LINGUISTICALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING: TEACHERS’ PRACTICES WITH ENGLISH LEARNERS IN RURAL ELEMENTARY CLASSROOMS

By

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To Farrah, Chanda and my Mom Virginia
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The increasing diversity in the K-12 student population in the US, particularly the rapid growth in the number of English learners (ELs) in urban and rural school classrooms and the continual homogenization of a White, female, teaching force create cultural and linguistic disconnections in the classroom. As research suggests, although classroom diversity and ELs’ academic needs could be addressed by teachers’ enactment of Linguistically Responsive Teaching (LRT) practices, most mainstream classroom teachers are not adequately prepared to implement these practices. Informed by the LRT framework, the study examined the teaching practices of EL teachers, particularly in rural school settings. Rural school settings continue to experience educational and sociocultural challenges that impact teachers’ practices with diverse students. This study addressed two main questions: (1) What linguistically responsive teaching practices do rural teachers of English learners implement in their classrooms? 2) What factors shape the instruction of English learners?

Two elementary teachers who taught ELs in a rural school in southeastern US during the academic year 2018-2019 participated in the study. Primary data were gathered through classroom observations and interviews and secondary data were
obtained from text documents. Data analysis, which commenced with open coding, followed by focused coding and culminated in theoretical coding, also employed an iterative approach. Findings showed that the two focal study teachers implemented LRT practices across the six central tenets but not in the first tenet – sociolinguistic consciousness. Findings further demonstrated that rural factors such as place-based awareness, limitations of rurality, support system, and rural upbringing shaped their instruction of ELs. Further research and professional development endeavors should focus on providing more opportunities for teachers to develop and sustain LRT practices.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Overview

Public schools in the US have seen an increase in the number of English learners (ELs) who constitute the fastest-growing portion of the school-age population (Fránquiz & Salinas, 2011). There are 4.5 million ELs enrolled in public schools across the United States (US) (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2018), with the state of Florida ranked third in EL population totaling more than 265,000 (Florida Department of Education [FL DOE], 2017). According to Wright (2015), an English learner is defined as “a non-native speaker of English who is in the process of attaining proficiency in English as a new, additional language” (p. 1). The growth of ELs in K-12 public schools across the US has implications to the teaching practices of teachers which need to address the linguistic and literacy needs of ELs (Calderón, Slavin & Sánchez, 2011; Samson & Collins, 2012). However, most, if not all mainstream teachers who have ELs in their classrooms are either under- or unprepared to teach this group of students (Coady, Harper, & de Jong, 2011; Li, 2013; Menken, 2006). Persistent discourses involving responsive teaching practices for immigrant ELs continue to shape and affect educational reforms, research and practice. Questions like “How do we educate ELs in mainstream classrooms?” or “What do teachers need to know and do to instruct them effectively?” remain among researchers and practitioners. Recently, scholars suggest that educational realities pertaining to effective instruction of ELs implicate the necessity of linguistically responsive teaching ([LRT]; Lucas & Villegas, 2011) practices.
In this introductory chapter, I will accomplish three goals: First, I contextualize the research problem being investigated and list the two research questions. Second, I discuss the significance of the study. Lastly, I will define important terms to provide the foundation for the language used in this dissertation.

**Statement of the Problem**

The rapid and substantial demographic changes in the school-age population of the US are attributed to the recent increase in immigration (Samson & Collins, 2012). About half of the immigrant population does not speak English fluently and is also considered as the fastest-growing segment of the student population (Calderon et al., 2011). In the school year 2014-2015, 9.4% of public school students in the US or an estimated 4.6 million were English learners (NCES, 2017). While ELs account for an average of 14.2% of public school enrollment in urban school districts, there is a lower percentage of ELs in rural school districts across the US with 3.5% (NCES, 2017). In the north central area of Florida, mainstream classrooms have low numbers of ELs (Coady, Harper, & de Jong, 2016). In terms of grade level, a greater percentage of public school students in lower grades (K to grade 5) than those of upper grades are ELs, with the highest in Grade 1 with 16.5% (NCES, 2017). Among the first languages spoken by ELs in the US are Spanish, Arabic, Chinese, Vietnamese, Haitian Creole, Tagalog (Filipino) and Korean (Ruiz Soto, Hooker, & Batalova, 2015).

As ELs are instructed alongside their native English-speaking peers in K-12 classrooms where English is the primary medium of instruction, they encounter challenges related to the quality of teaching that they receive. ELs are also assessed by tests that were written for native speakers which may be linguistically inappropriate for them (Giouroukakis & Honigsfeld, 2010). In 2011, the achievement gap between EL and
non-EL students on the NAEP reading assessment was 36 points at the 4th-grade level and 44 points at the 8th-grade level. Such statistical figures are especially glaring in states that record the highest numbers of ELs. For instance, data from the Florida Standards Assessment (FSA) indicate that ELs continue to be outperformed by non-EL students across all of the state standardized assessments (Coady, Li, & Lopez, 2017; 2019). Additionally, the gap at the 5th grade level in both English language arts and mathematics persists across all grade levels. For example, the percentage of student considered “proficient,” that is, passing with a score of 3 or above on the English language arts assessment, was 16.1% in grade 5 but that number decreases to 7.9% by grade 10 (FL DOE, 2017), highlighting an achievement gap of 44.1 percentage points between EL and non-EL students by grade 10 (Coady et al., 2017, 2019).

The statistical figures related to EL achievement and the wide-ranging circumstances surrounding effective EL instruction in the US necessitate the preparation and development of teachers who have the skills to effectively teach them. Over the past years, educational scholars have explored the perspectives, dispositions, knowledge and skills that teachers need to have to successfully educate ELs (e.g., de Jong & Harper, 2005; Schleppegrell, 2004; Wong-Fillmore & Snow, 2005). For instance, Coady, Harper, & de Jong (2016) theorized that high quality teachers of ELs should have three characteristics: (a) knowledge of their bilingual students’ backgrounds including their home languages and literacy practices; (b) content-pedagogical knowledge and skills to enact effective instructional practices to address bilingual students’ needs; and (c) knowledge of and the ability to navigate educational policies across societal levels. Other authors (e.g., Lucas, Villegas, & Freedson-Gonzales,
Valdés, Bunch, Snow, Lee, & Matos, 2005) insist that EL teachers should have an understanding of the structure of English, a knowledge of second language learning principles, and an ability to apply these principles in their teaching. Lucas and Villegas (2010) drew on previous literature about effective teaching of ELs and they proposed a framework called Linguistically Responsive Teaching (LRT).

Previous literature, however, reports that there has been relatively little attention paid to the essential knowledge and skills that mainstream general education teachers need to possess in order to provide effective instruction for ELs (e.g., Coady, Harper, & de Jong, 2011; de Jong, Harper, & Coady, 2013). In addition, although LRT has gained notable attention in research literature (Bunch, 2010, 2013; Turkan, de Oliveira, Lee, & Phelps, 2014), it has not yet been extensively empirically examined (Tandon et al., 2017). Research on the preparation of general education teachers to work with ELs provide significant and relevant perspectives. Similarly, research about in-service programs examining teachers’ instructional practices with ELs are also important.

The aforementioned circumstances related to teachers’ knowledge and skills that enable them to effectively teach ELs also warrant the necessity to examine teachers’ practices in rural areas and school districts (Ballantyne, Sanderman, & Levy, 2008; Stufft & Brogadir, 2010). Similar to the national teacher demographics in the US, the teaching force in rural areas can be characterized as primarily white, English-speaking females with a bachelor’s degree (Hansen-Thomas, Grosso Richins, Kakkar, & Okeyo, 2016). Correspondingly, there is a dearth of empirical studies that explored EL teachers’ practices in rural classroom settings (Fogle & Moser, 2017). The very few studies that examined the experiences and practices of mainstream EL teachers in rural areas
indicate that rural educators continually face pedagogical challenges in addressing the needs of English learners (e.g., Fry & Anderson, 2011; Good, Masewicz, & Vogel, 2010; Hansen-Thomas et al., 2016). These challenges include their inability to communicate with English learners and their parents, limited ability to effectively use teaching strategies for ELs with varying linguistic ability levels, and the inability to assess ELs through integration of their home language to the curriculum (Good et al., 2010; Hansen-Thomas & Grosso Richins, 2015).

Knowledge about the teaching practices of rural EL teachers that reflect linguistically responsive teaching helps educators understand more effective ways of addressing the various needs of ELs (Calderon et al., 2011; Samson & Collins, 2012). Examining and analyzing the ways that rurality shape teachers' instruction of ELs is critical to understanding how the broader, sociopolitical context affect the learning experiences of ELs. This consciousness towards rural context as pedagogical (Greenwood, 2009, 2013; Gruenewald, 2003) could also enable teachers to expand and enhance their instructional practices for ELs.

Despite the documented increase in EL population in US public schools in both urban and rural settings, issues related to their education are not addressed by educational policies, research and practice (Lucas & Villegas, 2010). Specifically, the role of teacher quality and effectiveness in improving educational outcomes is paramount (Samson & Collins, 2012). As mainstream teachers increasingly encounter English learners in their classrooms, they are required to develop and acquire broad and deep knowledge related to EL student learning, instructional skills, and a positive disposition towards diverse learners. The linguistically diverse classroom populations in
K-12 schools necessitate conceptualizing, designing and implementing linguistically responsive pedagogical strategies that enable teachers to meet the academic needs of ELs. As such, a close examination and analysis of rural teachers’ instructional practices with ELs that reflect linguistically responsive teaching is warranted.

**Purpose and Research Questions**

The purpose of this study was to examine the teaching practices of teachers with English learners in rural, elementary classroom settings to find evidence of linguistically responsive teaching (LRT) (Lucas & Villegas, 2011). Based on prior research, studies have repeatedly shown that teachers’ instructional practices frequently do not support the academic needs of English learners, in part due to teachers having had little or no professional development (Coady et al., 2011; Lucas, Villegas & Freedson-Gonzales, 2008). This finding from the literature implies the need for empirical research to examine how teachers instruct English learners in rural elementary classrooms that are reflective of LRT. This framework consists of three orientations and four types of language-related knowledge and skills (Lucas & Villegas, 2011) that teachers need to become linguistically responsive teachers. The orientations, defined as “inclinations or tendencies toward particular ideas and actions, influenced by attitudes and beliefs (Richardson, 1996) are important for teachers to embrace to enable them to apply the necessary knowledge and skills (Lucas & Villegas, 2010). When applied in the classroom setting, the LRT framework suggests that linguistically responsive teachers have both the orientations and language-related knowledge and skills that address the linguistic, academic, and social needs of ELs. Thus, in this study, I sought to examine teachers’ practices with ELs that were reflective of the LRT and contribute to the literature on effective teaching of ELs.
The study also explored how rurality shaped teachers’ instruction of ELs. Integral to this goal is an examination of the rural context, specifically the various factors within it and how these elements influenced teachers’ practices. Turner and Meyer (2000) assert that context helps teachers become better educators by encouraging them to question the ways they teach and consequently improve their practices. In the process of improving these practices, teachers have to develop also their awareness towards various social, cultural and political factors that might influence their teaching. Recent and previous studies have explored the relationships among contextual factors, teachers’ beliefs and teachers’ practices (e.g., Cuayahuitl & Carranza 2015; Johnson, Kraft, & Papay, 2012; Moini, 2009; Phipps & Borg, 2007), and these studies generally found that contextual factors have an influence on teachers’ instructional choices and decisions.

Empirical research that examined teachers’ practices with ELs in rural contexts is limited (Burton, Brown, & Johnson, 2013; Fogle & Moser, 2017). The current study aimed to contribute to the literature on the implementation of LRT with ELs in rural classroom settings. A basic principle underlying the study’s goal is the idea that certain factors in rural contexts like supportive school leadership (Hersi & Watkinson, 2012; Zhang-wu, 2017), community relationships (Stufft & Brogadir, 2010), and teacher-parent relationships (Shim, 2013) influence the ways that teachers teach ELs. This range of factors within rural contexts needs to be examined, because the teachers themselves may not be conscious of such elements and their influence that affect their implementation of linguistically responsive teaching practices.
This study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What linguistically responsive teaching practices do rural teachers of English learners implement in classrooms?
2. How does rurality shape the instruction of English learners?

**Significance of the Study**

This dissertation is important across several aspects, which include: (a) effective EL instruction and LRT; (b) LRT and rurality, and (c) preservice teacher education. First of all, the study has the potential to contribute to the growing literature on effective EL instruction through linguistically responsive teaching. The qualities of effective EL teachers are widely emphasized in the academic literature (e.g., de Jong, Harper, & Coady, 2013; de Jong & Harper, 2005; Schleppegrell, 2004; Wong-Fillmore & Snow, 2005), given that in recent years, the population of ELs in K-12 classrooms has dramatically increased (NCES, 2018). In rural schools, a similar trend on the growth of ELs is reported in the literature (O'Neal, Ringler, & Rodriguez, 2008; Walker, 2012). Because of this, rural teachers are also expected to be linguistically responsive in their teaching practices. However, many research studies highlight that teachers could not effectively teach ELs because teacher preparation programs did not sufficiently prepare them to teach ELs (de Jong et al., 2013). Most teachers, especially those in rural areas, also experience lack of professional development opportunities (Burton & Johnson, 2010; Wenger & Dinsmore, 2009). This study investigated the teaching practices of ELs to examine LRT in rural elementary classrooms. Findings of the study could contribute to a deeper understanding of how LRT is implemented in rural settings. Teachers can benefit from the descriptions and understanding of LRT through this qualitative study. The study’s findings could also encourage them to reflect upon their own teaching
practices and consider enacting changes that are responsive to their ELs’ linguistic, literacy and academic needs.

Second, this dissertation contributes to the emerging literature of investigating LRT in rural contexts. Very few studies examining EL teachers’ practices in rural classrooms via LRT are documented (e.g., Fogle & Moser, 2017). In addition, there is also a dearth of empirical research that explored how contextual factors in rural areas affect the instruction of ELs. A renewed interest in rural education is also evident in recent studies (e.g., Corbett, 2016; Reagan et al., 2019), which emphasized that rural teachers need to “work within” contexts that they inhabit. This means that teachers have to develop a consciousness towards the broader context that potentially shape their instruction of ELs. The study aimed to investigate how rurality influenced the teachers’ practices with ELs. Findings can contribute to the emerging literature on how LRT looks like in rural context which have inherent characteristics that could affect teaching and learning. Moreover, rural teachers can benefit from the study’s findings, particularly in developing their consciousness towards rurality and its advantages to their teaching practices with ELs. As previous studies emphasized, teachers who are aware of the dynamics of rural contexts could potentially expand their repertoires of practice for rural school children (Eppley, 2015; Page, 2006).

Lastly, the study adds to the literature on preservice teacher preparation for EL teachers who could enact LRT in rural settings. Teacher educators and preservice teachers might benefit from this study by understanding how teachers enacted LRT in their teaching practices with ELs. Teacher educators might consider critically re-examining their curriculum and the pedagogies that they employ with preservice
teachers. In the process of reconfiguring aspects of their teaching, they could consider emphasizing the central tenets of LRT in the preservice teacher curriculum to increase prospective teachers’ knowledge and skills that enable them to enact LRT. In addition, findings of the study about the relationship of rurality to teachers’ instruction of ELs can add to the literature on LRT in rural settings. Teacher preparation programs for rural settings might consider incorporating place-based education (Greenwood, 2013; Gruenewald, 2003) in the preservice teacher curriculum. By doing this, preservice teachers could develop an understanding of how rural contexts could be “pedagogical” (Gruenewald, 2003). Some educational scholars have argued that the perceived strengths of rural contexts offer unique opportunities for teachers to deliver high quality education for rural schoolchildren (Cicchinelli & Beesley, 2018).

**Definition of Terms**

The terms defined below were used in the study. The definitions indicate how each term has been used throughout the study.

- **Bilingual ESOL Paraprofessional:** Refers to a bilingual person who provides assistance in an ESOL self-contained classroom whose functions include: providing translation services to ELs and during parent conferences, serving as school-to-home liaisons for EL parents, and serving as resources to assist classroom teachers of ELs.

- **English Learners (ELs):** Refers to students whose home language is a language other than English, and their varying levels of proficiency, ranging from none at all to native-like proficiency, may impede academic achievement in classrooms where the language of instruction is English (Linquanti & Cook, 2013; Lucas & Villegas, 2011).

- **ESOL Self-Contained Classroom:** Refers to a classroom where ELs are provided with specialized intervention and support via a full-time bilingual paraprofessional and a highly prepared teacher.
• Rural Fringe Setting: Refers to a rural territory that is less than or equal to 5 miles from an urbanized area, as well as rural territory that is less than or equal to 5 miles from an urban cluster” (NCES, 2015, n.p.).

• Language-related Knowledge and Skills: Refer to complex and interconnected disciplinary knowledge, pedagogical-content knowledge, knowledge of learners, and pedagogical skills needed by successful EL teachers (Lucas & Villegas, 2011).

• Linguistically Responsive Teaching (LRT): A teaching framework that consists of three orientations (sociolinguistic consciousness, value for linguistic diversity, inclination to advocate for ELs) and four types of language-related knowledge and skills (learning about ELs’ academic, language and cultural backgrounds; analyzing language demands inherent in classroom tasks; knowing and applying principles of second language learning; and scaffolding instruction) which are inter-related (Lucas & Villegas, 2010).

• LRT Orientations: Refer to inclinations or tendencies toward particular ideas and actions, influenced by attitudes and beliefs (Richardson, 1996).

• Newcomer ELs: In this study, refers to ELs who arrived in the US within the school year 2017-2018 or within the current school year, 2018-2019.

• Place-based Education: Refers to pedagogical practices that illustrate teachers’ awareness towards places (Gruenewald, 2003), or in this study’ context, entails the rural context where teachers teach; this pedagogy also allows teachers to plan and implement teaching that is meaningful and relevant to the place, people and the local culture (Comber, Reid, & Nixon, 2007).

• Rural EL Teachers: Refer to teachers in schools within fringe rural settings who either teach in mainstream classrooms or ESOL self-contained classrooms which have at least 2 or more ELs.

**Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, I contextualized the research problem being investigated, specifically examining the implementation of LRT in rural, elementary classroom settings. I also discussed the need to examine how rurality shaped instruction of ELs. I discussed the significance of the study across effective EL instruction and LRT, LRT and rurality, and preservice teacher education. Lastly, I define important terms that provided the foundation for the language used in this dissertation.
In the next chapter, I review related studies and discuss the study’s conceptual framework.
CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Overview

In this chapter, my primary goal is to review empirical studies and theoretical articles that are relevant to the study. In Section A, I discuss Ladson-Billings's culturally relevant pedagogy that served as the foundation for the conceptualization of linguistically responsive teaching. In Section B, I thoroughly explore the construct linguistically responsive teaching (LRT) and draw upon the few empirical studies that have used LRT as a framework. In Section C, I provide a brief overview of teaching ELs in America’s rural context and discuss place-based education. Finally, I briefly describe the study’s conceptual framework in Section D.

Setting the Foundation: Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP)

Ladson-Billings (1995a) conceptualized culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) as a “pedagogy of opposition that is related to critical pedagogy and specifically committed to collective empowerment” (p. 108) of African-American students who remain underserved by US public schools. The oppositional stance that she takes is demonstrated in her desire to challenge deficit paradigms (Ladson-Billings, 1995b) that prevail in the academic literature regarding the education of African-American students. Despite the persistent portrayal of the under-achievement of students of color in schools, she insists on the possibility of a paradigmatic shift towards excellent teaching for this group of learners.

Ladson-Billings (1995b) defines CRP in her theoretical model as a pedagogy that “not only addresses student achievement but also accepts and affirms their cultural identity while developing critical perspectives that challenge inequities that schools
perpetuate” (p. 469). Ladson-Billings articulated three main principles of CRP: (a) students must experience academic success, (b) students must develop and/or maintain cultural competence, and (c) students must develop sociopolitical consciousness of the current social order. She also suggests that teachers must help students realize these principles through their enactment of culturally relevant pedagogy. With the persistently superficial treatment of multicultural education in teacher education (Banks & Banks, 2004; 2013), Ladson-Billings (1995b) reminds us that these efforts could serve to “exoticize diverse students as ‘other’” (p. 472). She suggests that a more transformative approach to enacting CRP can help alleviate the ‘other’-ing process in education.

Academic success largely focuses on the development of students’ academic skills, and culturally relevant teachers need to meet students’ needs “not merely to make them ‘feel good’…[but] to ‘choose’ academic excellence” (Ladson-Billings, 1995a, p. 160). While academic success may vary according to schools, contexts and students’ racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, its ultimate goal is to “help students perform at higher levels” (Ladson-Billings, 1995b, p. 475). Cultural competence entails that students maintain their cultural integrity while they achieve academically. Ladson-Billings suggests that CRP does not ask students to “negotiate the demands of school while demonstrating cultural competence” (p. 476). Rather, CRP requires that students’ academic experiences and their cultural values should work in tandem to enable them to see academic engagement in school as positive. Lastly, developing sociopolitical consciousness among students help them recognize, understand and critique social inequities (Ladson-Billings, 1995b). Teachers themselves should understand and be
aware of these issues to enable them to develop a pedagogy that questions inequities and to successfully implement a “social action curriculum” (Ladson-Billings, 1995a, p. 162).

In her foundational work, Ladson-Billings proposed a continuum of teaching behaviors that teachers need to enact in order to be designated as culturally relevant. First, she suggests that teachers need to develop a critical view of themselves and others which includes: a belief that all students are capable of success; an understanding that they are members of a sociopolitical community; and a belief in the notion of teaching as “mining” (Freire, 1973). Mining means adopting teaching strategies that enable teachers to “pull knowledge out” (Ladson-Billings, 1995b, p. 479) of students for them to succeed academically. Second, she proposes that there are ways through which teachers can establish and structure social relations that support culturally relevant pedagogy. For example, teachers could: (a) maintain fluid relationships with their diverse learners; (b) develop a community of learners among their students, and (c) show consciousness towards learners’ cultural backgrounds. Lastly, she advocates that teachers need to have a wide range of skills to enable them to construct knowledge in relation to their students of color, including a passion for teaching and learning, the ability to view knowledge critically, the ability to scaffold or build bridges between their learners’ backgrounds and school experiences, and adopting assessment that incorporates multiple strategies. Ladson-Billings advocates that teachers critically examine their own culture as well as those of others to enable them to function as culturally relevant teachers. As Milner (2016) argues in his study, empirical studies that establish the inherent link between teachers’ classrooms as
sociopolitical contexts and their identities as racial and cultural beings are vital in advancing the field of culturally relevant teaching. For White teachers, instead of protecting their Whiteness, they need to examine it because Whiteness and color-blindness prevent them from working towards culturally relevant pedagogy (Castagno, 2013).

Ladson-Billings further argues that in the implementation of CRP in classrooms, the ways that diverse groups should be viewed from multiple perspectives are not being critically examined. Still, Fasching-Varner and Deriki (2012) argue that there is a significant disconnect between teacher praxis and the theoretical underpinnings of CRP taught in teacher preparation programs. In other words, educators claim to be engaging in CRP but fail to connect their practice with its foundational principles.

Although Ladson-Billings (1995a) discussed the significance of using students’ home language to nurture cultural competence, she largely focused on the schooling experiences of African-Americans and “code-switching” (p. 161) between one’s home language and “standard” English. Students were permitted to express themselves in oral and written language with which they were knowledgeable and comfortable, and at the same time they were required to “translate” to the standard form. Similar to African-American students’ schooling experiences, Spanish-speaking ELs have linguistic experiences in US classrooms that encompass elements of language and identity, language and power, and their other linguistic needs. However, most research studies on teacher preparation and teacher development that focus on cultural diversity treat language only peripherally as one of many aspects of culture (Lucas & Grinberg, 2008). With the need to conceptualize CRP that focuses on language-related issues in the
classroom, Lucas and Villegas (2010) proposed linguistically responsive teaching (LRT) framework. They suggest that LRT could be used as a lens to examine ways that teachers draw on students' linguistic resources and cultural backgrounds to help them succeed academically.

**Linguistically Responsive Teaching (LRT)**

The linguistically responsive teaching (LRT) framework by Lucas and colleagues (2008a, 2008b, 2010, 2011, 2013, 2014) was conceptualized with a focus on the fundamental role of language in the educational experiences of English learners and the connections between language, culture and identity. LRT departs from CRT in its distinctive focus on language diversity and linguistic issues as crucial elements in the preparation and development of teachers of ELs. While the LRT framework was intended to guide teacher educators in the preparation of preservice teachers to work effectively with ELs, it could also be adapted for research and practical purposes. In terms of research, LRT could serve as a theoretical framework for examining the teaching practices of mainstream teachers who have ELs in their classrooms. Meanwhile, the LRT framework could also be used by administrators and teacher educators as a guide for designing professional development programs for teachers.

Lucas and her colleagues provided a framework of successful teaching for English learners that rests upon a set of orientations and language-related knowledge and skills needed by linguistically responsive teachers.

**Orientations of Linguistically Responsive Teachers**

The first, broad category of the LRT framework is composed of teachers’ orientations which are defined as "inclinations or tendencies toward particular ideas and actions influenced by attitudes and beliefs" (p. 302). The orientations that linguistically
responsive teachers should possess include positive views that affirm the importance of language in ELs’ learning experiences. By reflecting upon themselves and their assumptions towards ELs, mainstream classroom teachers embrace positive dispositions that serve as foundation for the development of their knowledge and skills in enacting linguistically responsive teaching (Lucas & Villegas, 2011). Lucas and Grinberg (2008) also suggest that linguistically responsive teachers collaborate with colleagues who are language specialists or with community members who have cultural and linguistic knowledge and can serve as language resources in the classroom.

The LRT framework identifies three interrelated orientations that linguistically responsive teachers need to demonstrate: (a) sociolinguistic consciousness, (b) value for linguistic diversity, and (c) inclination to advocate for ELs. I discuss each principle in the following section. These principles are found in Table 2-1.

**Sociolinguistic consciousness**

The first orientation that linguistically responsive teachers should possess is sociolinguistic consciousness that enables them to recognize two interrelated discourses: (1) the interconnectedness of language, culture, and identity; and (2) the sociopolitical dimensions of language use and instruction (Lucas & Villegas, 2011). These inter-related discourses underscore the need for teachers to be aware that linguistically diverse students come from different social classes, ethnicities, and races. Teachers have also to be conscious of the ways that these language varieties affect the learning experience of English learners who belong to language minority groups in the US. While sociolinguistic consciousness covers a wide range of dispositions, some scholars have identified specific characteristics that sociolinguistically conscious teachers should have. For instance, Olsen (1997) argues that this kind of
consciousness is demonstrated by teachers who understand that their students’ experiences as speakers of minoritized languages and the challenges that they face go beyond the cognitive aspects of learning a second language. While not all bilinguals necessarily experience cognitive difficulties, it is important for teachers to be aware of the structured linguistic inequalities in their classrooms that could affect the academic achievement of learners from language minority groups.

Other scholars insist that teachers need to understand that the dominant position of a language variety within a particular context derives from the power of the speakers of that language rather than from any form of linguistic factors (e.g., de Jesus, 2005; Delpit, 1995; Grinberg & Saavedra, 2000). The requirements expected of teachers to be sociolinguistically conscious are also embedded in what Bartolomé (2000) termed as ideological clarity, or the process by which teachers “achieve a deepening awareness of the sociopolitical and economic realities that shape their lives and their capacity to transform them” (p. 167). These sociopolitical realities could come in the form of linguistic power and privilege that is oftentimes associated with speakers of dominant languages like English. It is vital for teachers to recognize these factors because they either directly or indirectly affect the learning experiences of their EL students. When teachers have an understanding of the sociopolitical context of language, they can challenge the persistent myth that some languages are superior and work to overcome language discrimination.

Sociolinguistic consciousness could be developed among teachers through reflection. Lucas and Grinberg (2008) suggest the importance for teachers to reflect on their own assumptions about ELs and be cognizant of the fact that their perceptions of
language, language understanding and language learning are shaped by their own and their students’ sociocultural positioning. In addition, teachers have also to reflect upon their pre-existing beliefs and deficit perspectives about ELs as learners, and their pre-conceived values related to language and linguistic diversity which are largely unexamined (Lucas & Villegas, 2013). In other words, it is important for teachers to understand that ELs’ investment in learning a second language, e.g. English, is influenced not only by their own perceptions towards the relationship of their home language to English but also by their teachers' attitudes towards the use of both their home language and English in the classroom.

Valuing linguistic diversity

The second orientation that linguistically responsive teachers should demonstrate is valuing linguistic diversity. In their most recent work, Lucas, de Oliveira and Villegas (2014) contend that linguistically responsive teachers should show respect for and interest in diverse students’ home languages by either recognizing multilingualism as a resource or cultivating bilingualism among their emergent bilingual students. In addition, this orientation entails teachers' beliefs that: (a) linguistic diversity is worthy of cultivating and (b) ELs’ home languages occupy a significant space in the classroom and play a critical role in students’ learning experiences. These concepts of linguistic diversity support the notion of “linguistic capital” (Yosso, 2005) which includes “the intellectual and social skills attained through communication experiences in more than one language and/or style” (p. 78). However, it is not sufficient for teachers to simply embrace this orientation; they should at least complement their beliefs with a corresponding action to demonstrate such beliefs (Lucas & Villegas, 2011; Lucas, Villegas, & Freedson-Gonzales, 2008).
Teachers also need to demonstrate value for linguistic diversity because previous studies report that ELs’ home languages cause pedagogical challenges among typically White, monolingual teachers (e.g. Cunningham, 2018; Valdés, 1995). Additionally, US classrooms and school-settings continually adopt monolingual ideologies through English-only policies and practices (de Jong, 2013), which tend to suppress and neglect minority languages (Cunningham, 2018; Wiley & Lukes, 1996). These educational realities should challenge teachers to be vigilant of policies and legislations that perpetuate the myth that multilingualism and linguistic diversity are a problem rather than a resource (Rao & Morales, 2015; Ruíz, 1984).

Another important aspect of this LRT principle relates to teachers’ expectations towards ELs. Lack of value for and recognition of ELs’ linguistic resources may translate into lowered expectations and unchallenging instructional practices (Lucas & Villegas, 2011). Lowered expectations highly relate to the notion of *el pobrecito*, which refers to the misguided belief that children who come from poverty or other disadvantaged backgrounds already have difficulty so that schools should not expect too much from them (Garcia, 2001). Linguistically responsive teachers should believe that ELs are capable of success and they should set high expectations of them.

**Inclination to advocate for English learners**

The third orientation that linguistically responsive teachers need is advocacy for English learners. According to Lucas and Villegas (2011), teachers should understand that ELs should be provided equitable educational opportunities through pedagogy that utilizes their social and cultural capital as additional resources for their learning. Furthermore, teachers need to have the willingness to act as advocates for ELs which is largely built upon teachers’ understanding of and empathy towards their ELs (Lucas &
Villegas, 2013). Advocacy also entails “actively working to improve one or more aspects of ELs’ educational experiences” (Lucas & Villegas, 2010, p. 304), which include activities like tutoring EL students, encouraging colleagues to participate in PD related to teaching ELs, organizing and supporting bilingual parent groups, challenging the fairness of assessment practices, and campaigning for legislation supportive of ELs and their families (Athanases & de Oliveira, 2010; de Oliveira & Athanases, 2007).

In and outside of the school context, teachers who advocate for ELs promote and argue for equity in two ways. First, they could work towards fairer assessment practices and language policies in school that appropriately recognize the needs of linguistic minority groups. In relation, teachers could navigate these policies on behalf of ELs and bilingual students (de Jong, Harper, & Coady, 2013). Second, teachers who advocate for ELs speak or act on behalf of them if they see students’ languages being devalued (Lucas & Villegas, 2013). In advocating for ELs, teachers also need to be aware that the nature and processes of taking this stance differ in different local contexts that are contingent upon the support that individuals, groups and stakeholders have for diversity (Lucas, de Oliveira & Villegas, 2014). As some scholars contend, advocacy for change in the educational systems themselves, which call for attention to the sociopolitical dimensions of language use, language policies and language education is an effective way of advocating for emerging bilinguals (e.g., Hornberger, 2005; Staehr-Fenner, 2014).

While these three orientations are well-defined in previous and current literature, it is important to reiterate two discourses that are significant to developing these orientations among teachers. First is the notion of “praxis” (Freire, 2000) – reflection
plus action needed to achieve social change — that should accompany teachers’ sociolinguistic consciousness. Teachers challenge social inequities perpetuated in schools when they act upon oppressive educational practices. Some other ways that teachers could uphold LRT include: (a) challenging the invisibility of language issues in the professional development of teachers for ELs; (b) collaborating with colleagues and encouraging them to participate in PD activities related to teaching ELs; and (c) actively working with parents and community members to enhance instruction for ELs.

The second significant area in developing teachers’ orientations as linguistically responsive teachers relates to self-reflection (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Richards, Brown, & Forde, 2007). In their recent work, Martin & Strom (2016) emphasize that one way of supporting the development of a linguistically responsive teacher’s identity is incorporating reflective practice. Reflective teaching entails continuous reflection among teachers on their own cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Self-reflection, for instance, occurs when teachers examine their attitudes and beliefs about themselves and toward others (Lucas & Villegas, 2002). Reflection also provides teachers opportunities to confront their own biases and belief systems. Getting rid of these biases could enable them to establish trust and personal relationships with their ELs.

The second area of linguistically responsive teaching encompasses teachers’ knowledge and skills which refer to the “complex and interconnected disciplinary knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, knowledge of learners, and pedagogical skills” needed by successful EL teachers (Lucas & Villegas, 2010).

**Knowledge and Skills of Linguistically Responsive Teachers**

The academic literature suggests that teachers should maintain a balance between expanding their teaching competence and developing their critical orientations.
towards their learners’ identity, culture and language (Cohen, 2011; Daniel, 2015; Jiménez & Rose, 2010). As Howard and Aleman (2008) posit, “teacher capacity reflects their content knowledge as intersecting with a complex notion of culture and language, knowledge of effective teaching practice in diverse settings and development of their orientations that includes awareness of institutionalized systems of inequality” (p. 165). Although Howard and Aleman do not directly refer to teaching ELs, their discourse could be relevant to teachers of mainstream classroom contexts. In these contexts, inequality emanates from the unequal power relations between teachers, ELs and their native English-speaking counterparts. The rhetoric on teacher knowledge defined by a balance between teaching effectiveness and critical awareness has been illuminated by the emergence of the linguistically responsive teaching framework (Lucas & Villegas, 2011; Lucas, Villegas, & Freedson-Gonzales, 2008). In this section, I focus on the pedagogical expertise anchored on language-related knowledge and skills that teachers need to employ in their instruction of ELs.

There is a narrow literature base that identifies the knowledge, skills and dispositions teachers need to instruct EL populations (e.g., Coady, Harper, & de Jong, 2011; de Jong, Harper, & Coady, 2013; Garcia, 1999; Gonzalez & Darling-Hammond, 1997; Wong-Filmore & Snow, 2005). In the LRT framework, Lucas & Villegas (2011) distilled four types of pedagogical expertise that linguistically responsive teachers need to have. The knowledge and skills of teachers in the LRT framework include: (a) learning about ELs’ backgrounds, language, experiences and proficiencies; (b) identifying the language demands of classroom discourse and tasks; (c) knowing and
applying the key principles of second language learning; (d) scaffolding learning for ELs (Lucas & Villegas, 2010, 2013; Lucas, de Oliveira & Villegas, 2014).

Learning about ELs’ backgrounds

Teachers should acquire a repertoire of strategies for learning about the linguistic and academic backgrounds of ELs (Lucas & Villegas, 2011; Lucas, Villegas, and Freedson-Gonzales, 2008). These knowledge and skills could enable them to adapt curriculum based on ELs’ needs, abilities and proficiency levels in L1 and L2 (Lucas, de Oliveira, & Villegas, 2014). Teachers’ knowledge about their ELs’ backgrounds could also enable them to meaningfully differentiate instruction (de Oliveira & Shoffner, 2009) according to how students learn and to build on language-appropriate instructional and assessment practices (Santamaria, 2009). As some educational scholars argue (e.g. Gay, 2010, Milner, 2016), it is important for teachers to build pedagogical bridges that create meaningful connections between diverse learners’ cultural and language background to the curriculum content. In similar vein, scholars contend that instruction and curriculum content that is relevant to students’ cultural backgrounds and previous knowledge and experiences is key for learning a second language (e.g., Solorzano & Solorzanzo, 1999). Teaching strategies that incorporate the use of ELs’ language repertoires to make sense of content uphold the notion of “translanguaging” (Garcia, 2009; Lewis, Jones, & Baker, 2012; Park, 2013). Translanguaging offers ELs opportunities for bilingual and multilingual practices of English, their home language, and other languages they know to understand curriculum content.

Identifying language demands

The second pedagogical expertise required of linguistically responsive teachers is the ability to identify the language demands of the ESL and mainstream classroom...
and to recognize that academic tasks given to ELs require specialized language and literacy skills (de Oliveira & Shoffner, 2009, 2017). Under this principle, teacher need to have two important skills: (a) implementing both a rigorous and a challenging curriculum for ELs, and (b) making content comprehensible for them. These demands for skills from teachers and the complicated nature of how language functions in teaching ELs make this aspect challenging. This complicated process, for instance, requires teachers to: (a) know what linguistic tasks they want ELs to learn from a classroom activity; (b) explicitly direct students to this task; (c) explain, model, or demonstrate ways students might be expected to complete this task; and (d) assess students to determine whether the task was successfully completed. However, Lucas and Villegas (2011) suggest specific ways for teachers to demonstrate this language-related skill.

For instance, teachers could identify vocabulary that students have to understand in order to access the content of the curriculum. In addition, teachers need to analyze language to determine the features of academic discourse of various disciplines that are likely to be challenging to ELs (Lucas & Villegas, 2013). To be able to do this, teachers themselves should demonstrate an understanding of the features of languages, linguistic subsystems and other language-related knowledge (Lucas & Villegas, 2011; Wong Fillmore & Snow, 2005). Lucas and Villegas posit, “the more detailed teachers can be in their analysis of language demands built into learning tasks … written materials, the more able they will be to identify aspects of the tasks and written texts that interfere with ELs’ understanding” (p. 305).

**Knowing and applying L2 learning principles**

To have a comprehensive understanding of the overall and everyday academic performance of ELs, teachers also need knowledge of the key principles, sociolinguistic,
and sociocultural processes involved in second language learning. They should also be able to apply these principles to their instructional decisions and practices (Lucas & Grinberg, 2008; Lucas & Villegas, 2013). With the complex process of second language learning, teachers have to understand that their ELs are negotiating two interrelated worlds of acquiring English proficiency and learning academic content. There is a large body of established literature on knowledge and dispositions that teachers need to know about second language learning (e.g., Cummins, 2000, 2008; Thomas & Collier, 2002; Wong Fillmore & Snow, 2005). However, Lucas and Villegas (2010) suggest six established principles that generally underscore the importance of teachers’ knowledge about the elements and processes affecting second language acquisition. These principles are outlined in Table 2-1.

Scaffolding instruction

Lastly, a pedagogical expertise required of linguistically responsive teachers is an ability to apply a basic set of practices and tools for scaffolding instruction to make the curriculum accessible to ELs (Lucas & Villegas, 2013; Wynn & Laframboise, 1996). Scaffolding refers to the types of instructional support essential for ELs’ learning of both academic content and English (or another language) in the school context (Gibbons, 2002; Lucas, de Oliveira, & Villegas, 2014; Walqui & van Lier, 2010). Teachers need to provide temporary supports to enhance learning for ELs, particularly in carrying out tasks that are beyond their current proficiencies and capabilities. Lucas and colleagues outline specific skills for scaffolding instruction which are outlined in Table 2-1.

Teacher’s LRT Practices: Empirical Literature

The need for empirical work examining the instructional practices of EL teachers that are reflective of linguistically responsive teaching (LRT) is essential in
contextualizing language and linguistic diversity and their critical role in ELs’ learning experiences. However, there is a dearth of empirical research on the instructional practices of mainstream teachers that demonstrate the elements and principles of LRT (e.g., Coady et al., 2019, forthcoming; Hersi & Watkinson, 2012; Lucas, de Oliveira, & Villegas, 2014; Tandon, Viesca, Heuston, & Milbourn, 2017). The dearth of studies related to LRT is evident both in teacher education research and classroom teaching practices. This may be a consequence of limited prior attention to language issues, linguistic diversity and the education of ELs (Lucas & Grinberg, 2008) in empirical, educational research.

In this section, I provide a review of the limited empirical work that examined teachers’ linguistically responsive teaching practices with English learners. It is worthy to note that four of the six empirical studies that were reviewed used culturally and linguistically responsive teaching (CLRT) as theoretical framework. Researchers of these studies used a combination of CRT and LRT to examine teachers’ practices across the intersections of these two related frameworks. However, their studies also focused on the tenets of LRT that were distinct from the principles of CRT. In reviewing these empirical studies, I focused on the findings related to the tenets of LRT. In a broad sense, a review of the literature on teachers’ teaching practices demonstrated evidence of the basic tenets of LRT that were implemented by teachers in their instruction of ELs, such as scaffolding instruction, value for linguistic diversity, and knowing and applying principles of second language learning.

The study conducted by Tandon et al. (2017) examined the perceptions of teacher candidates (TCs) and novice teachers of linguistically responsive teaching in
relation to teaching multilingual learners. The study found that overall, the participants did not share extensive perspectives related to the LRT framework. The aspect of LRT which the participants mostly discussed was related to teaching strategies and scaffolding. Their perceptions did not demonstrate a deep level of linguistic responsiveness as evident in their limited perspectives of embracing orientations of LRT like sociolinguistic consciousness, valuing linguistic diversity and inclination to advocate for ELs.

The study conducted by Giouroukakis and Honigsfeld (2010) investigated the effects of high-stakes testing on teachers’ classroom practices, particularly on the literacy tasks and materials that they implemented to develop ELs’ literacy skills to prepare them for standardized tests. The study found that the teachers’ instructional practices reflected culturally and linguistically responsive teaching and the instructional activities and materials used in the classroom had directly prepared the ELs for high-stakes testing. The seventh tenet of LRT, scaffolding instruction for ELs, was evident from the teachers’ use of modeling structured practices and individual intervention, use of purposeful activities, and cooperative learning like drama, songs and role-playing. There was also evidence of the LRT tenet on building connections to activate ELs’ prior knowledge and experiences through the teachers’ use of reading materials in literature that were related to students’ own lived experiences on migration and immigration. These reading materials also featured fictional characters of the modern age which ELs were able to relate to.

In another study conducted by Hite and Evans (2006), they examined the teaching practices of 22 teachers, particularly in their use of accommodation strategies
for English learners which reflect the LRT tenet of scaffolding instruction for ELs. Although the authors did not explicitly use LRT as the study’s theoretical framework, the concepts that they used to frame the study like affective filter hypothesis (Krashen, 2003), second language acquisition theories (e.g., Cummins, 2000) and the input-interaction-output model (Krashen, 1982), were highly related to second language learning principles that constitute the LRT framework (Lucas & Villegas, 2011). The study found that the teachers implemented language scaffolding in their teaching practices with ELs which include modeling and demonstration, use of visuals, manipulatives, repetition and speech simplification, modification of instructional materials or creation and use of original materials for ELs, use of students’ native language in instruction and use of bilingual dictionaries during the assessment. Some of the teachers’ practices also demonstrated evidence of the LRT tenet related to teachers’ awareness and application of second language acquisition (SLA) principles like creating a safe, inclusive, and welcoming classroom and supporting social interactions in the classroom. Overall, the teachers’ strategies for teaching literacy and content materials to their ELs were compatible with some tenets of LRT.

Framing their study with ethic of caring (Noddings, 2002) and CLRT (Lucas, Villegas, & Freedson-Gonzales, 2008), Hersi and Watkinson (2012) examined the teaching practices of three (3) high school teachers in a newcomer program through the experiences of immigrant students in the school. The study was conducted in a unique school context with a focused mission of serving the needs of ELs who speak 25 different languages. The authors found that teachers enacted the role of cultural brokers by helping students navigate challenges and providing intangible and tangible support.
They demonstrated an ethic of caring like attending to the needs of their ELs, respecting their perspectives and capitalizing on their motivations in their teaching practices. These practices demonstrated evidence of an LRT tenet related to respecting ELs’ cultural backgrounds and affirming diversity. Furthermore, as the teachers set high expectations for their students, they provided them linguistic support, e.g., cooperative learning strategies, allowing ELs to use their home language to solve math problems, use of word wall and sentence frames and integrated their students’ experiences, knowledge and language into the curriculum.

Two other studies that examined teachers’ implementation of LRT practices demonstrated evidence of a tenet of LRT on valuing linguistic diversity. For instance, Zhang-wu (2017) examined the teaching practices of a fourth-grade, Black female mainstream teacher in relation to CLRT that includes the institutional, personal and instructional dimensions (Richards, Brown, & Forde, 2007). She had 25 students and 70% of them spoke Spanish as their home language. In enacting CLRT, the teacher infused LRT-related elements like language scaffolding and student empowerment. The study also gave light to a classroom-based implementation of language-related knowledge and skills by the teacher who saw herself as a role model and an advocate of linguistically diverse students. Moreover, the teacher showed evidence of enacting this pedagogical skill while establishing good relationships with her ELs through an ethic of caring (Noddings, 1999, 2002) and a desire for empowering her learners. The study’s findings also revealed that contextual factors enabled the teacher to enact LRT. One of these factors is the joint support from the principal, her colleagues and the university research team affiliated with the school.
In the study of Rao and Morales (2015), the authors examined how teachers in two school contexts using different bilingual education program models addressed the linguistic and cultural needs of ELs. The study showed evidence of CLRT practices among teachers in the dual language school that reflected validation and affirmation of linguistic diversity as assets and resources for instruction. Findings also demonstrated the enactment of LRT tenets like creating a safe classroom space where ELs communicated in a language they were comfortable, building ELs’ knowledge on their cultural and language backgrounds, and providing opportunities for ELs to serve as language resources in the classroom. There was also evidence on the use of Spanish where walls and bulletin boards were filled with bilingual materials. Meanwhile, the absence of CLRT practices among teachers at the transitional bilingual school reflected an assimilationist approach to teaching. In this context, teachers viewed and enacted teaching as a technical endeavor that privileges the transmission of knowledge and the teacher views herself/himself as separate from the classroom and community (Ladson-Billings, 2009; Nieto, 2002).

The empirical work reviewed in the preceding section included two studies (Hersi & Watkinson, 2012; Rao & Morales, 2015) that intentionally examined LRT within the context of existing language programs in the US, e.g., newcomer programs, dual-language programs and transitional bilingual education programs. As these contexts are designed specifically for ELs, this highlights that research on LRT in mainstream classrooms is notably scarce. The positive outcomes in studies that were conducted in specific language programs are quite expected and predictable because the teachers have likely been prepared well in their teacher preparation programs, or they may have
a specialization in ESOL or bilingual education. The same results would not be expected in mainstream classrooms as there is evidence that teachers in these classrooms are either under- or un-prepared to work with ELs (Lucas & Villegas, 2010).

Overall, these studies, which were all conducted in urban and sub-urban school settings, illustrate the possibility of implementing LRT in either mainstream classrooms or in classrooms that utilize language program models like newcomer and two-way immersion models. What is missing from these studies, however, is an understanding of LRT in rural, classroom settings and an exploration of the various contextual factors in a rural context that influence teachers’ enactment of LRT in classrooms with ELs. This study attempts to fill this gap by examining EL teachers’ practices in rural, elementary classroom settings that focused on finding evidence of LRT practices. As it examined teachers’ LRT practices, it also attempted to identify factors within the rural context that influenced teachers’ practices.

The evident gap in the academic literature, particularly the dearth of empirical research that examines LRT in rural contexts and the factors inherent within these settings that influence teachers’ enactments of LRT practices warrants the necessity of including a discussion of the literature on place-based education.

**Place-Based Education**

To contextualize the discussion on place-based education, I provide a brief examination of the academic literature about the challenges confronting rural school settings and teachers. An understanding of LRT in rural school settings could be more comprehensive when viewed through the lens of place-based education, that puts an emphasis on the role of rurality in the pedagogical practices of EL teachers in rural schools.
Teaching ELs in Rural American Contexts

Rapid globalization and the growth of new industries in rural and suburban areas of U.S. South and Midwest (Fogle & Moser, 2017) have resulted in the growth of English learners in rural schools, ranging from 135% in North Carolina to 610% in South Carolina (Horsford & Sampson, 2013). In Texas, approximately 59,000 ELs attend rural and small schools (Johnson, Showalter, Klein, & Lester, 2014). However, despite the changing demographics in rural schools that have seen greater multilingualism and multiculturalism (Fogle & Moser, 2017), teachers in these areas have not had sufficient training to target the educational needs of students whose first language is not English (Rodriguez & Manner, 2010).

Teacher un- and under-preparedness is also exacerbated by the persistent crisis in rural education which include attracting, recruiting, and retaining high quality teachers (Arnold, Newman, Gaddy, & Dean, 2005; Azano & Stewart, 2015; Collins, 1999; Gallo & Beckman, 2016) or high turnover and teacher shortage in disadvantaged schools (NCES, 2011). Specifically, ESL teachers are among the hardest to recruit (Dadisman, Gravelle, Farmer, & Petrin, 2010), in part because many states have ESL teacher shortages and ESL positions are often readily available in suburban and urban areas (Walker, 2012). In a recent study in the predominantly rural state of Idaho, 72% of the school districts with ESL teacher vacancies reported that they were hard or very hard to fill (Batt, 2008). Additionally, teachers in rural school districts frequently have limited experience with ELs, making professional development paramount but often expensive, as these opportunities are much more limited in rural areas than in urban centers (Burton, Brown, & Johnson, 2013; Wenger & Dinsmore, 2009).
Lack of community amenities, lower salaries (Arnold et al., 2005), and high poverty rates (Miller, 2012) constitute the common factors that cause additional challenges in the teaching practices of teachers in rural settings. Additionally, the insulated nature and the inherent physical, social and cultural characteristics of rural communities, (Burton & Johnson, 2010) and the realities of rural life (Barley & Brigham, 2008) can result in novice teachers in rural areas experiencing unique and perhaps more profound isolation (Barley, 2009; Fry & Anderson, 2011). Rural teachers have to deal with a lack of teaching resources, as well as out-of-date classrooms and laboratories (Marlow & Cooper, 2008). These circumstances compound the problems that rural teachers face in their teaching practices, let alone rural EL teachers who are either unprepared or underprepared to teach this group of students (Good, Masewicz, & Vogel, 2010; Manner & Rodriguez, 2012; Rodriguez & Manner, 2010).

However, despite the many claims about the nature of rural communities, some researchers think otherwise. For instance, White and Reid (2008) argue that the unique qualities found within rural communities can otherwise be seen as resources for attracting and retaining teachers. For instance, the smaller size of rural schools has its advantages like lower student-to-teacher ratios as compared to larger schools (Center for Public Education, 2018; Wenger & Dinsmore, 2009) and generally closer relationships between teachers and students (Semke & Sheridan, 2012). The strong sense of community within the school as well as support from the local community is interpreted as a positive force for rural schools (Knoblauch & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2008). This sense of community is attributed to the ways that rural communities are linked to their schools in ways not typical of urban areas (McCracken & Miller, 1988). More
specifically, some educators who choose to teach in rural communities do so because they either have personal connections to rural communities or are attracted to the prominent role of the school within the community (Arnold et al., 2005, Arnold, Biscoe, Farmer, Robertson, & Shapley, 2007). Personal relationships and a family atmosphere tend to create a cooperative, accepting, and supportive environment in rural schools (Sheridan, Kunz, Holmes, & Witte, 2017), which is correlated with positive student attitudes, behavior, and achievement (Jeynes, 2003; Stern, 1994).

Because of the inherent characteristics of rural communities, an added layer of expectations from teachers becomes important in their teaching practices. They are expected to adapt to the rural context, to recognize both the challenges and the opportunities inherent within these contexts and to acknowledge that place itself could be a resource in their teaching. For instance, teachers need to fit in with the school and the local community, as they are generally expected to develop familiarity with the places and the people (Eppley, 2015). As some scholars contend, to teach effectively in a rural community, teachers must not only see themselves as individuals who chose to teach in rural communities but should also build relationships with the surrounding community and connecting with students in the classroom (White & Reid, 2008).

Rural teachers have an obligation to awaken the consciousness of their students towards sustainability in rural areas and help them develop and nurture a sense of place (Wenger, Dinsmore, & Villagomez, 2012). Additionally, rural teachers must learn the specific culture not only of their new school, but also of the rural community itself (Eppley, 2009) because effective teaching in rural areas requires that educators recognize and respect this unique sociological dynamic (Burton & Johnson, 2010). The
notion of “place” (Corbett, 2016; White & Reid, 2008) and an understanding of its role and importance in the teaching practices of rural teachers is a “necessary condition in appreciating the circumstances and specificity of rural education” (Green & Reid, 2014, p. 27). In the following section, I elaborate on place-based education as an important theoretical construct used in this study.

**Place-Based Pedagogy**

Central to this study is the notion of context as a dimension through which teachers’ practices with ELs in rural settings is examined. Recently, educational scholars who heeded to the renewed interest in rural education argued that context is something that is “worked” and “worked within” (e.g., Corbett, 2016; Reagan et al., 2019) by teachers who inhabit certain places, or in this case, rural places. In relation, the notion of rurality as a cultural construct that people shape and maintain through the ways they talk about and enact “rural” (Kline & Walker-Gibbs, 2015) has evolved into a much more complicated idea. However, within the context of place-based education, rural has been given emphasis as a spatial, geographical and demographic dimension from which to understand place-based education. This study was contextualized within a rural setting which I theorized as an important factor that shaped teachers’ enactment of LRT in their classrooms. The construct of “rural” was not simply used as a backdrop for examining teachers’ implementation of LRT in their classrooms. It was also conceptualized as “constitutive places that shape identities and possibilities” (Eppley, 2015, p. 70) and are “pedagogical” because places teach educators who, what, and where they are, as well as how they might live their lives (Gruenewald, 2003).

In a broad sense, place-based education foregrounds the local by explicitly promoting the well-being of places (White & Reid, 2008) and by emphasizing ecological
and rural contexts (Gruenewald, 2003). Place-based pedagogies “allow teachers to structure learning opportunities that are framed as meaningful and relevant to their students because they are connected to their own places, to people and to the popular cultures and concerns that engage them” (Comber, Reid, & Nixon, 2007, p. 13). Place-based pedagogies are also more focused on the development of teachers’ awareness towards places (Gruenewald, 2003) beyond the immediate and the local, with a clear and articulated sense of the relationship of the local to the global, and of the social lifeworld to the natural environment (White & Reid, 2008).

Place-based education is important in teacher preparation and teacher development because it provides teachers opportunities to know about a particular rural place and understand its relationship to, and with other places. Knowing the place enables teachers to develop knowledge and sensitivities that empower them as teachers in rural schools (White & Reid, 2008). As teachers come to understand the inherent characteristics and dynamics of rural contexts, they also begin to recognize the challenges, possibilities and opportunities within these settings. A recognition of these elements could then enable them to view rural education through an asset-based perspective that shape their teaching practices. Scholars in the field of rural education describe this as place-based consciousness (e.g. Greenwood, 2013; White & Reid, 2008), an approach to education that is relatively known (Azano & Stewart, 2016), but has sparked renewed interest among researchers of rural teacher education (Biddle & Azano, 2016).

Teachers’ awareness of place could be a key means of expanding their consciousness about the significance of place, or in this study, the rural context, and its
relationship to their teaching practices in the classroom. White & Reid (2008) argue, for instance, that teacher preparation programs can successfully prepare teachers for rural settings if they understand and enact teacher education curriculum with a consciousness of and attention to the concept of place. This argument could also be true for in-service teachers who teach in rural settings. Having a consciousness of the place where they teach or they inhabit helps them build the connection between their classroom and the wider community. Such connections could enable them to plan, design and implement learning experiences that are strongly anchored on notions of belongingness, social and cultural capital (Yosso, 2005), and shared community context (Eppley, 2015) which are considered as unique assets of rural communities.

Related to the notion of place-based education is critical pedagogy of place which provides a critical lens to a place-based education. Gruenewald (2003) conceptualized his theory of critical pedagogy of place by combining Freire’s (1998) critical pedagogy and place-based education, particularly rural education (Haas & Nachtigal, 1998; Theobald, 1997). He asserted that while critical pedagogy of place offers an “agenda of cultural decolonization”, place-based education “leads the way toward ecological reinhabitation” (p. 4). The merging of these two constructs also has significant implications for educational research. In particular, critical pedagogy of place underscores the need for empirical studies to recognize the fundamental value of rural contexts as pedagogical (Gruenewald, 2013; Gruenewald & Smith, 2014) and an understanding of the significance of place in relation to broader contexts (White & Reid, 2008). Moreover, while educational scholars need to examine how they contextualize place in their research, they also need to study how they operationalize research
questions related to teacher education for rural places (Reagan et. al., 2019). Through this, research studies could examine the lived realities of teachers not only within the school context but also in the economic, social and cultural realities of rural communities that potentially impact their instructional decisions and practices (Biddle & Azano, 2016).

Examining critical pedagogy of place within and across the situation of teachers in rural settings entails the need for teachers to reflect upon the context where they teach and how they recognize this space in relation to their teaching practices. The act of reflecting on their situationality (Freire, 1998) which Gruenewald termed as “decolonization and reinhabitation” (p. 4) enables teachers to foster their consciousness towards contextual and geographical conditions that shape them and their actions, specifically their teaching practices with learners from diverse backgrounds. It is important for teachers to reflect upon the rural community where they teach because these spaces are “social constructions filled with ideologies” (p. 5). In other words, the dynamics of rural settings and the diverse cultural backgrounds that ELs bring to their classroom, shape teachers’ classroom practices. This kind of reflection must also be accompanied with “reinhabitation” which entails not only enhancing their teaching of ELs but also improving the social and ecological conditions of rural areas which they inhabit.

The use of place-based education theory as a lens to examine teachers’ LRT practices with ELs in rural classroom settings entails constructs like rural, place, and rural education and their significant impact on student learning and teacher practice. By working with the notion of place-based education in this study, my conceptual
understanding of LRT as a teaching framework points to the different factors that are intrinsically linked to rural contexts. In other words, place-based education introduces a new perspective for viewing LRT in rural settings, particularly in terms of how rural context could shape the ways that teachers teach ELs in linguistically responsive ways. In working with ELs and all students in rural settings, teachers who enact place-based education alongside LRT could expand their repertoires of practice that are strongly anchored on distinctly rural phenomenon (Newman, 2004) that are available to children in rural schools (Page, 2006).

**Conceptual Framework: LRT**

Lucas, Villegas and Freedson-González (2008) argued that little attention was being paid to the linguistic needs of ELs in K-12 classrooms either in teacher preparation or in teacher professional development. They suggested a framework called linguistically responsive teaching (LRT) as a guide in designing a curricula for preservice teacher preparation and professional development needs of in-service teachers who teach ELs. The LRT framework outlines the orientations, knowledge and skills needed by teachers to be linguistically responsive in teaching ELs. Yet, this teaching framework has not been extensively empirically examined (Tandon et al., 2017; Turkan et al., 2014). Educational researchers also reported that there is a dearth of empirical studies examining teachers’ linguistically responsive teaching practices in rural classroom settings (e.g. Fogle & Moser, 2017; Good, Masewicz, & Vogel, 2010; Manner & Rodriguez, 2012).

This study aimed to fill these gaps in the academic literature, given that K-12 classrooms in rural US continue to experience growth in the number of English learners (Hansen-Thomas & Grosso Richins, 2015; Good et al., 2010; Manner & Rodriguez,
The growth in EL population entails the necessity for teachers to provide ELs linguistically responsive instruction to address their language and literacy needs. It is also imperative that empirical studies examine the various factors within rural contexts that shape teachers’ instruction of ELs.

The LRT framework (Lucas & Villegas, 2010) was the main theory used to examine the teaching practices of EL teachers in rural, elementary classroom settings. Lucas and Villegas (2010) outlined seven key principles that describe the orientations, knowledge and skills of linguistically responsive teachers. These principles were outlined in Table 2-1. Lucas and Villegas (2010) contend that the seven elements of LRT are inter-related and cannot be considered distinct or separate from each other. They further argue that there are overlaps across the orientation and the knowledge and skills that teachers need in order to be designated as linguistically responsive. For instance, some principles of second language learning are highly related to the fifth LRT tenet about teachers’ skills in identifying and understanding language demands inherent in classroom tasks. Additionally, Lucas and Villegas (2010) insist that teachers could enact the seventh tenet of LRT – scaffolding instruction – if they know and understand their ELs’ language backgrounds, language proficiencies, and learning needs.

In their most recent study, Tandon et al. (2017) suggested that a combination of orientations and knowledge and skills may be vital to the development of PSTs’ and novice teachers’ LRT skills because of anxieties and fears that they feel towards teaching multilingual learners. In other words, scholars and educational researchers emphasize that an expansive LRT orientation and a broad range of language-related knowledge and skills enable teachers to enact LRT. However, these wide-ranging
principles appear to be daunting and overwhelming, and so LRT tends to be viewed as ambitious or aspirational and navigational. Aspirational because teachers may not be able to possess all the orientations or to enact all the knowledge and skills. However, they could instead work towards implementing some LRT principles as a stepping-stone to realizing all the elements. Navigational because teachers could use their knowledge of the LRT principles to guide them in designing and implementing effective instruction for ELs that are responsive to their language and literacy needs.

As discussed previously, the limited empirical work that examined teachers’ LRT practices found that teachers enacted LRT mostly across knowing and applying second language learning principles and scaffolding instruction. There was limited evidence of the enactment of the three linguistically responsive orientations – sociolinguistic consciousness, valuing linguistic diversity, and an inclination to advocate for ELs – which, according to Lucas and Villegas (2010), are necessary for the development of LRT knowledge and skills.

In this study, I subscribe to the notion that the orientations of linguistically responsive teachers overlap with language-related knowledge and skills. Previously, I cited some specific overlapping ideas within the seven central principles of the LRT framework. By integrating the various elements of LRT into classroom teaching, teachers can develop the orientations and skills necessary to meet the learning needs of ELs. However, I have a contention with the idea of Lucas and Villegas (2010) that teachers are not able to apply the LRT knowledge and skills if they do not possess the three orientations which they view as essential. Besides, they argue that the framework is not intended as a formula to be followed but as a guide for teachers and teacher
educators. In other words, it could be very challenging to find evidence of teachers enacting all the seven tenets in their classroom practices, especially in rural classrooms which continually face varied structural and pedagogical challenges such as lack of resources and lack of PD opportunities (Fry & Anderson, 2011; Walker, 2012). The main intention of this study was to find evidence of LRT that were implemented in the teaching practices of rural EL teachers. It did not intend to assess whether the teachers were completely implementing all the tenets that Lucas and Villegas (2010) provide.

Thus, I conceptualized LRT in this study not as a prescribed procedure that needs to be completely followed nor a set of steps that must be wholly enacted before teachers are designated as linguistically responsive. Instead, LRT could be enacted through a combination of the framework’s central tenets reflected in teachers’ practices towards providing effective instruction for ELs. However, teachers’ limited abilities to implement all the LRT tenets might not guarantee a deep-level enactment of the teaching framework.

I also contend that LRT could be examined differently in rural school settings, given the nature and characteristics of rural contexts that impact teachers’ practices. Specifically, the inherent dynamics within a rural setting, e.g. shared community context (Eppley, 2015); teachers’ relationships with multilingual families (Coady, 2019); place as pedagogical (Gruenewald, 2003), could affect teachers’ instructional decisions and practices with ELs. Other contextual factors like school culture, policies, and values (Cuayahuitl & Carranza, 2015; Richards et al., 2007), school and district leaders (Hersi & Watkinson, 2012; Zhang-wu, 2017), and collaborations between the school and the community (Walker, 2012) also affect rural EL teachers’ instructional practices. Thus, I
also conceptualized LRT in this study in relation to the notion of rurality, particularly on how the factors inherent within rural contexts shape rural teachers' instruction of ELs.

A synthesis of the aforementioned conceptualization of LRT in this study is provided in Figure 2-1.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tenets of linguistically responsive teaching</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A. Orientations</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sociolinguistic consciousness</td>
<td>Understanding that language, culture, and identity are interconnected; Knowledge of sociopolitical dimensions of language use and instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value for linguistic diversity</td>
<td>Respect for and interest in ELs’ home language; Belief that linguistic diversity is worthy of cultivating and acting upon this belief by validating and affirming ELs’ home language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocating for ELs</td>
<td>Taking action to improve ELs’ access to social and political capital and opportunities; Promoting educational equity for ELs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B. Pedagogical knowledge and skills</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning about ELs’ backgrounds</td>
<td>Connecting ELs’ prior knowledge and experiences to new material; Understanding ELs’ linguistic needs to inform instruction that meet these needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying language demands in the classroom</td>
<td>Explicitly identifying and teaching language tasks needed for classroom activities;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowing and applying principles of second language learning</td>
<td>Promoting language, content and skill development for ELs; Understanding the fundamental difference between conversational language proficiency and academic language proficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Providing ELs access to comprehensible input that is beyond their current level of competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedagogical knowledge and skills</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging social interactions in the classroom to develop ELs’ social and conversational language proficiency;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knowing that strong skills in L1 or home language could facilitate L2 learning;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creating a safe and welcoming classroom climate for ELs;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Explicitly attending to linguistic form and function in teaching ELs</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Scaffolding instruction for ELs</td>
<td>Extra-linguistic support, e.g., visual tools, graphic organizers, illustrations and videos;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modifying difficult texts and oral language to make them more comprehensible, e.g., speaking slowly or using gestures to accompany oral speech;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Giving clear, explicit instructions;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Designing purposeful activities and cooperative learning that allow ELs to interact with their peers;</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Helping reduce anxiety that hampers learning for ELs;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Encouraging the use of students’ home languages</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2-1. Conceptual framework of the study
CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

Overview

This study investigated the teaching practices of teachers of English Learner (EL) students to examine linguistically responsive teaching in rural elementary classroom settings. The study also explored the factors within rural contexts that appeared to shape teachers’ instruction of ELs. Two research questions guided the study: (1) What linguistically responsive teaching practices do rural teachers of English learners implement in classrooms? and (2) How does rurality shape the instruction of English learners? The study used qualitative research methods of data collection and analysis (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) and an interpretive paradigm as “a set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013, p. 26). In this chapter, I describe the process of data collection and analysis, and the epistemological framework for the study. In the following chapter, I provide findings from the study.

Epistemological Framework

With the goal of examining Linguistically Responsive Teaching (LRT), this study adopted a constructivist epistemological perspective (Crotty, 1998). A constructivist epistemology underscores the uniqueness of the experiences that each individual has and suggests that each person’s ways of making sense of such experiences is valid and worthy of respect (Crotty, 1998). Since each individual has a distinct way of experiencing the world and constructing meanings based on their own frames of reference (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013) and from their own vantage points (Hatch, 2002), there are likely to be multiple ways in which teachers make sense of LRT. As Johnson
(1995) argues, if the researcher’s aim is to “engage in research that probes for deeper understanding rather than examining surface features” (p. 4), constructivism may facilitate that aim. In other words, a constructivist perspective suggests that each person perceives the world differently and actively creates their own meanings from events around them through interaction with their surroundings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013; Raskin, 2002; Young & Collin, 2004). This study also recognized that the social construction of reality is influenced by certain cultural lenses and worldviews that people have been acculturated into through experience (Crotty, 1998; Raskin, 2002).

**Theoretical Framework**

Congruent with the study’s epistemological perspective, this study utilized a constructivist-interpretive paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013) that guided the interpretation and the meaning-making process of teachers’ instructional practices with ELs. This paradigm emphasizes the centrality of meaning which should be given an important space in an interpretive study. As Stake (1995) asserts, “the ethnographic ethos of interpretive study seeking out emic meanings by the people within the case, is strong” (p. 240) (emphasis in the original). Following this paradigm, in this study, I privileged participants’ viewpoints and the meanings that they constructed.

**Methodology**

This dissertation was an exploratory study that used qualitative research methods. As discussed previously, the decision to use a constructivist-interpretive paradigm was consistent with the study’s goal of examining the teaching practices of EL teachers in rural school settings through the lens of LRT. More importantly, the study used an exploratory approach because few research studies have been conducted on LRT, and the existing academic literature is just beginning to emerge. The dearth of
empirical studies examining LRT in actual classroom contexts (Coady et al., 2019, forthcoming; Hersi & Watkinso, 2012; Lucas, de Oliveira, & Villegas, 2014) underscores that LRT is under-studied and not clearly articulated through empirical research.

**Research Context**

**Participant Selection**

I intentionally selected the study participants through purposeful, convenient sampling (Patton, 2002). To recruit participants for the study, I identified two teachers who had reputations as strong teachers with the likelihood of implementing LRT with EL students. The two teachers taught in two different classroom settings in a grade 3-5 school in the same school district. These contexts are discussed in the succeeding sections. To identify study participants, I used a set of criteria based on information obtained from credible sources who worked with teachers in a professional development project in Flag County during the time of the study. The criteria for participant selection included the following:

- Participated in a professional development program in Flag County
- Had a newcomer EL in her classroom; newcomer ELs are students who arrived in the US within the school year 2017-2018 or within the current school year, 2018-2019
- Had at least 4 years of teaching ELs
- Held an ESOL endorsement from the State, or has earned points towards a state ESOL endorsement
- Taught in grades K-5 in the school district of Flag County in two different grade levels
- Was willing to be observed and participate in the study through interviews
- Held a bachelors or Master’s degree at the time of the study
The two teachers in the study were participants in a professional development (PD) program facilitated by a large, public university in the southeastern US. The project was a federally-funded teacher education program that provided extensive teacher education to teachers and educators who worked in rural settings with EL students. The aim of the PD program was to build teacher-leaders (Palmer, 2018) in the context of low-incidence settings of EL students (Bérube, 2000). At the time of this study, the PD program was in year three of its five-year implementation, and participating educators had completed the first phase of coursework (six graduate-level courses) related to teaching EL students and leading peers.

Having worked to a certain extent with the participants is noteworthy. I had personally and professionally interacted with them via the PD program. These interactions provided me with knowledge about their potential to enact LRT because of my role as a research assistant in the PD project in which the teachers were participating. The goals of this study were aligned to the larger objectives and were related to the broader goals of the PD program. Nevertheless, the research questions in this dissertation were independent of and different from the overarching objectives of the PD program that involved teachers in Flag County.

Before the data collection, I obtained IRB approval. I sent out a letter to the Flag County School Board to obtain consent in conducting the study (see Appendix B) and a letter to the school principal to obtain permission from the office to conduct the study (see Appendix C). For the recruitment of the participants, I sent a letter through email to the two teachers whom I initially identified as my study participants (see Appendix D).
When I obtained IRB approval and the two teachers’ consented to participate in the study, I began the data collection process.

**The School Context**

The study was conducted in a rural school district in the southeastern US at Verona Elementary School (pseudonym) (VES). The school was geographically situated in the rural town of Verona, and considered a fringe rural setting, which is defined as “a rural territory that is less than or equal to 5 miles from an urbanized area, as well as rural territory that is less than or equal to 5 miles from an urban cluster” (NCES, 2015, n.p.). The proximity of a “fringe” rural area to either an urbanized area or an urban cluster is closer than those of “distant” and “remote” rural areas. As such, there is potential access to educational resources, economic needs like goods and commodities, and health services for people living in this area. Proximity to more urbanized areas frequently provides additional educational resources to teachers (Lavallée, 2018).

VES was under the jurisdiction of Flag County Public Schools, a public school district in the southeast US. It had a total of 5,435 students in grades pre-K to 12 with a student-teacher ratio of 16:1. The Flag County school district consisted of four elementary schools, four middle high schools, one K-12 school, one K-8 school, and two charter schools. In the school year 2017-2018, the EL enrollment rate in Flag County was 3.5%, which was the lowest recorded rate in the prior 5-year period. In terms of enrollment by race and ethnicity, 12.1% of the students were Hispanic, 12.1% were Black, other ethnicities or races were represented as Asians, American Indians and Pacific Islanders, and 70.1% were White.
Schools in Flag County implemented an ‘inclusive’ classroom approach to education in which EL students were placed in inclusive classroom settings. In inclusive classrooms, special needs students spent most if not all their time in the general education classroom with their non-special needs counterparts. However, schools in Flag County also undertook instruction for EL students that was focused on the development of English language proficiency in the areas of listening, speaking, reading and writing. To realize this goal, ELs in Flag County participated in a computer-assisted learning program called Rosetta Stone that was available in all Flag County schools. Additionally, schools with fifteen (15) or more ELs were provided with an ESOL paraprofessional whose functions include: providing translation services to ELs and during parent conferences, serving as school-to-home liaisons for EL parents, and serving as resources to assist classroom teachers of ELs. In VES, 13.2% of the total student population comes from a Latino background and 62.9% of the total student population is classified as economically disadvantaged (NCES, 2016). ELs comprised 8.1% of the total school population. The school district is classified as “Title 1”, which means that financial assistance is provided through state educational agencies (SEAs) to local educational agencies (LEAs) and public schools with high numbers or percentages of children from low income backgrounds. This financial assistance helps ensure that all children meet challenging state academic content and student academic achievement standards (NCES, 2016). In other words, most students in the schools in Flag County come from low socioeconomic status backgrounds.

The study took place in two different classroom contexts: an inclusive mainstream classroom and a self-contained 4th grade ESL classroom, both located in
the same school. The rationale behind this decision was premised on research-based ideas that these two types of classrooms have different approaches to teaching ELs, given their differing characteristics. However, one common characteristic of these two differing contexts is that both classrooms have newcomer ELs who came from countries outside of the US.

The first context was representative of a mainstream, inclusive classroom as described earlier, in which ELs are taught alongside their native English-speaking peers in general education classrooms. In the north central area of the southeastern US state where this study was conducted, mainstream classrooms have low numbers of ELs (Coady, Harper & de Jong, 2016) and have been referred to as low-incidence settings (Bérube, 2000; Haworth, 2009). These types of classroom settings are distinctive in more rural and suburban areas across many states in the US (Coady et al., 2016).

In contrast, the second context, the self-contained ESL classroom, is atypical for this school. In this classroom ELs were provided with specialized intervention and support via a full-time bilingual paraprofessional and a highly prepared teacher who had previously been recognized as “teacher of the year” in a state-wide competition. In particular, a self-contained ESL classroom used a variety of classroom configurations where learners conducted academic work with other ESL students and were mainstreamed for non-academic subjects and non-instructional parts of the day. In addition, the teacher in the self-contained ESL classroom had to “level instruction”. This means that the teacher had to plan small-group and whole-group lessons given the varying levels of ELs’ English language proficiency.
The self-contained ESL classroom was designed and implemented based on two observations related to the achievement scores of ELs and how they were treated in the classrooms. First, the student data achievement of EL students in VES revealed that in the last five consecutive years, EL students who reached fourth grade had stagnant scores and zero growth on i-Ready, a differentiated online program that allows students to work on their skill level in both reading and math, and in a state-wide assessment in English language arts, math and end-of-course subjects like algebra 1 and geometry that measure students’ achievements of the state’s education standards. Secondly, based on observations among teachers and administrators, ELs in VES usually sit at the back of the room, separating themselves from their mainstream peers.

**Data Collection**

The collection of data was determined by the research questions, the theoretical and epistemological perspectives, and the participant sample (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I collected data from observations, interviews, and text documents. I relied on the use of ethnographic methods of data collection for this study, which included classroom observations and semi-structured interviews as the primary sources of data, and text documents as secondary sources of data. Data from classroom observations included the ELL-modified Danielson Rubric (Coady et al., 2019, forthcoming) and field notes. Table 3-1 provides the details on the data collection strategies, the activities within each strategy and the documentation process for each strategy in relation to the research questions of this study. Appendix E provides a more detailed itinerary of data collection that included my tasks as the researcher, the instruments that I used to collect data and the kind of data that were collected.
This section of the chapter offers a more detailed description of the data collection methods used in this study. The first part of this section provides a description of the procedures used to collect the primary sources of data: classroom observations, post-observation interviews, and two semi-structured interviews before and after data collection. The second part describes the procedures used to obtain the secondary source of data: textual documents.

**Observations**

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), there are multiple reasons why researchers conduct participant observation as a data collection technique. One reason is to lead researchers in understanding the context through a firsthand encounter with the phenomenon. Another reason is that participant observation enables researchers to encounter incidents and behaviors that can be used as reference points for subsequent interviews. I employed an ethnographic approach to data collection through classroom observations. These observations provided me the opportunity to examine LRT in the context of teachers’ instructional practices, and to obtain first-hand information that enabled me to describe their teaching practices.

I conducted classroom observations twice a week for over six (6) weeks and followed two (2) sets of schedules (See Appendix F) used alternately, e.g., Set 1 was used in Weeks 1, 3 and 5, while Set 2 was used in Weeks 2, 4 and 6. I used two sets of schedules primarily to ensure that each teacher was observed in different days of each week. Additionally, observations were not conducted during Fridays because these were the times when little instruction was conducted by the teachers. However, there were two instances when I observed teachers on a Friday because two holidays in November and January fell on a Monday.
I observed Farrah for a total of 12 school days in her classes that ran from 8:10 am to 9:55 am, her first math and science block and from 10:00 am to 11:45 am, her second math and science block. Farrah and her partner teacher, Sharon, switched classes from Monday to Friday. This meant that Farrah taught her homeroom class during the first block and then she instructed Sharon’s homeroom class during the second block. At 11:45 am., the students in both sections went to the cafeteria for lunch, followed by recess. In the afternoon, her homeroom class goes back to her classroom for their special area and intervention. For this school year, Farrah was assigned to teach only science and math to two sections of students, and these were the classes that I observed for the study that resulted in a total of 43 hours of observation time.

While I also observed Chanda for a total of twelve (12) school days, I spent more time observing in her classroom from 7:50 to 10:45 am and from 12:05 to 2:10 pm, except for two (2) days when I started at 9:00 am because the students were assessed during those days from 7:50 to 8:50 am. I had the opportunity to spend additional hours to observe Chanda because in her self-contained ESL classroom, she taught all subjects to her class: ELA/reading, intervention, social studies, math and science. The six-week observation that I conducted in Chanda’s ESOL self-contained classroom resulted in a total of 60 hours of observation time.

I conducted classroom observations in two phases. During the first phase of observations, I observed the teachers using the ELL-modified Danielson rubric (see Appendix G) for the first 30 minutes. The ELL-modified Danielson rubric, which was validated by scholars and researchers working under a PD program administered by a large, public university was used in the study because it was designed as a tool to
identify observable teacher practices while teaching or directly interacting with English learners in inclusive mainstream classrooms (Coady, et al., 2019, forthcoming). The intended use of the validated rubric to assess teachers’ practices with ELs was related to some of the goals of this study. In other words, some of the instructional practices of LRT like affirming ELs’ linguistic and cultural backgrounds, establishing a safe and inclusive classroom and using teaching strategies for language support were the same as those in the rubric. The rubric had only two of the four domains in the Danielson Framework for Teaching (The Danielson Group, 2012), namely, classroom environment as domain 2 and instruction as domain 3. Each domain was comprised of five components, and some of these components, (e.g., “2a: creating an environment of respect and rapport”; “2b: establishing a culture of learning”; “3a: communicating with students”), reflected some of the tenets of LRT (Lucas & Villegas, 2011). Each teacher was rated using the scale of 0 to 3, with 0 corresponding to “unsatisfactory”, 1 to “developing”, 2 to “effective” and 3 to “highly effective”. Each level across the five components of the two domains contained examples that further guided rating the teachers during the first phase of the observation. However, because the rubric itself was not able to capture in-depth information that described the teachers’ practices in their enactment of LRT, I also employed ethnographic methods of classroom observation to obtain detailed notes about the teachers’ instructional practices during the second phase of the classroom observations.

During the second phase of classroom observations, I generated open field notes from the observations that I noted in relation to teachers’ practices that were evident of LRT. As Merriam and Tisdell (2016) argue, researchers have to plan ahead about what
aspects of the specific context on which to focus. Guided by the LRT framework, I focused my observations on the teachers and their: (a) instructional practices that were reflective of the orientations and pedagogical expertise of linguistically responsive teachers (e.g., scaffolding learning for ELs, explicit attention to language functions needed for learning; recognizing ELs’ L1; assessment with differentiation); (b) use of language(s) (e.g., explicit attention to language functions needed for learning; integrating language with content, and teachers’ differentiated instruction along ELs’ home language and English proficiency levels); (c) relationships with students (e.g., knowing and properly articulating ELs’ names, establishing a welcoming classroom where ELs feel safe, and managing student behavior); (d) nonverbal communication cues (e.g., facial expressions and eye movements, physical setting of the classroom and physical cues).

In conducting the observations in the two classroom contexts, I maintained a very minimal level of participation to ensure that my presence was not intrusive to the teacher and the students. This meant that despite my presence as a researcher of which the students were aware, I did not actively participate in class activities. However, with the total number of observation hours that I spent in the two classrooms, some students initiated conversations with me. In a few instances, some students came to the desk on one corner of the classroom where I usually sat and observed and they asked, "Hello, Mr. Lopez, how are you?" or "Hi Mr. Mark, what do you have for lunch?" Whenever these things happened, I conversed with the students briefly and then I instructed them to go back to their desks. I assured them at some points that we can have other conversations during their break but not during class hours. Occasionally,
some of the students also came to my table and asked for assistance in their class work in ELA, Science or Math. However, I asked Chanda’s consent before helping them.

When writing field notes on my laptop computer, I paid particular attention to the different aspects of the teachers' instructional practices with ELs that were discussed earlier. Whenever I wrote very significant observations and practices, I highlighted these notes. If I deemed that these teaching practices needed clarification or validation, I wrote questions and used them during post observation interviews to clarify my observations. For instance, I was impressed by Chanda's use of the phrase "expectations of excellence" to introduce the Science lesson on measuring mass and volume. I highlighted this and wrote a question beside it: "Can you elaborate why you used this phrase when you introduced the lesson in Science earlier?"

**Interviews**

Interviews differ from other forms of conversation by having a specific structure and purpose (Tracy, 2013) that involves an interchange of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009). DeMarrais (2004) defines a research interview as “a process in which the researcher and participant engage in a conversation focused on questions related to a research study” (p. 55). As researchers, we cannot always observe other people’s feelings and thoughts and the ways that they interpret certain experiences or find out “what is in and on someone else’s mind” (Patton, 2015, p. 426). Because of these limitations, I conducted interviews in order to obtain information about the lived experiences of and viewpoints from the respondents’ perspectives known as *verstehen* or understanding (Tracy, 2013). In obtaining these special types of information (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), I was
able to generate sufficient and rich data that requires comprehensive analysis of the phenomenon of interest.

The nature of the research questions for this study required information-rich data that could yield deep descriptions of teachers’ instructional practices with ELs that reflected LRT and in-depth explorations of contextual factors that shaped teachers’ classroom practices in rural contexts. With this in mind, I used interviews as the second mode of primary data collection for this study. Each teacher was interviewed a total of eight times in their respective classrooms. One of the interviews was conducted prior to the commencement of the classroom observations. The goals of the first interview were to strengthen my rapport with them and to know them better as individuals and as professionals. Each initial interview lasted approximately for 35 minutes. During the initial interview, I discussed the objectives of the study with each teacher, their roles in the study and what they could expect in terms of data collection. The initial interview also served as an opportunity for me to gather background information from each teacher which included their personal life stories, their K-12 and college educational experiences and their professional experiences in working with ELs. The interview questions can be found in Appendix H.

The other six interviews were conducted each week after two post-observations. Patton (2002) insists that researchers undergo a post-interview review to make the most of this “critical time of reflection and elaboration,” recording pertinent contextual details and emerging analytical insights (p. 384). The post-observation interviews were conducted to verify information obtained from classroom observations and were particularly focused on the immediate and actual details of experience (Seidman, 2006),
the teachers’ actual teaching practices. I conducted one post-observation interview per week or after every two classroom observations because I did not want to take too much of each teacher’s time. For instance, Chanda had to attend planning meetings or emergency meetings after her class and these happened during the times when I was in her classroom to observe. Thus she requested that our post-observation interviews be scheduled at the next classroom observation. In Farrah’s case, her “lunch duties” took place between 11:45 am to 1:05 pm, and these also happened during the times when I was there to observe her. Thus, she requested to be interviewed during the next classroom observation. In each post-observation interview, I used clarificatory questions that were obtained from a combination of two classroom observations for each particular week. Post-observation interviews lasted approximately 12-15 minutes.

Each post-observation interview, which I also called “debriefing”, was conducted to clarify each teacher’s instructional practices, class activities, and episodic events that I considered significant to the research questions. In doing so, I asked each teacher to provide her rationale on conducting a specific class activity or asked her to elaborate more on why she decided to implement a particular teaching strategy. I used the information that I gathered from the observation as a basis for developing follow-up or clarifying questions to better understand each teacher’s instructional practices and decisions. The clarifications were important in ensuring that the description of the teachers’ practices presented in the study were credible and well-supported with details. For instance, when I observed that Chanda re-arranged the students’ seating arrangement, I included a debriefing question, "I observed that you changed the seating arrangement of the class. I remember that you mentioned this plan to me before. What
was the rationale behind this decision?” By asking this question, I was able to obtain additional information about this particular practice, particularly the rationale behind re-arranging her ELs’ seat assignments. In the case of Farrah, I noted that she employed two teaching strategies when she reviewed the students’ math homework. I wrote two debriefing questions, “In today’s review of their math homework, I liked how you went through details in working on the word problems, and how you went through the process step by step. You also did a good job in contextualizing the word problems. Why did you do this? How is it helpful for your English learners?” and used them during the post-observation interview. By doing this, I was able to understand more deeply her implementation of those teaching strategies in relation to EL learning.

In addition, I also asked reflective questions during the post-observation interviews. For example, I asked each teacher, “For this week, what instructional practices do you think are your strengths in terms of teaching English learners?” or “If you were to reflect on your teaching this week, which would you improve on and which would you retain?” Moreover, I also asked reflective questions about certain practices that I noted were significant. For instance, I observed that Farrah sometimes referred to the FSA or i-Ready when she instructed students especially during math lessons. I was interested in understanding why she sometimes referred to these tests so I wrote a debrief question, “I noted that you referred to the FSA when you taught the lesson on multiplying whole numbers and fractions. Why did you do this? Do you consider standards tests as influential to your teaching practices?” Some of sample questions used for the post-observation interviews are provided in Appendix I.
The eighth interview was conducted during the last day of each classroom observation. The first part of this interview was used as the post-observation interview for the last week of observations which lasted approximately 7-10 minutes. The second part was used as the final interview for each teacher which lasted approximately 20-25 minutes. One important question asked of the teachers during this interview was about the significant changes in their teaching practices with ELs in the past six weeks. Another important question asked during the final interview related to the factors outside their classrooms which shaped their teaching practices with ELs and the factors that they believe impeded effective teaching of ELs. I also used the last interview session as an opportunity to thank each teacher and inform them to expect some emails from me within a week or two purposely to clarify some information and to do member-checking with them. I discussed the process of member-checking (Tracy, 2013) that I employed in the data analysis section. The questions used for the final interview are provided in Appendix J.

Over the course of six interviews, each teacher was interviewed for a total of 72-90 minutes. When combined with the initial and the final interviews, Farrah was interviewed for two hours and 14 minutes of total interview time while Chanda was interviewed for almost three hours.

All the interviews were audio-recorded and were transcribed verbatim. I personally transcribed the first interview with each teacher. However, I used an online program called TranscribeMe! to transcribe the seven other interviews for each teacher. I uploaded 14 audio files to the website of the online program and paid the corresponding cost. After 24 hours, I received 14 Word Documents that contained the
encoded transcriptions of the interview files. I read through all the documents and detected some errors. To correct these errors, I played each audio file while I read through each document and made the necessary corrections. I employed this data verification procedure in all 14 Word Documents. The next steps related to data organization are discussed in the following section.

**Text Documents**

Qualitative researchers often use texts as supplementary sources of data (Charmaz, 2006). Charmaz writes about the importance of archival data,

> Ethnographers rely most heavily on their field notes but make use of newsletters, records, and reports when they can obtain them. Comparisons between field notes and written documents can spark insights about the relative congruence - or lack of it - between words and deeds (p. 38).

Charmaz (2006) also classifies archival data into “extant texts” and “elicited text”. According to Charmaz, extant texts are those that were created for specific purposes but could possibly help researchers address their research questions. Their values lie in their relative availability and seeming objectivity. Also, extant texts enable field workers to “couple data from the document’s content with an understanding of how the documents are used by participants” (Tracy, 2013, p. 83). In this study, I collected six lesson plans from each teacher which correspond to the six weeks that I conducted the classroom observations. The two teachers each sent me a link which provided me access to their lesson plans which were saved in the online platform, “Google Docs”. I accessed each link and downloaded the six lesson plans of each teacher and saved them in my database as word documents.

Additionally, I also collected samples of their work in the previous online courses that they completed with the PD program in which they participated. Prior to collecting
these documents, I sought permission from the project’s principal investigator and from the participants to access their final course materials, such as their proposed inquiry projects in EDE 6325 (Guided Inquiry), their lesson plans in TSL 6373 (ESOL Methods) and their final products in the course EDG 6207 (Transforming the Curriculum). The instructors of the three courses provided me with the digital versions of the materials, which served as secondary source of data for the study. Although these text documents were written for purposes outside the scope of this study, these written materials reflected each teacher’s beliefs and perceptions about teaching Els. It is noteworthy to mention that I analyzed these documents along with the primary data obtained through classroom observations and interviews. I also used these text documents to provide additional evidence to support my findings from the classroom observations and interviews. Table 3-2 provides a summary of data collected.

Data Analysis

This section of the chapter outlines in further detail the approaches that I used to analyze the data collected for the study. I provide a basic summary of the steps that were taken to complete the process of data analysis.

Data Organization

Before commencing the data analysis for this study, I organized my data sets on the computer. First, I created a folder for my first case, Farrah, and another folder for my second case, Chanda. Second, I created three sub-folders for the three data sets under each case folder which were labeled: 1) Observation field notes; 2) Interview transcripts; and 3) Text documents. Then, I created a new word file that contained all my field notes from the first day to the last day of the observations and I saved this under the Observation field notes folder. I created a sub-folder for the ELL-modified Danielson
rubric that were generated from the classroom observations. I followed the same process for the other two data sets, the interview transcripts and the text documents using Word document files. In doing this, it was easier for me to know where each data set was located and the details associated with it (Bazeley, 2013), thus allowing for easier access. This systematic process of managing and preparing the data sets also made it easier to deal with the large amount of data I obtained.

**Data Analysis Steps**

After organizing my data sets, I began the data analysis process for the first research question that examined the linguistically responsive teaching practices that rural teachers of English learners implemented in their classrooms. I utilized a deductive method of data analysis (Crabtree & Miller, 1999) based on the LRT framework used in the study. However, there were few instances when a priori codes could not capture the nuances of the teachers’ practices. Because of this, I employed an inductive approach and created new descriptive codes using keywords from the data. Combining both approaches enhanced the study’s rigor by keeping the conceptual framework in mind while allowing for the possibility of the emergence of new themes (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). For instance, codes about parent involvement emerged from the interview data. However, this recurring code could not be categorized in any of the tenets of the LRT framework. I created a new code related to this frequently emerging finding.

In the initial phase of this process, I read my field notes and interview transcripts twice, without marking anything nor highlighting important ideas. This mode of reading allowed me to recollect my thoughts about what I wrote during the observations and the questions and responses that I used and obtained from the interviews. I also read the
textual documents that I collected twice. During the third reading, I employed open coding (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) or first cycle coding (Saldaña, 2011) for instances of LRT implementation across all data sources. I marked incidents that stood out for me based on my knowledge of the theoretical framework that I used in the study. It is important to note that during the open coding process, I also wrote analytic memos (Clarke, 2005; Saldaña, 2009) which served as explanations of the open codes that I generated. These memos were written in the “comment function” of Microsoft word. A sample of written analytic memos is provided in Appendix K.

For instance, I highlighted sections in the field notes that indicated the recognition of students’ home language in the classroom, e.g., “encouraged ELs to respond in Spanish or Chinese”, or “students used their home language in conversations” or “teacher asked students Spanish equivalent of science terms”. I highlighted these ideas because based on the LRT framework, linguistically responsive teachers respect and affirm ELs’ home language by using them as resources for learning in the classroom.

During the next step, I employed focused coding. I further coded the open codes that were obtained through open coding with a set of a priori codes that were derived from the LRT framework as shown in Table 2-1. To do this step in the process of data, I re-read the data line-by-line to identify instances of LRT elements in the participants’ practices and perceptions about their teaching practices with ELs in their classrooms. The code names corresponded to the set of ideas that Lucas and Villegas (2011) provided under each tenet or principle of LRT. For instance, the open codes that I cited previously, “encouraged ELs to respond in Spanish or Chinese”, or “students used their home language in conversations” or “teacher asked students Spanish equivalent of
science terms” were coded during the focused coding as encouraging the use of ELs’ L1 or HL (Lucas & Villegas, 2011). This approach to coding helped me segment the data for further understanding and it helped me also describe their conceptual properties.

After focused coding, I employed theoretical coding (Saldaña, 2013) to synthesize the focused codes into overarching themes to support the study’s findings. I used seven theoretical codes to synthesize the emergent findings, with code names corresponding to the seven tenets or principles of LRT. These tenets included: (a) sociolinguistic consciousness; (b) value for linguistic diversity; (c) inclination to advocate for ELs; (d) learning about ELs’ linguistic and cultural backgrounds; (e) analyzing language demands of classroom tasks; (f) knowing and applying the principles of second language learning; (g) scaffolding instruction. I went back to the data sets of each teacher and I employed these codes. I read through the data sets and marked the places where there was evidence related to one finding. I repeated this process to highlight sections which had evidence of another finding. I copied and pasted examples of evidence into new documents for alongside the findings that emerged from the study.

To answer the second research question, I employed a similar procedure, starting from open coding to theoretical coding, but I did not use pre-existing categories during the various phases of coding. However, I maintained a level of awareness towards rurality as a construct during the coding process. After obtaining open codes from across all the data sets, I grouped related open codes into focused codes. I re-analyzed the focused codes and compared them again with the data. I utilized this iterative approach until I obtained theoretical codes.
Trustworthiness

After providing a detailed discussion of the data collection and analysis process employed in the study, I also provide a description of the steps that were undertaken to assure the trustworthiness of this research project. Based on the literature on qualitative research (e.g., Glesne, 2011; Hatch, 2002), this section of this chapter outlines the strategies that were undertaken to ensure the study’s trustworthiness.

First, I described my role in the research study in terms of my personal history as an English learner myself and as an active participant in the PD program through which I worked closely with teachers in Flag County. I also described my positionality in terms of data analysis, particularly on the possibility that the data analysis process was influenced by my preconceived notions about CRP and CLRT. As Merriam and Tisdell (2016) stated, it is important for researchers to clarify their biases from the beginning of the study so that readers can understand their positions and assumptions in the study.

To ascertain the study’s credibility, I employed two strategies within data collection to build a level of trust within the research: data triangulation and a prolonged period of time in the teachers’ classrooms during data collection. Credibility was built into the research through the use of more than one method to collect data. The current study used classroom observations and interviews as data collection strategies. Text documents such as teachers’ weekly lesson plans and learning philosophy essays, were also used to supplement information collected from observations and interviews. Another strategy used to ensure the credibility of the study was the prolonged period of time that the researcher spent in the research site. As has been described in the data collection section of this chapter, one teacher was observed for approximately 40 hours and was interviewed for a total amount of two hours and 14 minutes while the other
teacher was observed for approximately 60 hours and was interviewed for a total amount of approximately two hours and 56 minutes.

In terms of data analysis, I employed “member checking” described in the earlier section, and peer review and debriefing to establish trustworthiness in the research process. Member-check or respondent validation is employed by researchers to enable the study participants to confirm and validate their experiences through the researchers’ interpretation of these accounts (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I employed member-check in two distinct ways. First, observation field notes and analytic memos were shared with the teachers during post-observation interviews. As an example, before I asked each teacher clarifying questions about the occurrences that I noted, I first recounted to them what I observed and asked if I was correct or not. For instance, I asked one of the teachers during post-observation interview # 2, “Okay, I observed that you cited some real life examples yesterday when you were talking about the human senses, about the ears, the cochlear implants if you remember, because you wanted to make the concepts clearer to the students. Is that right? So why do you do this? Is it helpful for ELs?”

Second, I employed member check when I asked the two teachers to confirm and validate the findings that emerged from the study. To do this, I personally provided each teacher a summary of the findings that I obtained from their respective data. The summary included the main findings that emerged from the study and I included an exemplar for each finding which I extracted from the field notes or the interview transcripts. I asked them to review the document and provided them ample time to read the findings. The next day, I went to VES and conducted the member check in their respective classrooms. I asked them if they had any questions or comments about the
summary of findings that I provided them. Both teachers confirmed that the findings were accurate.

I also used the strategy of peer review and debriefing by speaking with two of my fellow PhD students and colleagues who had also worked with teachers in Flag County. We discussed the data analysis process that I had undertaken and whether the procedures that I used made sense to them. We also talked about the emergent findings of the study, and I asked them to provide their insights since they were also very familiar with the two teachers in the study. During the data analysis process, I met with my advisor and committee chair for multiple times to seek her insights about the coding process and the initial findings. I also met with two other professors to ask for their insights about the coding analysis process that I employed and to seek their opinions about how to deal with the emerging findings of the study.

Finally, I employed a strategy that involved reporting in detail the processes that I had undertaken in conducting the study or in what Lincoln and Guba (1985) refer to as “audit trail.” In a qualitative study, an audit trail “describes in detail how data is collected, how categories were derived and how decisions were made throughout the research process” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 253). To implement this strategy, I kept a research journal or I wrote memos about the small and big steps within the process of undertaking the study. Additionally, I documented my reflections, emerging questions and even the simplest decisions that I made. Among the primary sections that were documented include what Shenton (2004) suggests about ways that I implemented the research design (e.g., how I planned and how I executed the plan via strategic implementation); the operational details of data gathering (e.g., a complete
documentation of the interviews to be undertaken); and a reflective appraisal of the project (e.g., written reflections on the process of inquiry that was undertaken).

**Role of the Researcher**

In executing the work of this dissertation, it was important to describe and reflect upon my role as the researcher, an undertaking that was helpful in ascertaining the credibility of the study. On a personal level, I am a lifelong English language learner because I speak languages other than English. Also, being an immigrant in the US, I continually engage in experiences that require me to assimilate myself to the dominant group. I had my own struggles throughout my educational journey in K-12 and higher education in my home country that required me to learn English, both as a social language and as an academic language. These experiences provided the very foundation of my perceptual lenses in interpreting ways that ELs negotiated with the demands of mainstream classrooms and with their White, monolingual teachers. In other words, I am coming into this study as a colored, multilingual, non-dominant member of the US mainstream society attempting to understand the instructional practices of mainstream teachers in meeting the needs of ELs. While these characteristics are totally different from the characteristics of the participants in this study, they are quite similar to the characteristics of their English learners. These circumstances significantly influenced the ways that I perceived the central phenomena that was investigated in the study.

On a professional level, there are many layers of experiences that have motivated me to conduct the study. At the outset, I am a teacher educator in a country where most students in K-12 classrooms are English as a second language (ESL) learners, thus I always have a critical consciousness towards the ways that we prepare
future ESL teachers in the Philippines. Specifically, my critical consciousness is largely influenced by my thinking that Filipino students who learn content through a bilingual mode of instruction – that is, the use of both Filipino and English as primary mediums of instruction from K to 12 and college – should have effective teachers who could provide them linguistically responsive teaching practices for content comprehension and language development. Additionally, while Filipino students in rural, poor regions of the Philippines continually experience low quality of education, there is a need for the preparation of teachers who could provide effective instruction for ESL students in spite of the pedagogical challenges that confront rural teachers.

As a research assistant of the PD program that provided professional development opportunities for teachers in Flag County, I witnessed firsthand how teachers in this context demonstrated teaching practices that were either supportive or not supportive of the academic needs of ELs. As part of the team that validated an ELL-modified Danielson rubric (Danielson Group, 2012) I had the opportunity to observe some teachers in their classrooms, and based on these experiences, I observed that most of them did not demonstrate effective teaching practices with ELs. However, I also learned from my participation as a research assistant of the PD project that there were few teachers who could potentially enact teaching practices that were reflective of LRT.

I also reflected upon my positionality in this study, particularly in terms of data analysis which was possibly influenced by my existing mindset on LRT. In 2016, I collaborated with my former academic advisor on a research project on culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) for preservice teachers. In this project, I had many opportunities to read and annotate peer-reviewed journal articles and discuss culturally
relevant pedagogy with my research team. These experiences enriched my thinking about CRP which served as the foundational theory for LRT – the main framework that I used in the study.

**Limitations**

One of the limitations of this study related to my position as an immigrant in the US, which situated me as either non-American and non-Hispanic or non-Latino. The cultural differences between me and my participants created a situation where my interpretations could be inevitably influenced by my frame of reference as a Filipino. Although I might have brought a neutral perspective by virtue of my nationality, my own cultural background could have potentially influenced the ways I constructed meanings from the experiences of White American teachers. However, I tried to minimize these biases by adhering to the research design and by continually reflecting upon the biases that I brought to the study. My written reflections that were recorded in my journals allowed me to reduce issues related to subjectivity in the research study.

**Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, I outlined the epistemological, theoretical and the methodological frameworks that I used to conduct this research study. I described the context of the study and provided details about the participants and the methods that I used to collect and analyze data. Finally, I described how trustworthiness was established in the study, my role as the researcher and the study’s limitations.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Data Collection Strategies</th>
<th>Activities of Data Collection</th>
<th>Documentation process</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What linguistically responsive teaching practices do rural teachers of English learners implement in classrooms?</td>
<td>Classroom observation</td>
<td>Observed classes of 2 teachers in 2 phases: the first phase was allotted for the rubric; the second phase for ethnographic observation to write down field notes</td>
<td>Phase 1: Used the ELL-modified Danielson rubric (see Appendix G)</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Post-observation interviews</td>
<td>Interviewed the two teachers once a week or after 2 classroom observations which lasted between 15-20 minutes each</td>
<td>Phase 2: Wrote down field notes including descriptive notes, reflective memos/observer commentary (Merriam &amp; Tisdell, 2016) and direct quotations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Semi-structured and unstructured interviews</td>
<td>Used an audio-recorder to document post-observation interviews</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>How does rurality shape the instruction of English learners</td>
<td>Classroom observation</td>
<td>Observed classes of 2 teachers in 2 phases: the first phase was allotted for the rubric; the second phase for ethnographic observation to write down field notes</td>
<td>Phase 1: Used the ELL-modified Danielson rubric (see Appendix G)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post observation interviews</td>
<td>Interviewed the two teachers once a week or after 2 classroom observations</td>
<td>Phase 2: Wrote down field notes including descriptive notes, reflective memos/observer commentary (Merriam &amp; Tisdell, 2016) and direct quotations</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Semi-structured and unstructured interviews</td>
<td>Interviewed each teacher once before the start of data collection and once after the data collection</td>
<td>Used an audio-recorder to document the post observation interviews</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 3-2. Summary of data collected

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data sets</th>
<th>Farrah</th>
<th>Chanda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom observations</td>
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<td><strong>Duration (in days &amp; hours)</strong></td>
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<td>60 hours</td>
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<td><strong>Field notes</strong></td>
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<td><strong>ELL modified Danielson rubric observation protocol</strong></td>
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<td>10 observation protocols</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Number of interviews</strong></td>
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<td>1 initial interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6 post-observation interviews</td>
<td>6 post-observation interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 final interview</td>
<td>1 final interview</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Duration</strong></td>
<td>2 hrs. 14 minutes total</td>
<td>2 hrs. 56 minutes total</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Interview transcripts</strong></td>
<td>39 pages (single-spaced)</td>
<td>46 pages (single-spaced)</td>
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<td>Textual documents</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Weekly lesson plan (LP)</strong></td>
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<td>6 LPs</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Modified ESOL lesson plan</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Learning philosophy</strong></td>
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<td>1 essay</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>statement</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><em><em>UbD</em> unit plan (UP)</em>*</td>
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<td>1 UP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coaching project</strong></td>
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<td>1 written product</td>
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</table>

*Understanding by Design*
CHAPTER 4
FINDINGS FOR RESEARCH QUESTION 1

Overview

This study was framed with the LRT framework (Lucas & Villegas, 2011) to examine the instructional practices of EL teachers in rural, elementary classrooms and to explore how rurality shaped their instruction of ELs. The first research question was, “What linguistically responsive teaching practices do rural teachers of English learners implement in classrooms? The second research question was, “How does rurality shape their instruction of English learners?”

In this chapter, I present the findings for the first research question. The findings, discussed in the following section, are organized by a priori themes from the LRT framework. Lucas and Villegas (2011) outlined three orientations (Tenets 1-3) and four types of language-related knowledge and skills of linguistically responsive teachers (Tenets 4-7). These characteristics were discussed in Chapter 2. The findings in the following section are presented according to each focal teacher, Farrah and Chanda, which will be followed by a cross-case analysis. Table 4-1 provides a summary of the study’s findings in relation to the themes obtained from the LRT framework (Lucas & Villegas, 2010).

Farrah’s LRT Practices

Farrah implemented linguistically responsive teaching practices across three central tenets of LRT which include: (a) learning about ELs’ backgrounds to inform instruction; (b) knowing and applying principles of second language learning; and (c) scaffolding instruction (Lucas & Villegas, 2011). I elaborate on the thematic findings of
the study, and in each theme, I examine how Farrah’s teaching practices demonstrated linguistically responsive teaching.

**Learning about ELs’ Linguistic and Academic Backgrounds**

Learning about ELs’ background emerged from the findings with Farrah. She demonstrated an understanding of the variation in her ELs’ language and academic backgrounds that informed her instruction. However, findings also reveal that Farrah possessed a surface-level knowledge of her ELs based on information that she obtained from the school’s guidance counselor or the ESOL aide. In addition, Farrah learned about her ELs’ backgrounds through her spontaneous interactions with her colleagues and parents outside of the school.

Farrah’s teaching practices that reflected LRT were evident in her connections between ELs’ backgrounds and prior knowledge to new learning. These connections facilitated activating ELs’ background knowledge and previous experiences that helped them better understand concepts that were taught. These connections also facilitated comprehensible input, because the ELs understood new information based on their prior knowledge and experiences. These teaching strategies—activating EL background and prior learning—reflected the fourth tenet of LRT. During the discussion about weather in science, for instance, she drew from her students’ cultural backgrounds. To help ELs understand the concept of weather, particularly the amount of rainfall in Florida during summer, she used an example about watermelon farms in the town of Verona. She was aware that most ELs’ parents work in these farms, and she believed that using this example would help ELs’ connect to the new concept because they were familiar with the work of their parents in these farms. Farrah elaborated about making connections between ELs’ backgrounds and new learning:
I just want to make as many connections as possible and activate their background knowledge and previous experiences for conceptual understanding. In Science, when we talked about hail and storms, I related it to the life of farmers in Verona because most of our ELs have parents who work in watermelon farms here. And connecting hail and storm to stories in the farm during summer when watermelons break during hailstorms is just something that many of them are familiar with. (Post-observation interview # 6)

While this situation may also demonstrate culturally responsive teaching, it overlaps with LRT because activating ELs’ backgrounds or situations that involve their parents and families could potentially facilitate meaningful connections in their thinking. Their familiarity with the situation could stimulate their interest and become more engaged with learning.

**Knowing and Applying the Principles of Second Language Learning**

Linguistically responsive teachers understand the process of learning a second language and can apply this to teaching ELs. Farrah demonstrated knowledge of the principles of L2 learning and applied these in her teaching practices that reflected LRT. These teaching practices were captured with one theme obtained from a priori themes from the LRT framework – minimizing ELs’ anxiety by creating a safe and welcoming classroom.

Teachers who are linguistically responsive need to create classroom environments that minimize the anxiety that ELs feel in mainstream classrooms. Farrah demonstrated evidence of building her classroom where ELs exhibited less or no anxiety that engaged them in learning. From the outset, Farrah manifested caring for and empathy towards her ELs that was anchored on her knowledge of them. Her caring stance towards her ELs was also motivated by her awareness of the deficit in their schooling and personal experiences and their limited proficiencies. For instance, she
showed caring towards Ariana, one of her newcomer ELs from Guatemala, who was detained in New York for two months prior to her coming to VES. Farrah gave her special attention during her first few weeks in her classroom. She also provided her support to cope with her new environment and attended to her social and academic needs. Farrah said, “she’s still very much kind of sheltering herself and protecting herself from everything that was going on, still feeling everything out” (Post-Observation Interview # 2). Farrah further explained that Ariana was still very conscious of her actions in the classroom, but she was gradually coping with the help of her EL peers. However, Farrah’s skill in effectively building personal relationships with her ELs minimized Ariana’s anxiety. This was evident in her interactions with her EL and mainstream peers in the classroom and her engagement in class activities.

Farrah’s teaching practices allowed her to establish her classroom as a comfortable space where ELs developed caring relationships with each other and with their mainstream peers. Alfredo and Rita, Farrah’s ELs who were proficient in Spanish and English, automatically helped Eldon and Ariana by translating the word problems from English to Spanish. They also explained the instructions in the math worksheet in Spanish to their newcomer EL classmates who seemed to have understood the instructions for the activity as evident from their nods of approval. During the third post-observation interview, Farrah elaborated on this situation and she said, “It just happens automatically among them… like Alfredo would provide help to Eldon even without me instructing them to do so, and I don’t mind using Alfredo and Rita because they’re higher and more proficient in L1 and L2” (Post-observation Interview # 2).
Linguistic responsiveness was evident in these teaching practices because Farrah’s ability to minimize her ELs’ anxiety as language learners facilitates interactions where ELs’ use language. Whenever they interacted with their EL peers, they used their L1, and whenever they interacted with their mainstream peers, they used English.

The foregoing observations in Farrah’s classroom were related to the second domain of the ELL-modified Danielson rubric which is “classroom environment”, particularly in component 2a – “creating an environment of respect and rapport. In comparing those observations with the examples provided in the ELL-modified Danielson rubric, there was consistency between the field notes and the ratings in component 2a in the rubric. Farrah obtained a rating of ‘2’, described as “effective”, in this component because she fostered an environment where ELs felt like they were respected. Farrah’s personal relationship with her ELs built on an ethic of caring and empathy that helped minimize their anxiety as language learners in a mainstream classroom reflected linguistically responsive teaching.

**Scaffolding Instruction**

The final element of the LRT framework is instructional scaffolding as a form of support that help ELs carry out learning tasks in the classrooms that are beyond their current abilities. Farrah implemented instructional scaffolding that demonstrated linguistically responsive teaching practices. Her teaching strategies supported language development, content comprehension, and facilitated ELs’ learning experiences in the classroom. This finding is captured via two a priori LRT themes, which include supplementing or modifying difficult written texts to make content accessible and supplementing or modifying oral language to reduce language difficulty.
Supplementing or modifying difficult texts

Teaching math and science to ELs is complicated by the use of technical and specialized academic vocabulary that are likely to be challenging to ELs. Because of this, teachers need to provide language support for ELs to enable them to comprehend difficult text. To enable ELs to understand specialized vocabulary in math and science, Farrah supplemented her teaching strategies with learning materials that facilitated vocabulary enrichment. One of the strategies that Farrah employed to scaffold academic vocabulary development among ELs was her extensive use of journals in math and science. In her two classes, all students had their own personal journals. Farrah relied heavily on this learning aid and she emphasized that she was very strict about her students having their own journals. For her, she believed that ELs were provided with language support through the information that they wrote in their journals like the definitions of certain science or math concepts. It also facilitated their comprehension, mastery and retention of concepts and academic vocabulary in math and science. In language acquisition and content comprehension, this kind of instructional scaffolding supported second language learning principles.

Across her six weekly lesson plans, Farrah consistently used this strategy in her students’ daily activities. She also expected that their journals in the two subjects that she taught them were complete. When she employed this teaching strategy, she modeled the procedure of journaling to her students on her own journal which was projected on the smart board. For example, in science, she expected her students that their lessons about the different human body systems and the organs of each system were documented in their journals. Specifically, she instructed students to write the names of the different organs of the digestive system, for instance, in the left column of
each page and for them to write the definition of each term on the right column of the page. This teaching strategy scaffolded learning among her ELs through an emphasis on mastery of important vocabulary in math and science and a focus on important concepts that help ELs comprehend the lesson. Consistently, her use of study guides like journals were also reflected in her weekly lesson plans. For instance, she wrote, “Add stomach, small intestine, large intestine, liver, and pancreas to journal” (Weekly lesson plan, Week of 12/10/2018). Whenever Farrah asked students to write down the science terms in their journals, she also advised her ELs to use their chrome books to find Spanish translations of words that they found where challenging or incomprehensible. A visual example of a journal that she modeled for students is provided in Figure 4-1.

Farrah justified her extensive use of journals in science and math as a helpful teaching strategy for ELs because it provides them a concrete material that they could go back to whenever they forget concepts and definitions previously taught to them. ELs were also able to take their journals home with them and they used these in completing their homework, especially when their parents could not help them. Farrah’s journal-based teaching strategies also demonstrated her explicit attention to language use in math and science, particularly on ELs’ development of academic vocabulary that are necessary in understanding concepts.

**Supplementing or modifying oral language**

Farrah also employed teaching strategies that helped ELs understand input that were provided in the form of instructions for class activities, new information or previously discussed concepts. Her teaching strategies that reflected LRT through instructional scaffolding included the following: (a) using detailed explanation of the
procedures for solving math problems; (b) slowing down her pace in talking whenever she gave instructions for class activities; (c) repeating key words and emphasizing key concepts by writing them on the board or instructing students to underline them on their textbooks or journals; (d) explaining difficult words and ideas; (e) giving sufficient examples; and (f) using hand-motions and gestures to accompany her oral discourse.

In one example, Farrah employed detailed explanations and provided additional examples when she discussed division of fractions. According to her, she based this decision on her students’ formative test results which showed that they were still less proficient in dividing fractions. She elaborated during the sixth post observation interview that she implemented a detailed explanation as a technique because she found it very appropriate for ELs who were struggling with both the language and content, particularly for complex word problems in Math that required them skills in dividing fractions. She further elaborated:

As far as going at a slower pace, I think this is a skill that in my mind is simple yet helpful to ELs; it’s just an easy skill that just takes a little bit of extra time, but it helps put concepts across clearly. (Post-observation interview # 6)

Overall, Farrah demonstrated very limited evidence of LRT in her teaching practices. Her extensive use of explicit instruction was accompanied with some ESOL techniques that could be considered just good teaching. Yet, her efforts towards providing ELs with effective instruction shaped by her own teaching beliefs reflected a concern for her ELs. Farrah was extra-caring to them and she also held high expectations of them as learners in a mainstream classroom.
Chanda’s LRT Practices

The teaching practices of Chanda reflected the orientations and language-related knowledge and skills that constitute the LRT framework. Her implementation of these orientations, knowledge and skills enabled her to enact linguistically responsive teaching practices with ELs in her rural classroom setting. Chanda’s teaching practices demonstrated evidence across five tenets, which include: (a) valuing linguistic diversity; (b) inclination to advocates for ELs; (c) learning about ELs’ linguistic and academic backgrounds; (d) knowing and applying principles of second language learning; and (e) scaffolding instruction (Lucas & Villegas, 2011). Although she demonstrated evidence of identifying language demands inherent in classroom tasks, there was limited evidence of this in her classroom. In the following section, I will elaborate on the thematic findings of the study and examine how Chanda’s teaching practices led to her implementation of LRT.

Valuing Linguistic Diversity

Chanda’s LRT practices were evident in her enactment of the second central tenet of the LRT framework – valuing linguistic diversity. Teachers who value language diversity in the classroom possess the following orientations: (a) positive attitudes towards bilingualism; (b) respect for and interest in ELs’ home languages and encouraging its use in the classroom. I used these *a priori* themes to capture the evidence in Chanda’s teaching practices that reflected LRT.

Positive attitudes towards bilingualism

In her teaching practices, Chanda’s positive attitudes towards bilingualism were evident. Her affirming stance towards her ELs’ development of bilingualism supports the LRT principle of valuing linguistic diversity. Across the 12 classroom observations, there
were ten instances where Chanda used cognates in English and Spanish to teach specialized vocabulary terms in science and academic terms across content areas. In using these cognates, she provided ELs many opportunities to utilize their L1 and L2 to access content through an understanding of academic terms in both languages. She provided English-Spanish cognates across the content areas. For example, she used cognates in science, e.g., aquaplane/aquaplano, biology/biología, biography/biografía; in social studies, e.g., ceremony/ceremonia, colony/colonia, history/historia, geography/geografía; and in math, e.g., addition/adición, subtraction/sustracción, multiplication/multiplicación, division/división. Chanda’s use of cognates reflected LRT principles that emphasize the importance of integrating language development and content comprehension through instruction in both L1 and L2.

Apart from using cognates, Chanda also provided her ELs with bilingual learning resources across content areas. In social studies, Chanda provided her students with learning materials and graphic organizers used for formative assessment in both English and Spanish. In reading, she provided the newcomer ELs and ESE students with Spanish versions of all the books that they read in class. In science, whenever Chanda utilized handouts, she provided ELs with a bilingual version so that as she read the content in English, she instructed the newcomer ELs and the ESE students to follow along in Spanish using their handouts. A sample of a formative assessment written in Spanish is provided in Figure 4-2.

In addition, there were 10 times across the 12 classroom observations when Chanda and Ms. Reyes, the classroom ESOL paraprofessional, explained linguistically complex directions for class activities using English and Spanish. Chanda gave
instructions in English and asked Ms. Reyes to translate these instructions and articulate them to the class in Spanish. Chanda’s stance towards developing bilingualism among her ELs was further evident in her classroom’s physical organization where she maintained bilingual anchor charts and bulletin boards. A bilingual poster was also posted on the wall beside the main door of the classroom. The poster, provided in Figure 4-3, evinced a message of welcome, care and respect. Her teaching strategies and classroom organization that exhibited her disposition towards bilingualism validated and affirmed ELs’ culture and language. ELs feel valued and respected when they see evidence of learning activities or classroom artifacts that used their home language. In addition, Chanda’s attitude towards bilingualism reflected her respect for linguistic diversity. A sample of her bilingual anchor chart in science is provided in Figure 4-4.

In the ELL-modified Danielson rubric, the component “2e”, described as “organizing physical space”, is highly related to Chanda’s LRT practices that affirmed linguistic diversity and bilingualism. Chanda obtained a rating of ‘3’ in eight out of the ten components related to organizing physical space by affirming their cultural and linguistic backgrounds. These practices demonstrated her consistent and effective organization of physical space in her classroom which affected EL learning. Her implementation of a consciously planned seating arrangement for her ELs based on their mid-year test scores, accounts of their behaviors, and their comfort levels with their peers also supported an effective physical classroom space. The ELL-modified Danielson rubric is provided in Appendix G.
Respect for and interest in ELs’ home languages

In Chanda’s classroom, respect for ELs’ home languages was evident through her teaching practices that encouraged ELs to use them in various learning situations. Across the classroom observations, there were eighteen times that Chanda employed her ELs’ home language as a resource for learning in the classroom. Chanda’s teaching practices that leveraged her ELs’ home language as learning resources were consistently evident whenever she asked students to provide the Spanish translation of English words across the content areas. During math drills, for instance, Chanda allowed her newcomer ELs to give their answers or to explain the procedures they used to solve problems in Spanish or Chinese. Across the observations, there were 10 times when Chanda allowed Joshua to respond in Chinese because she was aware that his English was below grade level but that he had strong math concepts. For instance, whenever Chanda called on Joshua to give his answer to a math problem, he responded in Chinese. Chanda followed it up and said, “In English?”, then Joshua gave his answer in English, or in case he did not know how to say it in English, he encouraged him to write his answer on his small white board and showed it to her. During a different occasion, Chanda also encouraged Janela to say her answer in Spanish so that her newcomer EL classmates could understand her. Chanda’s consistent interest in her ELs’ home language supported her stance towards cultivating bilingualism in the classroom that reflected the LRT tenet about valuing linguistic diversity.

During the final interview, Chanda elaborated on her teaching practice of using ELs’ home language as a learning resource in her classroom:
Opportunities are provided for students to respond in their first language and translation is provided to help them feel included in instruction. I also invite students to provide Spanish/Chinese words for important concepts and/or read words that I have provided that relate to English words that are being studied. I allow them to teach me how to pronounce words in their first language so they see that I, too, make mistakes while learning their first language, so it is okay if they make mistakes, as well. (Interview # 2)

Chanda’s interest in her ELs’ home language, particularly Spanish, supported her enactment of LRT by valuing linguistic diversity in the classroom. More importantly, it also provided her the opportunity to see herself as a learner in the classroom, an attitude that characterizes a linguistically responsive teacher. She demonstrated vulnerability as an EL teacher by being willing to learn from her students, particularly learning their home language. In doing this, Chanda also minimized ELs’ anxiety towards learning a second language by situating herself in a position of a learner and her ELs as experts or language resources. These language practices support another tenet of LRT – knowing and applying principles of second language learning. She believed that openness made the students feel that they have something to teach her through what she called a “reciprocal relationship” and not a “top-down relationship”. She added, “I allow them to teach me how to pronounce words in their first language so they see that I, too, make mistakes while learning their first language, so it is okay if they make mistakes, as well” (Post-observation interview # 3)

On eight occasions across the 12 observations, Chanda admitted to her students that whenever she attempted to speak in Spanish, it took her some level of effort to pronounce words correctly. She also told her students that Ms. Reyes, the ESOL para-professional, constantly taught her how to spell words in Spanish using phonics because some Spanish words do not use English phonics. The most common
occurrence in the classroom about learning from her students occurred over the course of twelve observations. Whenever she asked her ELs to provide her the Spanish translation of English words that they used across content areas, Chanda admitted that she learned from them. When the students were not able to respond because they did not know the accurate term, Ms. Reyes helped to provide the Spanish translation for the class. More importantly, every time Chanda explicitly disclosed to her students about learning new Spanish words from them, her students gave her a thumbs-up sign. These “reciprocal relationships” that she had with her ELs disrupted the traditional teacher-student relationship surrounding language learning in the classroom. Chanda elaborated on these practices that affirmed the value of her ELs’ home language in the classroom:

I sometimes play dumb, and ask the students because I have found that they are less apprehensive in trying their English if they see me try my Spanish... so if they can teach me a new word in Spanish, then when I work with them and I'm teaching them English words and they pronounce it incorrectly, there’s not that stigma because I pronounced it incorrectly five minutes and you had to correct me, so I... I'm actually using that to my advantage, so that the students feel comfortable in trying out their English and shockingly three of the newcomers are already saying Math answers in English. (Post-observation interview # 2)

Chanda recognized her ELs as experts in their home language. In her daily teaching practices, Chanda always used the expression “In español?” whenever she asked ELs to provide her translations of words in Spanish. She elaborated:

I also depend a lot on the students. I will put up, if there is an English word that seems to stop them, and I was like, “What is this word in español?”, and let them see if they can come up with it, and sometimes they do and sometimes they look to my ESOL aide... with Spanish, it has always a bit more challenging because I even have one student here who wants to encourage, she’s an encourager, so when I say it correctly, she puts a little thumbs up sign as a way of congratulating me for saying the word correctly...But Chinese, I’m still working on it because I have trouble reproducing the sounds so I usually ask Joshua to help me.(Interview # 1)
Chanda’s teaching practices supported LRT practices by providing ELs the opportunities to affirm the value of their home language in the classroom. As part of her daily practice, Chanda worked with a small group of ESE students and low proficient ELs on reading texts in Spanish and English. During one occasion, Chanda muttered, “Jemima, you are teaching me Spanish just like I’m teaching you English.” Jemima responded to her with a smile on her face and said, “You are welcome, Miss Chanda”, and they both did a high-five. Meanwhile, other ELs in the group displayed facial expressions showing their desire to have that same opportunity to teach Chanda Spanish words. Across the observations, there were seven times when ELs came to my table during breaks or after recess to teach me Spanish words. These circumstances provide evidence of ELs’ awareness that their home language is respected in the classroom and saw themselves as language resources and experts.

**Inclination to Advocate for ELs**

The third central tenet of LRT is the inclination to advocate for ELs. Lucas & Villegas (2010) argue that advocacy entails “challenging the fairness of assessment practices that require ELs with little time studying English to take standardized tests” (p. 304). de Oliveira & Athanases (2001) contend that an ‘inclination to advocate’ for ELs could be demonstrated by adapting instructional materials and teaching practices to meet ELs’ learning needs (de Oliveira & Athanases, 2007). Drawing on these a priori themes, I draw on these themes to capture evidence of LRT in Chanda’s teaching practices.

**Adapting instructional materials and assessment for ELs’ needs**

Chanda demonstrated linguistic responsiveness in her teaching practices by her initiatives in creating teaching materials and modifying assessment materials that
accommodated ELs’ varying levels of proficiency. She modified assessment materials for her newcomer ELs and ESE students who have below grade level reading proficiency in English. She demonstrated a critical awareness towards the oppressive standardized assessments of ELs and acted upon this by modifying the materials to fit their proficiency levels. She elaborated, “… so it’s constantly recreating or inventing the wheel because I can’t find it anywhere else created at the level that I need for these students.” (Post-observation Interview # 3)

She consistently implemented an ongoing assessment of student learning by embedding formative assessment within instruction to provide her an opportunity to evaluate if learning was taking place among her ELs. She wrote in her learning philosophy essay, “When learners do not respond as planned, different strategies can be used or more guided practice can be provided, depending on the learner’s needs.” She admitted that she constantly relied on student feedback to help guide her instruction and tried to pick materials that engage, excite, and help her ELs to think critically and grow. She asserted, “I am very reflective about student progress and how it relates to my chosen teaching strategies, and I am willing to adjust instruction ‘in the moment’ and throughout the unit to better meet my students’ needs” (Interview # 1). Differentiated and ongoing assessment of student learning that reflected LRT were recorded over five times across the 12 classroom observations of Chanda. For instance, her use of modified assessment was evident during the second day of classroom observations.

After the vocabulary enrichment activity in ELA, Chanda proceeded to teach reading. She provided students with a text in English to read and expected them to
respond to a set of questions to assess their text comprehension. The newcomer ELs and the ESE students were provided a set of reading comprehension assessments that was different from those of their more proficient peers. Additionally, Chanda also provided them with a set of words in English and Spanish that looked like a simplified glossary. During a quick conversation with her during the activity, Chanda explained, “Yes, I wrote the test myself for them to adjust the readability because in the past few months that they were here, I saw that they struggled with text readability.” Chanda modified the post-lesson assessment for newcomer ELs and ESE students based on her observations and previous assessment results that revealed how they struggled with reading English texts. She elaborated on providing accommodations for them:

Oh. Yes, the accommodations that I’m using, I just thought that because the newcomer ELs and the ESE students have really shown that they are below grade level in reading, I thought of providing English-Spanish glossary of keywords. And we’re looking at adjusting the readability because most of the tests that we’re writing for the grade level are in the lexile levels and that we could do a lower fourth-grade lexile level and not be modifying, just accommodating. Because ESOL, I’m only supposed to accommodate unless they’re ahhhmmm you know, can modify, after that is accommodate. So that’s the other piece [laughter], taking the existing test and changing the structure, looking at vocabulary usage to get the readability down to a 550 Lexile rather than an 8 or 9 hundred lexile. And that will accommodate them in their readability but same questions. Questions won’t change. (Post-observation interview # 3)

Providing newcomer ELs and ESE students with accommodations through modified assessment demonstrated Chanda’s implementation of linguistically responsive teaching practices. She further elaborated:

So this was a one-hour conversation yesterday with her (the school principal). Now I’m like …"Okay, I can go ahead but they want a sample." Okay, well that will be tonight’s work, we can come up with a sample. And I still have to write the original fourth grade test tonight because the standard that we’re on, there is no existing test in our item bank. So they asked if I would go ahead and write a test that everyone was choosing and then from there come up with the level version and then the modified
version. So it will be fun. I’m excited that that will help us move more in the direction of focusing on English acquisition and not just always focusing on content. Because I feel like they are being bombarded with content that so far above their levels that it’s a frustrating thing. (Post-observation interview # 3)

Challenging state-mandated assessment practices

In many instances during classroom observations, Chanda implemented differentiated assessment practices for her ELs. During the eighth observation day, the students worked on a writing assessment in social studies. Based on the Focus Standards in her weekly lesson plan, the students were expected to identify the effects of Spanish rule in Florida and to describe the cause and effects of European colonization of the Native American tribes in Florida. Cognizant of the reading and writing proficiency levels in English of her newcomer ELs and the low performing ELs, Chanda modified the instrument that she used to assess them. With the help of Ms. Reyes, the ESOL paraprofessional in her classroom, Chanda wrote a Spanish version of the writing assessment. In that version, she used a T-chart graphic organizer that contained lesser words to make the readability of the instrument more suited for the ELs for whom the assessment was intended. So instead of writing down the effects of Spanish colonization, she provided those details in Spanish placed in paper cut-outs. The students matched these with their corresponding causes provided in the first column, which were also written in Spanish. In short, Chanda ensured that tests for the newcomer ELs were translated into their home languages, and these assessments were available in her classroom, despite Florida not offering native language assessments for teachers of ELs. She found whatever ways she needed to in order to ensure that children are learning and have equitable access to learning in school even if it violates or challenges a state policy.
Chanda’s linguistic responsiveness in terms of challenging assessment practices was also evident in her formative assessment of EL student learning. In the reading subject which was tested in FSA, Chanda observed that her fourth grade ELs did not have a voice in their written essays because it was curtailed by the demands of the standardized test. In this type of test, students are required only to write based on inference of and evidence from the text. The lesson on that particular day was identifying and explaining the structural elements of a poem, e.g., verse, rhyme, meter, alliteration, stanza, etc. To assess her students, Chanda deviated from the usual assessment format and she devised a more contextualized assessment activity. Specifically, she used a poem-writing activity that required lesser rigor but were more interesting to her ELs which help them develop their writing skills and express their voice in writing. She hoped that her ELs would improve in their quality of writing when they found something that interested them and start to put a little of their own voice into their writing. Through this, she can scaffold them to writing by teaching them all the variables that they need to successfully write an essay.

During the assessment, students were more engaged and enthusiastic, which was evident when Carla and Tanya moved to my desk to write their couplets. During cooperative activities like this, Chanda allowed her students to move away from their desks and find other spots in the classroom where they could work comfortably. At first, Carla and Tanya grappled with their writing. When they agreed about a topic that they wanted to write about, they started to list down rhyming English words related to their topic. They successfully wrote a couplet that rhymed. They grew more excited when they wrote a rhyming couplet. They repeated the strategy that they used until they wrote
four more rhyming couplets. They told me, “We just can’t stop writing, this is so exciting.”

With these assessment practices, there was a consistency between the field notes and Chanda’s ratings in component ‘3d’ of the ELL-modified Danielson rubric. In particular, these observations related to Chanda’s use of modified assessment were related with “Using Assessment in Instruction” and the corresponding examples provided in the rubric. Farrah obtained a rating of ‘2’ described as “effective”, in this component because the modified assessments were adapted for newcomer ELs’ L1 and L2 language proficiency levels. In addition, the use of their L1 in the assessment scaffolded their learning of academic content in social studies.

**Learning about ELs’ Linguistic and Academic Backgrounds**

Chanda’s LRT practices that demonstrated valuing linguistic diversity, applying second language learning principles and scaffolding instruction overlap with this tenet. In other words, some of the teaching practices of Chanda were anchored on her knowledge of her ELs that informed her instruction and close relationships with them. Additionally, she exerted efforts to continuously help her understand the lives and experiences of ELs outside the classroom, which include: (a) using differentiated formative assessments, (b) creating opportunities for open discussions and purposeful interactions in the classrooms, (c) consciously designing seating plans and grouping students that allowed her to observe ELs’ behavior and social interactions, and (d) taking the time to know them well. According to her, she maintained written notes and accounts of ELs’ behaviors, moods, and ways of interacting with their peers, and she considered these incidents when planning her lessons or organizing her students into groups. Chanda was conscious of these pieces of information about her ELs and she
also recognized that they come to the classroom with their culture and language. She was also aware of her ELs’ varied language abilities and literacy skills and her ESOL self-contained classroom as having many varying and significant needs. She elaborated:

As teachers of ELs, we need to recognize the things that they already have, language, culture and identities and use these to make connections and really understanding how to tap into students’ cultural and language backgrounds and use these to your advantage in your teaching; and then understanding the culture that they come from and how they may respond to you behaviorally and socially, and how they may motivate themselves as learners based on expectations at home, expectations of the family, so kind of understanding how all of that place into your teaching (Interview #1).

During a math lesson on solving for “area” and “perimeter”, Chanda related the lesson to her ELs’ backgrounds. She knew that some of her ELs’ parents work in blueberry farms in Verona and in nearby areas. To activate her ELs’ thinking, she cited examples of blueberry farms that were enclosed with wooden fences and showed photos of these farms. When these photos were shown on the smart board, the class reacted almost unanimously and they all seemed to say “Oh I think I’ve seen that before” or “Oh we went blueberry picking there before.” After successfully engaging ELs’ interest and activating their previous experiences, she presented the math word problem that required students to solve for the perimeter. She showed them a google map picture of her yard in Verona, created the boundaries that would create the fence, and provided measurements of some of the boundaries. After providing them time to solve the perimeter, she asked her students to work in pairs to compare their answers. During the post-observation interview, Chanda recounted that after the math lesson on “area” and “perimeter”, she saw one of her ELs’ parents in Winn Dixie. The parent gladly recounted that her son said to them at home one night, “I rode my bicycle around the perimeter of our property when I came home from school.” Apparently, the parent
was surprised about her son’s use of the word perimeter. Chanda then remembered teaching them this concept by connecting it to their previous experiences or existing knowledge.

**Identifying Language Demands Inherent in Classroom Tasks**

EL teachers must be able to analyze the linguistic demands of oral and written discourse (Cummins, 2000; Wong-Filmore & Snow, 2005) in order to promote language, academic and skills development among ELs (Lucas & Villegas, 2011). Teachers can enact this skill if they identify key vocabulary that helps ELs access curriculum content. Additionally, teachers can also promote language development among ELs if they know specific ways that students are expected to use language to complete learning tasks in the classroom. However, before teachers can enact these demands, they are expected to have an understanding of the forms and functions of language and the fundamentals of linguistic analysis (Lucas & Villegas, 2011). Evidence of Chanda’s teaching practices that reflected LRT were captured into one theme, that is, explicit attention to language form and function to make the content accessible and comprehensible to her ELs. In one post-observation interview, Chanda explained her rationale for adjusting the readability of her formative tests in ELA. She said:

> I am excited that this (formative assessments that she wrote) will help us move more in the direction of focusing on English acquisition and not just always focusing on content, because I feel like they are being bombarded with content that is so far above their levels and it’s a frustrating thing. (Post-observation Interview # 2)

Across the classroom observations, there were many instances where Chanda integrated second language development with content learning. For instance, in her social studies lessons, she extensively worked on vocabulary development that enabled her students to comprehend the context of the texts that they read. This was evident in
one specific topic about the effects of European colonization to Native American tribes in Florida. She implemented language-based pedagogy which included identifying key words from the text, circling clues or noun phrases, and generating new words to synthesize main ideas from the text. She employed these techniques to guide students in writing an opinion essay about the colonization of Native American tribes in Florida by the Europeans. These strategies facilitated a systematic way of learning language through texts that ELs read across content areas. In other words, Chanda ensured that her ELs could understand social studies content while they developed and acquired second language.

During the discussion of the text, Chanda demonstrated an explicit attention to language. She asked the class, “What do we mean by positive?” A student responded and said “good”, then she went on to explain the meanings of contrastive terms like positive and negative in the context of the lesson. She also explained how these terms were used in a different context like Math, where positive integers and negative integers do not necessarily mean that they are good and bad numbers. Her LRT practices were evident in her teaching strategies which enabled ELs to contextualize the vocabulary words that they learn across the content areas. Chanda demonstrated an understanding that vocabulary development is not merely recognizing words but also understanding how they are used in context.

Her explicit attention to language form was also evident in her teaching practices that fostered her students’ comprehension of academic words and their meanings through context clues. For instance, she explained judiciously how morphemes such as prefixes in words like “pre-”, “bio-”, and “inter-” provide clues about the meanings of
words attached to them. Chanda’s explicit focus on language by examining features of academic words across content areas could enable ELs to clarify language features that could interfere with their understanding of these words.

Scaffolding Instruction

In Chanda’s classroom, scaffolding learning for ELs was a prevalent practice that demonstrated LRT. Across the content areas, Chanda implemented scaffolding so that EL learning progressed from lesser cognitive demands to higher order thinking, or from micro to macro levels of language learning. To do this, she utilized graphic organizers, visual tools, and pictures to enable ELs to access and comprehend texts and learning materials. But more importantly, Chanda scaffolded learning for ELs purposely to make it relevant to ELs’ prior learning and language proficiencies. Chanda went a level beyond simple ESOL scaffolding techniques to ensure that ELs’ are acquiring language and understanding content. She explained:

So I try to craft questions or design graphic organizers so that we start with our lower level questions, build upon cognitive complexity, so that by the time they get to more difficult questions or tasks, they’ve already built some background to help them answer questions or complete tasks. (Post-Observation Interview # 4)

For instance, in reading, she used language scaffolding to facilitate ELs’ understanding of the storybook “A Christmas Carol”. She purposefully grouped ELs with varying levels of language proficiency and instructed them to perform specific tasks. To ensure that everyone was contributing, she assigned ELs’ their respective tasks. One member who had below grade level proficiency would list down one-word adjectives to describe the main character, Scrooge. A more proficient member of the group would use the adjectives and put them into context by giving evidence of action/s of the character from the text. The highly proficient group members would then synthesize these words and
phrases into complete sentences to obtain the values or lessons from the story. When
the groups were able to provide two or more sentences, Chanda asked them, “So how
do we synthesize those sentences into a summary of the book chapter that we just
read?” The group members discussed among themselves and wrote their respective
chapter summaries into colored strips of paper. The newcomer ELs and ESE students
who were assigned to different groups demonstrated engaged learning that was evident
in their conversations. In one of the groups who worked near the desk where I was
seated, some newcomer ELs like Oswaldo generated a list of words that described
Scrooge in Spanish, and when he could not translate the words to Spanish, he asked
the ESOL paraprofessional to help him. In this activity, Chanda implemented LRT by
utilizing a progression of language learning from specific details to a general idea.
Through summary writing, ELs are scaffolded in understanding the text, Chanda
explained:

Well, one reason for the summarizing is I have found that a lot of these
students latch onto a specific detail or event, but struggle with
summarizing the big picture. So I figured if we summarized each chapter,
then they're getting more practice and I can give them immediate
feedback as to what were important events that should be included in the
summary and what events are less important or how to synthesize the
idea of the events into a big idea. So it was to practice the summarizing as
well as to help them keep up with the plot because it's a chapter book

In the ELL-modified Danielson rubric, particularly under component 3c –
“engaging students in learning”, Chanda obtained a rating of ‘3’ described as “highly
effective” during the day when she implemented the purposeful, cooperative learning
activity described above. She obtained this rating because her teaching strategy was
highly associated with examples provided in the rubric under component 3c in the rubric

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like “materials were used to scaffold EL learning, lessons move from micro to macro
where students synthesized specific details.”

Chanda’s teaching practices related to scaffolded instruction overlap with other
LRT tenets like knowing and applying principles of L2 learning, particularly on providing
ELs opportunities for social interactions through purposeful grouping. She explained her
rationale for grouping students:

I was hoping by placing them, purposely, in mixed [language ability] groups. So it was students that were at varying levels of language
acquisition so that they could kind of build off of each other's thinking and
generate a list of words, not just a single word, but everyone contributing
will then make it to where they had multiple options. I let them initially
choose a partner but that didn’t work. So the way that I did it, there was
that effort to put students together that have varying levels of language
acquisition and proficiency. As well as a comfort level in expressing
themselves. Not putting someone that's really high with someone that's
really low that would make them feel-- so kind of a bridge for each one
there was a student that kind of bridges the middle. (Post-Observation
Interview # 4)

To scaffold instruction, Chanda implemented strategies in modifying oral
language or adjusting the time for newcomer ELs to complete their tasks. Whenever
Chanda asked students to write down information that she dictated, she instructed the
students who completed writing down the information to raise their pencils. This would
signal her to proceed when everybody was done writing. During math drills, Chanda
employed wait-time or she provided extra-time, e.g., one or two minutes of extension,
for the newcomer ELs and ESE students to complete their tasks. The ESOL
paraprofessional also employed repetition whenever she provided the directions for
activities in Spanish. In reading, social studies, and ELA, Chanda used sentence frames
or discussion prompts during group activities. As discussed previously, she also
provided newcomer ELs and ESE students with simplified, Spanish versions of the
books that they read in ELA and reading. These books contained fewer words but had more pictures, drawings, and illustrations. The ESOL paraprofessional assisted the newcomer ELs and ESE students in reading the books.

Chanda’s LRT practices in relation to scaffolded instruction were also evident in her use of bilingual picture cards for vocabulary development. She used learning resources that she created and were intended to facilitate ELs’ mastery of ELA academic vocabulary. For instance, she provided each student a set of three small flashcards that contained a picture, a word in English and Spanish and a definition in English. The students were expected to match the vocabulary words with their definitions and their corresponding pictures. After matching them, they were expected to bring them to her for checking. Once checked, the students kept the materials on their desk drawers for use the next day. The same procedure was repeated in the succeeding days until the students were able to master the words and their definitions. While she articulated that her goal of developing students’ mastery of English vocabulary words was related to testing purposes, she modified the ways to teach them for meaningful understanding. A sample of bilingual picture cards that Chanda used are provided in Figure 4-5.

In this type of visual learning, Chanda’s main objective was to enrich ELs’ word bank in ELA. However, she also explained that she aimed to help ELs retain their vocabulary words in both languages. She decided to include photos that matched each word in each set of flashcards to provide ELs a concrete visual of the English terms. Chanda lamented that it took her some effort to produce the cut-outs of pictures, but
she expressed hope that it will be worth it if her students learned from the experience. During the post-observation interview, she elaborated on this strategy:

Well, primarily I'm using it because I'm finding that a lot of them don't have the background knowledge. Even if they can read what the word is and they can read its definition, they still don't create a mental picture of what it looks like. And we know that visual images just make learning a little more concrete. So that's where the idea came from was let's create cards. And I started out only doing it for the ELLs, but I added everyone when I saw how some of my non-ELLs were struggling to help the ELLs match them. (Post-observation interview # 5)

**What is LRT for the 2 Teachers?**

From the outset, Farrah and Chanda held high expectations of their ELs. They both adhered to teaching standards set by federal and state regulations for curriculum and assessment. They also demonstrated scaffolded instruction that facilitated engaged learning among their ELs. Moreover, both teachers showed their abilities to minimize ELs’ anxiety towards learning a second language by fostering a welcoming classroom environment. However, the two teachers differed in the ways that they enacted LRT. In the next section, I will present the cross-case findings across the two teachers’ practices.

Findings of the study indicate that the aspect of LRT mostly implemented by Farrah and Chanda was scaffolded instruction. The scaffolding strategies mostly used by both teachers involved extra-linguistic support, supporting or modifying difficult text for access and comprehensible input, and supporting or modifying oral language to minimize language difficulty among ELs. The two focal teachers’ perspectives also affirmed these observed teaching practices. Chanda explicitly stated, “I have put in place more practices that scaffold vocabulary, like picture cards and flashcard matching activities in both languages and tried on different strategies for meeting the needs of my
ELs” (Interview # 2). Farrah also asserted, “Since starting with the PD program, I feel like it has also changed my instruction for my ELs. I have more strategies that I implement with them and I have more resources that I am able to use” (Interview # 1). Based on the teachers’ practices and perspectives, they viewed LRT as a skills-based pedagogy comprised of teaching strategies and techniques that scaffold EL learning. It appeared that both teachers heavily relied on specific scaffolding strategies like explaining difficult words and ideas, creating opportunities in the classroom for interaction, using visual tools like picture, graphic organizers, and highlighting key vocabulary and central ideas across content areas.

Another aspect of LRT that was mostly implemented by both teachers was related to knowing and applying principles of second language learning. Under this LRT tenet, teachers need to have an understanding of different principles which they can apply in their teaching practices. Farrah and Chanda understood that creating a safe and welcoming classroom could help reduce ELs’ anxiety towards learning a second language, and they both applied these principles in their teaching practices. As mentioned previously, both teachers set high expectations of their ELs and believed in their abilities to learn and be successful. The two teachers also demonstrated an understanding of the value of building relationships with their ELs and among them that was evident in their extra-caring efforts towards their ELs. Farrah said:

Well, from the beginning of the year, I want them to feel comfortable to be able to come up and talk to me if something is going on and uphold a situation where I could be that safe person … that I am also a normal person and not a robot who just stands up in front of the class and teaches. (Post-observation interview # 2)
While Farrah recognized that building these relationships does not happen overnight, she exerted efforts to establish these personal connections because she wanted her ELs to look at her as a friend as well as a teacher and feel comfortable with her.

Chanda’s understanding of second language learning principles, particularly the importance of building relationships enabled her to build a community of learners in her classroom which demonstrated LRT. This was evident in how some of her ELs who had very limited English vocabulary and seldom uttered any English word transformed into confident learners. For instance, Chanda talked about how Joshua, her Chinese EL, transformed. According to Chanda, Joshua barely spoke to anyone, including her at the beginning of the school year. While conducting this study, there was evidence of Joshua’s transformation because he was already communicating with Chanda and his classmates in English. Across the observations, there were six times when Joshua came to my table and “challenged” me to solve math problems that he wrote on his white board. There were four times when he used his hands to signal me to approach him to verify his answers on his white board. Joshua’s transformation, from an EL who barely spoke a word in English to an EL who was more confident and communicative despite limitations in his English oral proficiency, provide evidence of a skills-based pedagogy on creating a community of learners that reflected LRT.

Evidence of a community of learners fostered through reinforcing the use of ELs’ home languages in Chanda’s classroom was also noticeable in the relationships among ELs. At the very beginning of the classroom observations, Chanda’s ELs demonstrated classroom behavior that seem to have resulted from a welcoming and respectful classroom atmosphere. During informal conversations, ELs freely switched from
speaking in English to Spanish while Joshua unconsciously responded to Chanda in Chinese. ELs’ minimal anxiety towards speaking their home languages provided evidence of Chanda’s respect for ELs’ home language. In building a community of learners, Chanda demonstrated consciousness towards ELs’ learning experiences in terms of physical space. She consciously planned students’ seating arrangement based on ELs’ status (newcomer, ESE, proficiency level), test data, growth scores, her own notes about their behaviors and midyear test data. For her, she considered modifying the seating plan as a form of accommodation because by strategically placing students based on their overall performance in class, they would either perform better or not. She justified her plan and elaborated:

And so I find it’s just important to read the room. And look for ways to head off behavior issues because when they don’t click is when there’s those annoyances, and you start hearing squabbling and bickering when they have to do group work and it just makes for a very unpleasant situation. And honestly most of the time it just leads to lowered academic expectations because they spend more time trying to figure out how to get along than actually doing the work. I looked at students that weren’t making the growth that I would expect by this time of year; moved them closer to me or away from distractions so that they are kind of situated now with peers that are at a similar academic level that will hopefully sharpen their skills when we have group discussions (Post-observation interview # 5).

This practice that demonstrated Chanda’s awareness of her ELs’ personalities, learning styles, and needs in terms of ELs’ position in the classroom exhibits linguistic responsiveness. Instruction informed by knowing your ELs and tailoring teaching strategies according to their needs is an important component of LRT.

Overall, the LRT practices of Farrah and Chanda intersect along two tenets: scaffolding instruction and knowing and applying second language learning principles. Findings demonstrate limited evidence of LRT in Farrah’s teaching practices across the
other tenets of LRT, while a significant amount of evidence in Chanda’s LRT practices were found across six of the seven tenets of LRT.

Limitations

Findings in the study were affected by certain limitations. First, having only two participants in the study and having collected data in a period of six weeks or a total of 12 classroom observations and eight interviews had implications on the quality of data collected for this study. In relation, informal conversations with the participants, e.g., conversations during lunch break or after class, were not officially approved as data; thus, excluding the wealth of information that was generated through these conversations. Moreover, data gathering through video recording of their teaching practices was not also included as a method of data collection, which would otherwise have provided a more nuanced data profile for the study.

Second, a limitation of this study was associated with the Hawthorne effect, or the possibility that the two teachers modified an aspect of their behaviors, particularly during the interviews and the post observation interviews in response to their awareness that they were participants in the study. It is noteworthy to mention that the teachers were well-aware that I was largely involved as a research assistant in the PD project that they were also part of. Theoretically, they would have provided responses to questions based on what they thought I wanted to hear, and responses that might reflect the impact of the PD program on them as EL teachers and to their teaching practices.

Finally, another limitation of this study was connected to my position as an immigrant in the US which situated me as either non-American and non-Hispanic or non-Latino. The differences in culture between me and my participants created a
situation where my interpretations could be inevitably influenced by my frames of reference as a Filipino. Although I might have brought a neutral perspective by virtue of my nationality, my own cultural background could have potentially influenced the ways I constructed meanings from the experiences of White American teachers. However, I tried to minimize these biases by adhering to the research design and by continually reflecting upon the biases that I brought to the study. My written reflections that were recorded in my journals allowed me to reduce issues related to subjectivity in the research study.

**Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, I presented the findings for the first research question which were organized according to the a priori themes from the LRT framework. Farrah’s limited LRT practices were evident across few tenets which included: (a) learning about ELs’ linguistic and academic backgrounds; (b) knowing and applying L2 learning principles; and (c) scaffolding EL learning. These findings do not demonstrate a deep level of linguistic responsiveness, and the gaps in these findings will be discussed in Chapter 6.

Meanwhile, Chanda implemented linguistically responsive teaching practices related to the central tenets of the LRT framework. These LRT practices included: (a) valuing linguistic diversity; (b) inclination to advocate for ELs; (c) learning about ELs’ backgrounds; (d) implementing explicit attention to language form and function; (e) knowing and applying L2 learning principles; and (f) scaffolding EL learning.

Meanwhile, the teachers’ LRT practices intersect along only two tenets: (a) scaffolding instruction and (b) knowing and applying second language learning principles.
I also discussed the limitations in the study’s findings. Findings related to the second research question are presented in the next chapter.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LRT tenets</th>
<th>Thematic findings – LRT <em>a priori codes</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tenet 1: Sociolinguistic consciousness</td>
<td>Not demonstrated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenet 2: Valuing linguistic diversity</td>
<td>Not demonstrated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farrah Chanda</td>
<td>Not demonstrated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenet 3: Inclination to advocate for ELs</td>
<td>Not demonstrated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenet 4: Learning about ELs’ linguistic and academic backgrounds</td>
<td>Connecting ELs’ prior knowledge to new learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenet 5: Identifying and understanding language demands inherent in classroom tasks</td>
<td>Not demonstrated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenet 6: Knowing and applying second language learning principles</td>
<td>Minimizing ELs’ anxiety by creating a welcoming classroom space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenet 7: Scaffolding instruction</td>
<td>Supplementing/modifying difficult texts</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Supplementing/modifying oral language</td>
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Figure 4-1. A sample journal in science. Photo courtesy of author.

Figure 4-2. Sample of a modified assessment in social studies for newcomer ELs. Photo courtesy of the author.
Figure 4-3. A bilingual poster in Chanda’s classroom. Photo courtesy of the author.

Figure 4-4. A bilingual anchor chart in Math in Chanda’s classroom. Photo courtesy of the author.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aquaplane/Aquaplano</th>
<th>A board for riding on water, pulled by a speedboat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aquarium/Aquario</td>
<td>A transparent tank of water in which fish and other water creatures and plants are kept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biologist/Biólogo</td>
<td>An expert in or student of the branch of science concerning living organisms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biography/Biografía</td>
<td>A story of someone's life written by someone else</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Figure 4-5. A sample of bilingual picture cards
In this chapter, I present the findings in relation to the second research question, “How does rurality shape teachers’ instruction of English learners?” As discussed in Chapter 2, despite the limited research that examine effective teaching of ELs in rural school settings, I theorized in this study that the context of rurality in general shaped the teachers’ implementation of LRT practices in their classrooms. More specifically, based on the academic literature and my own assumptions, I conceptualized that the rural context and the dynamics and challenges inherent in such contexts can influence the teaching practices of EL teachers. Using the study’s findings, I elaborate on the ways that rurality shaped the teachers’ practices by examining various factors within the rural context and how these factors influenced the implementation of LRT practices. I drew heavily on the two focal teachers’ perspectives from interviews and teaching practices from observations as evidence of the findings.

Findings about how rurality shaped the teachers’ instruction of ELs are understood in the context of four themes: (a) place-based awareness; (b) limitations of rurality; (c) joint support from school leaders, professionals and practitioners from nearby communities; and (d) teachers’ rural upbringing. The notion of rurality is embedded in each theme, particularly in ways that certain elements distinct to rural contexts have either directly or indirectly affected teachers’ instruction of ELs. For instance, rural settings have a distinct and shared sense of community (Eppley, 2015) that affects teachers’ decisions and teaching practices. I discuss the thematic findings in the following sections.
Place-Based Awareness

Both teachers in the study demonstrated place-based awareness that shaped their instruction of English learners. Place-based awareness refers to the teachers’ awareness towards the rural geographic area where they teach and the understanding that their ELs, their roles as teachers and the school are part of a broader rural context. Place-based awareness also entails teachers’ understanding of the contexts where they teach enable them to develop knowledge and skills that could enhance their teaching of diverse students. For example, the teachers’ place-based awareness was evident in their experiences with school consolidation—a trend in rural educational settings—and an awareness of place and space.

School Consolidation

One of the teachers talked about preparing her ELs to navigate the “real world outside” which influenced her teaching practices. Specifically, Farrah was concerned about her ELs’ preparedness to navigate a more challenging context ahead of them when they go to sixth grade in Verona Middle-High School (VMHS), a school that three years prior had been consolidated from a single middle school and a single high school. Farrah’s awareness of the relationship of VES to VMHS as important institutions of their rural community was tied to her concern for the welfare of her ELs. She knew that her ELs’ only option was to move to VMHS as they reached the middle school stage in their education. Because of this, ELs have to be immersed in a school setting with schoolchildren who were far older than them and this could have an impact on their learning experiences. She was also aware that the situation in that school was “not kind to ELs” because “it could eat them alive” (Interview # 2). For instance, because of school consolidation, VMS and Verona High School had only one ESOL teacher who
provided ESOL services to both schools. She explained her teaching practices in relation to the middle school in the community:

I just feel like at this point they just need as many people skills and as much content as they could possibly get before they go to the middle school because the situation over there is a mess. And it is going to eat them alive. I mean an ESOL teacher is over there but she's only in the high school and they have some ESOL aides that push into classes. The other day when the ESOL aide and I were helping one of the kids that are over there, there was like no accommodations at all. And I'm like, "Holy cow Grace", I mean it was rough. So I think that just getting them as far as I possibly can here to prepare them. (Interview # 2)

Farrah perceived that the middle school’s ESOL program was not as comprehensive and effective as other ESOL programs in the school district. Because of this, she expressed her concern for ELs when they have to navigate this context.

Her awareness of these circumstances at VMHS shaped her teaching practices. In particular, Farrah believed that her ELs could navigate the middle school if they acquire English communication skills to express what they want and what they need. Her belief shaped her teaching practices that aimed at developing their English and interpersonal communication skills. To further address her ELs’ needs to develop their English communication skills, Farrah had worked closely with the school's ESOL para-professional to help Ariana and Eldon when they arrived as newcomer ELs in VES. During these occasions, they focused on working on their English and reading. Although these teaching practices did not necessarily demonstrate LRT as conceptualized in the eight tenets outlined in Chapter 2, her awareness of the effects of school consolidation to ELs when they reach sixth grade shaped her instruction of them. Farrah’s desire to develop her ELs’ English communication and interpersonal skills was reflected in her teaching but it was not consistent with being linguistically responsive. In other words, second language learning for her was exclusively focusing on ELs' development of
English skills without providing them the appropriate scaffolding. In addition, these practices appear to have immersed ELs in instruction mostly, if not totally delivered in English.

**Awareness of Rural Spaces**

One of the teachers, Chanda, demonstrated awareness of rural spaces. From the outset, Chanda was conscious of the inter-relatedness of her role as a teacher, her ELs’ learning experiences and the rural community. She said:

> One thing that’s great in a small community is it’s where the school truly overlaps with the community and they are partners in raising the students. There’s an inter-relatedness to everything, you know. I’d teach students that may go to my church, or that I will definitely see at some point at the grocery store. I have gone to my kids’ little league games, I stopped over at three other games to see some of my students playing little league baseball. In the bank where one of my parents works, I made sure to go to her line to chat briefly with her (Interview # 1)

She was cognizant of the impact that relationships in the community had on the school and consistently articulated awareness of the broader context of the rural community. Chanda asserted that “there’s not a separation” among the school, the community, parents, teachers and schoolchildren, and rural schools often are community centers. For her, the starting point of this attachment is the relationship that teachers build with parents and community members. When she learners that one of her ELs’ parent worked in a blueberry farm down from her house, Chanda visited the place at least twice to speak with the parent.

Chanda’s awareness of the rural space was also translated to her teaching. She admitted that she does not give homework to students because ELs would either return to school the next day without working on them or these were incomplete. More importantly, she was conscious that parents might not be able to assist their children in
their homework. She knew that most parents are in agriculture and had to work for longer hours, which means having less time for their children. In two interviews, Chanda described home visits where she spoke with one of her ELs’ parents. She explained the ELs’ situation:

I’ve had one parent, and the first contact I had was because of a concern on recess behavior, but there are no academic concerns where there should be. The child never does homework. The child never takes home and reads anything. He doesn't bring back papers without me sending two or three notices. And then as going to my child's home yesterday, sometimes they're dealing with things that are a lot greater than that piece of paper that I send home for homework. And when their home life is the way that it is, you have to just accept that what they get here at school is all they're going to get. And it's no fault of their own and it's not even the fault of the parent. They're just trying to survive. When I walked in there yesterday, I'm just like, "Please Lord, don't let them see it on my face" because literally, I just want to sit here and cry with them. Like, "How can you live like this?" And yet you make sure your child is clean every day and that they come to school every day, knowing that what you face every day in just trying to put a meal on the table.

Chanda further describe this experience as a “wake-up call” for her because she realized that there were many layers to the child’s situation at home which continually affected his performance and behavior.

Above all these situations, Chanda filled in some of the limitations resulting from situations in the home that prevented parents from addressing the needs of their children. For instance, she provided individual intervention to ELs who were not able to cope with the lessons because of their home situations like Vina. Vina was one of her ESE students who was significantly below her ESE peers in terms of reading ability. Chanda also elaborated that Vina had special needs, particularly individualized instruction because she had below grade level proficiency in both her L1 and L2. She was also aware of Vina’s learning styles, particularly on her ability to internalize and remember things once she got them, but took her a lot of repetition and practice. There
were also three different times that Vina was absent from class and according to her mother, she was sick. Vina’s mother also failed to attend at least two parent conferences that Chanda planned. With this situation, Chanda provided Vina with one-on-one individualized instruction at least 10 minutes per day just to guide her through and help teach her some word strategies. During individualized instruction with Vina, Chanda also explained that she read the texts to her at a slower pace and she implemented repetition whenever she read longer sentences to her.

**Limitations of Rurality**

Schools in rural communities continue to experience structural challenges such lack of resources, teachers isolation and retention, and lack of PD opportunities (Azano & Stewart, 2015, 2016; Burton & Johnson, 2010; Walker, 2012) that impact teachers’ practices. According to Chanda, limited funding available for rural schools resulted in inadequate learning materials or additional visual and technology-based materials for students. Limitations in rural areas include lack of resources and teachers have to play multiple roles in order to provide the needs of students.

**Rural Teachers’ Multiple Roles**

Chanda performed multiple roles at VES in addition to teaching all the subjects in her ESOL self-contained classroom. Her other roles included: (a) team leader of VES fourth grade teachers; (b) ELA specialist for CPALM5; (c) a facilitator of reading endorsement courses for NEFEC6-Flag County. For Chanda, taking on these multiple duties and responsibilities was challenging because planning and implementing her day-to-day lessons for her ELs also required time and effort. The multiple functions that she was expected to fulfill also took off some significant time from her classroom duties, which in turn, affected her implementation of well-planned lessons for the day.
As discussed in Chapter 3, Chanda’s ESOL self-contained classroom was a one-year pilot study to determine whether the sheltered self-contained classroom would improve learning for the school’s ELs. Chanda explained that this classroom model entailed various phases of implementation according to the school district’s expectations in facilitating a growth in her ELs’ achievement data in FSA and iReady. Because of this, Chanda noted that she had to work closely with the school principal, the guidance counselor and other personnel to meet all the requirements that the district laid out. Looking closely into this factor, it appears to be a common characteristic of rural schools where teachers “wear multiple hats”, but it has far-reaching implications on teachers’ ability to implement LRT. As Chanda noted, language-planning for a classroom with so many varying and significant needs had always been challenging.

**Lack of Resources**

One of the more common problems facing teachers in rural areas a lack of various resources, described below. This problem certainly affected the ability of the two focal teachers to implement LRT practices. Chanda recognized that a lack of resources in her rural school and in the rural community had a profound influence on her teaching practices. She articulated this dilemma and said that while accessing resources that support best practices for ELs was challenging, finding culturally relevant materials was even more difficult. This factor also impacted her teaching in ways that insufficient or unavailable resources affected the delivery of well-planned instruction for ELs. Additionally, she lamented that the time she spent in preparing resources that were not available would have been devoted to other aspects of planning and implementation. She considered these circumstances as a “constant battle” for her because she wanted to do all what was in her head, but she could not. She elaborated:
Lack of resources still are a struggle for me because I am constantly-- the PowerPoint I used today, I worked on three hours last night to create. So it's constantly recreating or inventing the wheel because I can't find it anywhere else already created at the level that I need for these students. I needed the visuals, a lot of visuals. So it was me creating the PowerPoint and the handout so that the visuals would be there when I'm explaining what a diagram is. When I'm explaining, they need to see it in that moment to even name it, before we can start interpreting it. (Post-observation interview # 4)

In relation to this, Chanda recognized that the element of time also affected her teaching practices with ELs. Oftentimes, she felt frustrated because she was not able to implement the different teaching strategies in her “toolbox of techniques” because of limited time. She said that there was a compromise on what she could get done and what she knew should be done because she cannot implement all her plans because of time. She lamented, “sometimes, I have to be realistic and trade-in practices for things that I know are not as effective, but because it's the amount of time frame that I have or the resource that I can get my hand on in that moment” (Post-observation Interview # 4).

Chanda’s awareness of a lack of resources as a continual challenge that they face, however, did not impede her from implementing LRT. She either wrote grants to get technology support or spent at least fifty to a hundred dollars of her own money to augment resources for her classroom. Her desire to instruct her ELs through LRT practices pushed her to provide what the school and the rural community could not provide. She also demonstrated optimism amidst challenges in rural schools and said that lack of resources made planning and implementing her lesson challenging, but not impossible.

Despite the persistent challenges related to lack of instructional and material resources, Chanda acted upon these situations by creating her own resources or
modifying available resources to fit the needs of her ELs in the classroom. One of the ways that she provided linguistic accommodations to her ELs was analyzing the resources that she made or modified for students’ varied language learning needs. Her planning efforts with a consciousness towards her EL’s linguistic needs enabled her to scaffold learning for them to make the text or the content accessible. Specifically, she was able to provide ELs with extra-linguistic support, supplemented and modified difficult texts, and designed purposeful activities that engaged ELs in learning, all of which are reflective of LRT practices.

**Local School Board and District Policies**

Farrah articulated that outside of her classroom, one of the influential factors that made it difficult for her to meet ELs’ language learning needs was the local school board and testing policies. She said, “All they are worried about is test scores. They say that they’re doing what’s best for our kids, but they’re not in the classroom everyday” (Interview #2). Chanda also acknowledged that state and district policies impacted her teaching practices. She noted that pressures for students to perform well on state standardized tests guided her teaching practices on some occasions, and these inhibited her freedom to teach in ways that were linguistically responsive to her ELs. She elaborated on how district policies limited her teaching practices:

> I still have my hands tied when it comes to there being a specific curriculum map that has to be followed, there being specific assessments that I must give, regardless if I feel that they are best practiced or not. If they are district determined, state determined, I have no say.

Chanda also noted that executing quality instruction requires a commitment of time, and this is often impeded by district and classroom calendars and initiatives.
Support System

The two focal teachers conceptualized support system as a structure comprised of factors that include: (a) professional development opportunities that they previously had or were participating in during the time of the study; (b) support from the school administration, particularly the principal; (c) assistance from bilingual members of and practitioners from nearby communities; and (d) support from ELs’ parents.

In terms of opportunities for PD, one of the teachers recognized how her participation in the PD program facilitated the evolution of her teaching practices for ELs. Across the interviews, Farrah repeatedly claimed in all of her interviews that her completion of the online courses in the PD program and her interactions with her fellow teachers in Flag County equipped her with teaching strategies for ELs. For instance, the PD program provided her ESOL teaching strategies that were highly related to LRT, particularly those of scaffolding instruction for ELs. In addition, the PD program provided learning resources for effective EL teaching that were related to LRT. It is important to discern though that Farrah’s teaching practices that utilized ESOL strategies do not necessarily reflect LRT. In other words, Farrah’s knowledge and skills that were enriched through the program provided her a good foundation to effectively teach ELs.

Farrah also added that through the PD program, she developed a sense of empathy towards her ELs. Specifically, she empathized with her ELs in terms of her increased awareness towards her colleagues in VES who did not prioritize the students in their instructional and assessment practices in their classrooms. The empathy towards ELs pushed her and her co-teaching partner to include ELs in all assessments. She elaborated:
I do feel like since the PD program, there’s been changes from the start until now. There are some teachers in campus who are so driven on the test that if ELs don’t count for the test, they get pushed to the backburner… and so I feel like I and Ms. Shane, we get all these little new babies because we incorporate them and do what we can to help them learn and progress. I think including them in whatever we do is more than a lot of teachers aren’t doing here. (Interview # 2)

Farrah’s and Chanda’s involvement with the PD program also provided them the opportunity to establish a network with professionals who provided them assistance through various means. For instance, they tapped the bilingual expertise of the program coordinators of the PD program who translated for parents and guardians in Spanish and Chinese during parent conferences. Although these forms of assistance did not directly impact their teaching, they were helpful in strengthening their connections with ELs and their parents. Having built a trustful relationship with some bilingual coordinators of the PD program, Chanda consistently invited one of them, Daniela, to her classroom to assist her and the ESOL paraprofessional. For instance, when a newcomer EL arrived in her class during the middle of the school year, Chanda invited Daniela to assess his language proficiency in Spanish because the student could not read, speak nor write in English at all. Although this kind of assessment did not provide a formal, comprehensive assessment of the newcomer EL’s L1 proficiency, it provided Chanda some ideas about designing her initial teaching strategies with him. Teachers who seek assistance from bilingual community members to assist them during their interactions with ELs and their parents help facilitate their knowledge their ELs’ backgrounds. Meanwhile, Farrah also tapped bilingual coordinators of the PD program to assist her. In addition, she expressed hopes that in the second phase of the PD program, she would develop the ability to advocate for ELs and implement teaching practices to support her stance of being an EL advocate.
Across the interviews, there were three instances where Chanda recognized the support that the school principal provided to her ESOL self-contained classroom. The principal’s support was evident in different ways, which include: (a) constant guidance in and affirmation of her instructional plans; (b) consistent monitoring and follow-up of her ELs’ progress from mid-year assessments and classroom formative assessments; and (c) providing a full time ESOL paraprofessional to assist her in instruction and in translating learning resources and materials. According to Chanda, the school principal’s trust and confidence in her to facilitate the ESOL self-contained classroom in VES strongly motivated her to “keep going despite the odds” (Interview #2). Chanda also believed that her participation in the PD program endorsed and heavily supported by the school principal provided her opportunities to further enrich herself professionally and address the needs of her ESOL self-contained classroom. Chanda, like Farrah, also believed that the school principal’s participation to the same PD program contributed to the sustained support that their school leader extended to them.

**Rural Upbringing**

The teachers’ rural upbringing influenced their teaching dispositions and their instruction of ELs. Farrah’s relationship-building skills with ELs that minimized their anxiety towards L2 learning appear to have been shaped by her upbringing in a rural community. Chanda’s place-based awareness that was evident in her teaching practices seem to have been shaped by her early childhood experiences in a rural community.

As a child, Farrah grew up and attended elementary school in a rural farming community in Verona in the southeastern US. Farrah perceived her early experiences in a rural community in terms of relationships and opportunities bound by a socioeconomic
lens. In terms of relationship, she noted, “everyone knows everyone”, which for her meant that if an individual or a family needed help, there was always someone there. She described that wealthier community members in her rural community helped other members who were in need of either money, material resources, or opportunities. She viewed community relationships more in terms of helping those in need to uplift their living conditions, where material and financial resources were vital. Farrah’s early experiences on the ways that members in her rural community built close relationships have influenced her perspectives towards the value of establishing connections that are anchored on kindness, caring and concern.

In terms of opportunities, Farrah perceived her upbringing in a rural community as an experience that taught her the value of hard work and responsibility. Because of her family’s low economic status, she was raised as a child working on a peanut farm and fulfilling other family responsibilities. She noted, “At an early age, I was exposed to the concept of hard work that provided me opportunities to develop good work ethic.” (Interview # 1). Farrah also perceived that growing up in a rural community and participating in a local community farm organization helped her cultivate determination and resourcefulness. These virtues later became the foundation for the development of her leadership skills. She elaborated:

I grew up on a peanut farm, and it was expected that young to old would all work, though the women did not go to the field, there was plenty of work to be done. I feel like this had a huge impact on me as an adult, having a good work ethic and knowing the value of a dollar. (Interview # 1)

At an early age, Farrah was exposed to the ways that her rural community valued relationships that were defined by concepts like helping those in need or nurturing close, personal relations. Her early years of experience as an individual who grew up in
a rural community and who witnessed how community members built community relationships enabled her to realize the importance of building connections and personal relationships. These elements seem to have shaped her present disposition towards teaching. When she talked about the qualities of an effective EL teacher, one prevalent motif that emerged was her orientation towards the personal aspect of teaching rather than from a pedagogical perspective. For instance, she viewed that effective EL teachers should possess values that could enable them to establish a good rapport with them in the classroom. She elaborated:

Patience! A lot of times as teachers, we want to see instant results, this is not always the case with our ELs. I also think you need to be caring and understanding, when you get new ELs, there is no telling what they have been through. This is why respecting their time here and limit your demands when they arrive into your class. For example, a student that has just gotten here may be shy and withdrawn; you should not expect them to speak to you or others. They are still getting acclimated to our class and being in a new place. You should also get to know their culture, all of these things will help you build a relationship with them so they begin to trust you and open up to you. (Interview # 1)

Her strong disposition towards patience as a quality of an effective EL teacher seems to have been shaped by her childhood experiences. Again, this perspective should not be conflated with being a linguistically responsive teacher. In other words, the values that Farrah developed during her childhood years influenced her teaching practices in general.

Farrah’s attitude towards the value of personal relationships that was evident in her orientation of teaching ELs. This seemed to translate into her teaching practices. For example, she demonstrated evidence of an LRT tenet about fostering a safe and welcoming classroom environment that was anchored on an ethic of caring and personal relations with her ELs. The kind of classroom environment that she nurtured
helped ELs minimize their anxiety and feelings of inferiority that might have otherwise affected their engagement with learning in the classroom. Farrah’s evident orientation towards relational aspects of teaching ELs was also prevalent through the ways that she interacted with her newcomer ELs. She was more caring towards them and she established personal relations with them because she wanted them to look at her as a friend as well as a teacher. She was also very “tactful” in the way that she approached them so that her ELs would feel that they are valued and respected by her.

Chanda grew up in a rural community called Transville, a 30-minute drive from Verona and also a rural town, where she was residing with her own family. She described herself and said:

I had a very similar upbringing to many of the students in this community... so I wouldn’t really say that we lived in poverty, but we weren’t necessarily even what would be considered middle class... so I grew up in an area where agriculture was what... what drives the community, small class sizes and fewer resources. (Interview #1)

Having grown up in a rural community, particularly in an area where agriculture was what drove the community that had very few resources, Chanda identified with most, if not all of her students. She viewed her upbringing in a rural community broadly in terms of relationships and opportunities through a sociocultural and educational lens. She articulated that her rural community played a vital role in her social and cultural development as a person, as well as in her educational experience. According to her, these circumstances influenced her decision over 20 years ago to teach in the rural town of Verona and to remain committed to rural education.

Chanda’s perspectives about her early experiences as a learner in a rural community underscored the interrelatedness of the community and its members, the school, students and their parents. While she admitted that her rural community had
fewer resources to offer, she still felt that she had an adequate education in terms of the community’s support to her while she was studying. She strongly asserted, “I do feel like the community did support when they could in resources, but they supported even more in just maintaining a level of high expectation for learning… and the teachers met those expectations” (Interview # 1). With her strong belief that her teachers met the community’s expectations, she also talked emphatically about her K-12 teachers and the kind of education that she received:

I do feel that I had an excellent education, because the teachers I had were invested in me as a person, and in helping me grow and learn and saw that their own professional development and a lot of the same qualities that I have aspired to have or from those teachers on how they prepared me. (Interview # 1)

Chanda’s rural upbringing that was built on community relationships appear to have influenced her present teaching dispositions. As mentioned previously, Chanda demonstrated place-based awareness by interacting with parents outside of the school whenever she run into them in shared community spaces like grocery stores, churches and baseball fields. She visited parents who worked in blueberry farms near her house. These relational practices that demonstrate Chanda’s place-based awareness shaped her teaching practices.

**Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, I elaborated on the ways that rurality shaped the teachers’ practices by examining various factors within the rural context and how these variables influenced the implementation of LRT practices in the teachers’ classrooms. These rural-based factors that shaped teachers’ instruction of ELs include: (a) place-based awareness; (b) limitations of rurality; (c) support system; and (d) rural upbringing.
CHAPTER 6
DISCUSSION

Overview

The purpose of this qualitative, exploratory study was to investigate the teaching practices of EL teachers to examine linguistically responsive teaching in rural elementary classrooms, and to examine how rurality shaped their teaching practices. A review of previous and current literature showed that there is a dearth of research examining actual classroom practices that provide a concrete way of understanding LRT (Griner & Stewart, 2012; Hollie, 2011; Fiedler et al., 2008; Milner, 2016; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Additionally, there is a dearth of research examining the LRT practices of rural teachers of English learners (Burton, Brown, & Johnson, 2013; Fogle & Moser, 2017; Fry & Anderson, 2011). This study was undertaken to address these shortcomings in the academic literature, particularly in examining the LRT practices of EL teachers within the contexts of rural classrooms.

The current research was framed with the following research questions: (1) What linguistically responsive teaching practices do rural teachers of English learners implement in classrooms? (2) How does rurality shape their instruction of English learners? In Chapter 2, I provided a synthesis of the academic literature on LRT, particularly the seven central principles or tenets capturing the orientations and language-related knowledge and skills that teachers need to have for them to enact LRT (Lucas & Villegas, 2011). These tenets include: (a) sociolinguistic consciousness; (b) valuing linguistic diversity; (c) inclination to advocate for ELs; (d) learning about ELs' backgrounds; (e) identifying and analyzing language demands inherent in classroom
tasks; (f) knowing and applying principles of second language learning; and (g) scaffolding instruction.

Findings of the study revealed that the two focal teachers implemented linguistically responsive teaching practices across the central tenets of the LRT framework. Farrah’s teaching practices reflected three central tenets of LRT which include: (a) learning about ELs’ backgrounds to inform instruction; (b) knowing and applying principles of second language learning; and (c) scaffolding instruction (Lucas & Villegas, 2011). Meanwhile, Chanda’s teaching practices demonstrated evidence across six central tenets which include: (a) value for linguistic diversity; (b) inclination to advocate for ELs; (c) learning about ELs’ backgrounds; (d) knowing and applying principles of second language learning; and (e) scaffolding instruction. Although Chanda showed evidence of enacting the fifth tenet – identifying language demands inherent in classroom tasks – there was limited evidence of this.

In this chapter, I will discuss the findings of the study in relation to the LRT framework (Lucas & Villegas, 2011). In the second sub-section, I will discuss LRT and rurality and will include a discussion of parent involvement and engagement as an element of rurality. Then, in light of the study’s findings, I will interrogate the LRT framework in the third sub-section of this chapter and relate it to the broader conversation on teacher education and development. I will provide a summary of the chapter in the last section.

LRT Orientations and Language-Related Knowledge and Skills

In their foundational work on LRT, Lucas and Villegas (2011) suggest that linguistically responsive teachers need to possess orientations or “inclinations…towards ideas and actions, influenced by attitudes and beliefs” (p. 302) and language-related
knowledge and skills. Teachers’ orientations are necessary for the foundational development of linguistically responsive pedagogy, which means that without attending to them, teachers are not able to embrace and apply the necessary knowledge and skills (Lucas & Villegas, 2010). Similarly, some educational researchers suggest that a combination of both the orientations and knowledge and skills may be vital to the development of teachers’ LRT skills (e.g., Tandon et al., 2017). There are seven central tenets of LRT which are wide-ranging, thus this teaching framework is complex. LRT also appears to be daunting and overwhelming because it appears that teachers are being asked to implement teaching strategies that they are not familiar with or have limited exposure. From the outset, not enough attention was being paid to teacher preparation or teacher PD that address the linguistic needs of ELs (Lucas, Villegas, & Freedson-Gonzales, 2008). This challenge is further exacerbated by the increasing diversification of K-12 classrooms and the homogenization of a White, female teaching force (Gay, 2013; Sleeter, 2017).

One finding that stood out in this study is that the two focal teachers demonstrated limited evidence of LRT practices. Farrah did not demonstrate any of the LRT orientations – sociolinguistic consciousness, valuing linguistic diversity, and an inclination to advocate for ELs – and she showed very limited evidence of enacting language-related knowledge and skills in her teaching, despite receiving professional development in this area and holding the state of Florida ESOL endorsement of 300 hours of preparation. Meanwhile, Chanda also failed to demonstrate evidence of sociolinguistic consciousness but showed significant evidence of supporting bilingualism, respecting ELs’ home languages and an inclination to advocate for them in
her teaching. She also enacted LRT in her teaching practices, but these practices did not exhibit a deep level of linguistic responsiveness. In the following section, I discuss the findings and relate them to the study’s theoretical framework. However, I also discuss gaps in the study’s findings in relation to the broader conversation of LRT, teacher education and teaching.

**LRT Orientations**

Farrah’s teaching practices suggest that there is limited evidence of enacting LRT in her instruction of ELs. As mentioned previously, she did not demonstrate evidence of any of the orientations that teachers need to enact LRT. Certainly, her lack of these orientations impeded her ability to teach in linguistically responsive ways. There is also a possibility that her LRT orientations may be limited but have provided her the opportunity to enact good teaching but not LRT. For instance, Farrah was monolingual and she did not speak her ELs’ home languages. Yet, she allowed them to use Spanish and Chinese for classroom communication and content comprehension, especially among her newcomer ELs. Previous studies reported that linguistically responsive teachers recognized linguistic diversity by providing diverse students to use their native languages for interaction and building a “community” in the classroom (e.g. Bergeron, 2008; Rhodes, 2013). Other researchers also argue that LRT exceeds knowing and speaking ELs’ home languages but entails fostering a learning community where ELs use their L1 because teachers respect their languages (e.g., Rao & Morales, 2015). By providing a space in the classroom for students to use their home languages, Farrah sent her ELs a caring and welcoming message that their language and culture is respected. ELs are then encouraged to participate in class activities and be more engaged in learning (Lucas, Henze, & Donato, 1990; Lucas & Villegas, 2010).
However, providing a space in the classroom for ELs to speak their home languages for communication purposes is totally different from utilizing these languages for instructional purposes. LRT suggests that teachers need to leverage ELs’ home languages as resources in the classroom for language development and content comprehension (Lucas & Villegas, 2010). In addition, using ELs’ home languages alongside their second language promotes bilingualism among emergent bilinguals (Garcia & Wei, 2014; Park, 2013). While these practices were missing in Farrah’s classroom, Chanda was able to show evidence of these LRT practices. Her practices that reflected valuing linguistic diversity supported her positive attitudes towards bilingualism and her respect for and interest in her ELs’ home languages. These skills intersect with other LRT tenets like an inclination to advocate for ELs, an ability to apply second language learning principles and scaffolding instruction. For instance, her awareness of her ELs’ varied abilities and language proficiencies in L1 and L2 that demonstrate the fourth LRT tenet – learning about ELs’ backgrounds – prompted her to adapt assessments according to their needs, which demonstrated the third tenet – an inclination to advocate for ELs. Additionally, her LRT practices that scaffolded ELs’ learning were highly connected to her desire to use their L1 as a classroom resource.

Chanda’s perspectives and dispositions as an EL teacher were strongly anchored on her belief that all students deserve a quality education and be successful learners. Believing in the capability of her ELs, Chanda made it a personal priority to support their success (Hersi & Watkinson, 2012). She also considered herself as a very reflective teacher because her classroom had many varying and significant needs given the nature of her ELs who had varying levels of language proficiency and learning
needs. Additionally, Chanda also demonstrated knowledge and awareness of her classroom context – an ESOL self-contained classroom – that certainly shaped her ability to implement LRT. She designed lessons implemented through differentiated teaching, specialized intervention and linguistically responsive instruction. These attitudes and dispositions provided Chanda the impetus to differentiate and modify instruction for her ELs. As Rao and Morales argue (2015), teacher beliefs impact effective teaching of ELs. Her perspectives enabled her to understand the connections between language and schooling and the particular implications of those connections for ELs (Lucas & Villegas, 2010), and she gave life to these dispositions in her pedagogy. In other words, her teaching practices reflected linguistic responsiveness because she possessed teaching orientations influenced by her understanding of the connections between language, teaching and EL learning.

Language is deeply entwined with a sense of identity and with social and cultural affiliations (Valdés, Bunch, Snow, & Lee, 2005). In school, ELs bring with them their culture and language that influence the ways that they express themselves, use language and respond to instruction. Teachers need to understand this relationship between language and identity to enable them to find ways to consider students’ linguistic backgrounds in their teaching (Lucas & Villegas, 2010). In relation, research supports the value of encouraging ELs to use their home languages in learning and concept development (e.g., Collier & Thomas, 2010; Samway & McKeon, 1999). Chanda recognized the importance of these discourses because she respected and valued ELs’ home languages and she exhibited positive attitudes toward bilingualism. She applied her understanding of these principles in her teaching practices that
validated and affirmed ELs’ native languages. As Chanda built on her consciousness towards language use for instructional purposes, she also positioned students as resources and herself as not “all knowing” which are critical aspects of CRP and LRT (Ladson-Billings, 1995a; Rao & Morales, 2015).

Chanda’s positive dispositions towards bilingualism support the contention of language scholars regarding the use of ELs’ native languages as resources from which teachers draw for effective instruction (Ruiz, 1983; Rao & Morales, 2015; Zentella, 2005). Teachers can also leverage knowledge in ELs’ home language when developing English literacy skills and academic content (Reyes, 2009) or use it as a tool for learning English (Giouroukakis & Honigsfeld, 2010). Chanda’s understanding of these principles that underscore the development of bilingualism among ELs and emergent bilinguals prompted her to always find a balance in providing them enough Spanish or Chinese and English to understand concepts. The inclusion of ELs’ L1 in instruction also aided in positive cultural identity construction and exposed them to affirmative perceptions about their language (Reyes & Vallone, 2007). As Rao and Morales (2015) contend, teachers who recognize equal value of languages also create an inclusive and supportive climate in their classrooms that can minimize ELs’ anxiety towards learning a second language.

Apart from valuing linguistic diversity, teachers enact LRT when they advocate for ELs (Lucas & Villegas, 2010). Across all their works related to LRT, Lucas and Villegas used “inclination to advocate” for ELs as the third central tenet. When viewed through a critical lens, this language differs from “advocating for ELs.” This language discrepancy—*inclination to* versus *advocating for*—will be discussed in the second subsection of this chapter that focuses on theorizing the LRT framework in relation to the
realities of teachers’ practices. However, for the purposes of this discussion, Chanda’s teaching practices that reflected this tenet will be discussed using the language “inclination to advocate for ELs.” In other words, evidence of the third LRT tenet in Chanda’s practices demonstrate an inclination to advocate for ELs, which may not necessarily mean advocating for them.

Lucas and Villegas (2011) state, “equity for ELs must be the explicit focus of advocacy efforts to ensure that language-related issues do not continue to be ignored” (p. 60). However, within the micro-level of the classroom, an inclination to advocate for ELs can take many forms. Chanda’s inclinations to advocate for ELs were evident in the ways that she adjusted her instructional and assessment practices to fit the needs of her ELs, particularly the newcomers. Her awareness of her classroom’s sociocultural dimension, e.g., ELs’ varying levels of language proficiency in L1 and L2; and ELs’ different learning characteristics and needs, motivated her to tailor her practices to address the differences among her learners (Lucas & Villegas, 2010). As Herrera, Holmes, and Kavimandan (2013) argue, instruction should be differentiated according to how students learn, built on their existing knowledge and experience, and be language appropriate. Chanda’s classroom practices like differentiating instruction, providing language accommodations, and writing or modifying assessment materials for her newcomer ELs, for instance, constitute an inclination to advocate for ELs. Her awareness towards lack of resources as a typical problem in rural schools (Azano & Stewart, 2015; Bryant, 2007) also stimulated her to create authentic teaching resources or re-create existing materials (Giouroukakis & Honigsfeld, 2010). These practices affirm a form of advocacy at the classroom level that entails improving ELs’ educational
experiences (Athanases & de Oliveira, 2010) by responding to inherent educational challenges in rural settings with solutions and remedies.

Advocating for ELs also necessitate interrogating policies and the extent to which practices, school and district regulations perpetuate or challenge inequities (Coady, Harper, & de Jong, 2013). By challenging state-mandated assessments that were evident in her classroom practices, Chanda transcended the limitations that local policies impose upon effective instruction of ELs. Chanda’s determination in disrupting federal regulations on assessment like providing tests for newcomer ELs in their home language exhibits advocacy efforts for ELs who tend to be marginalized by policies that perpetuate inequity. In other words, Chanda navigated educational systems and stringent policies on behalf of her newcomer ELs. To effectively advocate for emergent bilinguals, teachers must ultimately advocate for change in educational systems themselves (Staehr Fenner, 2014), and they could start with their practices in their own classroom settings.

**LRT Knowledge and Skills**

The second broad domain of LRT is language-related knowledge and skills. Lucas and Villegas (2011) refer to knowledge and skill as the “complex and interconnected disciplinary knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, knowledge of learners, and pedagogical skills” (p. 56) needed by successful teachers. They also emphasize that in order for teachers to enact these skills, they should embrace the three orientations. In this study, this discourse becomes a point for contention because findings revealed that Farrah was able to demonstrate LRT practices, albeit limited, despite not possessing the LRT orientations. Considering this, it may be valid to ask: Are teachers’ practices that are not shaped by LRT orientations and dispositions
considered linguistically responsive at all? Is there a causal relationship between teachers’ orientations and language-related knowledge and skills? In other words, it may be valid to theorize that when teachers do not embrace LRT orientations and dispositions, it either prevents them from implementing LRT at all or delimits their abilities to implement LRT practices. These limitations could possibly result in a surface level implementation of LRT.

The fourth tenet of LRT is learning about ELs’ backgrounds to inform instruction. Background is comprised of a deep-level of information about ELs’ cultural assets and funds of knowledge (Gay, 2002, 2010; Moll, Amanti & Gonzales, 1992), academic backgrounds, linguistic knowledge, previous experiences, prior learning and knowledge (Lucas & Villegas, 2010). It is also important for teachers to know that ELs are not a homogeneous group because they enter the US with varying levels of oral proficiency and L1 and L2 literacy skills (Valdés & Castellón, 2011). Farrah and Chanda demonstrated evidence of this tenet in similar ways. Both teachers utilized the backgrounds of some of their ELs in relation to their parents’ work in blueberry and watermelon farms in Verona and connected these to new learning.

The two focal teachers demonstrated their knowledge of second language learning principles and applied these in their teaching practices that reflected LRT. A rich body of literature underscores what EL teachers need to know about L2 learning (e.g., Coady, Harper, & de Jong, 2011; Cummins, 2000; Fillmore & Snow, 2005; Harper & de Jong, 2004; Lucas & Villegas, 2010; Thomas & Colier, 2002). Six of these principles were included in the LRT framework (Lucas & Villegas, 2011) discussed in Chapter 2. Specifically, the LRT framework includes teachers’ skill in helping reduce
ELs’ anxiety towards L2 learning and creating a safe and welcoming classroom. These principles go hand in hand, and it is an important element of relationship-building.

Linguistically responsive teachers need to be vigilant in providing ELs a safe, welcoming classroom environment for optimal learning (Lucas & Villegas, 2010; 2011). In addition, teachers must strive to minimize ELs’ anxiety that can interfere with second language learning (Krashen, 1982; Pappamihiel, 2002). Farrah’s teaching practices reflected how she applied this principle by employing teaching strategies that minimized ELs’ anxiety and fostered a safe and welcoming classroom. Her ability to build caring relationships (Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Zhang-wu, 2017) was instrumental in reducing her ELs’ anxiety in her mainstream classroom with mostly native English speakers. Similarly, Chanda successfully built trustful relationships with her ELs and among her ELs. Her commitment to cultivating fluid relationship with diverse students fostered a community of learners (Ladson-Billings, 1995a) in her classroom. As mentioned in Chapter 4, the two focal teachers’ teaching practices intersected along this principle.

Meanwhile, Chanda’s LRT practices were evident in applying the principle that purposeful and cooperative learning activities provide ELs opportunities for social interaction. Meaningful interactions engage ELs in negotiating meaning to gain access to comprehensible input and extend their productive capabilities (Lucas & Villegas, 2010). By understanding this principle, Chanda provided her ELs with opportunities to interact with their English-proficient peers to expose them to more language use (Gibbons, 2002) through cooperative learning activities across content areas. Moreover, Chanda ensured that her ELs actively participated in the interactions during collaborative work in class. When ELs become actively engaged in small-group
interactions, they could not only gain access to meaningful input but are also motivated to produce output (Trumbull & Farr, 2005). Thus, it is also imperative for teachers to structure small group interactions so that ELs could maximize these opportunities of interacting with their more proficient peers for academic and language development. Calderon et al. (2011) also affirm this discourse and they argued that when teachers use a variety of cooperative strategies, they create a safe context where ELs practice the new language (English) with peers.

Findings from this study also indicated that the aspect of LRT most frequently implemented by Farrah and Chanda was scaffolded instruction, the seventh LRT tenet. In the study conducted by Tandon et al. (2017), they examined that the perceptions and understandings of linguistic responsiveness among preservice teachers and novice teachers. They found that overall, the most frequently discussed aspect of LRT was related to teaching strategies and scaffolding instruction. In a similar vein, few empirical studies reported that most teachers implemented LRT through scaffolded teaching (e.g., Giouroukakis & Honigsfel, 2010; Hite & Evans, 2006; Zhang-wu, 2017). However, most of these studies also reported that teachers applied their knowledge of second language learning principles in their teaching practices. These elements include the use of ELs’ native language for instruction (e.g., Rao & Morales, 2006) and implementing an ethic of caring to minimize ELs’ anxiety towards language learning (e.g., Hersi & Watkinson, 2012; Zhang-wu, 2017).

Farrah and Chanda implemented various types of instructional scaffolding (Lucas & Villegas, 2010) that enabled them to enact LRT. Lucas & Villegas (2011) describe scaffolding as forms of temporary support that help learners carry out learning tasks
beyond their current capability. Scaffolded instruction also makes curriculum accessible to ELs (Lucas & Villegas, 2013) because teachers employ strategies or provide peers that guide and assist ELs in engaging with linguistic and academic tasks. Based on the findings from previous studies that examined teachers’ LRT practices, scaffolding instruction emerged as the most applied LRT tenet (e.g. Giouroukakis & Honigsfeld, 2010; Hite & Evans, 2006; Zhang-wu, 2017) or the most discussed aspect in preservice teacher preparation (Tandon et al., 2017). This is because instructional scaffolding could be enacted through a wide array of teaching strategies or typical ESOL techniques found in the literature. However, some educational researchers argue that scaffolded instruction that fails to account for more critical language use in the classroom are just good teaching (e.g. Hite & Evans, 2006; Tandon et al., 2017). Other researchers also argue that scaffolding needs to be examined in relation to academic language development especially in mainstream classrooms with ELs (e.g., Zhang-wu, 2017). These limitations on teachers’ use of scaffolded teaching thus serve as springboard for aspiring to be more linguistically responsive. Their efforts and evident commitment to effectively teach ELs could be the first steps that lead them toward enacting LRT practices. Both teachers articulated their desire to learn more about LRT and implement linguistically responsive teaching strategies. More importantly, as the study’s findings revealed that the two teachers’ LRT practices revolved more around scaffolded instruction, critical implications about teachers’ implementation of LRT is highlighted.

Effective implementation of LRT could be influenced by teachers’ orientations and language-related knowledge and skills. Yet, it is worthy to note that in the case of
Chanda, her knowledge of her classroom context seemed to have further shaped her enactment of LRT practices. Her ESOL self-contained classroom required of teachers high quality lessons that were planned and implemented through differentiated teaching, specialized intervention and effective instruction leveled according to the varying levels of ELs’ English language proficiency. These demands are highly related to the tenets of LRT, and Chanda’s teaching practices intersected along these principles. Her awareness of the special requirements of her classroom context as contrasted to those of mainstream classrooms in VES facilitated her desire to implement LRT. Conversely, Farrah’s awareness of her classroom as a mainstream classroom setting with low EL-incidence shaped her teaching dispositions and practices that showed limited LRT practices.

The third sub-section of this chapter provides a discussion of the teachers’ LRT practices in relation to the LRT framework through a critical lens.

**Rurality and Linguistically Responsive Teaching**

Rurality shaped teachers’ instruction of ELs in ways that factors within the rural context influenced the teaching practices of the two focal teachers. While there are multiple definitions of “rural” used in rural education research (Arnold et al., 2005), there is also a lack of conceptual consensus about what constitutes rural (Stolmack, 2011). Rural could be defined according to its relationship to urbanized areas in terms of economic activity (CREC, 2018). In Chapter 3, I identified Verona as a fringe rural area defined as “a rural territory that is less than or equal to 5 miles from an urbanized area, as well as rural territory that is less than or equal to 5 miles from an urban cluster (NCES, 2015). The proximity of a “fringe” rural area to either an urbanized area or an urban cluster is closer than those of “distant” and “remote” rural areas. I also
conceptualized rurality in this study as a sociocultural construct that is characterized by rural elements which include: social and cultural capital (Yosso, 2005), shared community context (Eppley, 2015), professional and geographic isolation (Burton & Johnson, 2010), and high poverty rates (Miller, 2012). In addition, I framed rurality through the lens of place-based awareness, viewed as “constitutive places that shape identities and possibilities” (Eppley, 2015, p. 70).

The influence of rurality to the teachers’ practices for ELs were understood based on four themes which include: (a) place-based awareness; (b) limitations of rurality; (c) joint support from school leaders, professionals and practitioners from nearby communities; and (d) teachers’ rural upbringing. These themes encompass the notion of rurality, particularly in ways that certain elements distinct to rural contexts have either directly or indirectly affected teachers’ instruction of ELs. These findings suggest that social, political and cultural conditions in rural schools and communities could impact teachers’ perspectives, beliefs and teaching dispositions. Their previous and current experiences within these settings could shape their worldviews towards issues that confront both their school and the community. For instance, current anti-immigration sentiments within rural settings could impact the implementation of educational policies by educators and policymakers related to ELs’ needs (Lee & Hawkins, 2015). Rural teachers who grew up in rural communities and are more aware of their students’ strengths and weaknesses enact personalized teaching built on caring (Eppley, 2015). In other words, teachers’ awareness of the rural dynamics affects their perspectives, which are then translated into teaching practices in the classroom.
The nature of this study, particularly on the need to emphasize the concept of rurality as influential to the teachers’ instruction of ELs, requires a focus on the concept of place-based (Comber, Reid, & Nixon, 2007; Shamah & MacTavish, 2009) and place-conscious (Greenwood, 2013; Gruenewald, 2003; White & Reid, 2008) pedagogy. However, an analysis of the study’s findings seem to point towards place-based awareness as influencing the two focal teachers’ instruction of ELs. Again, it is worthy to note that there was limited evidence of LRT in the teachers’ practices, and so rurality might have shaped their teaching practices that did not focus on language instruction or linguistic responsiveness. In other words, while this study initially considered place-based pedagogy as a construct to analyze how rurality shaped teachers’ LRT practices, findings do not sufficiently support its use in the study. This is because both teachers did not demonstrate evidence of place-based consciousness. Rather, they showed evidence only of place-based awareness. Thus, the issue of place and place-based education appears as an essential feature of instruction for EL students, because it shapes and frames what teachers can do and how.

Place-based consciousness entails the necessity for teachers to reflect upon the notion of “places” as pedagogical (Gruenewald, 2003) and recognize “place” as a productive pedagogical construct (Greenwood, 2013). It is important for teachers to reflect upon the rural community where they teach because these spaces are “social constructions filled with ideologies” (p. 5). In other words, the dynamics of rural settings and the diverse cultural backgrounds that ELs bring to their classroom, shape teachers’ classroom practices. However, findings from the study showed that both teachers did not demonstrate critical and sociolinguistic awareness towards the rural context where
they taught. Their teaching practices and perspectives demonstrated place-based awareness that lacked some critical aspects that would have otherwise enabled them to enact LRT in their classrooms.

The networks of support that the two focal teachers recognized as influential in their teaching of ELs and their enactment of LRT is affirmed in previous research (e.g., Hersi & Watkinson, 2012; Richards et al., 2007). Broadly speaking, opportunities for professional development (PD) focused on enhancing instruction for ELs shaped the teachers’ instructional practices with ELs. The teachers’ participation in current and previous PD opportunities that were related to teaching ELs was also influential to their current teaching practices. Although these effects were not far-reaching, they facilitated growth among the teachers, particularly in enriching their teaching strategies for ELs and in their orientations towards LRT. Previous studies affirm this finding (e.g., Calderon et al., 2011; Hansen-Thomas et al., 2016; Martin & Strom, 2016; Ringler, O’Neal, Rawls, & Cumiskey, 2013) in rural settings and report that various PD components like mentoring, workshops in communication and language strategies, and SIOP model implementation helped teachers enhance EL instruction.

The other component of support system that the teachers recognized as influential in their teaching practices was establishing partnerships and collaborations with the nearby community. Farrah and Chanda developed professional relationships with bilingual professionals, practitioners, and teacher educators the nearby town of Grant where a large, public university is located. The school’s partnership with a research team from this public university provided teachers with opportunities to tap the team members who provided them assistance in translating for EL parents, research
activities, and professional engagements. Collaborations in improving effective EL instruction extends beyond schools to networks of support from community agencies and nearby communities (Scanlan, Farttura, Schneider, & Capper, 2012; Walker, 2012). School contexts that value partners within rural communities and in nearby communities can help teachers implement LRT practices (Hersi & Watkinson, 2012). Other studies also underscore the importance of partnerships between rural schools and universities on the provision of appropriate and accessible PD that help improve the outcomes for culturally and linguistically diverse students. (e.g., Hansen-Thomas et al., 2016; Lee & Hawkins, 2015; O’Neal, Ringler, & Lys, 2009; Paciotto & Delany-Barmann, 2011).

Support from school administration is a crucial component of teachers’ instructional practices in any context (Wenger, Dinsmore, & Villagomez, 2012). This principle also applies to the effective instruction of ELs as reported by previous research (e.g., Hite & Evans, 2006; Richards, Brown & Forde, 2007; Zhang-wu, 2017). Across these studies, supportive school leadership had a positive impact to the teachers’ practices. In the case of Farrah and Chanda, their principal encouraged them to participate in the PD program that was facilitated by a large, public university in the nearby town. In addition to this, the trust and support that the principal gave to Chanda to facilitate the school’s ESOL self-contained classroom constantly motivated her to enact quality instruction for her ELs. The teachers valued the principal’s ideas, suggestions and feedbacks because the principal herself was very supportive of the school’s partnership with a university research team working on improving EL instruction. Research studies generally suggest that supportive educational leadership
is related to changes in instructional practices and increases in teacher effectiveness (e.g., Johnson, Kraft, & Papay, 2012; May & Supovitz, 2011).

An emergent finding in the study that is highly related to rurality indicated another element that is not widely discussed in previous LRT literature – teacher-parent relationships. There are very few studies that suggest the importance of parent-teacher relationship and collaboration to effective EL instruction (e.g. Hersi & Watkinson, 2012; Rao & Morales, 2006; Shim, 2013). Successful and innovative newcomer programs engage parents through quality communication with them (Bigelow, 2010; Bigelow, Brasford, & Smidt, 2007; Hersi, 2011). The support and perspectives of EL parents in rural contexts do matter if schoolteachers are serious about recognizing the contributions that they are able to provide (Shim, 2013) and in non-traditional ways (Coady, 2019; Jeynes, 2003). The two teachers perceived that parent involvement was an important aspect of their teaching that enabled them to enact LRT.

**Parent Involvement and Engagement**

The construct of parent involvement in this study was conceptualized as a component of rurality based on the view that educators cannot ignore the role of parents in their children’s education in rural school settings, a requirement of schools underscored by the Every Student Succeeds Act, the federal policy on education. Parental involvement is described by educational researchers as processes that involve parents in interactions with schools to promote academic success (Ceballo, Maurizi, Suarez, & Aretakis, 2014; Hill & Tyson, 2009). This component of the educational process usually assumes that parents engage in ongoing communication, often initiating interactions, with schools (Coady, 2019). Meanwhile, parent engagement emphasizes teachers’ effort to "reach out, know, understand, care and advocate for students in..."
collaboration with parents and caregivers” (Coady, 2019, p. 21). Coady’s notion of parental engagement was used in this study to discuss and analyze the teachers’ effort to communicate with ELs’ parents and families. The two teachers’ practices and perspectives in relation to parental involvement also support what other scholars espouse about the essence of teachers’ efforts in bridging cultural differences to build collaborations with parents. These relationships could enable them to understand their ELs in the classroom and build upon them to design instruction that meets their ELs’ needs (e.g., Shim, 2013). As Ladson-Billings (2009) observed, the important first step to effective teaching is building an alliance, a network of trust with parents and community members, but which is often overlooked by teachers.

Teachers who have a deep knowledge of the sociocultural backgrounds and histories of ELs’, their parents and their families (Coady, 2019) are able to act upon oppressive situations upheld by the status quo in schools and in the community. Among Latino families, the concept of “familismo” (Coady, 2019) exists, in which ELs have extended families which include uncles, aunts, and grandparents. In a similar vein, this concept in an important indicator of Filipino culture because many Filipino families value close family ties. For instance, grandparents live with any or one of their children’s families because the concept of retirement homes or facility for the elderly is not widely practiced in the Philippines, and it runs counter to their values of “kapamilya” (family bond or ties). This concept of “maintaining close bonds with the family, family obligations and maintaining familial support networks” (Coady, 2019, p. 21) also contributes to the understanding of the concept of “familismo” among Latino families. A critical understanding of “familismo” means that teachers who enact LRT need to recognize the
complex relationships that affect the ways that they engage parents or families with the education of ELs in their classroom.

Evidence from the data showed that the two focal teachers initiated parent engagement by communicating with their ELs’ parents to inform them of their children’s academic concerns and to build mutual relationships with them. According to Farrah and Chanda, reaching out to parents is the first step in the process of building relationships with them that is built upon relational trust and care (Byrk & Schneider, 2002; Coady, 2019). As Coady (2019) further insisted, the attempts of educators to engage multilingual families and parents must be built upon trust, care, understanding, and human relationships. The two teachers also emphasized that reaching out to parents ensured that parents were “part of the conversation on their children’s education” and were recognized and respected. Once these trusting relationships are established, teachers could further engage parents and be “on the same page” with them in helping their children succeed in school. As educational researchers observed, a positive correlation between parental involvement and ELs’ learning has been firmly established (e.g., Hill & Tyson, 2009; Panferov, 2010). However, other researchers emphasized that apart from increasing student achievement, quality interactions and communication between teachers and parents have a significant impact on student achievement (e.g., Padgett, 2006).

For instance, Jeynes’s (2003) meta-analysis research demonstrated that traditional parent communication, such as sending home letters and inviting parents to schools, are not necessarily culturally or linguistically responsive in ways that lead to student learning. While the study found that parental involvement significantly impacted
different groups of children coming from different racial, social, and economic groups in different levels, it also affected certain aspects like academic achievement. In short, teachers should view parent involvement through a multidimensional lens because not all ELs have the same family characteristics or come from the same cultural backgrounds.

**Challenges to Implementation: What is Missing in LRT?**

Findings from this study warrant a critical examination of LRT, both as a theoretical framework that guides teacher preparation and as a theory that guides educational research. While LRT could be extremely useful in guiding teacher education practices and professional development, it also tends to become a daunting task for teachers. It is daunting because the central principles of LRT are wide-ranging and so for some teachers, it could become just an aspirational and overwhelming undertaking. Recent studies suggest that linguistic responsiveness is difficult to attain and that additional work is necessary for teacher preparation programs to prepare linguistically responsive teachers (e.g., Tandon et al., 2017). As the study’s findings affirm, there was evidence of the lack of LRT in the two focal teachers' practices. Farrah graduated her bachelor’s degree with an ESOL endorsement, which suggests that she obtained the necessary preparation to teach ELs. Yet, her teaching practices demonstrated very limited evidence of LRT. Chanda also earned her ESOL endorsement through accumulated points that she obtained from participating in PD activities related to teaching ELs. According to her, she also had exposure to culturally responsive teaching when she was working towards completing her master’s degree in educational leadership. She demonstrated evidence of LRT in her teaching practices, yet they did not exhibit a deep level of linguistic responsiveness. We could then ask: Is an ESOL
endorsement, such as that required by the state of Florida, sufficient to prepare
teachers to become linguistically responsive? Are teachers able to discern between
good ESOL teaching and LRT? Above all, we could also ask: Are we asking teachers to
do something that they are not aware of or something that they do not have knowledge
of?

First of all, findings of the study showed that both teachers did not demonstrate
evidence of one critical aspect of LRT which is sociolinguistic consciousness. Although
Chanda exhibited an inclination to advocate for ELs, there was limited
evidence in her
teaching practices. Sociopolitical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 1995a) and
sociolinguistic consciousness (Lucas & Villegas, 2010) are emphasized in the CRP and
LRT literature. For instance, sociopolitical consciousness enables EL teachers
critique the norms and institutions that produce and maintain social inequities (Ladson-
Billings, 1995a) and sociolinguistic consciousness enables teachers to recognize that
language use and language education exist within larger sociopolitical contexts (Lucas
& Villegas, 2010). There was no evidence that the two focal teachers possessed either
of these orientations based on their perspectives and teaching practices. Even though
they implemented language scaffolding practices, one of the participants did not show
that she possessed sensitivity towards the relationship between language, EL learning
and identity (Lucas & Villegas, 2011). Although both teachers were aware of the issues
in their rural contexts, they did not act upon their awareness to advocate for ELs. For
instance, Farrah spoke about how government issues since the election of Donald
Trump as the US President had caused fears among families about their security in the
town of Verona. She elaborated:
Our families are definitely supportive and they are here for the children. And that’s what makes me sad, with all of our government issues, because there are good families here that are contributing and they’re hard workers. I know that they work full time jobs, but they’re here for parent conferences and they’re her for all that good stuff. And so I think our job has just been – especially since Trump got elected, letting them know that it is a safe place here (Interview # 2).

Yet, her awareness did not prompt her to act upon these issues and failed to advocate for ELs through her classroom practices.

Across all their work related to LRT, Lucas and Villegas used the phrase “inclination to advocate for ELs” as the third LRT tenet as opposed to what other scholars use like “advocating for ELs” (Coady, Harper, & de Jong, 2013). In their work, Athanases and de Oliveira used the term “advocacy” which entails actively working to improve and enhance one or more aspects of ELs’ educational experiences. In other words, these scholars argue that advocating for ELs should be accompanied with informed action. This element is missing in the LRT framework and this has a significant impact to the practices of teachers who strive to enact LRT. As evident from the study, Farrah and Chanda may have possessed an inclination to advocate for ELs, but an informed action that should accompany such inclinations was missing.

Findings of the study also revealed that the two focal teachers mostly implemented LRT through their teaching strategies and scaffolded instruction. This finding is validated by previous studies (e.g., Giouroukakis & Honigsfeld, 2010; Hite & Evans, 2006; Zhang-wu, 2017). More importantly, it suggests that teachers conceptualize LRT with a focus on enriching their teaching strategies without giving attention to developing their sociolinguistic consciousness and advocacy for ELs which are rather important. As Lucas and Villegas (2010) emphasized, LRT is a combination
of orientations and language-related knowledge and skills that successful EL teachers need.

For instance, Farrah did not exhibit evidence of possessing the three orientations of linguistically responsive teachers. In addition, there was also some evidence of a disconnect between Farrah’s beliefs and teaching practices. For instance, she claimed that she was good at differentiating instruction but there was no any evidence of this in her teaching practices. These inconsistencies validate what Fasching-Varner and Deriki (2012) insist about the disconnect between teacher praxis and the theoretical underpinnings of CRP, which also applies to related frameworks like CRT and LRT. Despite not being able to demonstrate sociolinguistic consciousness, valuing diversity and an inclination to advocate for ELs, Farrah was able to implement LRT but in very limited ways. Again, this situation suggests that the more critical aspects of LRT – teachers’ linguistically responsive orientations – are either missing from teachers’ repertoire of knowledge or very limited. It is worthy to note that Farrah demonstrated anxiety towards differentiated instruction for ELs. She lamented, “I’m a little panicked because that’s [an ESOL self-contained classroom] a lot of differentiating…I’m worried because I really need to be prepared to meet all the needs of ELs (Interview # 2). For her, she viewed scaffolding instruction as a lot of work and meeting ELs' needs as daunting. She also perceived that good teaching of ELs is “good for everybody”, which suggests that she treats her ELs and mainstream students equally. These perceptions run counter to LRT orientations that teachers need to have to enable them to enact LRT.
The ability of Farrah to implement LRT practices in spite of her lack of orientations suggests that in this study, LRT is merely a combination of some specific principles that teachers enact through their teaching practices. Although Farrah’s teaching practices do not necessarily exhibit a deep level of linguistic responsiveness, they demonstrate some specific principles of LRT. In the study conducted by Hite and Evans (2006), they found that although some teaching strategies for ELs are “just good teaching”, the teachers demonstrated that their practices and attitudes are instead a springboard for strategies specifically suitable for ELs. Similarly, I would argue that Farrah’s efforts, dispositions and perspectives could serve as springboard for her to develop a deep level of LRT in her teaching.

In the light of the study’s findings, I would theorize that Farrah’s teaching practices may have possibly been affected by various factors that are worth examining. These factors are related to the challenges reported in previous academic literature that impede teachers’ ability to enact LRT. These challenges include: (a) lack of knowledge or limited knowledge of the LRT framework (Tandon et al., 2017); (b) limited pedagogical content knowledge of teaching strategies for ELs (Coady, Harper, & de Jong, 2013; Good et al., 2010; Hansen-Thomas & Gross Richins, 2015; Hansen-Thomas et al., 2016); (c) lack of attention to EL teacher preparation and teachers’ PD opportunities focused on EL teaching (Daniel, 2014; Ringler et al., 2013) (d) attitudes towards differentiated instruction or scaffolded teaching, e.g., anxiety towards teaching ELs (Pappamihiel, 2002; Rao & Morales, 2015; Tandon et al., 2017).

Meanwhile, Chanda’s teaching practices demonstrated evidence of LRT across six of the seven central tenets of the framework’s central tenets. Teachers’ language-
related disciplinary and pedagogical knowledge is important to enable teachers to be linguistically responsive (Lucas & Villegas, 2010, 2011). Additionally, EL teachers must be able to analyze the linguistic demands of oral and written discourse to promote language and academic content and skills development (Cummins, 2000; Wong-Filmore & Snow, 2005). These demands from EL teachers render this aspect of LRT as a very challenging aspect because teachers need to have a baseline knowledge of language forms and functions. Chanda’s teaching practices were limited to language development for conceptual knowledge or to make content accessible. She stated, “I am becoming more comfortable with analyzing resources for language demands and planning activities that help students access vocabulary and concepts (Interview # 2). Her perspectives and practices illustrate her limited stance towards recognizing other critical linguistic features that are essential for literacy development and English acquisition.

Another critical aspect that was missing in both teachers’ practices in relation to LRT was the absence of skills in navigating Chinese and devoting adequate attention to the language that one of their ELs spoke. In other words, both teachers merely treated their Chinese EL as another Spanish-speaking EL who had similar language needs with the majority of their EL peers. For instance, whenever Spanish is incorporated in instruction, Chinese is not given the same attention at all. Chanda said:

So one thing I’m going to do is go ahead and translate the word problems into Spanish because then that only leaves me with one language learner that speaks Chinese that I need to provide support or in translating for him...so for him, in order for me to be more supportive for his needs, I plan to keep the same strategies. (Post-observation Interview # 2)
Although Chanda demonstrated evidence of providing her Chinese EL support and language scaffolding, she applied the same strategies that she used with her Spanish-speaking ELs.

**Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, I discussed the findings of the study in relation to the LRT framework. I also discussed LRT and rurality, and I included a discussion of parent involvement and engagement as an element of rurality. I also critically examined the LRT framework and related it to the broader conversation on teacher education and development and teaching.
CHAPTER 7
CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Overview

The purpose of this study was to investigate the teaching practices of English Learner students (ELs) to examine linguistically responsive teaching in rural elementary classroom settings. With this goal in mind, the main research question was, “What linguistically responsive teaching practices do rural teachers of English learners implement in classrooms?” The second research question was, “How does rurality shape their instruction of English learners?” A constructivist-constructionist epistemological perspective was used to frame this qualitative, exploratory study of two focal teachers in a rural, elementary school in southeastern US.

The study employed a constructivist-constructionist epistemological perspective that underscored the unique experiences and perspectives of the two focal teachers. The construction of meanings in the study were also shaped by the participants’ worldviews and the researcher’s cultural lenses, positionality and perceptions. The participants of the study were two EL teachers in an elementary school in a rural town in southeaster US. The study utilized qualitative research methods such as classroom observations, which included the use of a validated observation protocol called the ELL-modified Danielson rubric (Coady et al., 2019, forthcoming) and ethnographic methods of classroom observations, interviews and post observation interviews to gather primary data. Text documents such as teachers’ weekly lesson plans and artifacts of completed assignment from the courses that the teachers completed under the PD program were collected and used as secondary data. Data analysis was conducted using a deductive method that relied heavily on a priori codes obtained from the LRT framework (Lucas &
Villegas, 2011). At some points during data analysis, an inductive approach was also employed, allowing the emergence of new themes that were important in examining and understanding LRT in rural contexts. Data analysis commenced with open coding, which was followed by focused coding and then theoretical coding. During these stages, coding was guided by a priori codes obtained from the study’s theoretical framework.

Findings from this study revealed that the two focal teachers implemented linguistically responsive teaching practices across the seven central tenets of the LRT framework to varying degrees. Farrah’s teaching practices reflected three central tenets of LRT which include: (a) learning about ELs’ backgrounds to inform instruction; (b) knowing and applying principles of second language learning; and (c) scaffolding instruction (Lucas & Villegas, 2011). Meanwhile, Chanda’s teaching practices demonstrated evidence across five central tenets which include: (a) value for linguistic diversity; (b) inclination to advocate for ELs; (c) learning about ELs’ backgrounds; (d) knowing and applying principles of second language learning; and (e) scaffolding instruction. Although Chanda showed evidence of enacting the fifth tenet – identifying language demands inherent in classroom tasks – there was limited evidence of this.

Findings also revealed that rurality shaped the teachers’ instruction of ELs through ways that were captured by four thematic findings, which include: a) place-based awareness; (b) limitations of rurality; (c) joint support from school leaders, professionals and practitioners from nearby communities; and (d) teachers’ rural upbringing. These themes encompassed the notion of rurality, particularly in ways that certain elements distinct to rural contexts have either directly or indirectly affected teachers’ instruction of ELs.
In Chapter 6, I discussed the findings of the study in relation to the conceptual framework. I also included the discussion of parent involvement & engagement as integral to examining LRT in rural classroom settings. In addition, I discussed the teachers’ LRT practices through a critical lens that provides a significant foundation for the study’s implications for future research, teaching and teacher education. In this chapter, I discuss the potential implications of this dissertation for research, teaching, and teacher education. I conclude with a summary of this chapter.

Implications

Research

This study has the potential to add to and expand on the discourse regarding effective instruction of ELs in rural settings. By analyzing how teachers in rural school settings perceived and implemented linguistic responsiveness in their instruction of ELs, the study informs the literature on LRT (Lucas & Villegas, 2011). This framework has gained notable attention in the academic literature (Turkan et al., 2014), but it has not yet been extensively empirically examined (Tandon et al., 2017). Linguistically diverse elementary students in mainstream and ESOL self-contained classroom contexts bring with them their home languages to the classroom. This study also informs the research on how teachers could draw upon ELs’ home languages as resources in the classroom. Findings across the two focal teachers revealed their respect for language diversity, which inform a consideration of teaching ELs in linguistically responsive ways by showing respect for and interest in their HL (Giouroukakis & Honigsfeld, 2010; Calderon et al., 2011). ELs can achieve more if they feel that their L1 is used as resources in their learning (Rao & Morales, 2015).
The study was conducted in one rural, elementary school with two teachers as participants through an exploratory study. Based on the study’s findings, the two focal teachers showed limited evidence of LRT in their teaching practices with ELs. Future research studies could focus on more participants, e.g., four to six teachers across different grade levels or investigate LRT in two different school settings. Variations across samples in studies like this could yield richer, descriptive data to establish case studies that examine LRT practices of teachers in rural settings. It would be instructive to learn from more teachers to verify whether LRT is being implemented across the school district of Flag County. In addition, it would be instructive to learn how application of the LRT framework applies to rural educational contexts internationally.

Teaching

Findings of the study emphasized the limitations of evidence of LRT in the focal teachers’ practices. These limitations suggest that EL teachers in rural settings face a wide array of challenges, ranging from limited knowledge of LRT to pedagogical challenges inherent in rural classroom settings like lack of resources and multiple roles that teachers have. This study suggests the necessity of PD opportunities for EL teachers that are focused on developing their orientations and language-related knowledge and skills that they need to enact LRT. Undoubtedly, Farrah and Chanda are well-intentioned teachers of ELs. Even the most well-meaning teachers can unintentionally provide instruction that may not meet the needs of students. The efforts that they manifested in their curriculum, in their pedagogy, in their interactions with their ELs represent a change in their perspectives and dispositions and which may be all that is possible in their rural classrooms. Yet, their efforts need to be complemented with the
basic orientations and knowledge and skills to enable them to deliver quality instruction for their ELs despite many limitations brought by circumstances in rural settings.

The teachers extensively talked about the importance of parent-teacher communication as integral to their enactment of LRT in their classrooms. The discourse on parent involvement and engagement as vital in the effective instruction of ELs in rural settings is affirmed by previous studies (e.g., Calderon et al., 2011; Coady, 2019; Hite & Evans, 2006; Rao & Morales, 2015). In the same vein, both teachers in the study perceived that parent support could enable them to enact LRT. The study suggests that rural EL teachers need to further strengthen and/or identify creative and effective ways to engage and involve families and parents in the education of their children. Integral to this is the necessity to build differentiated relationships (Coady, 2019) with ELs’ parents and families to enable teachers to fully understand that the dynamics of Hispanic families are culturally different from the set-up of families in the US and other cultures.

However, findings of the study also revealed that the two teachers had generalized knowledge and/or false assumptions about their EL students and their parents and families. For example, Farrah assumed that Latin American countries “may not value their children’s education” and Chanda perceived that ELs’ parents cannot support their children academically because “they are not cognitively able to do so, and they need to work long hours.” However, their deficit perspectives should not be construed as forms of oppressive ideologies nor signals of resistance towards learning about other cultures. As White, middle class teachers, their thinking about culture, their lack of preparation, education, or continuing professional development regarding LRT contribute to teachers’ formation of deficit perspectives. In addition, their “common
sense” about how parent involvement should look like, which are still strongly anchored in their dominant, Eurocentric ideologies also limit their capacities to build differentiated relationships (Coady, 2019) with ELs’ parents and families. The study then suggests that teachers need to examine themselves, their assumptions and values that they bring to teaching. Teachers should be “willing to be disturbed” (Wheatley, 2002) by having their beliefs and ideologies challenged by their own teaching practices that are not responsive to the need of their learners.

**Teacher Education**

Implications from this study emphasize the importance of the combination of LRT orientations and language-related knowledge and skills that are vital to teachers’ instruction of ELs (Tandon et al., 2017). Although the LRT principles are wide-ranging and complex, it is not impossible for teachers to develop this pedagogy over time with strong professional development and ongoing on-site support. In addition, strong leadership to support teachers appears to play a role. In other words, despite LRT’s complexity, it is important for teachers to possess a wide spectrum of orientations and pedagogical expertise to effectively teach ELs. In the light of this, the study suggests that reforms in teacher preparation programs focusing on teacher candidates’ development of the LRT orientations, skills and knowledge is needed. In particular, teacher education courses need to incorporate linguistic courses (Lucas & Villegas, 2011) or ESOL-infused courses (Coady, Harper, & de Jong, 2011) across the curriculum. These efforts are vital in developing preservice teachers’ baseline knowledge of language forms and functions that enable them to engage in analyzing language demands inherent in classroom tasks (Lucas & Villegas, 2011). In addition, an emphasis on language-related teaching strategies that include a critical perspective on
second language teaching in teacher education curricula could equip teacher candidates with the necessary knowledge and skills to enact LRT.

Teacher preparation programs for rural settings also need to incorporate place-based education (Greenwood, 2031; Gruenewald, 2003) in the teacher education curriculum for EL teachers. Although place-based consciousness or an awareness of the rural context and its inherent characteristics that are “pedagogical” were not evident in the teachers’ practices, they demonstrated place-based awareness. Their awareness of the rural context and its inherent dynamics shaped their instruction of ELs. The study suggests that teacher preparation programs for EL teachers in rural settings should incorporate place-based and place-conscious education (Comber et al., 2007; Greenwood, 2013; Gruenewald, 2003) into their curriculum. A curricular reform could integrate place-based education and LRT that aims at preparing teachers to effectively teach ELs in rural settings. Preparing teachers to negotiate the challenges of cultural and linguistic diversity in rural settings enables them to expand their repertoires of teaching practices for ELs in rural schools (Eppley, 2015).

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I discussed the potential implications of this dissertation for research, teaching, and teacher education. In terms of research, future studies could utilize the findings of this exploratory research as baseline information for empirically examining teachers’ LRT practices in rural, classroom settings. In terms of teaching, the study’s findings suggest the need for teachers’ to continually undergo self-reflection and examination to enable them to enhance their instruction for ELs. For teacher education, the study’s findings could be useful, as they offer important implications for the need to consider LRT as a pedagogy in effectively teaching ELs.
APPENDIX A
END NOTES

1 i-Ready – an online program designed as differentiated instruction, integrating powerful assessments to address students’ individual needs; recognizes the many assets ELs bring to the classroom by promoting engagement and access, integrating strategic scaffold, and supporting academic language development (Curriculum Associates, 2019).

2 ESE – in the southeastern US state where the study was conducted, children with disabilities who need specially designed instruction and related services are called exceptional students and the help given them is called exceptional students education, thus ESE. The purpose of ESE is to help each child with a disability progress in school and prepare for life after school. Services may include technology devices, therapy, special transportation, or other supports (FL DOE, 2012).

3 All names of persons, towns, schools and school districts used in the study are pseudonyms.

4 Scrooge – the main character in the story book “A Christmas Carol” who was a mean-spirited, miserly old man.

5 CPALMS – Collaborate, Plan, Align, Learn, Motivate and Share; State of Florida’s official source for standards information and course descriptions that provides access to standards-aligned, free, and high-quality instructional/education resources.

6 NEFEC – North East Florida Educational Consortium; a regional, non-profit, educational service agency that provides cooperative services to small and rural member districts
October ______, 2018

To whom it may concern

Re: Conduct of data collection in VES

I am Mark Preston S. Lopez, a PhD in Curriculum and Instruction candidate of the University of Florida. I am currently working on my dissertation which is titled “Examining Teachers’ Linguistically Responsive Teaching Practices in Rural Elementary Classrooms”. The purpose of the study is to examine the teaching practices of elementary teachers in their classrooms which have English learners, and how these practices support their language and literacy needs. In addition, the study shall also examine the role that the school, classroom and societal contexts play in shaping teachers’ LRT practices.

In relation to this, I would like to seek permission from your office to observe the classrooms of selected teacher-participants in the study. Through the careful use of a selection criteria, I have selected two (2) teachers from Verona to be the participants in the study. I will be seeking their consent to participate in the study. The classroom observations will be undertaken twice a week for 6 weeks. Besides the classroom observations, I will also be conducting interviews with the selected teachers. Additionally, I will be documenting some archival documents from the two school as additional data for the study.

Rest assured that the identities of the teachers shall be protected and that all data gathered from the two schools will be treated with utmost confidentiality and shall be used exclusively for the purposes of the study.

I look forward to your favorable response to this request. More power!

Very truly yours,

MARK PRESTON S. LOPEZ
PhD in Curriculum & Instruction candidate
October ______, 2018

The School Principal
Verona Elementary School

Dear ____________:

I am Mark Preston S. Lopez, a PhD in Curriculum and Instruction candidate of the University of Florida. I am currently working on my dissertation which is titled “Examining Teachers’ Linguistically Responsive Teaching Practices in Rural Elementary Classrooms”. The purpose of the study is to examine the teaching practices of elementary teachers in their classrooms which have English learners, and how these practices support their language and literacy needs. In addition, the study shall also examine the role that the school, classroom and societal contexts play in shaping teachers’ LRT practices.

In relation to this, I would like to seek permission from your office to observe the classrooms of selected teacher-participants in the study. Through the careful use of a selection criteria, I have selected ______________ and ______________ to be the participants from your esteemed school, and they have provided consent to be the participants in the study. The classroom observations will be undertaken twice a week for 1.5 to 2 hours. Besides the classroom observations, I will also be conducting interviews with the selected teachers. Additionally, I will be documenting some archival documents from your school as additional date for the study.

Rest assured that the identities of the teachers shall be protected and that all data gathered from your school will be treated with utmost confidentiality and shall be used exclusively for the purposes of the study.

I look forward to your favorable response to this request. More power!

Very truly yours,

MARK PRESTON S. LOPEZ
PhD in Curriculum & Instruction candidate
APPENDIX D
LETTER TO RECRUIT PARTICIPANTS

October ______, 2018

________________________________
Verona Elementary School

Dear ________________:

I am Mark Preston S. Lopez, a PhD in Curriculum and Instruction candidate of the University of Florida. I am currently working on my dissertation which is titled “Examining Teachers’ Linguistically Responsive Teaching Practices in Rural Elementary Classrooms”. The purpose of the study is to examine the teaching practices of elementary teachers in their classrooms which have English learners, and how these practices support their language and literacy needs. In addition, the study shall also examine the role that the school, classroom and societal contexts play in shaping teachers’ LRT practices.

In relation to this, I would like to invite you to participate in this study. I am looking for four (4) elementary teachers who: (a) have a minimum of 4 years of teaching experience; (b) are teaching within K-5 level in the school district of Flag County, particularly in the town of Verona; (c) holds either a Bachelors/Masters degree; (d) has previous experiences with teaching English learners (ELs); and (e) have ESOL endorsement or earned points leading to endorsement. You have been carefully selected because you are believed to fit these criteria.

Participants will be asked to do the following:
- sign the IRB consent form, to be scanned, and returned over e-mail
- be willing to be observed by the undersigned in their classrooms from September 2018 to January 2019
- participate in 3 audio-recorded interviews, lasting 60-90 minutes each (scheduled over the course of a month or so and at your convenience)

With the topic of the study and the level of commitment involved, and if you are interested in participating in the study, please provide me your phone number and let me know when you are available for a brief phone call to discuss the project.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Mark Preston S. Lopez
# APPENDIX E
## ESTIMATED TIMETABLE FOR DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Data collection Methods</th>
<th>Instruments</th>
<th>Expected output</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>First semi-structured interview (60-90 minutes) with two (2) participants: to establish a good rapport with teachers and to gather personal and professional info</td>
<td>Interview Guide (Appendix H) Audio-recording</td>
<td>Audio-recorded interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Classroom Observation (Phase 1)</td>
<td>ELL-Modified Danielson rubric</td>
<td>Completed rubric assessment of teachers’ practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Classroom Observation (Phase 2): Focused on teachers’ practices with ELs</td>
<td>Teachers’ lesson plans</td>
<td>Observation field notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collection of textual documents</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Encoded and analyzed observation notes</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post-observation interview 2 (20 minutes)</td>
<td>Interview Guide (Appendix I)</td>
<td>Lesson plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Memos/analyzed notes on artefacts and their significance to the phenomenon under study</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Classroom Observation (Phase 1)</td>
<td>ELL-Modified Danielson rubric</td>
<td>Completed rubric assessment of teachers’ practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Recorded and transcribed audiofiles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Classroom Observation (Phase 1)</td>
<td>ELL-Modified Danielson rubric</td>
<td>Completed rubric assessment of teachers’ practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Classroom Observation (Phase 2): Focused on teachers’ practices with ELs</td>
<td>Teachers’ lesson plans</td>
<td>Observation field notes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Encoded and analyzed observation notes</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Classroom Observation (Phase 1)</td>
<td>ELL-Modified Danielson rubric</td>
<td>Completed rubric assessment of teachers’ practices Observation field notes <em>Encoded and analyzed observation notes</em></td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set 2</td>
<td>Classroom Observation (Phase 2): Focused on teachers’ practices with ELs</td>
<td>Teachers’ lesson plans</td>
<td>Lesson plans <em>Memos/analyzed notes on artefacts and their significance to the phenomenon under study</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collection of textual documents</td>
<td>Interview Guide (Appendix I)</td>
<td>Recorded and transcribed audiofiles</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post-observation interview (20 minutes)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 5</th>
<th>Classroom Observation (Phase 1)</th>
<th>ELL-Modified Danielson rubric</th>
<th>Completed rubric assessment of teachers’ practices Observation field notes <em>Encoded and analyzed observation notes</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Set 1</td>
<td>Classroom Observation (Phase 2): Focused on teachers’ practices with ELs</td>
<td>Observation protocol (Appendix G)</td>
<td>Lesson plans <em>Memos/analyzed notes on artefacts and their significance to the phenomenon under study</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collection of textual documents</td>
<td>Teachers’ lesson plans</td>
<td>Recorded and transcribed audiofiles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post-observation interview (20 minutes)</td>
<td>Interview Guide (Appendix I)</td>
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<tr>
<th>Week 6</th>
<th>Classroom Observation (Phase 1)</th>
<th>ELL-Modified Danielson rubric</th>
<th>Completed rubric assessment of teachers’ practices Observation field notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Set 2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Observation protocol</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers’ lesson plans</th>
<th>LESSON PLANS</th>
<th>MEMOS/ANALYZED NOTES ON ARTEFACTS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE TO THE PHENOMENON UNDER STUDY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ELL-Modified Danielson rubric</td>
<td>Observation protocol</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Collection of textual documents
Post-observation interview (20 minutes)
Interview Guide (Appendix I)
Lesson plans
*Encoded and analyzed observation notes*
| Classroom Observation (Phase 2): Focused on teachers’ practices with ELs | Final Interview (60-90 minutes): to clarify possible vague information, to do member-check and to thank participants in person | *Encoded and analyzed observation notes*<sup>*</sup>  
Lesson plans  
*Memos/analyzed notes on artefacts and their significance to the phenomenon under study*  
Recorded and transcribed audiofiles |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collection of textual documents</td>
<td>Teachers’ lesson plans</td>
<td>Interview Guide (Appendix J)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>*</sup>-Data collection and analysis will be done simultaneously each week; at the end of each week, analyzed field notes/memos will be produced

♦ Set 1: Teacher 1 will be observed Monday and Wednesday (MW) while Teacher 2 will be observed Tuesday and Thursday (TTh)

♦ Set 2: Teacher 1 will be observed Tuesdays and Thursday (TTh) while Teacher 2 will be observed Monday and Wednesday (MW)
## APPENDIX F

**OBSERVATION SCHEDULE FOR STUDY PARTICIPANTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schedule set</th>
<th>Farrah</th>
<th>Chanda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Set 1</td>
<td>Nov. 13 (Tues)</td>
<td>Nov. 14 (Wed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nov. 15 (Thurs)</td>
<td>Nov. 16 (Fri)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set 2</td>
<td>Nov. 26 (Mon)</td>
<td>Nov. 27 (Tues)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nov. 28 (Wed)</td>
<td>Nov. 29 (Thurs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set 1</td>
<td>Dec. 4 (Tues)</td>
<td>Dec. 3 (Mon)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dec. 6 (Thurs)</td>
<td>Dec. 5 (Wed)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Set 2</td>
<td>Dec. 10 (Mon)</td>
<td>Dec. 11 (Tues)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dec. 12 (Wed)</td>
<td>Dec. 13 (Thurs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set 1</td>
<td>Jan. 15 (Tues)</td>
<td>Jan. 14 (Mon)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jan. 17 (Thurs)</td>
<td>Jan. 16 (Wed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set 2</td>
<td>Jan. 23 (Wed)</td>
<td>Jan. 22 (Tues)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jan. 25 (Fri)</td>
<td>Jan. 24 (Thurs)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX G
ELL-MODIFIED DANIELSON RUBRIC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory “ELL”</th>
<th>Developing/NI “ELL”</th>
<th>Effective “ELL”</th>
<th>Highly Effective “ELL”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2a: Creating an environment of respect and rapport</td>
<td>Teacher does not create an atmosphere of respect and/or support for ELLs. Examples include not affirming the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of ELLs; not showing respect; lack of general warmth, caring and sensitivity appropriate to cultural and linguistic differences of groups of students. L1 is ignored or de-valued as resource for learning.</td>
<td>Teacher infrequently or sometimes creates an atmosphere of respect and/or support for ELLs. Examples include inconsistent and/or ineffective attempts affirming the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of ELLs; inconsistent and/or ineffective show of respect, general warmth, caring and sensitivity appropriate to cultural and linguistic differences of groups of students. L1 typically not integrated as resource for learning.</td>
<td>Teacher generally and effectively creates an atmosphere of respect and/or support for ELLs. Examples include affirming the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of ELLs; showing respect, general warmth, caring and sensitivity appropriate to cultural and linguistic differences of groups of students. L1 may be used as a resource for learning.</td>
<td>Teacher consistently and effectively creates an atmosphere of respect and/ or support for ELLs. Examples include affirming the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of ELLs; acknowledging students and families with respect, genuine warmth and caring, and sensitivity to students’ cultures; L1 is used as resource for learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2b: Establishing a culture for learning</td>
<td>Teacher does not establish a culture for EL learning.</td>
<td>Teacher infrequently or sometimes establishes a culture</td>
<td>Teacher generally and effectively establishes a culture</td>
<td>Teacher consistently and effectively establishes a culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2c: Managing classroom procedures</td>
<td>Teacher does not manage classroom procedures for ELLs. Examples include loss of instructional time with ELLs due to inefficient classroom routines, procedures, and transitions not being modified to assist ELLs.</td>
<td>Teacher infrequently or sometimes demonstrates management of classroom procedure for ELLs. Examples include the loss of instructional time due to inconsistent and/or ineffective classroom routines, procedures, and transitions with little language modification to assist ELLs; little to no use of visual support.</td>
<td>Teacher generally and effectively manages classroom procedures for ELLs. Examples include classroom routines and procedures that are predictable and clear to ELLs and may have visual support; little instructional time is lost.</td>
<td>Teacher consistently and effectively manages classroom procedures for ELLs. Examples include classroom routines and procedures that are predictable, consistent and clear to ELLs; common rules and procedures are comprehensible with the aid of visuals/posters or the use of L1; teacher explicitly explains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2d: Managing student behavior</td>
<td>Teacher does not manage student behavior for ELLs. Examples include having no evidence that standards of conduct have been established, and little or no teacher monitoring of student behavior; response to ELL misbehavior is disrespectful; appropriate ELL behavior makes ELL invisible or almost ignored.</td>
<td>Teacher infrequently or sometimes demonstrates management of student behavior. Examples include evidence of inconsistent and/or ineffective establishment of standards of conduct, and inconsistent and/or ineffective teacher monitoring of student behavior; response to ELL misbehavior is sometimes disrespectful.</td>
<td>Teacher generally and effectively manages student behavior. Examples include standards of conduct that are generally clear to ELLs (possibly visible/written); teacher uses culturally and linguistically appropriate management strategies.</td>
<td>Teacher consistently and effectively manages student behavior. Examples include standards of conduct are clear (visible/written) to ELLs and culturally and linguistically appropriate. Students, including ELLs, take an active role in classroom organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2e: Organizing physical space</td>
<td>Teacher does not organize the physical environment in a safe and inclusive way that fosters learning for ELLs.</td>
<td>Teacher infrequently or sometimes demonstrates organization of the physical space. Examples include safe space but not always inclusive; limited use of</td>
<td>Teacher generally and effectively organizes of the physical space. Examples include a safe and often inclusive classroom for ELL learning; desk placement and</td>
<td>Teacher consistently and effectively organizes the physical space. Examples include a classroom that is safe and inclusive; class space that supports ELL practice for English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Component</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory “ELL”</td>
<td>Developing/NI “ELL”</td>
<td>Effective “ELL”</td>
<td>Highly Effective “ELL”</td>
</tr>
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<td>3a: Communicating with students</td>
<td>Teacher does not communicate with ELLs. Examples include unclear communication or no communication of expectations for ELL learning; directions and procedures are unclear, confusing or nonexistent for ELLs; teacher language contains errors and/or is inappropriate or not adapted for ELLs’ culture or linguistic background; does not seek out language support so that miscommunication</td>
<td>Teacher infrequently or sometimes communicates/sometimes communicates effectively with ELLs. Examples include inconsistent and/or ineffective communication of expectations for ELL learning; directions and procedures are limited and/or sometimes unclear; explanations of content are clarified after initial confusion; typically does not seek out language support so that miscommunication and student</td>
<td>Teacher generally and effectively communicates with ELLs. Examples include clear expectations for ELL learning, including clear directions, and procedures; explanations are generally clear to ELLs and reflect students’ cultures and linguistic development; teacher seeks out language support, which is generally responsive to learner needs/abilities, to ensure smooth communication; r</td>
<td>Teacher consistently and effectively communicates with ELLs. Examples include clear expectations for ELL learning; including clear directions, and procedures for ELLs and the use of multiple languages; teacher seeks out language support to ensure smooth communication and proactively seeks to reduce student miscommunication and misconceptions.</td>
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<td>3b: Using questioning and discussion techniques</td>
<td>Teacher does not use appropriate questioning and/or discussion techniques appropriate to ELLs' linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Examples include little to no use of questions, wait time, sentence frames or starters, visual aids or grouping strategies.</td>
<td>Teacher infrequently or sometimes uses limited questioning and/or discussion techniques appropriate to ELLs' linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Examples include yes/no questions, known answers, one-word answers for all ELLs without considering linguistic proficiency; some/limited use of wait time, sentence frames/starters, visual aids and grouping strategies.</td>
<td>Teacher generally and effectively uses questioning and/or discussion techniques appropriate to ELLs' linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Examples include general use of questions across the stages of proficiency, wait time, sentence frames, visual aids, grouping. Techniques align with WIDA (Can Do Descriptors, ELD levels).</td>
<td>Teacher consistently and effectively uses questioning and/or discussion strategies for ELLs. Examples include consistent use of questions across proficiency levels, wait time, modeling, sentence frames, visual aids, grouping, meta-linguistic and/or meta-cognitive techniques; techniques are aligned with WIDA (Can Do Descriptors, ELD levels).</td>
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<td>3c: Engaging students in learning</td>
<td>Teacher does not engage ELLs in learning. Examples include no evidence of activities and a lesson.</td>
<td>Teacher infrequently or sometimes engages ELLs in learning. Examples include a lesson that</td>
<td>Teacher generally and effectively engages ELL students in learning. Examples include</td>
<td>Teacher consistently and effectively engages ELLs in learning. Examples include ELLs that appear to be</td>
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<td>3d: Using Assessment in Instruction</td>
<td>Teacher does not demonstrate use of assessment in instruction for ELLs. Examples include no monitoring of ELL learning; ELLs not made aware of assessment criteria; no feedback to ELLs; no awareness of ELL progress.</td>
<td>Teacher infrequently or sometimes demonstrates use of assessment in instruction for ELLs. Examples include some/little monitoring of ELL learning; some/limited feedback to ELLs; partial awareness of ELL work; one-word feedback; little to no positive and/or constructive feedback.</td>
<td>Teacher generally and effectively demonstrates use of assessment in instruction for ELLs. Examples include regular monitoring of progress and learning; language repair or immediate scaffolding; (immediate scaffolding); wait time in assessment. Generally provides positive and/or constructive feedback in response.</td>
<td>Teacher consistently and effectively demonstrates use of assessment in instruction for ELLs. Examples include assessment that is sophisticated and woven throughout the instruction and lesson; adapted for ELLs’ language proficiency levels, and informs ongoing instruction; frequent and regular formal and informal assessments of ELLs’ comprehension; identifies instructional needs.</td>
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<td>assignments, materials, and/or groupings of ELLs.</td>
<td>has a recognizable structure and student activity but is not fully maintained and has few or no strategies for eliciting talk/participation/thinking together for ELLs.</td>
<td>activities and assignments, materials, groupings of students appropriate for ELLs’ language ability levels and cultural backgrounds; and strategies for eliciting student thinking and interaction.</td>
<td>engaged throughout the lesson; materials are ready and used to scaffold ELL learning; lessons move from macro to micro to provide specific supports for various ELLs at different language ability levels and backgrounds; and strategies for eliciting student thinking and interaction.</td>
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<td>3e: Demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness</td>
<td>Teacher does not demonstrate flexibility and responsiveness to the instruction plan for ELLs, even when a change would improve the lesson or interest of ELLs. Examples include the teacher's dismissal of ELL questions when they experience difficulty; No instructional strategies targeting ELLs across stages of language proficiency.</td>
<td>Teacher infrequently or sometimes demonstrates flexibility and responsiveness to the instruction plan for ELLs. Examples include an attempt sometimes to modify the lesson for ELLs when needed; sometimes anticipates or responds to ELL questions with moderate to little success. Few to no instructional strategies targeting ELLs across stages of language proficiency.</td>
<td>Teacher generally and effectively demonstrates flexibility and responsiveness to the instruction plan for ELLs. Examples include promoting successful learning specific to ELLs; modifying tasks to accommodate ELLs’ questions, interests, and needs; appropriate repertoire of instructional strategies targeting ELLs across stages of language proficiency.</td>
<td>Teacher consistently and effectively demonstrates flexibility and responsiveness to the instruction plan for ELLs. Examples include continually identifying opportunities for enhancing ELL learning of language and content; planned and unplanned (micro scaffolded) instruction specific to ELLs’ linguistic levels and cultural background; extensive repertoire of instructional strategies targeting ELLs across stages of language proficiency.</td>
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Observer Name: ________________________________________________
APPENDIX H
FIRST INTERVIEW GUIDE

At the start of the conversation, remind the participant about the informed consent and the goals for the study.

Rationale: The first interview is designed to: (a) establish rapport with the teachers; (b) gather some personal and professional information from the teachers which will help establish a baseline for comprehensively understanding their instructional practices.

1. Tell me about yourself as a teacher. Has your teaching evolved over time? If so, why do you think it has evolved? That is, what has shaped the evolution of your teaching?

2. Tell me about the community or communities in which you grew up. What are your significant experiences growing up?

3. Tell me about your experience as a student in elementary school. What was school like for you? How do you think teachers perceived you?

4. Do you think you received a high quality education? What kinds of things explain your views of the quality of the education you received? That is, why do you see your education as strong or not so strong?

5. Did the community you lived in affect the quality of your education? Tell me about this.

6. What kind of preparation have you had in teaching English learners? What experience have you had with ELs before coming to this school? Have you had previous professional development on teaching ELs?

7. What do you think a teacher needs to know and do to be a good teacher of English learners?
APPENDIX I
SAMPLE OF QUESTIONS ASKED DURING POST-OBSERVATION INTERVIEWS

Farrah:

In today's review of their Math homework, I liked how you went through details in working on the word problems, by going through the process step by step which I think is a good strategy. At the same time, you also did a good work in contextualizing the word problem and is a good modeling strategy. How do you think is this helpful for your English learners?

You also taught today by basing your instruction on your observations yesterday about students' misconceptions on certain concepts related to Math word problems. You based your instruction today based on previous results and you demonstrated a good effort in correcting misconceptions? Is this helpful at all for ELs?

I observed that you switched seats for some students as compared to last week. Why is this?

Apart from your own self-motivation, what factors outside the classroom do you think influence your implementation of effective teaching of English learners or culturally responsive teaching?

If you were to reflect on your teaching this week, what things would you retain in terms of teaching English learners effectively?

Chanda:

I observed that you worked with a group of ELs who are struggling with written tasks. Do you do this oftentimes and why?

I think that you push students towards higher order thinking or critical thinking by asking questions that stimulate their thinking: e.g., use of reflection, use of the question “What does that mean?”, e.g., what does it mean to declare independence etc. Can you tell me more about this? “What does it mean to interpret?”

You worked with Valeria one-on-one. She is an ESE student. Why?

Based on your teaching today, what aspects do you consider as strong points in terms of teaching ELs? What aspects do you consider as weak points?

You talked about expectations today, specifically setting high expectations for students. What is the reason behind this decision?

I observed that you switched seating arrangements. I remember you mentioned this plan before. Why did you do such?
APPENDIX J  
FINAL INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. I have observed from the previous week(s) that ____________. Why did you make such decisions? What influenced you to make these decisions in your teaching practices?

2. Since the start of this study, what are the significant changes in your teaching practices with ELs? Tell me more about this.

3. What factors do you consider shaped your teaching practices with ELs? Could you elaborate on these factors?

4. What are the strengths of a rural town? What are the weaknesses?

5. In order to implements effective teaching practices with ELs, what kind of support or resources from outside your classroom will you need?

Before the end of the interview, I will personally thank the participants and hand them the gift card as token for their participation.
APPENDIX K
SAMPLE OF MEMO WRITING

Initial interview (before the start of classroom observations)
November 12, 2018 (Interview #1)

M: OK, so about your experience as a teacher.

B: This is my 20th year in education. In my first year in kindergarten, then first grade, second grade, I started out teaching in primary, 4th grade, 5th grade. I have been an educational assistant for 7 years. I have been with CPAM for Florida State University for 2 years as an English language arts content specialist, and that allowed me to teach in the K-5 classroom and then after 2 years, the travel got too little too much on my family, so when I returned to the site I wanted to try intermediate, so I transferred over to Millington Elementary and this is my fourth year there. I teach all subjects and this is my first year teaching the ELL community classroom. I feel very about the challenges associated with teaching in an ELL classroom. I feel very about the strategies that I have used, especially with diverse learners, and as well as the needs of my school, which is part of the community, I feel very about this is very important for me to work on, find ways that we are not growing as a school, and see how I can be part of the solution to that problem.

M: Yeah.

B: This is a definite area of need in our community.

M: About me, that's a very good disposition. I'm very about your teaching over time, do you think?

B: Oh yes. I basically taught me how to teach. I'm very about book-driven, curriculum-driven, very much dependent on a specific set of resources. I'm very about that I taught me how to teach. I'm very about that I was a very reflective person, and teacher, and I learned very quickly that one-size fits all teaching did not fit me as a teacher.

M: Yes.

B: And that most curricular resources were given taught to the middle, and did not address the needs, so I began my third year of teaching really looking at professional literature, and I have for professional literature which is probably not normal.

M: About me. I've been talking to people who are interested in best practices, and looking at, taking a standards-based approach to my teaching which focused on abounds in professional practices that would carry over from year to year and build strong thinkers.

M: About me.

B: And now I am still more standards-driven. I'm more about the standards and the type of thinking we're asking students to do. I create most of my own resources, and it's very little, that's what would be considered as a stand-alone curriculum.


Green, B., & Reid, J. A. (2014). Social cartography and rural education: Researching space(s) and place(s. In S. White, & M. Corbett (Eds.), *Doing educational research in rural settings: Methodological issues, international perspectives and practical solutions* (pp. 26-40). New York: Routledge.


BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Mark Preston S. Lopez completed his Bachelor of Secondary Education degree at the University of Baguio in the Philippines. From 2001-2005, he taught at the Central Luzon State University, and from 2005 to 2010, he served as Executive Assistant to the President and taught courses in the College of Education at the Nueva Vizcaya State University. In 2012, he obtained his MA in gender & cultural studies degree at Simmons University in Boston, Massachusetts under a Ford Fellowship. He went back to the Philippines and continued teaching in the college level, particularly at the Mountain Province State Polytechnic College, and is affiliated with the Teacher Education Department. With his desire to further his graduate studies, he applied for a Fulbright Grant and took his PhD in curriculum & instruction at the University of Florida with a focus on ESOL/Bilingual Education and graduated in August 2019. His research interests include culturally and linguistically responsive teaching, ESOL/bilingual education, preservice teacher education and in-service teacher preparation, mother tongue-based multilingual education and multilingualism, and teacher professional development in rural settings.