expressed this as having different personalities, while others spoke about this as being different aspects of your personality or your “self.” While there is a difference in that terminology, we can say that the general feeling is similar.

Depending on your affinity with the different languages you use, you felt that these different personalities had different levels of authenticity. So, for example, a language you felt only somewhat comfortable in did not result in as strong a “language personality” as a language you felt more comfortable in, such as a native language or a language you have been using for a long period of time. One of you, for example, described this as “acting” in another language.

Another aspect of “self” that has played a role in your language learning stories has been your image of yourself as a student, and your image of your future self. Part of being a student, especially a secondary school student, is language study. You all seem to recognize that while language study is, for the most part, compulsory in secondary school, students engage in that part of schooling in a wide range of ways, from complete disengagement to motivated study. For many of you, studying a language or languages at school was something that you engaged in in order to help yourself as a student in secondary school and, hopefully, secure a place at a college that you wanted to go to; for some, you even looked into possible careers related to language. In this sense, becoming bilingual or multilingual went hand-in-hand with your vision of yourself as a college student, and perhaps with a preliminary vision of who you want to be later on in life.

Finally, while there is a distinction to be made between self and identity, there is some overlap. Some of you discussed the identity aspect of language and how certain languages

seemed to reflect your ideas of identity better than other languages that you use. Or, it could be that your identity is based on using multiple languages, and you express your identity as a bilingual or multilingual. Different types of identity, such as regional, national or ethnic identity, influenced the languages you use as well as the particular varieties of language you use.

Some of you expressed hybrid identities that you felt did not fit neatly into more “common” conceptions of national identity, such as “Irish,” “French,” “Spanish,” Korean,” and so on. You seemed to pull aspects of your own identity from these more “mainstream” identities. While your reactions to this reflected a broad range of emotions, the common element was that many of you felt that your identity could not neatly be defined as one or another thing, or that perhaps it changed frequently. This may also have led to tension between how you see yourself and how others seem to see you.

### **Role of emotions**

Your stories about your language learning and use were expressed along with a wide range of emotions. Typically, the focus was on “positive” emotions, and your stories did contain a number of positive emotions, such as enjoyment of the language and of the language learning environment.

One of the more interesting positive emotions that came out in several stories was the idea of being “healed” by the learning of a language. This “healing” could have been a direct effect of the language itself or of the context in which you were able to engage with that language. Learning that language or those languages had a restorative effect on those of you who discussed this aspect of language learning. Similar to what was mentioned above in terms of escape, you spoke as if this language gave you the opportunity to make up for something that was taken from you or to make yourself better in some way. Some of you talked about how leaving to study in another country, or watching a movie or listening to music in another language had this type of effect on you.

Another emotion, this time a “negative” one, that several of you discussed was frustration. Language learning is a long and time-consuming process, and, like most things we learned, we might feel frustrated that we’re just not getting it. This theme or topic came up in several stories. There was frustration not only in your feelings about your own progress and proficiency, but also frustration with the method of instruction, methods of assessment and also at moments of use, where you had to use the language but could not use it to the effect that you

wanted to use it. For example, you may have found yourself in a situation where you needed to make a request or a complaint in one of your languages, and you could not do so. You know that if you had to make that same request in one of your other languages, there would have been no problem, but because you had to do it in one of your “weaker” languages, you experienced feelings of discomfort and frustration. But the frustration you felt didn’t always lead to you giving up the language; maybe you thought that you wanted to get better at that language so that you wouldn’t feel that way again. Frustration wasn’t always a “negative” thing: for example, there were a couple of stories that involved being so upset that, although you found yourself in a foreign country speaking a foreign language, you were suddenly able to complain and make yourself well understood because your frustration and anger forced you not to think, but just to speak.

A different aspect of frustration that seemed to pop up in your stories is not necessarily frustration with the language or with your progress in learning the language, but rather frustration with the other people who are involved in the language learning context. As mentioned earlier, you might have had a teacher whose style just didn’t work for you, and so although you really wanted to learn the language you just couldn’t get what you wanted out of the class. You might have also seen yourself in competition with the peer or sibling whose language abilities you might have thought were better than yours.

Closely related to frustration was a sense of urgency in many of your stories. Again, the idea that you want to be better or more proficient, or you want to be further along in your language learning journey than you currently are, filled some of you with a sense of urgency. This, though, does not seem to be a negative or demotivating factor for you; rather, it seems to motivate you to get where you want to be more quickly. But again, there is a conflict between what you want to be able to do in one of your languages versus what you are currently able to do. Perhaps it was a case of “unfinished business”, that you were not satisfied with where you were and you knew you could do more. You wanted to have this language in a way that satisfied you. Maybe it was that you wanted to know just how proficient you could get in another language, already having done it once before. Or maybe instead of choice, you felt a duty to the language or the people who speak it to learn it better.

A final emotion, or maybe a better word is feeling, I’d like to highlight here is something that might be considered affinity or resonance. In other words, you feel closer to some of your languages than to others. This goes beyond simply liking or disliking a language, and may be for any number of reasons, like tradition or family or pure interest. But of the languages that you



currently have and can use for whatever purpose you use your languages for, there are some that you feel closer to than others. This feeling of affinity is not static, however, and may change over time; some of you discussed wanting to get closer to a particular language or languages. This may entail you trying to study more about language or choosing to go live in an area where that language is used. In some cases, your progress in the language and your proficiency seemed to be enough, meaning you are satisfied with the distance that you feel between yourself and that language. You may come to change your mind in the future, but for the moment, it is close enough. When it comes to choosing a new or further language to learn, you've made choices based on which language or languages you felt resonated with you. This may have been because that language had a certain image for you, or you enjoyed how the language sounded, or the opportunities you thought the language might give you.

Some of you have mentioned regretting studying a certain language because you no longer feel any affinity towards that language. As mentioned earlier, while a new, different, or foreign language may provide a means of escape, there might have been times when you felt you needed to once again escape from the new language back into your old language.

You are not always able to describe what it was that attracted you to a language, but you did notice that something fit you or felt close to you. On the other hand, you are also able to identify when a language no longer had that same meaning or "fit" for you, or when you thought it would be alright to stop studying the language actively. The main point here is that the feelings about the languages changed over time. Perhaps at the beginning you were excited to learn something new and different from the language or languages you already spoke, but as you kept learning, that original excitement faded or changed into something more negative. For some of you, the introduction of exams and assessment at school fundamentally changed the relationship with the language you were studying. For others, it might have been the types of things you are able to read or listen to or watch, in other words, the kind of media available in that language. In some cases, it was your changing relationship with people, the people with whom you use that language, that ended up changing how you felt about that language. While all of you admitted to understanding the potential social and economic benefits of speaking a foreign language or languages, those benefits did not seem to register as highly on your list of priorities; instead, there was quite a lot of talk about people and relationships, things which often invite a range of emotions.

In terms of the different kinds of emotions that showed up in your language use, a couple of you also briefly approached the topic of emotive words, such as swear words, and the

emotional impact they had on you. There was mention of the frequency and creativity of curses in different languages as well. Finally, a few of you spoke about how people emote in different languages and cultures (like the way people express happiness or excitement in Ireland, for example, as compared to Spain), and how you experienced those differences.

### **Desire for different types of language-related knowledge – linguistic, pragmatic, symbolic**

While it is sometimes said that bilingual or multilingual individuals know more about language in general than their “monolingual” counterparts, what was interesting to hear from you was that you seem to have a very strong understanding of not just the linguistic aspects of language but also more pragmatic concerns, such as social contexts, socioeconomic issues in language, cultural issues, history of language and the languages in the areas where they are used, and so on. In short, you didn’t just know about the language, you also knew quite a lot about social and political issues surrounding the people and areas that use that language. Many of you were interested in the concept of language and not just in individual languages.

Not only did you know these things, you also seemed to have very strong opinions about several of the issues that you knew about. On the one hand, this is no surprise, since these other aspects of language are nowadays supposed to be taught in language classrooms. On the other hand, these other aspects are not always discussed in language classrooms, and the depth at which you understood these issues and how they influenced your language choices was quite interesting.

For many of you, this knowledge was clear when it came to discussing dialects and accents. You had a very high awareness of what dialects and accents might mean and what they might portray, and you had this awareness in several of your languages. You seem to have developed a number of strategies and ideas about using the various dialects at your disposal. In fact, you were very conscious in your decisions about which dialects you wanted to use. You were also quite conscious about why it was those dialects that you spoke as opposed to other dialects. Of course, for languages you might have learned later on, you would have started with the “standard” dialect, or perhaps with what your teachers used, but as you progressed, you learned more about alternative dialects and may have decided to incorporate those within your own language use. For your “native” languages, your dialect would have most likely been inherited from family. If you later went on to study a home language formally at school, you would have learned more about the standard version of that language, which might have affected how you

went on to use that language. The point is that you all knew quite a lot about language varieties, and many of you were interested in continuing to learn about variety in languages.

Bundled into the knowledge of different accents and language varieties is a knowledge of when and how to “code switch.” You talked about mixing languages, playing with languages, switching between dialects or registers, basically breaking lots of the “rules” of language or maybe questioning why you had to follow certain rules; however, you also expressed an awareness of when it was important to abide by the “rules” of language. You did have differing opinions about whether breaking rules was appropriate, desirable, or right, but you all mentioned doing this to some extent.

Many of you not only had all these types of knowledge but were also quite interested in adding to that knowledge. In fact, several of you cited the learning of a particular grammatical item, idiom or some other small language elements as one of the moments that inspired you or motivated you to develop a closer relationship with a language. In other words, you were excited when you found out how the language worked, and this made you want to learn more about how the language works. Again, this was occurring on several different levels, and not just the linguistic. You valued the classes and teachers that provided you with this type of knowledge.

Now, what could this mean? As stated earlier, many of you showed an affinity for certain languages in your repertoires and a wish to increase that affinity or closeness with those languages. Maybe you wanted to not only learn more about the language but also more about the people who use the language, the situation and context that gave rise to that language, and what might make a person say something in that way. Of course, you might also have a desire to sound more “natural” in your own use of the language, but there is always the idea that you might want to understand the people you use that language with better than you do at this point. So, in your learning and use of, for example, French, you are not only trying to make yourself understood better in French, but you are also trying to better understand the others who use French.

A simpler explanation, especially for languages you learned at school, was that you knew that you would eventually be assessed on the language and you needed to show that you had the required linguistic knowledge. So, your desire to learn more was tied in your desire to be a “good” student. However, none of you said this during our interviews. There was no mention of wanting to be a better student and working harder at a language to do so. Your study of languages had much more to do with what you saw as your development as a person.

Another possible interpretation of the desire to know more about the languages is that, for those of you who grew up speaking more than one language, while at first the distinction between the languages was not clear, as you grew older and learned more you came to understand that these languages have to be separated, and you wanted to know more about that separation and the differences that led to it. A couple of you talked about your experience in a family where one parent spoke one language and the other parent another language, and this might have helped you learn the distinction a little earlier. You might not have known exactly what the differences between the languages were, but you understood that they were sort of different, and some words were used by one parent but not understood by the other. However, if you grew up in a place where multiple languages were being used at the same time, your learning of the differences between languages might have come later, perhaps at school, because you noticed that you might need to distinguish between the languages and rely on just one language when speaking to certain people outside of your family. In short, you may have felt you had to learn to be “monolingual”.

To give an example, if at home you grew up speaking English and Spanish, and you didn't really know they were different languages until a little later on in childhood, you eventually learned that you had to distinguish between the two and, in most cases, use only one of them when speaking to someone outside of your family. You had to learn to see the difference between things that previously did not seem very different. If both your parents spoke English and Spanish, you might have learned the distinction at school. If one parent spoke English and the other Spanish, you would probably have learned the distinction at home. In either case, you had to learn to separate them. So, when it came to learning a further language at school, perhaps you thought that it was important to focus on the differences because in most instances, you would be expected to use just one language. After all, switching between languages when you're talking to someone means that you know the other person also speaks those languages and uses them in a similar way to you, and that's something that you can really only know if you have an established relationship with the person or you are very aware of the context that you're in. In most cases, you'll probably only use one language.

For those of you who started out with just one language, in cases where your home language was the same as the main language at school, the difference between languages would have been presented right from the start of learning foreign languages. You already knew that what you were studying was somehow different from the language you already used. So, for example, if you grew up speaking Korean at home and at school, the moment you started learning English was the moment you learned about the difference between the two. You started

your learning from a place of difference. Ironically, after studying English for years and developing an affinity for it, it started to feel less different. However, although it might have felt less different, somewhere in the back of your mind you already knew that the languages were different.

So, in essence, perhaps for all of you the learning of languages, whether at home or in school, was the learning of difference. And, in order to understand difference, you all wanted to know more than just difference in pronunciation or vocabulary; you also wanted to know about the roots of those differences. You wanted to learn the ways in which you could manage those differences yourself. To put it another way, there was a desire to understand what made these languages special. This does not mean that you did not notice similarities between languages, but rather that at some point you learned that you would have to manage the differences.

### **Influence of the aspect of time**

The final theme that I'd like to highlight here is something that has emerged in other sections but is also something I'd like to dedicate some space to. Time has shown itself in several of your stories in several different ways. Your feelings and judgments about languages have changed over time, just as you yourself have changed and your contexts have changed. Over time, the people around you have changed and their influence on you has also changed. Over time, your progress in a language has changed, which has led to you changing your mind about the language and about your engagement with the language.

There have been specific moments in time that have played important parts in your language learning stories. Perhaps it was an exam, or a conversation with teacher or friend, or even a friend you made and with whom you still have a relationship with in which you use one of your languages, that has shown the effect of time. So, whether it was a key moment in time, or just the general flow of time, your relationship with your languages has changed.

Now, this might seem like common sense. Of course over time things change, and since learning happens over time, your understanding of your languages and your place in that is going to change. But one thing that was interesting was that, if you haven't practiced or used a language in a while, many of you mentioned that you felt you had lost the language. However, no one really spoke about positive change, such as how you noticed yourself becoming more proficient. You didn't mention moments where you were satisfied with your progress in language use, but in terms of change, it seemed as though it was easier for you to notice a negative change

rather than a positive change. To put it another way, positive changes, or positive experiences of change, came along with proof and were noticed instantaneously; negative perceptions of change were more based on feeling. So, you might say, "I haven't used English in a long time and I feel I've lost some of it," or "while I was talking, I realized how well I could get along in Irish." However, it was rarer to hear statements like "I feel like I've gotten better at English since I've been here," or "I suddenly felt like I couldn't speak any Japanese." Perhaps this means that you feel loss of knowledge or loss of proficiency more acutely over time, while you perceive improvement in sudden bursts. Or maybe this is because it is more difficult to perceive progress than it is to perceive, for lack of a better term, deterioration. The lapse in time was felt more when it came to talking about how you feel your proficiency has gone down compared to when your proficiency goes up.

Another aspect of time that was important to some of you was age. Some of you talked about how you thought it was better to learn a language when you were younger because you had been told that people who learn a language at a younger age are more likely to become proficient in that language. This affected your expectations for your own language learning, and it seemed to affect how motivated you were to study that language. You tended to have lower expectations for the languages you learned later on (even though you weren't that old anyway) as compared with languages you learned earlier on in education or perhaps at home. I suspect that many of the issues I've mentioned here do rely in part on your age at the time you thought these things, as well as your current age.

For those of you who spoke about age, you might have also mentioned your siblings and compared yourself and your language development to what you noticed happening in your siblings. Another frame of reference for you were your peers, who are of the same age but may have had different experiences with language learning. You seem to notice that a few years difference in age could lead to a vastly different experience with language learning and use. Tied into this was the concept of being ready or feeling ready to study a language; some of you talked about how you were not ready to study a new language earlier on in your schooling, while later you came to enjoy studying that language. You needed to be ready before you could engage in motivated learning.

Finally, there is the issue of time spent studying a language. Some of you talked about how, although you might have spent a number of years studying a language at school, you still do not feel comfortable using that language. You might have talked about how you spent several years studying the language only to give it up and choose a different language upon entering

university. As mentioned earlier, you might have regretted learning that language, thereby regretting the time you spent learning a language that you no longer feel any need for or any use for. At any rate, you recognize that learning a language requires time, and some of you expressed doubts about whether you have used that time well. Of course, you also expressed positive views where you were happy with the amount of time you spent learning the language because you are happy to be able to now use that language as you do.