

Decolonizing Collaboration in English Language Teaching:  
Teacher Identity and Tanzania

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**Abstract**

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This dissertation explores the dynamics of international collaboration in English language teaching from a decolonizing perspective. It examines the collaborative relationship between myself, the author, and fellow teachers of English at a university in Morogoro, Tanzania, in order to reflect more critically on the nature of cross-cultural partnerships. Together, we designed and conducted a separate, joint research project at my colleagues' university, and our resulting process of collaboration is considered here through the lens of identity, or how who we are shapes our professional choices while negotiating various discourses implicated in English language teaching including differing notions of (de)coloniality as formed locally and globally. Through a critical, ethnographically oriented study with data collected digitally and in-person from multiple sources

including participant observation, semi-structured interviews, key documents and artifacts, and my personal research journal, I examine how we negotiated the broad identities of “Participant-Researcher” and “Principal Investigator” in our shared research project. I analyze the discursive positionings that served to make sense of these roles in ways that both resist and reify coloniality as well as how we re-negotiated these roles and their inherent tensions through a discourse of interdependence. I conclude by sharing insights into how practices and conceptions of collaboration in English language teaching may be decolonized through cultivating a sense of identity-in-community; centering flexibility, community, and relationships in research design and practice; inviting conversation around power dynamics between collaborators; and engaging the emotionality of decolonizing work, though decolonizing as a term and as a process remain complicated. Overall, this dissertation aims to spur ongoing efforts to cultivate more equitable relationships between foreign and local English educators with broader implications for theorizing, practicing, and decolonizing Global North-South collaborations by working across and through difference.

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*“There is no research of one person.”* (Rahim, Interview 060222)

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### Preface

*Stopped by the movements of a huge early bumblebee which has somehow gotten inside this house... It is looking for what it needs, just as I am, and, like me, it has gotten trapped in a place where it cannot fulfill its own life. I could open the jar of honey on the kitchen counter and perhaps it would take honey from that jar; but its life process, its work, its mode of being cannot be fulfilled inside this house. And I, too, have been bumping my way against glassy panes, falling half stunned, gathering myself up and crawling, then again taking off, searching.*

Adrienne Rich, *Notes Towards a Politics of Location* (1984, p. 30)

The sensation of bumping up against a glassy pane – running head-on into a boundary unseen, falling down confused, re-grouping before continuing on with an undaunted belief in the existence of something more - is an apt metaphor for so many things: learning, teaching, traveling, working across differences of all kinds. In her context, Adrienne Rich (1984) was speaking to her dawning realization that the culture of Western feminism was very white, structured by the perspectives and values of white women, and as a white woman complicit in a system of erasure and dominance, she had not previously reckoned with the politics of her location within it. And yet, she also gives voice to “a struggle to keep moving, a struggle for accountability,” (p. 29) searching for a way forward that can invoke a feminist “we,” that is, a “we who are not the same. We who are many and do not want to be the same” (p. 38).

I began and return to this work with similar sentiments. For me, the “house” that Rich speaks of represents many things: the myth of English language as neutral; the idea of education as apolitical; the English language teaching industry in its racialized, capitalist form; the assumption that “partnership” means equity; presentations of research which obscure the identities and relationships to which it is owed. The honey in these notions is sweet and tempting, but I know it will not sate me as it once did.

There is also the potential to get stuck in them, trapped in a place that is ultimately unfulfilling. We have to keep moving, beyond this house, searching for sweetness elsewhere.

## Background

### Unsettled Curiosity

In 2015, as an English Language Fellow with the U.S. Department of State, I was assigned to work on a curriculum project at Sokoine University of Agriculture in Morogoro, Tanzania. The project was to revise two courses in the communication skills sequence which provide English language instruction for general population students. The project was initiated by the Department of Language Studies at the university in order to make the courses more communicative in nature; they reported that students entering the university had some linguistic knowledge of English but lacked practice in using the language for communication, and this affected their academic performance, as English is the institutionally-preferred language of instruction at the university level in the multilingual context of Tanzania. These two courses as they were previously taught focused on linguistic features of English, and the department wanted to re-orient their teaching towards skills for communicating in English. However, the members of the department who were to become my colleagues faced daunting challenges including but not limited to lack of student motivation for participatory learning, insufficient classroom spaces that inhibited movement and student conversation, lack of resources such as reliable electricity and internet, and large class sizes of 100+ students at that time, though these numbers would continue to grow to over 300 by the time I returned for the present research, seven years later. In spite of these challenges, the members of the department sought to make their teaching more communicative in the interests of supporting student learning and aligning with current received wisdom for effective English Language teaching (ELT). In addition, effective teaching of English language as a medium of education at the university was also meant to resonate with Tanzania's national development goal of training the workforce for sustainable use of science and technology (URT, 1999).

From July to October 2015, we worked together to revise the curriculum and create materials to support the new learning objectives. In the end, we created a skills-based sequence of topics for two courses and a student activity book for one of the courses. This was in addition to two intensive professional development sessions: one week-long session of workshops to guide curriculum and materials building, and one two-day session to review the student activity book.

The work we did together helped to a certain extent to achieve a “paradigm shift” in teaching English for communication; colleagues reported that the materials we created were an improvement from the past in that the course focus was content themes rather than grammatical structures which were placed in context, based on situations students would encounter in their lives with learning objectives built upon in a spiral nature with material recurring with increased complexity (Mohamed, 2018). As a testament, the curriculum and materials we created in 2015 were still in use as of 2023. Overall, it seemed like our work was a success.

More importantly to me, perhaps, was that our working relationship seemed overwhelmingly positive. I personally was struck by the rapport that we had as a group, and it prompted me to reflect on other experiences that I had had as an English teacher on the African continent in Senegal, Lesotho, and Burundi. This relationship, by contrast, seemed more *equitable*, as if my colleagues and I were more mutually engaged in exchanging ideas and working towards shared goals. However, I began to question this: was the relationship as equitable as I imagined, or remember? This unsettled curiosity has been a constant companion in my English teaching career, knowing that English language learning and teaching has a dark underbelly and that as a white American and so-called native English speaker I benefit from and contribute to harmful, interrelated systems of inequity, and I still wonder about my role in it all. I know that our initial collaboration was not immune to these global complexities, but I wondered if my colleagues share these concerns and how our ongoing collaboration functions as a microcosm of larger

tensions in the field. I wondered how we make sense of the work we do, given who we are, and how we negotiate across our differences.

To explore these and other questions, I sought to work with this group again on a project to benefit their department and then study the collaborative process to interrogate both the challenges and possibilities for working together. I think of this reflective process as decolonizing work, with an awareness that both the label and the labor involved are complex (i.e., Tuck and Yang, 2012), and this idea will be unpacked throughout my analysis here as well as through my ongoing collaboration with this group. I believe the decolonizing work I am referring to, a type of deconstruction and reconstruction, should be done in and through collaboration working across difference in dialogue with the Other - a capitalized term that I will use throughout this dissertation to denote and honor the people who may be socially constructed as different than the self. I believe that working through collaboration allows particularly those from the Global North to re-examine assumptions and develop a sense of interdependence from which we can cultivate social change, and this conviction will be elaborated further throughout my analysis. For now, I would like to introduce some of the key concepts that have emerged as meaningful in this process and foreground how they have structured my work.

## Key Concepts

### Decolonizing

By “decolonizing,” I refer to acknowledging and rooting out coloniality (Mignolo, 2011, as cited in Morreira, 2017), or the enduring habits of mind and behavior as a legacy of colonialism that continue to structure our senses of self and Other, while simultaneously moving towards other ways of being (Mbembe, 2016; Ngũgĩ, 1986; Santos, 2012). I choose to use this term as a verb in its active form to emphasize the dynamic nature of decolonizing as both an ongoing process and necessary labor. I see this labor in an unsettled, uneasy solidarity that is incommensurate with other more material forms of decolonizing work happening around the world (Tuck and Yang, 2012), including on the lands of the Tulalip, Suquamish, and Muckleshoot nations and Duwamish peoples on which I live and practice. As

such, I acknowledge that this term is a contested one, further highlighted by discussions with the participants in this study in which my terminology was deemed "not wrong, but not shared" (Rahim, GM102522), with more details explained in Chapter 4. Throughout these important reflections and contestations, however, I have maintained my view that the field of English language education has been profoundly shaped by colonialism and ongoing coloniality (e.g., Motha, 2014), and I have become more conscious than ever of how colonial dynamics continue to shape the production of knowledge in academia, particularly around concepts key to my study such as identity (e.g., Sandhu and Higgins, 2016). By noticing, critiquing, and attempting to move beyond the taken-for-granted assumptions in my fields, I see my research as an exercise in decolonizing not only our understandings of notions such as identity and collaboration but also offering alternatives rooted in more expansive, relational ways of being (e.g., Chilisa, 2020; Sarr, 2020). A necessary part of this work has also been maintaining critical reflexivity (Hughes and Pennington, 2017) about my own role in reproducing as well as resisting coloniality, including ongoing grappling with the implications of theoretical appropriation of concepts such as Ubuntu which will be explored in Chapter 5 (see also Lynch and Motha, 2023). Overall, I wish to cultivate decolonizing as an invitation to rethink our present in the context of a past (Mamdani, as cited in Makuva and Shinza, 2017, p. 6) as a new habit of mind which can inform a more equitable future.

### Identity and Interdependence

Identity and interdependence are two other key terms in this work, and in exploring the co-construction of identities as a function of and gesture towards our inherent interdependence on the Other, I discuss them here in tandem. I have come to understand identity as *who we are in the world*, a complex and dynamic interaction between individual action and the discourses made available to us by history and socially specific constructions of personhood (Bourdieu, 1992; Fairclough, 1995; Menard-Warwick, 2005). By discourses, I refer to both *ways of being in the world* tied to individual beliefs and global ideologies as well as *the language we use* to both reflect and shape our human experience (Gee,

2012). I believe that individuals have a degree of choice in how we perform (Butler, 1990) or position ourselves (Davies and Harré, 1990; van Langenhove and Harré, 1999) and that this often happens through language use as well as social interaction; however, experience has taught me that the choices we have in any given moment are constrained by *who others think we are in the world*. Thus, who we are can shift from moment to moment and varies with context, and I hold this resulting flexibility inherent in *who we can be* as a source of great hope for changing our societies and wider world.

This research is born of the belief that how we see ourselves has a profound impact on what we do, and its findings suggest that learning to see ourselves as interdependent with others can motivate us to work towards justice for all. For example, the ways that teachers perceive themselves, as well as the ways they are perceived by others around them, influence the choices they make in classrooms and how they interact with colleagues (e.g., Kayi-Adar et al., 2019; Trent, 2012; Varghese et al., 2016). While this study is locally specific with findings that are not generalizable, I think it gestures towards personal orientations that each of us can cultivate to inform small-scale choices made in connection with a wider whole that is in desperate need of greater care. For example, seeing oneself as interdependent with the people of the sinking shores of Kiribati could influence us whether or not to accept a plastic bag at the grocery store or take public transit to work. Seeing oneself as interdependent with Others experiencing the daily grind of oppression in the form of racism or transphobia could encourage us to speak up at a family gathering when a relative tells a seemingly innocuous joke. I maintain a steadfast idealism that these small changes start ripples around us, rooted in a sense of oneself as “intimately and integrally” connected to the well-being of Others (Chun, 2016, p. 568). Perhaps we are not just interconnected but *interdependent* on the Other: we *need* the Other, and our well-being is dependent on theirs. To call ourselves human is to recognize and nurture the humanity of the Other. When they are de-humanized, we are de-humanized. Our collective dignity and survival are dependent on the dignity and survival of all.

But humanity, identity, and interdependence are grand ideas: big abstract concepts that most people probably do not contemplate every day. Thus, it is in our relationships with the others around us in everyday settings such as school, work, and the market, where we have the chance to see ourselves reflected back and make different choices. I argue that it is in those communities where we have the most potential for change, and the change starts with ourselves and *who we think we are* in relation to Others of seeming difference.

### Identity-in-Community

For me, the notion of interdependence as an intervention in prevailing understandings of identity came from both personal experience and increased exposure to the idea of Ubuntu, a pan-African life philosophy that emphasizes the interdependence of all life forms (e.g., Chilisa, 2020) which will be discussed more in Chapter 2. I considered using the term Ubuntu to refer to the sentiment of relationality that was emergent in my research but discarded that idea because I felt doing so would be appropriating a term that did not originate from my participants' Tanzanian culture, despite appearing in many pan-African writings. Upon reading more about concepts of Ubuntu in Africanist works (e.g., Chilisa, 2020; Madzima, 2014; Makalela, 2015; Sarr, 2020; Walwema, 2021), I was struck by the similarities between this relational sense of being and the ways in which the participants in my study - my colleagues, Tanzanian university instructors, were discussing their work and senses of self within it, as described in Chapter 4. I was also struck by how exposure to these ideas was informing my own sense of self as a researcher, outsider, and collaborator. However, the term Ubuntu was not invoked by participants themselves and is not a Swahili word, and I believe inauthentic use of this term risks a form of exoticism or appropriation for (white) researcher gain. In Chapter 5, I take up these concerns and ask questions about who can employ theories and concepts from the Global South and the implications for white-identified researchers. As a result, I refer to the relational enactments of identity as *identity-in-*

*community*, offered in this dissertation and discussed in Chapter 2 as a lens to conceptualize identity outside the frame of Global North-dominated theories for decolonial purposes.

Ubuntu-inspired *identity-in-community* seemed resonant with experiences and conversations that I had contemplated both before and during this dissertation project. In time, it also became an ontology for research, following Chilisa's (2020) Ubuntu research ethic. In this way, what I have sought is not merely appropriating identity-in-community as a concept, but rather, incorporating it into how I go about my work as a researcher and colleague and letting it affect me and orient my practices. To illustrate how my own sense of Ubuntu-inspired identity-in-community has developed alongside this research, allow me to share a story.

*"Our grandmother"*

It's 10:20pm on a Monday night. I'm curled up on my couch in the fetal position, an interview with a colleague scheduled in 40 minutes, which would be 9am in Tanzania. I'm debating whether or not to cancel. We were supposed to talk the previous night, but Tabasamu, my colleague, had to unexpectedly drive a neighbor in labor to the hospital; since he has a car, the fact that he would help a neighbor in need was unquestioned. I don't want to cancel the interview again, but I can't focus right now. I just got off the phone with my dad, and then my sister; my grandmother has just passed away in Chicago. With a tight-chested sigh, I send the following WhatsApp message:

Hello. I'm so sorry to ask, but can we reschedule our interview. I have just received news that my grandmother died. I am talking with my family now, so I will not be able to do our interview.

I'm sorry for any inconvenience. (KDA033021)

He responds almost immediately with a string of emoji, five men with their hands over their little yellow heads – perhaps surprised, speechless. Under that he writes:

Oooh I am very sorry for that Renee. Oooh my condolence to you. May God almighty grant you strength and comfort in this time of grief.

May our grandmother's soul rests in eternal peace!

This is followed by another string of emoji, four yellow faces with tears pouring down their cheeks. Even though it has been years since we talked, I can hear his voice clearly in my head saying these words, and I am comforted. It's only later that I register the "our" in "our grandmother's soul" - probably a typo of "your," but the sentiment of "our grandmother" fits as well. It manifests the feeling I've had before with my colleagues that our struggles are shared and that we all accompany each other in the same human condition despite our many differences in experience.

I get the same feeling over the next few days as I receive other messages from friends, colleagues, and in particular those from the African continent. I am struck that a newly admitted graduate student who I have just met emails me from Ghana with condolences, saying that his friend, another Ghanaian graduate student who I have known for a longer time told him I had lost a loved one, and he wanted to reach out as well. The group of librarians in multiple countries across the continent that I am currently preparing with for a virtual conference presentation likewise extend their condolences when I tell them I have to cancel our meeting so I can attend my grandmother's funeral. In turn, when one of those librarians then tells me she can't attend our rescheduled meeting because she is at the hospital with a loved one in critical condition, I naturally extend her the same empathy and offer to meet with her separately about her presentation, if and when she has time. This respect for social obligations seems to be part of a broader ethic that people in similar contexts extend to each other as well, not just me. Throughout my research in Tanzania, my colleagues as participants repeatedly cited a similar reverence for death and funerals specifically, such that colleagues would readily set aside professional obligations and deadlines to honor the dead in community and expect others to do the same, for example as later illustrated by Rahim in Chapter 6 (INT113022A). In these

contexts where social relations take precedence, I feel a give and take, rooted in compassion and a sense of shared humanity that comes before conference presentations, dissertation research and rescheduled interviews. It's a sentiment that has enchanted, confused, frustrated, and amazed me as someone who was raised in a very different culture and ways of being: more individualistic, putting work and achievement first above family and social commitments.

For some time, I struggled with what to call this notably different sentiment and how to avoid essentializing it to all African people and contexts, despite the clarity that this feeling has been a common thread through the twenty African countries I have visited, though how it is expressed can vary from place to place. I have previously referred to this sentiment as "generosity of spirit," and in my experiences, it is a certain openness to connection, an ingrained care for the well-being of others, and a profound awareness of the interconnectedness of all life – human, natural, and spiritual. I have felt it on buses and beaches, in people's homes and in shared offices, during moments of exuberant celebration and quiet contemplation. It's the lived understanding is that we're all in this human condition together, and sharing is how we survive. It is more than simply interdependence, however; it's an awareness of our inherent connections to one another and also the intrinsic importance of nurturing those connections as insurance against uncertain futures. I've also heard this phenomenon described conversationally as "emotional wealth," or being wealthy in terms of friends, family, and the capacity to treat every human as part of this circle. Time is measured in people, and people are of the highest value. Everyone gives freely of themselves and expects you to do the same, with all the necessary patience and optimism, humor and humility. There is always give and take – between self and Other, us and them, present and future, trust and unknown – such that the lines between all of these become blurred. The lines remain – not erased, just ever-flexing – a sense of what I now call *identity-in-community*, or an understanding of oneself as part of a community, able to take and responsible to give back in order to derive a sense of self.

## Collaboration

This dissertation focuses on collaboration as the site of identity formation, where we interact and come to see ourselves in the Other (Chilisa, 2020, p. 241, citing Swanson). I believe that only by working in collaboration can we all move beyond existing structures of oppression to cultivate more equitable ways of relating to each other. In my research, I define collaboration as “co-labor” or laboring together, involving different labor from differently positioned co-labor-ators (Vavrus and Bartlett, 2013). I consciously choose this term as an alternative to the rhetoric of “partnership” which is often too sanguine and apolitical, assuming a form of equality which has proved elusive in many instances where Global North and Global South institutions and individuals work together (e.g., Vavrus and Seghers, 2010) as will be detailed in Chapter 2. By contrast, I want to highlight the true labor involved in working across social difference and explore the struggles or tensions we experienced in working together. I believe that examining these struggles, which may be more common than many partnerships concede, and eventually learning from them can be ultimately generative for imagining alternative ways of being in relationship with the Other.

In alignment with these wider goals, I have made efforts to cultivate collaboration in this dissertation in many aspects. For example, I have chosen to keep myself accountable to my participants by asking a member of the SUA Department of Language Studies who is also a participant in the study to serve on this dissertation committee. This approach could be perceived as unethical from a more traditional social science research standpoint in which researchers are expected to remain “objective” and somehow separate from their research and participants. However, because the focus of my dissertation, collaboration, is highly relational, my approach to ethics is relational as well. Drawing from approaches of participatory design research (e.g. Bang and Vossoughi, 2016) as well as an Ubuntu research ethic (Chilisa, 2020), the choice to involve members of the participant community from early stages of shaping my research is expressly political and decolonizing; I want to bring Global South voices to the table in critiquing research *about* them to move towards research *with* them, as the joint

research project I ended up carrying out with my colleagues aimed to be. My overall goal for my work is tied to developing more meaningful collaborations, and so involving participants from the outset is a reflection of my ethical stance towards collaboration and relationality as assets in research rather than detriments.

### Uncertainty

This dissertation has also been profoundly shaped by the uncertainty associated with the COVID-19 global pandemic. In March of 2020, as international borders were closing and the world was glued to news of a new virus spreading like wildfire, I was preparing for my doctoral exams. Later that year, I crafted the prospectus for this research not knowing if or when I would be able to visit Tanzania in person. I knew I wanted to travel there to be with my colleagues and complete a project of their choosing to benefit their department, both as a measure of reciprocity and also as a scene of collaboration for my research, but the vision for how exactly that could happen remained vague and hazy. Awaiting clearance to travel, I began collecting data virtually in Winter 2021, conversing electronically with colleagues in interviews, messages, and group meetings. In 2022, I was eventually able to travel to Tanzania two times for a total of six months of in-person data collection and collaboration time. While working in person was immensely refreshing, resulting in richer data and deeper analysis, I realized that any uncertainty I had been assigning to pandemic conditions had in fact been a constant in my work all along.

I have felt the uncertainty acutely even as I analyze my so-called “findings,” working through the complexities of studying identity in a cross-cultural space structured by ongoing coloniality and particularly when exploring the role of race and gender in our collaborative relationship; while I know that identity categories are locally, socially-constructed and often rooted in colonial ideologies (e.g. Appiah, 2018) and therefore open to deconstruction and decolonial blurring as perhaps further encouraged by Ubuntu-inspired sensibilities (e.g. Chilisa, 2020), I have struggled with how to fully and

ethically represent my gendered interactions as a woman while being aware of my race as white, with the power to exert racialized harm and feed racist narratives (e.g. Appleby 2010, Hamad, 2020), as I will outline in Chapter 5. Relatedly, I have also questioned my role as a researcher of identity and discourse which may behoove me to speculate about my colleagues' words and behaviors in authoritative, somewhat intrusive ways bordering on psychoanalysis (Block, 2006) while also being aware of the parallels with colonially rooted attitudes which naturalize the (white) gaze and perspectives of the Global North as knowledge (Said, 1978; Santos, 2012; Spivak, 1988). Therefore, as I examine and re-examine the dynamics of my collaboration with my colleagues, the unsettled curiosity that initially sparked this dissertation has remained. While I understand that the conventions of a dissertation may oblige me to carry on with an air of certainty about what I have found, I know that it is those conventions I wish to push against with this writing and related work going forward.

As a result, I feel the need to announce that this is not a dissertation about certainty. Quite the opposite: It is about uncertainty – the uncertainty of those spaces that exist in between ideas, cultures, people, and time, the spaces that we build together, mushy brick by mushy brick, with walls that still wobble with the wind despite the best hopes and intentions. This dissertation describes those shared, co-constructed spaces and attempts to shed light on what happened within them. It recounts events from my perspective and then questions if those tellings are true. It gestures towards alternative ways of looking at things and likewise questions the value of doing so. As such, this dissertation plumbs uncertainty as its strength. It delves into the messiness to explore hows and whys, and it rolls around in the mess for the purpose of holding up a lived example and seeing what we can take away from it. This dissertation does not solve problems, but it does hold space for possibilities. It advocates for thinking otherwise. It makes an effort to practice what it preaches, that is, to unsettle the status quo and invite the reader to think otherwise alongside me.

## Structure of this Dissertation

### Overview of chapters

This dissertation is structured as follows. In Chapter 1, I have introduced the background of why I have undertaken this project as well as some of the key concepts that have emerged in the process. In Chapter 2, I will discuss my theoretical framework and a review of literature related to my study; theory and literature are woven together in order to emphasize grounding theoretical knowledge in lived experience and decolonization of knowledge production which I aim to foreground in the chapter and throughout this dissertation. Chapter 3 will discuss my methodology, describing how I undertook this ethnographically oriented critical qualitative study of international collaboration through the lens of teacher identity. I will describe my methods of data collection and data analysis drawn from critical discourse analysis and positioning theory to examine how my colleagues and I negotiated the identities available to us in the course of collaboration. Chapter 4 will relate analysis of that data focused on my colleagues negotiating their roles as “Participant-researchers” and related positionings that we co-constructed to make sense of that role in our collaborative work. I will also illuminate some of the tensions that arose in our collaboration as a result of their having to negotiate a dual role, as both participants and researchers, and how colleagues seemed to re-negotiate these tensions through a discourse of interdependence which encouraged a sense of identity-in-community which can resist ongoing coloniality in collaborations. In Chapter 5, the analysis shifts to a focus on myself and how I negotiated the role of “Principal Investigator” (PI) in our collaboration and which co-constructed positionings served to make sense of that role for me and my colleagues. I also explain how these positionings make troubling allusions to the colonial figure of “Lady Bountiful,” an archetype of a nice white woman who serves the interests of empire and reifies coloniality. I describe the inner conflict that these connections sparked for me and how this tension created challenges in our collaborative work while also providing me an opportunity to re-negotiate my identities through a discourse of interdependence. I take into account valid concerns around my own theoretical appropriation of ideas

such as Ubuntu while also suggesting the potential of identity-in-community as tool towards decolonizing collaborations in English language teaching (ELT). In Chapter 6, I conclude by considering the implications of identity-in-community for international collaborations in ELT and collaboration across difference more broadly. While the nature of my analysis is locally specific and not generalizable, I offer suggestions and a next set of questions that could guide research to cultivate greater equity in decolonizing collaborations in ELT and otherwise through increased attention to identity and interdependence.

### Interconnection and Recursivity

While I have attempted to separate my analysis into a focus on my colleagues and then a focus on myself, in reality, these two foci are very intertwined and interdependent. As a result, analysis about both parties features in both Chapters 4 and 5, and I take this as further evidence of the interconnected nature of our senses of self in collaboration. In writing, I had started my analysis with a focus on myself based on data available to me during the global pandemic and then focused on my colleagues after I was able to make an in person visit to Tanzania. As a result of insights gathered through that experience and data collection in person, I then I went back and revised the analysis focused myself. In the end, I decided to foreground the voices and experiences of my colleagues (Chapter 4) followed by my reflections on my own role (Chapter 5). I mention this to be transparent about my process as well as to underscore that analysis is recursive, as ever, and my thought processes are still ongoing.

In addition, to enact the interconnected nature of self and Other as well as theory and practice, I have emphasized narrative in my writing throughout this dissertation. This emphasis is seen in the inclusion of stories in every chapter as well as the narrative framing of my analysis chapters, related as an overall story of what happened in our collaboration and some of my thoughts via iterative analysis. Likewise, I have made this stylistic choice to highlight that the work of analysis and collaboration is co-constructed and still ongoing, and this dissertation relates my thinking at this point in time which will

likely shift with additional time and experience and the generous input of those who read it. Asante sana/ *thank you very much* in advance.

## Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

My theoretical framework for this study is informed by postcolonial and decolonial theory, identity theory, critical discourse theories of language including positioning theory, and decolonial approaches to qualitative research. These areas overlap and complement one another, and so they are woven together here along with other related literature and foundational research on key topics in order to establish the conceptual grounding of the issues I aim to explore. Rather than the more traditional splitting and labeling of “theoretical framework” and “literature review,” then, this chapter is organized by content themes such as “Language and Identity” and sub-themes such as “Identity and Discourse” which have emerged as central to my analytic understanding of my work, informed jointly by theory and research-based literature. In this chapter, I am locating myself (Rich, 1984) within a genealogy of thought, in relation to both given and chosen ancestors who have lighted the path I now walk. I am bringing them into conversation with each other and announcing my place in a family of ideas (Oliver, 1986) as I now see it, upon reflecting on the highly relational and interdependent journey it has been. I am part of a blended intellectual family, drawn from many different countries, disciplines, and orientations to knowledge, so I present the ideas here as likewise blended into a sort of narrative that has shaped my thinking about my research.

This move towards blending is part of my general orientation throughout this project towards decolonizing, a complex term and set of practices that will be explored soon enough. I see the blending of theoretical framework and literature review as expressly decolonial for multiple reasons: first, blending the two grounds theoretical knowledge in lived experience, as observed and expressed in studies on similar topics. Specifically, I aim to integrate more experiences of those who have been historically excluded from theory-building including large swaths of populations of the Global South, a term I use here to refer to a diversity of locations and peoples bound by the joint experience of struggle against capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy (Santos, 2018, p. 2). I aim to integrate these lived

knowledges by highlighting “absences” and “emergences” (Santos, 2012) in taken-for-granted theories in my field. Additionally, decolonial blending takes a stand against the policing of intellectual borders which are themselves remnants of colonization (Anzaldúa, 1987; Ngũgĩ, 1986). Instead, I wish to relish the highly interrelated nature of theory and literature, the abstract and the concrete, aiming to blur the epistemological binaries that can typically limit our thoughts and knowledge building. In blurring these boundaries, I also wish to highlight their social construction as a means of both critical awareness and buoyant hope that our ways of being may be likewise blurred, more porous, in recognition of the expansiveness of heart and mind that working towards social justice asks of us all.

To engage these principles, I would like to begin by sharing a small story of those porous boundaries and foreshadow my thoughts on theory, literature, and research to follow.

### “Ethnography is stories”

It is mid-morning in early June in Morogoro, and I am trotting one step behind my colleague and senior, Rahim. We have just wrapped up our third interview over the past year, this time in person and at the language center, a large open room recently re-vamped with computers and meeting tables that serves as a multipurpose space for my colleagues in the Department of Language Studies. We are now winding our way back through the Mazimbu campus towards the main administration building, hoofing along the meticulously raked dirt pathways etched into the dry grass.

As I match his brisk pace, I take this opportunity to mention to Rahim that after I return to the U.S. next week, I am going to analyze the data I have collected with colleagues over the past three months in Morogoro and write a dissertation chapter focused on them, which I ask if he would like to review to see if I am “on the right track” (FN060222). Given the way that my colleagues have talked about research thus far, seemingly oriented towards a positivist approach informed by traditional social sciences methods, I feel the need to add the caveat that I want to “write differently” from “typical” academic styles; I want to my writing to be more “story-based” and “engaging” so as to “move people’s

hearts” when they read about my research. To my surprise, he affirms my sentiments. “Yes,” he says brightly, “**Ethnography is stories.**” It is “subjective, but ... we get there objectively,” he punctuates, and we share a laugh at his witticism. It seems we are more on the same page than I previously thought.

## Language and Identity

### Identity and Discourse

Identity, variously referred to as *self*, *role*, *personality*, *category*, or *subject position* depending on specific theories and Western intellectual traditions (Benwell and Stokoe, 2006, p. 6), can be generally thought of as *who we are in the world* and is intricately linked with language; as Julia Menard-Warwick explains, “We author our identities... by drawing upon historically available resources – the resources that our lives have made available to us” (2017, p. 63). Some of the contemporary resources for identity include socially constructed categories such as race, gender, and class which structure our human experience; however, these categories are also born of historical violence which separates and stratifies groups of people. For example, the construct of race has been posited as a product and tool of colonialism, a way of categorizing people based on physical features such as skin color and hair texture that came to have social value in the advent of the trade in African slaves, an idea arising to justify and benefit European expansion (Appiah, 2018; Liggett, 2009). Awareness of the binding legacy of this violence has spurred scholarly interest in moving “beyond mere categories and produced within and by other systems of oppression” to examine the process by which identities are formed (Varghese et al., 2016, p. 561). However, identities also structure our human experience in very real, material ways. Thus, identity is both a fiction and existential fact (Menard-Warwick, 2005), both constructed by society and lived in physical reality. It follows that identities are complex and multiple, multilayered and intersectional (Crenshaw, 1991), with unique spaces formed at the junctures of different aspects of who we are, such that “privileged and marginalized identities co-exist” in all lives (Varghese et al., 2016, p. 563). Thus, *who we are in the world* is not as straightforward as it may seem; identity is a complex and

multilayered phenomenon, a product of multiple influences that shift with social context and intellectual grounding.

Western post-structural theory sees identities as constructed in discourse, or the language we use in the worlds around us, with language acknowledged as both tool and product of power (Bourdieu, 1992; Fairclough, 1995). Discourse itself can be thought of in two ways, according to James Gee (2012): upper-case “Discourses” or “ways of being in the world,” and lower-case “discourse” or “language in use,” and these terms underscore how language simultaneously structures and is structured by our use of it. Thinking of identity as constructed via D/discourses represents a historical shift from 17<sup>th</sup> century European philosophy which cast “identity as a personal, internal *project of the self*” (Benwell and Stokoe, 2006, p.7), to the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when identity was seen as a collective “intersubjective *product of the social*” (p. 8), to the post-modern, post-structural conception of identity as “fluid, fragmentary, contingent, and, crucially, *constituted in discourse*” (p. 17). This latter conceptualization is taken for granted among many prominent sociolinguists, educators, and critically-oriented researchers and theorists across varied disciplines today (Block, 2006; Kayi-Adar, 2019; Morgan and Clark, 2011; Ricento, 2005). Bethan Benwell and Elizabeth Stokoe (2006) note that partly due to the interdisciplinary nature of identity study and theorizing, there is a “sheer lack of agreement across different traditions” in terminology; as a result, in their work, they use various terms to denote identity including *self, role, personality, category, subject position* and others interchangeably while acknowledging that certain terms may be attached to certain theories (p. 6). Regardless, there seems to be scholarly agreement around the notion of identity as not only multiple and complex, but also shifting (Kayi-Adar, 2019) as identities are constructed through interaction, shaped by the interplay between existing power dynamics in the surrounding social context (Bourdieu, 1992; Fairclough, 1995; Gee, 2012) and individual action or “performance” (Butler, 1990) of ways of being made available in that context. Individuals retain agency, for example, to position themselves or others through strategic use of

discourse (e.g., Davies and Harré, 1990), though agency is always somewhat constrained by the identities available in any given context. Thus, identity can be seen as a “site of struggle” (Norton Pierce, 1995) or “suture” (Hall, 2000), not a static set of categories but rather a dynamic social process, negotiated through language, in interaction with others and surrounding D/discourses.

### Identity and Positioning

Critical theorists of discourse have taken a particular interest in foregrounding the agency and mechanics of how individuals may position themselves in order to negotiate relations of power via discursive resources (Davies and Harré, 1990). Positioning, defined as “a way in which people dynamically produce and explain the everyday behavior of themselves and others” (van Langenhove and Harré, 1999, p. 29) is the process by which individuals can “discursively display” their identities in relation to others (van Langenhove & Harré, 1999, p. 131). First articulated by Hallway to discuss the negotiation of gendered subjectivity in heterosexual relationships as a matter of “positioning oneself” and “taking up positions” (1984, as cited in van Langenhove and Harré, 1999, p. 16), positioning is inherently relational; an individual is always positioning oneself at the same time as they are positioning others. Van Langenhove and Harré (1999) thus define positions as “fluid ‘parts’ or ‘roles’ [assigned] to speakers in the discursive construction of personal stories” (p. 16) or “displays of personhood” (p. 18) with flexibility in how the positions or roles are expressed, for example, in terms of *attributes* such as “confident/apologetic,” *stories* such as “one who continues despite difficulties,” or *complementary roles* such as “teacher/learners” (p. 16). People can “deliberately self-position” through talking about their choices, expertise or unique point of view, or biography/life events (van Langenhove and Harré, 1999, p. 24) while also reflexively positioning others by the same means. Davies and Harré (1990) see positioning as the desired outcome of dealing with the multiple identities and contradictions inherent in the human condition, “the possibility of choice in a situation in which there are contradictory requirements” (p. 270) that can allow individuals to exercise agency in negotiating the multiple, competing D/discourses of

a given situation. For example, van Langenhove and Harré (1999) suggest that even stereotypes, defined demurely as “generalized expectations” about a social group (p. 128), may be “treated as rhetorical devices that people use in order to position themselves and others [...] which can be appropriated whenever useful in certain conversations” (p. 137). Thus, dominant D/discourses can be engaged and subverted to the speakers’ advantage or asserted in an exercise of power, in accordance with personal desires and contextual gains.

Crucially, however, criticality is still needed when applying the ideas of positioning theory in responsive, responsible ways that acknowledge power and researcher reflexivity. Moghaddam (1990), for instance, asserts that positioning is impacted by cultural conceptions of personhood, and that positioning practices vary with culture regarding the ideals a person is orienting towards, the dimensions they find relevant, and forms of storytelling used for positioning oneself and others (p. 80). As a result, differing notions of self are important to take into account when applying positioning theory in cross-cultural contexts. Moghaddam (1990) suggests that in the context of a more “collectivist” orientation to personhood, “group (as opposed to individual) attributes, identities, and histories may be more important in locating speakers reflexively in positioning and other discursive practices” (p. 84). He acknowledges the dominant “monotheistic, individualistic, materialistic, and rationalistic” views of the self rooted in “Western” psychology (p. 75) and describes a converse example for reflection:

an interdependent conception of the self, where the boundaries of people are more fluid than generally assumed in the West. ‘More fluid boundaries’ means that individuals often do not make sharp distinctions between themselves and the ingroup when, for example, assigning and taking responsibility, defining honour, and acting on interests (p. 83)

As a result, a researcher must remain self-reflexive and intellectually flexible to conceive of identity and agency outside of the bounds of Western-inflected, and thereby colonial, conceptions of personhood in order to attend to discursive realities which may be beyond their own experiences.

Relatedly, a study of positioning must also incorporate an analysis of power. As Langenhove and Harré (1999) caution, “rights for positioning are unequally distributed” (p. 23) due to capacity, willingness, and power in a given interactional setting (p. 30). Thus, attention to power remains a critical aspect of examining identity as a negotiation in which not all individuals enter with the same discursive resources, the “historically available resources [...] that our lives have made available to us” (Menard-Warwick, 2017, p. 63), acknowledging that privilege and oppression often continue to shape our identities despite our best efforts or intentions to the contrary.

Positioning theory has been deployed in studies of teacher agency (e.g., Kayi-Adar et al., 2019) and collaboration between English teachers (Trent, 2012) to illuminate how varied individuals negotiate the roles available to them in order to make sense of their experiences in relation to The Other. Its focus on agency is also in line with postcolonial thought (e.g., Bhabha, 1985) and serves decolonial goals; while identities are always constrained by available D/discourses, conceptualizing identity as a function of positioning highlights the capacity of individuals to resist dominant, colonial discourses through micro-discursive choices that in turn, agentively re-shape the social realities of their everyday lives (e.g., Canagarajah, 1999). This notion of positioning also reaffirms that identity is social work, or labor, as we constantly “[negotiate] new subject positions at the crossroads of the past, present and future” (Block, 2006, p. 39). This labor can take a particular toll on those in marginalized positions to navigate oppressive societal structures, but also presents opportunities for social change through identity work (e.g., Motha, Jain, and Teclé, 2012). This work of locating oneself within larger social frameworks of injustice is also a vital step towards the liberation of oneself and others (Rich, 1984) and constructing a sense of being in relationship with the Other.

### Identity and the Global North

As foreshadowed by Moghaddam (1990) above, thinking more broadly about these conceptions of identity that are taken for granted in prominent scholarship the fields of applied linguistics and

TESOL, reveals a more extensive, epistemic injustice (Santos, 2014) in that theoretical understandings of identity in language teaching and learning, as well as globalized knowledge production in general, have been dominated by concepts and intellectuals of the Global North (Lynch and Motha, 2023). In their summary of ideological foundations for the study of identity in the field, for example, Morgan and Clarke (2011) reference Descartes's consciousness of the self, Lacan's misrecognition of the self through language, Althusser's notion of interpellation, and Foucault's emphasis on discourse and subjectivity among others. Many of these concepts are rooted in epistemologies that are associated with the Global North such as visibility, in the sense that disclosure and legibility to power are necessary for recognition, upholding "a 'confessional' obligation... that many may find obtrusive" (Morgan and Clarke, 2011, p. 830). There is also an emphasis on ownership in that "you become an individual through *owning* your experience" (Skeggs, 2008, p. 14, emphasis added), and only some social groups, usually educated elites, retain the power to mobilize identity as a "resource." Identity conceptualizations have also been largely individualistic in nature; identities are seen as constructed through discourse, allowing a subject agency and thus, negotiated with individual purpose. Commonly upheld discourses of identity as "self-authoring" (Menard-Warwick, 2005) requiring "investment" or "claiming the right to speak" (Norton, 1995) posit identity as a strategic act, an accomplishment for individual gain. Identity is also implicated as competitive; as Skeggs points out, "Identity is just one way of thinking about personhood, a way that is particularly Western and particularly useful for global capitalism" (2008, p. 11). Chun (2016) sees connections to capitalism's newer form, neoliberalism, in that contemporary notions of identity place the responsibility on individuals to consistently make and re-make themselves in order to gain rewards and recognition in presumed competition with others doing the same. Postmodern conceptions of identity further underscore the idea of identity as precarious and shifting, requiring constant negotiation, labor, and struggle (i.e., Norton, 1995). Even with the intervention of postcolonial theory to highlight how Global North-derived notions of identity effectively erase and delegitimize other forms of

personhood (i.e., Spivak, 1988), alternatives such as hybridity (Bhabha, 1985) may still elide local power differences and unequal access to academic knowledge making about identity (Sandhu and Higgins, 2016) which remains centered in and on the Global North.

Thus, language and identity are inextricably linked as well as part and parcel of global power dynamics. *Who we are in the world* is in fact a complex and politicized notion, as much a product of *who we think we are* as it is a product of *how we have been taught to think* of ourselves, in constant negotiation with The Other. As a result, learning a new language and its attendant D/discourses comes with new ways of being - social possibilities and tools for reifying or resisting, often instigating identity shift and struggle (Norton Pierce, 1995). For those teaching language, the struggle can be even more acute as teachers are positioned as vessels for the ideologies that come with a given language as well as its complicated histories (e.g., Curtis and Romney, 2006; Motha, 2014) and local conceptions of identity which may construct the self differently than Western-based theories assume (Sandhu and Higgins, 2016).

Among languages, English has had a particularly complicated history, emmeshed in both social struggle and liberation. Spread globally by virtue of colonialism (Pennycook, 1994/2017), cultural imperialism (Phillipson, 1992), capitalism (Prendergast, 2008) and other nefarious forces, the status of English as an international language is indisputable, but claims of neutrality are harder to make; in the words of Alistair Pennycook, “We are never just teaching something called English but rather we are involved in economic and social change, cultural renewal, people’s dreams and desires” (1994/2017 p. xii). The discourses and identities divined through English language teaching thus invite closer, conscious attention.

### English and (De)coloniality

#### Colonialism and (De)coloniality

The English language is inextricably linked with the legacy of colonial power and present-day coloniality. While *colonialism* refers to “the conquest and direct control of other people’s land” that was

enacted in a specific time period linked with the global spread of capitalism (Chrisman and Williams, 1994, p. 2), *coloniality*, as coined by Anibal Quijano, is its afterlife, present in habits of mind and behavior that continue to uphold structures of oppression via the colonial matrix of power, the “interrelated forms of control, such as patriarchy, racism, knowledge, authority, and the economy, [which] underlies Western civilization” (Mignolo, 2011, as cited in Morreira, 2017, p. 292). The broad work of decolonizing, then, involves acknowledging and rooting out coloniality in its vast, varied forms while also moving towards other ways of being (Santos, 2012; Mbembe, 2016). As language can function as both a mechanism of coloniality and tool of resistance (e.g., Canagarajah, 1999), attention to language politics and education in specific contexts can play an important role in decolonizing spaces globally (Ngũgĩ, 1986; Odugu, 2017).

However, decolonization as a practice and as a term remains necessarily complicated. Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang (2012) remind us that the widespread use of the term decolonize can be problematic in that decolonization as an intellectual device is starkly distinct from the material repatriation of land to Indigenous peoples who are resisting ongoing occupation under settler colonialism. Conscious of this distinction, I continue to use this term because of its unique capacity to encompass the broad, multifaceted, and also ongoing effects of direct colonial control in a setting such as Tanzania. In invoking decolonization, I draw on the ideas of those such as Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o (1986), Achille Mbembe (2016), and Mahmood Mamdani who have lived under direct colonial control and its afterlives, or colonialism and coloniality respectively. I consciously use this term as opposed to the more benign and time-bound “postcolonial” which may misleadingly suggest that colonial power and its legacies are “post-” or ended. However, I did at times use “postcolonial” or “neocolonial” in the course of my project, at the suggestion of my local advisor and colleagues to better suit the social politics of my context in Tanzania, and I discuss local complexities around this terminology in later chapters. As a critical scholar in my own right, I call upon “decolonizing” in the temporal sense described by Mamdani, “thinking the present in

the context of a past” (2004, as cited in Makuvaza and Shinza, 2017, p. 6), as well as the relational sense emphasized by Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2012, 2014, 2018) and others who purposefully seek complexity, specificity, and self-reflexivity in order to dismantle dominant discourses and “re-center” (Mbembe, 2016). While these efforts remain incommensurate (Tuck and Yang, 2012, p.28) with the repatriation of lands on which I live and study, I see them in a solidarity that is necessarily “uneasy, reserved, and unsettled” (p. 3) such that efforts in one vein of decolonization acknowledge and inform others in the enduring struggle against coloniality in all of its visible and less visible forms.

### English and Coloniality of the Mind

The English language has served as a tool of coloniality in myriad ways. First, English teaching tends to adhere to a monolingual ideal, whereby English is separate from and valued over other languages (Anzaldúa, 1987; Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, 1986; Odugu, 2017; Pennycook, 1994/2017). Though language is by nature varied and malleable, varieties of English are hierarchized such that the forms from Inner Circle countries such as the United States are afforded more value (Kachru, 1990), and conceptions of English language “appropriateness” are intertwined with whiteness, with standards rooted in white culture and idealized English speakers racialized as white (Baldwin, 1979; Flores and Rosa, 2015; Kubota and Lin, 2006; Liggett, 2009). “Native” English speakers are likewise racialized as white (Motha, 2014) and often valorized as expert and ideal teachers despite the complications in defining who counts as “native” (Cook, 1999). The English teaching industry has grown up globally with these racialized ideologies, with preferential hiring for white native speakers (Ruecker and Ives, 2015) such that teachers of color and so-called non-native speakers are often delegitimated in the profession (Curtis and Romney, 2006). “Partnerships” between local and (white-coded) foreign, “native” English teachers can underscore these raciolinguistic inequities, such that “rigid dichotomies” between the two reinforce existing hierarchies rather than cultivate space for “mutual learning” as intended (Trent 2012, 2016). These hierarchies reflect an “enduring ideological commitment” within the field of TESOL to

native speaker saviorism, defined by Christopher Jenks and Jerry Won Lee as “the long-standing assumption that the White community can ‘save’ peoples of color by teaching them English” (2020, p. 186). The English language itself has also spread harmful ideologies embedded within it, such as anti-Blackness through the global proliferation of English-speaking media (Grant and Lee, 2009) and neoliberal capitalism through market-based vocabulary (Prendergast, 2008). All of this feeds a cycle whereby those who are proficient in the desired forms of English garner material and cultural resources, which results in more resources being funneled back into those Englishes and their interests, a “continuous reconstitution of structural and cultural inequities between English and other languages,” what Phillipson (1992) refers to as “linguistic imperialism” (p. 47).

For learners of English in postcolonial contexts, these inequities can foster a lasting colonization of the mind (Ngũgĩ, 1986), seeding self-doubt and self-alienation. Likewise, teachers of English both face and reinforce interlocking structures of oppression including nativism, racism, sexism, classism, linguicism, and neoliberal capitalism (Cook, 1999; Kubota and Lin, 2009; Motha, 2014; Prendergast, 2008; Song, 2016; Trent, 2012, 2016). Thus, English language teaching and learning has the power to reproduce coloniality, with identity as a manifestation of this phenomenon as “...the [English language teaching] profession with all of its racialized and colonized ideologies becomes embodied in its teachers” (Motha, 2017, p. 219). The bodies of English teachers are trailed by the “colonial shadow” of the profession (Vandrick, 2002) and differentially impacted by it depending on their location within it. Generally, this shadow engenders an ambivalence for those who teach English as they negotiate who they are in the world at the threshold between the colonial past and future (Appleby, 2010; Canagarajah, 2012a; Motha, 2014; Pennycook, 1994/2017), but English teachers also retain the power to push back against colonial ways of being that do not serve them through everyday forms of resistance (e.g., Canagarajah, 1999). Teachers have agentively used the multiple identities made available to them for personal and professional gain as well as social justice (e.g., Canagarajah, 2012a; Sandhu, 2019; Song,

2016). However, teachers have also wielded problematic identities such as “native speaker” to reify hierarchies between colleagues, especially as deployed by “native” teachers who feel threatened in their professional authority (Trent, 2012). Building on these insights, there is a need to integrate these understandings of identity with a critical analysis of power and apply them more broadly to a wider range of settings, in particular in postcolonial societies in the Global South, to continue to highlight possibilities for resistance and conscious social change. In the end, what teachers do, or don’t do, is intricately tied to how they think of themselves and their work (Kayi-Adar et al., 2019). It is therefore critical to understand teacher identities in order to sustain meaningful change and constructive support on local terms.

#### (De)coloniality and Identity

Furthermore, there is a need to decolonize understandings of identity that are taken for granted in most studies of identity vis a vis English language, as I articulated with my advisor, Suhanthie Motha, in our recent article in *International Journal of Educational Research* (Lynch and Motha, 2013). We noted that scholars including Raewyn Connell (2007) and Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2014, 2018) suggest looking to ways of knowing and being that are derived from the Global South as a measure of resistance to oppressive ideologies rooted in coloniality. In this line of thinking, decolonizing means taking stock of “absences” in the uneven terrain of globalized knowledge production and looking towards “emergences” as alternatives (Santos, 2012). Santos advocates for “epistemologies of the South,” a framework which “[concerns] the production and validation of knowledges anchored in the experiences of resistance of all those social groups that have systematically suffered injustice, oppression, and destruction caused by capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy” (2018, p. 1). This approach centers the broad and varied “lived knowledges” of marginalized peoples rather than the “thought knowledges” dominant in Global North spaces. Here, the Global South is not a geographical designation, but rather one of “anti-imperialism,” a diversity of locations and peoples bound by the joint experience of struggle

against capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy (Santos, 2018, p. 2), including related populations of the Global North (Santos, 2012, p. 51). Applied to the study of identity, this framework would treat the lived experiences of the researched as knowledges, such as local formations of identity that “allow the oppressed social groups to represent the world as their own and in their own terms” (2018, p. 2). Applied to English education, embracing epistemologies of the South could serve to focus research on resistance to dominant or oppressive ideologies around language, pedagogy, and other salient topics, looking at how such ideologies are resisted by an individual learner or within a cultural system. For example, Frances Vavrus and Lesley Bartlett (2012) applied the lens of epistemologies of the South to make sense of hybridized teaching practices that they observed in Tanzanian schools, ultimately advocating for an “ecology of pedagogy” to highlight the epistemological diversity between Global North-derived “best practices” and Global South realities. Thus, epistemologies of the South decenter the Global North in favor of exploring alternatives as lived and practiced by those outside of Global North geographies and epistemologies. This also gestures towards engaging differing conceptions of identity that resist dominant ideologies; as an example, Chun (2016) advocates for increased attention to “community-based identities that can work for change” (p. 569) and counter neoliberal ideals propagated via Global North-produced knowledge.

## English and Teacher Identity in Tanzania

### English in Tanzania

The United Republic of Tanzania is a setting where language was explicitly taken up as a tool of postcolonial resistance. First president Julius K. Nyerere, a former teacher, advocated for Swahili as an indigenous lingua franca as opposed to English, promoted as a common language among the many local languages within the colonial borders, combined with education as a driver of development and socialist self-reliance (Qorro, 2013; Rwiza, 2014). Swahili language was an integral part of Nyerere’s *ujamaa* policies meant to cultivate unity and solidify a national identity (Nyerere, 1968a, 1968b), and this

embrace of an indigenous language set Tanzania apart from other newly independent countries in the region.

Despite government policies to privilege Swahili, however, English has maintained social prestige (Blommaert, 2019; Mohamed and Banda, 2008; Vavrus, 2002) in parallel with its social prestige globally (e.g., Phillipson, 1992). In Tanzania, the cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1992) of English is mutually constituted by its position in formal education; English was retained as the language of tertiary education post-independence due to a perceived lack of Kiswahili to “cope with the demands of scientific thought and progress” (Blommaert, 2019, p. 14). In 2009, English was mandated as the medium of instruction (MOI) in public secondary schools, despite 35 years of academic advocacy to the contrary (Qorro, 2013) and further solidifying the elevated status of English. However, more recent political leaders have backtracked, and the Education and Training Policy of 2014 states the intention to institute Swahili as MOI at all levels of public schooling, but these sentiments have yet to be implemented (Tibategeza and Plessis, 2018). These moves demonstrate that English is “highly politicized, with ideological undercurrent which focused on setting English versus Kiswahili as antagonistic languages and especially of making English a source of problems in the education system in Tanzania” (Mohamed, 2018, p. 183). This tension encapsulates what Jan Blommaert (2005) calls the “Tanzanian Paradox” in which state ideology is at odds with grassroots practices: “the state’s attempt towards the generalization of Swahili at (almost) all levels of society was a huge success; its attempt towards ideological hegemony, however, was a failure” (p. 398). On the ground, this political paradox is evidenced by code switching and meshing which work to dissolve the simple English versus Kiswahili binary while facility with English remains a privilege tied to status, wealth, and urbanity (Blommaert, 2019; Mohamed and Banda, 2008; Nyinondi, Mhandeni, and Mohamed, 2017). This link between English and individual social capital is echoed in rhetoric surrounding English and economic development, with the assumption that English language skills bring higher paying jobs and opportunities of all kinds,

regardless of lived experience to the contrary (Qorro, 2013; Vavrus, 2002). For English teachers at the forefront of these contradictions, linguistic tensions exacerbate other institutional challenges that often “frustrate instructors’ creativity” (Komba and Mohamed, 2017, p. 60), and teachers’ capabilities are additionally undermined by the material realities of their classrooms and the country at large (Barrett, 2005; Nyinondi, Mhandeni, and Mohamed, 2017; Tao, 2013; Vavrus and Bartlett, 2013).

### Teacher Identity in Tanzania

However, while the challenges are immense, overly focusing on them reinforces the deficit rhetoric present in much research on education in Tanzania and Africa in general (Sugrue and Fentiman, 2012), and this framing ultimately disempowers teachers and forecloses possibilities for change. Some studies in Tanzania do “mitigate some of the assumption of deficiency” (Tao, 2013, p. 3; e.g., Barrett, 2007; Vavrus, 2002), for example, by engaging in longer-term collaborations that pair foreign and local researchers for data collection and analysis (Vavrus and Bartlett, 2013) and by illuminating social factors in teacher motivation and pedagogical choices (Tao, 2013; Barrett, 2007; Vavrus and Bartlett, 2013).

Across sub-Saharan Africa, the agency of teachers has been historically overlooked in favor of a technicist approach to teaching (Zeichner and Ndimande, 2008) rather than consideration for how they see themselves, how they are positioned in society, and how this influences their actions. This is compounded by a tendency to focus on pedagogy (e.g., Vavrus and Bartlett, 2013; Barrett, 2007) and student experience (e.g., Vavrus, 2002) rather than teacher identity as the topic of interest. Research that has utilized the lens of teacher identity in Tanzania, while limited, has illustrated that teachers inhabit multiple roles or “types” that may be separate, coexistent, and/or in conflict with one another, and that these identities affect how they go about their work and lives (Barrett, 2008; O’Sullivan, 2016). Studies focused on teacher identity in African contexts are generally underrepresented in the literature, and those that do rarely consider language teacher identity (c.f. Nomlomo, Stofile, and Sivasubramaniam, 2018) or higher education settings.

Given the complicated role that English has played in the identity of Tanzania as a nation, in addition to the material and social tensions that teachers of English navigate as the population accessing higher education continues to widen and grow (Nyinondi, Mhandeni, and Mohamed, 2017; Rwiza, 2014), a study focused on teacher identity in Tanzania at the university level could yield timely insights into how teachers make professional decisions which affect student experience and shape the future of Tanzanian society. Furthermore, this research would contribute to decolonial goals by highlighting teacher agency and context specificity in negotiating these global complexities, relating micro choices to macro discourses (e.g., Canagarajah, 1999; Motha, 2014).

### International Collaboration and (De)coloniality

#### Collaboration versus Partnership

Additionally, there is a need to account for how identities, racial and otherwise, are formed in interaction, as through the vehicle of “partnership” between local and foreign teachers of English. Indeed, the ideals and rhetoric of partnership have been taken up by many global organizations nowadays as a seemingly more progressive approach to institutionalized relationships. Francis Vavrus and Leslie Bartlett (2013) note how the idea of “partnership” can invoke a “presumptive egalitarianism” when used by institutions and top-down policymakers in recent years (p. 22), often to counter critiques of inequitable international relationships as an enduring legacy of colonialism in a move to depoliticize fields such as international development (Vavrus and Seghers, 2010). The idea of international partnership has been presented as not only mutually advantageous but necessary, as detailed in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 17, “Revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development” which maintains that the other goals “can only be realized with strong global partnerships and cooperation.” (UN 2015). The description goes on to specify benefits of partnership in largely neoliberal terms of financial growth and technical competence such as “data, monitoring, and accountability” (UN, 2015) indicating the ongoing influence of late capitalist ideologies with a “partnership” as a vector (see also Lynch et al., 2022, 2023). A desire for partnerships with similar

neoliberal framing is especially prevalent in higher education, particularly in contexts such as public universities where government funding has not kept pace with rapid growth (Ishengoma, 2017). At Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA), for example, where this study has taken place, “enhancing partnerships” is one of the nine stated strategic objectives outlined in the 2021-2026 Corporate Strategic Plan (SUA, 2021, p. xii), projected to contribute \$50M USD (115 billion Tanzanian shillings) over the next five years, or roughly half of the Tanzanian government’s expected contribution to the budget over the same time period, via partnerships with development and private sector partners (p. xiii). While the plan indicates a preference for expanding more “local” partnerships to counter the current majority of “foreign” partners (p. 60), partnerships overall are framed as “enhancing relevance and effectiveness” in research and pedagogical aims. My home institution, the University of Washington, likewise has included increased broad stroke collaboration in its strategic vision for the future in order to remain competitive and serve a more diversified student body, “as institutions become more niche but partner to offer breadth” (University of Washington, n.d.). These examples illustrate the overall increased appetite for partnership as a means towards political and economic survival in a changing, uncertain world. These neoliberal pressures then lend themselves to conceptualizing partnership as a presumed equalizer, without regard for the particular configuration the partnership takes.

While partnership is often presented as strategic and beneficial, underlying, persistent inequities between supposed “partners” echo throughout critiques of partnership in research and development within contexts such as Africa (Grieves and Mitchell, 2020; Omanga and Mainye, 2019; Samoff and Bidemi, 2004; Vavrus and Seghers, 2010), comparative and international education (Baily et al. 2017; Menashy, 2019), and English teaching outside of the Inner Circle (Trent, 2012, 2016; Widin, 2010). While these analyses tend to focus on macro-level phenomena such as the politics of funding (e.g., Menashy, 2019) however, on-the-ground, in-depth critical study of international partnerships on an interpersonal level remains underexplored, especially in the field of English language teaching.

Recent, interactional studies of partnership in related fields have centered on the benefits of cross-disciplinary collaboration between English and/or content teachers of similar cultural backgrounds to support student English language learning (Ghezali, 2021; Villavicencio et al., 2021) or international collaboration to enhance student learning in MATESOL programs in online environments (Schreiber and Jansz, 2020). However, power imbalances and the legacy of colonialism present in international relationships and research orientations remain an elephant in the room. As Supriya Baily, Farnoosh Shahrokhi, Tami Carsillo (2017) knowingly reflect,

Too often researchers have worked in countries, recognized the colonizing power of research and the hegemony of western scholarship or research interests but have been helpless to shift those power structures. While researchers have worked to promote participatory methods, the decolonization of research knowledge to build more equitable partnerships, this is harder in practice than in theory. (Baily et al., 2017, p. 4)

This acknowledgement, that the work of building equity in cross-cultural partnership is harder in practice than in theory, is deeply felt but rarely taken on as an object of study. If so, this lived knowledge is mentioned as an opening prelude or closing reflection rather than the topic of the research itself (e.g., Baily et al., 2017; Vavrus and Bartlett, 2013). Baily et al. (2017) have appropriately titled their volume of collaborative research *Experiments in Agency* to highlight the shaky, “experimental” and seemingly innovative nature of trying to shift the balance of power and “decolonize” research in education (Baily et al., 2017, p. 9). The urgency as well as recency of these pieces reflects a growing interest in partnership as a vehicle for expanded perspectives and social change to which I hope this study will add from the field of English Language Teaching.

To do so, I consciously choose the term *collaboration* to highlight the requisite act of co-laboring, or “laboring together,” in order to foster cross-cultural relationships of authentic exchange. In doing so, I follow Vavrus and Bartlett (2013) in their work in education in Tanzania in intentionally

describing their multifaceted, cross-cultural research project in this way and emphasizing that co-laboring is challenging and involves different labor for differently positioned colleagues. I likewise have chosen this term *collaboration* to build on their reflections and further ask what the labor of each party could be, given who they are, to jointly contribute to decolonizing goals. I believe decolonization must be done in collaboration with the Other, and yet, it is in collaboration where we come face to face with the “colonial ghosts squatting throughout [institutions of schooling]” (Motha, 2006, p. 98) and grapple with how best to exorcise them.

### (De)colonizing Collaboration

International collaboration continues to be a vehicle for enduring colonially rooted inequities. Specific to the African context, studies of and reflections on collaboration have revealed ongoing coloniality present in patterns and interpersonal dynamics which often reify the power of the Global North at the expense of Global South “partners” (Lynch et al., 2022, 2023). These patterns include: Dependence of African partners on external, often Global North-based sources of funding and validation of work (Samoff and Bidemi 2004; Grieves and Mitchell, 2020); Limited agency of supposed partners to set the research agenda and shape a project according to their needs (Grieve and Mitchell, 2020; Ishengoma, 2017; Omanga & Mainye, 2019; Samoff and Bidemi, 2004) which can result in a clashing of research priorities with those of the funder often taking precedence; Local, African counterparts completing the bulk of the work towards a shared project only for the foreign, Global North-based collaborators to claim credit and managerial (often white) superiority (Kumi & Kamruzzaman, 2021; Omanga & Mainye, 2019; Thörn, 2016); Contributions of local, African counterparts, such as navigation of bureaucracies through extensive social networks, often left overlooked and underappreciated yet integral to North-South collaborations (Kumi & Kamruzzaman, 2021; Sundberg, 2021; Omanga & Mainye, 2019); Limited focus on material contributions or resources only (Kumi & Kamruzzaman, 2021; Sundberg, 2021) revealing the very real vast inequities while also leading Southern partners to feel

deficient (Mlambo and Baxter, 2018; Grieve and Mitchell, 2020); Data gathered locally and then analyzed from afar (Omanga & Mainye, 2019; Thörn, 2016) which reinforces the power of the Global North in “global” knowledge making. Taken together, these patterns fuel ongoing epistemological injustice (Santos, 2014) in which the logics and rationalities of the colonizer remain the ultimate arbiters of truth and value (Lynch et al., 2023; Thörn, 2016). In line with Santos (2012), a first step in decolonizing such relations could be to address the “absences” and “emergences” in knowledge-making practices forged through more critical, authentic interconnection between partners as co-collaborators.

#### Collaboration, (De)coloniality, and Identity: *Identity-in-Community*

There is also a need for related studies in settings such as Tanzania to attend to researcher positionality and colonial power dynamics in research more broadly. For example, many of studies of teacher identity in African contexts are conducted by researchers from the Global North, whose presence is taken as benign and apolitical rather than an occasion to engage with coloniality (e.g., Norton and Early, 2011). In addition, researcher identity is generally mentioned in passing and rarely in terms of critical attention to dimensions of identity such as race and gender (c.f. Barrett, 2008). These types of absences may in turn replicate harmful patterns which naturalize the gaze and perspectives of the Global North as knowledge (Said, 1978; Santos, 2012; Spivak, 1988) and reinforce whiteness as neutral or normal (DiAngelo, 2018), insofar as whiteness can be conceptualized as an “ideological position and mode of perception that shapes our racialized society” (Flores and Rosa, 2015, p. 151) as part of the colonial matrix of power. Given the broader need to interrogate whiteness in English teaching globally (e.g., Jenks and Lee, 2020; Ruecker and Ives, 2015) and the entanglement of English, race, and coloniality (Motha, 2014), this criticality is warranted in order to confront the colonial legacy of qualitative research (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, p. 1) and English language teaching to advance social justice in the field.

Likewise, conceptions of identity drawn from Global South contexts could also provide opportunities to redress the colonial “absences” (Santos, 2012) with regards to identity theorizations currently dominant in TESOL, applied linguistics, and related fields. In the African context, Ubuntu provides such a lens to think about identity in more expansive ways which counter Global North ideologies. Ubuntu is “at once a philosophy and a culture” (Eze, 2008, p. 387), described as a relational form of personhood experienced in multiple contexts across Africa (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2001; Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru and Makuvaza, 2017; Sarr, 2020). The spirit of Ubuntu goes by many names such as the “sub-Saharan African worldview of Ubuntu/uMuntu” (Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru and Makuvaza, 2017, p. 86) or “hunhuism” which translates as “wholeness,” “family origins,” or “identity” (Madzima, 2014) but is expressed and enacted in locally specific ways. Studies have discussed this relational form of identity in geopolitical spaces such as Botswana (Nyamnjoh, 2004), South Africa (Makalela, 2015), and Zimbabwe (Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru and Makuvaza, 2017; Madzima, 2014), and also in cultural groups such as the Shona (Madzima, 2014), suggesting a pan-African presence (Sarr, 2020). Its philosophy is expressed in a proverb which states that “a person is a person through other people,” affirming the importance of relationships or social networks in order for an individual to establish a sense of self (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2001). At the core of this sense of self is the well-being of both the individual and their communities including spiritual, emotional, relational well-being (Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru and Makuvaza, 2017). A person acts with the good of the community in mind, and the community forms a social safety net as well as a sense of self and agency which moves beyond the individual (Madzima, 2014). Ubuntu differs substantially from Global North theorizations of identity in that the goal of identity formation is the well-being of an individual via a community as well as the well-being of the community through reciprocity centering social responsibility. Madzima (2014), for example, shows how hunhuism allows Zimbabwean primary students to remain optimistic and adapt to overcome extreme challenges via community-based structures which support their learning. A relational

identity reveals a sense of self that goes beyond the individual, an *identity-in-community* that emphasizes interconnectedness between individuals and communities which function to support well-being.

Deploying the concept of Ubuntu is of course, not a decolonizing panacea. In fact, using it in research may raise valid concerns about intellectually colonial mechanisms such as essentializing or appropriation. To this end, Morreira (2017) offers a cautionary note that decolonial thinking risks essentializing or creating binaries such as Western/African, individual/collective, and fully transforming colonial spaces will require not only re-orienting content and pedagogy but also finding “creative ways to blend Euro-American and African epistemologies” (p. 293, referencing Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013).

Another concern is theoretical appropriation for researcher gain; invoking a term such as Ubuntu, which was not offered by the participants of this study and is not a Swahili word, risks a form of exoticism which can benefit a (white) researcher grasping for cultural legitimacy at the expense of authenticity. These concerns ask questions about who can employ theories and concepts from the Global South and the implications for white-identified researchers such as myself, an epistemological entanglement which will be considered throughout this piece. However, finding the Ubuntu-inspired framing of identity as a useful analytic to make sense of my research findings, I refer to the relational enactments of identity I have experienced as *identity-in-community*, offered here as a lens to conceptualize identity outside the frame of Global North-dominated theories for decolonial purposes.

## (De)coloniality and Research

### (Critical) Ethnography: Crystallization

A study which aims to decolonize requires a decolonizing orientation to research, and I have tried to craft my present study with the principles laid out above in mind. A central way that these principles can manifest in research is a decidedly qualitative, ethnographically-oriented approach to truth. As Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (2005) point out, qualitative research has its historical roots in the colonial era in which knowledge of the racialized Other was commissioned to benefit

colonial powers, often through using that knowledge to infiltrate and dismantle societal structures in areas where colonizers sought expansion (p. 1). Thus, qualitative research methods are explicitly linked to the racist, imperial project in which a colonizer subject constructed knowledge about a colonized object which served to reify difference and Eurocentric superiority, a “colonial shadow” (Vandrick, 2002) that hangs over the practice of social research today (Chilisa, 2020; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999/2021). Over time, qualitative methodology has evolved to question and situate the claims to truth that can be made from social research, resulting in an expansion of methods and perspectives from which those claims are drawn in a movement towards research that is multidisciplinary, explicitly situated, and politically-informed (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005; Richardson and St. Pierre, 2005). Today, what remains is “a commitment to the naturalistic, interpretive approach to its subject matter and an ongoing critique of the politics and methods of postpositivism” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, p. 10), with an overall focus on relationships, meaning-making, and patterns in data, in which data is typically based in words and experience rather than numbers and calculations (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). Thus, “the purpose of qualitative research is not to prove anything, but to generate ideas which are sufficient to make us think again about what is going on in the world” (Holliday, 2015, p. 53). This overall aim, to highlight complexity and spark ongoing critical reflection, is most in line with my decolonizing orientation towards knowledge building.

A qualitative orientation to establishing a sort of truth, then, requires seeing all knowledge as subjective and situated. However, qualitative research fortifies its contributions to knowledge in a number of ways illuminated by Brian Paltridge and Aek Pakhiti (2015): first, by being “dependable” (as opposed to “reliable” in quantitative study) in “explicit and honest accounts” (p. 21) of the iterative research process; second, by being “trustworthy” (as opposed to “valid”) through the incorporation of multiple perspectives. This multiplicity is often achieved through a technique sometimes referred to as “triangulation” though not employed as a tool of assessment but rather “... multiple methodological

practices, empirical materials, perspectives, and observers... [to] add rigor, breadth, complexity, richness, and depth” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, p. 5) to a study. However, I prefer the term “crystallization,” employed by Laurel Richardson and Elizabeth Adams St. Pierre (2005) to highlight that “there is no one ‘correct’ telling... each telling, like light hitting a crystal, reflects a different perspective on this incident” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, p. 6). Alternatively, Sherick A. Hughes and Julie L. Pennington (2017) use the term “assemblage” to describe this process, a “gathering of a collection of items, including relevant literature, that fit together to provide multiple perspectives and rich, multilayered accounts of a particular time, place, or moment” (p. 23). Critical ethnography (e.g., Madison, 2005), which will be explained in more depth in the next chapter, encapsulates and operationalizes many of these values: an assemblage of many data sources, perspectives, and methods to weave together a crystalized type of truth that is self-consciously and intentionally subjective and multiple. Accordingly, I have strived to build an ethnographic understanding of one specific collaboration in action that speaks to the complexities of both the topic and the process of shaping my own understanding of it.

#### Participatory Design: Reciprocity and Flexibility

Another way in which I have sought to enact decoloniality in research is by aligning with principles of participatory design (Bang and Vossoughi, 2016; Leavy, 2017) including reciprocity and flexibility. Rooted in social justice traditions, participatory design “values collaboration, power sharing, and different kinds of knowledge (scientific, lay, experiential)” (Leavy, 2017, p. 224) by directly involving the affected communities and stakeholders in the research design process. However, it also takes for granted that partnerships in research are power-laden and subject to “ongoing fragility and negotiation” (Vakil et al., 2016, p. 199), making partnerships themselves worthy of careful attention and analysis with regards to their successes as much as in their challenges (Bang and Vossoughi, 2016; Vakil et al., 2016). Though not a “full research partnership” in the end, I have maintained at least a “principal researcher as

leader with community input” model, as articulated by Leavy (2017, p. 238), in which community members were continuously consulted and invited to participate at the capacity available to them. While still seeking to make visible and disrupt “historically powered relations” (Bang and Vossoughi, 2016, p. 184), this project has adhered to the major principles of participatory design including politicized trust (Vakil et al., 2016), cultural sensitivity, multiplicity, mutual benefit, and flexibility derived from a balance of openness and structure, with methodology that is necessarily recursive and responsive to evolving needs of the community over time (Leavy, 2017). As my retrospective analysis will show, my ideals of benefit and participation were complicated throughout this project, and I believe that being transparent about the attendant challenges and reconceptualized visions of these principles that I became aware of will contribute to the growing potential of collaboration in my fields.

Significantly, I have chosen to center reciprocity and flexibility in line with an Ubuntu-inspired research ethic (Chilisa, 2020), slowly and open-mindedly building consensus around how everyone involved can benefit from my work including participants, so as to confront the typical colonially derived patterns in which the researcher labors and benefits alone. An important aspect of cultivating reciprocal benefit has been flexibility in terms of meeting participants where they were at and grappling with the complexities of doing international research during a global pandemic. To flexibly approach these challenges, for example, I purposefully took a hybrid approach that included in-person and digital ethnographic data collection modes to empower wider participation and increased cohesion with participants’ lives (Murthy, 2012; Seymour, 2012). Though in-person research was my preference in the end, I remain encouraged by the words of Dhiraj Murthy (2012, np): “As ethnography goes digital, its epistemological remit remains much the same. Ethnography is about telling social stories... [and] with the introduction of new technologies, the stories have remained vivid, but the ways they were told have changed.” Flexibility in terms of research design and methodological approach allowed for a greater

number of voices (Seymour, 2012) and overall richer data which has served the underlying goals of this project.

#### Autoethnography: Critical Reflexivity

Another integral tool towards decolonizing ends is reflexivity, defined as “the researcher/writer’s ability to reflect on their own positioning and subjectivity in the research and provide an explicit, situated account of their own role in the project and its influences over the findings” (Starfield, 2015, p. 141). As such, I have tried to account for how my own words, actions, and beliefs have shaped the data I have collected, my analytic thoughts, and the narratives within which they are implicated. As Aneta Pavlenko relates, “The stories we tell are never fully our own” (2007, p. 180), as the data collected in research is always informed by and co-constructed with other people, places, languages, histories, and D/discourses. Part of reflexivity is considering myself as a character in my own stories, partially responsible for the generation of my data. This self-recognition entails thinking of interviews as active, a fundamentally “social encounter” and interactional site in which interviewer and interviewee are both active participants in making meaning (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995, p. 3). As such, I have tried to adopt a “dual interest” in the *whats* and the *hows* of interview content, not sacrificing one for another (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995, p. 5), adopting a “three-pronged approach” to analyze the social context, content, and form of interview data (Pavlenko, 2007, as cited in Higgins and Sandhu, 2014, p. 54). Interviews analyzed as social practice rather than benign research instrument can confront the colonial concealing of the power a researcher has in interpreting and representing interviews. In turn, “content” can be seen as co-produced in order to critique social hierarchies (Talmy, 2011) and highlight the fact that an interview is always collaborative, blurring the lines between interviewer and interviewee. These practices embrace the decolonial possibility of utilizing qualitative methods reflexively by making visible the role of the researcher and the surrounding context in co-producing meaning with participants as collaborators in knowledge making.

Hughes and Pennington (2017), however, extend the definition of reflexivity into the notion of *critical* reflexivity, or when “[researchers] *view themselves as complicit* (at least partially) in the problems they perceive... [which] can place scholars in quite a vulnerable position.” (p. 19, emphasis added). For researchers seeking to acknowledge and move beyond colonial dynamics, then, vulnerably acknowledging their own complicity in social problems is one step in this direction, from reflexive to *critically* reflexive. For me as a white, American woman in the field of English language teaching, this has meant explicitly grappling with how my own positionings contribute to ongoing coloniality in the field, as through my own international collaborations as in Tanzania. As a tool of critical reflexivity, I have layered into my study an autoethnographic aspect in which my own words and actions in collaboration are also an object of inquiry, and my membership in the communities I study and personal knowledge are a strength in exploring cultural practice (Behar, 1996; Hughes and Pennington, 2017; Tedlock, 2013). Autoethnography legitimizes the Self as focus of study as well as way into the study of another subject, as in international collaboration in my case (Maréchal, 2010; Tedlock, 2013). I also see systematic self-reflection as crucial to the social justice underpinnings of my work; locating oneself (Rich, 1984) and exercising reflexivity are necessary, especially for those in privileged positions to spark social change. Importantly, this personal reflection is then balanced and compared with data from other sources to circumvent naval gazing (Canagarajah, 2012b, p. 119) and the normalizing of whiteness (Ryden, 2012). In the autoethnographic tradition, I have included personal, reflective and artistic writing to “braid” genres (Tedlock, 2013), both evocative and analytic, emotionally engaging as well as critically reflexive (e.g., Anderson, 2006; Denzin, 2006; Maréchal, 2010; Muncey, 2010). As Tami Spry (2001) asserts, “Good autoethnography is not simply a confessional tale of self-renewal; it is a provocative weave of story and theory” (p. 713), which, similar to critical ethnography, can link macro-theories to micro-practices in generative, politicized ways that provoke or invite a reader to self-reflect alongside me.

### Story: Evocative Vulnerability

Adopting a decolonial and (auto)ethnographic orientation to collaboration has also meant embracing the power of stories as a tool of analysis as well as the vulnerability that such storytelling can invite. As Hughes and Pennington (2017) note above, exercising critical reflexivity puts a researcher in a vulnerable position, open to additional, personalized critique and negative emotions such as guilt, fear, and disgust. However, as they encourage, “It is the crucial consideration of unveiling the vulnerable self that can free the mind of self-deception without self-deprecation” (p. 19), intimating that acknowledgement of self-*deception* in order to move beyond self-*deprecation* is only made possible through research that makes *generative* use of vulnerability. Ruth Behar (1996) emphasizes that “Efforts at self-revelation flop not because the personal voice has been used, but because it has been poorly used, leaving unscrutinized the connection, intellectual and emotional, between the observer and the observed” (p. 13). As such, this study aims to scrutinize the personal connections between myself and co-collaborators as its nexus and honor creativity and emotions as instructive, “to find and locate [my] position in the research” and “[lead me] to investigate aspects of the research that might have otherwise been overlooked” (Mulvihill and Swaminathan, 2017b, p. 96). In analysis, this has meant that I have paid special attention to moments of emotional tension or heightening as a decolonial way of reasoning which honors physical, interpersonal ways of knowing elements that are not visible or tangible but nonetheless integral to my study. Emotional tension can also signal where ideas and identities are less stable, more vulnerable and open to possible intervention, like cracks in the pavement – moments where our previously settled ideas about identity, collaboration, leadership, race, and other Big Ideas suddenly get unsettled, shaken up by contact with the Other. In terms of writing, this commitment to the generative use of vulnerability has meant that I have chosen to write in an evocative, artistic way at times, often in a narrative form, again as a source of strength for deeper, more meaningful analysis as well as potential to move a reader into deeper reflection. As Thalia M. Mulvihill

and Raji Swaminathan (2017a) can affirm, “qualitative researchers are storytellers” (p. 1) for whom truth is multiple and complex, unraveling and re-weaving tales of the social forces that shape our worlds.

In that spirit, I would like to close with a story that illuminates the many delicate, identity balancing acts incumbent in this work of negotiating Self and Other, researcher and participant, insider and outsider, individual and community, theory and practice, and as Tabasamu puts it, the forest and trees.

“...but within those trees, we have forest there”

I’m sitting with Tabasamu for our last interview of my project so that I can “member check” his ideas about my analysis thus far (Tabasamu INT111522). We’re in “my” office, an office space that was assigned to me when the department moved to another office building with more space for the burgeoning staff. I was assigned one of the rooms, sparsely outfitted with a desk, chair, wastebasket, and ethernet cable and lovingly cared for by a cheerful woman who mops the concrete floor and wipes away the dust from the open screened window every single morning. I had been given a key to the door, adorned with a paper strip announcing “MWENDA,” the name I had been given by staff who found that name easier to pronounce than “Renee.” A few weeks later, a name placard with “Ms. Reenee” appeared on the door. Kajani later said, “When you are there,” referring to America, “remember you have an office here” (FN112922). I feel called into in this community, a community within which I feel a tension between my responsibilities and my own limitations and yet that I am constantly reminded that I am a part of – my name on the office door, my name on the key, being called *dada*, *sister*, and repeated requests to contribute back to it born of the deep inequities between us as well as a belief in our mutual benefit to one another.

Tabasamu and I are sitting at “my” desk, in our second attempt at interviewing for the day. The first was interrupted by the arrival of a guest, a white German woman whom our colleague Robinson

wanted me to meet and so knocked on the door and beckoned me out. People take precedence over work. As we settle back in an hour or so later, Tabasamu and I keep dancing around the idea of “neocolonialism” (as I have come to refer to coloniality with my colleagues) and whether or not it “features” in our collaborative relationship. His stance is still largely that no, neocolonial dynamics are not present in *our* relationship, though it may be present in *some* North-South research collaborations, a common trend which will be explored more in Chapter 4. He restates this opinion before taking a step back to consider that my perspective, by virtue of my outsider status, may enable me to “see” things which other participants cannot. He says, “I can also allow that maybe sometimes, there is something that sometimes maybe you cannot see. You say the elephant in the room?” I confirm the idiom which I introduced earlier, and he continues.

“But maybe sometimes we can be in the room, and the elephant is very big there, but you cannot see it as you can. You can be in the forest. You don’t see a forest, you see trees.”

I take in the poetry of his metaphor with intrigue and beckon him to continue: “Mmhmm.” He goes on:

**People who are outside there maybe they can see that that is the forest, but within that forest, we see trees. So, maybe you can be in the middle of neocolonialism, but you see that it is not there [...] a person who is seeing you with another angle, they are saying, 'We need to deliberate this person because we cannot see that he is within a forest. He only see trees, but within those trees, we have forest there.'** (Tabasamu INT111522)

Tabasamu seems to be suggesting that as insiders, he and other colleagues may only be able to see the daily goings on of their experience in our collaboration, or the trees, rather than the surrounding forest of global, colonially-derived politics of collaboration in English language teaching. He acknowledges my position as a type of insider included in our shared community but also an outsider researcher, “a person seeing with another angle,” and how this may influence my resulting focus on the role of coloniality whereas colleagues may be “in the middle of [it]” and “[seeing] that it is not there.” His

observations underscore the need for critical, self-reflexivity to see oneself as part of a greater sociopolitical whole as well as the value of doing research in community in which we can exchange perspectives and dance between insider and outsider knowledges with mutual, unsettling effects on the Other's perspectives.

## Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter describes the methods I have employed in this study as well as some of the underlying values and reasoning which informed them. Building on the previous chapter, this section illuminates how I have put my background knowledge into practice, a practice which is similarly a tapestry of different disciplines, traditions, and voices, undergirded by critical theories of language and identity as well as decolonial approaches to qualitative research. If the last chapter discussed the “why,” then this chapter furnishes the “how” of this ethnographically oriented study of collaboration in English language teaching through the lens of teacher identity. As I describe the events of the study, I also aim to make my own actions visible as part of a decolonial commitment to critical research which recognizes the social constructedness and enduringly inequitable mechanics of knowledge production. I will describe the setting of my research, conceptualized in various ways due to unique circumstances of space, time, and relationship, and then I will state the research questions which have guided my exploration. Then I will explain the methods for this study and how they have contributed to my holistic, crystallized yet still partial understanding of my topic, drawn from a variety of ethnographically informed traditions of critical ethnography, autoethnography, digital ethnography, and participatory design, accompanied by a transparent discussion of my approach to ethics and funding. I will outline the three phases of data collection spanning from January 2021 to December 2022 (Phase 1: Set Up Collaborative Project, January 2021-December 2021, Online; Phase 2: Work on Collaborative Project, March 2022 - June 2022, Morogoro; Phase 3: Revise and Reflect, September 2022-December 2022, Morogoro). I will also describe the twelve participants who collaborated with me to form the five main data sources (Field notes from participant observation, semi-structured interviews, group meetings, personal research journal, key documents and artifacts) woven together in my analysis. I will conclude by relating my approach to data analysis as informed by ethnography, critical discourse analysis, positioning theory, and critical decolonizing perspectives on qualitative research.

But first, a story which illustrates these some of these ideas as well as a sliver of the experience of putting them into practice:

“We can take a different format as we see fit”

I flip open my computer. Open Zoom, sign in, and wait. Will anyone show up? I’ve been planning this meeting for weeks, emailing, WhatsApping reminders. And now it’s here. It feels momentous – our first meeting, as a group, to decide our collaborative project, again, as a group (GM060821). The early morning sun creeps in through my window in Seattle, though it is already evening in Tanzania. I sip my coffee, nervously. Who will be here?

I’ve already talked to six of the then-thirteen members in the department who want to be a part of my research. We’ve had one-on-one interviews to discuss their background and motivations in teaching and learning English. “Passion” has come up a lot, as well as the idea of helping others and the joy of seeing learners succeed. They have told me about teachers in their family who inspired them and teachers in their schooling who encouraged them. I’ve heard about their educational journeys through undergraduate and graduate degrees, teaching in secondary schools and other universities before landing here, in the Department of Language Studies at SUA. By all accounts thus far, the department is a great environment to work in. They say their collegial relationships are supportive, “horizontal,” and familial even. Colleagues seem to work together in an interconnected give and take; they see what comes and then work with it, show up when they can, and don’t take it personally when someone’s availability changes due to circumstances beyond their control (read: all circumstances). It’s affirming for me to hear this approach alluded to out loud by my colleagues because it’s something I felt when I worked with the group in the past. I felt included as part of the social safety net, called sister, “Dada Renee,” and valued for my contributions towards our shared goals. There was a lingering feeling of... responsibility? Inclusion? It’s hard to name, but that sentiment is what has kept me coming back to work with this group again.

But the conversations we've had lately have been laced with a formality that belies that warmth of those relationships. Maybe the formality is because of the digital format, or the pretense of an "interview," or the distance of time and space. I've also wondered, many times over the interceding years, was that relationship real? Did it exist as in my rose-colored memories? Was that warm, inviting feeling shared? And now here I am grasping at nostalgia by demanding that they all attend a group meeting. I'm telling myself I haven't planned enough, that I'm asking too much, that no one will show. I breathe shallow breaths into the truth that I wanted this space to listen, to get a sense from others about what priorities they had. And that I'm not responsible for figuring it all out on my own. I can just be myself, be present, and that's enough. More coffee.

A black square with Kajani's name suddenly appears, and my fears dissipate instantly. I'm excited to see him. Our first interview was texting via WhatsApp, and I haven't seen him in years. Then Makamba, a comfortingly familiar presence, connects via audio, and we greet each other excitedly in Swahili.

"[Makamba], hujambo?" *[Makamba], how are you?*

"Sijambo. Habari yako?" *I'm good. How are you?*

"Nzuri, nzuri sana." *Good, very good.*

"Ndio." *Yes.*

"Picha yako yanichekesha (laughing)" *Your picture is making me laugh.*

"(laughing) Unapenda?" *You like it?*

"Ndio!" *Yes!*

I'm laughing at his profile picture on the Zoom screen, a chimpanzee smiling broadly at the camera, and remembering my appreciation for his wry sense of humor. Mine is the maniacal laughter of relief. We are debating the merits of turning on our videos given the fickle internet connection when another black square appears bearing the name of a colleague who I have never met. As he connects, Makamba notes

that I do not know this person and explains that they transferred from another department. The colleague enters and we greet each other, a bit stiltedly but earnest, as Kajani sends a message by chat that he is having trouble with his audio connection. Suddenly, Kajani is in the room with video, exchanging greetings with Makamba and I. The conversation switches over to Swahili exclusively, and my understanding peters out. I don't follow completely, but I get that Kajani is in a coastal town for work purposes, seemingly part of his increasing duties as a rising star of the department. When asked how his trip is going, Kajani answers, "Maisha inanira," *Life is boring*. It seems that this is a joke. As I join in the chuckling a second too late, a video of Rahim appears, smiling widely, waving emphatically, and talking, silently, before realizing he's on mute. All of us watching share a respectful, empathetic smile. I watch him silently and exasperatedly flag down a younger companion nearby to help. A young boy appears next to him, looking into the screen. All the while the chatter continues between and around us. And it fills my heart with joy. It feels like everyone shuffling into a meeting room on the SUA campus, greeting each other as we arrive, checking in, getting settled. It feels so warm and relaxing, slightly chaotic yet affirming – yes, this relationship is real, the warmth is real, and I can do this. We can do this. I can follow my heart and this meeting is going to be ok. We're on the right path.

Around twenty minutes after our planned meeting "start" time, I take the discursive step to transition us to the business portion. I take the floor and begin by thanking everyone for being present and negotiating the technological challenges to be here. I then give a brief introduction to myself and our goal today, to discuss the ideas for our collaborative project. I present my idea for how the meeting could proceed: going through the list of project ideas that I sent by email and discussing them one by one, or as I say, "**We can take a different format as we see fit.**" In that moment, it occurs to me to stop and invite Rahim to say something, as the oldest and most respected member of the group, or "the most senior" as I have also heard him called (He has also been referred to as nyani mzee, *old baboon*, but that's a story for another time). He takes the floor and thanks me for my "appreciation" before

elaborating on the meeting structure I've proposed. Makamba interrupts and advocates for me summarizing the ideas briefly first because "some" of us may not have seen all of the ideas. I agree and clarify if I should mention them all briefly, or if we should stop and discuss each one. Rahim and Makamba chime in to agree that I should summarize all at once. Then Kajani interjects to mention that he is currently on a break from a workshop and so we should "discuss quickly" if possible before he has to leave. I thank him for "alerting" us, and then we begin our discussion of the project ideas. Overall, this process is remarkably cohesive: we collectively establish a structure for our meeting, and every individual has input or consideration, but we understand that the meeting structure is flexible – we see what comes and work with it. The emergent expectation is that we will offer our views and slowly work towards a collective decision.

The interviews that I conducted around this group meeting were likewise flexible, according to participant preference and circumstance; for example, Mkude chose to interview by WhatsApp through a combination of synchronous texts and voice memos so that he could simultaneously spend time with his children, his voice responses occasionally punctuated by his throaty, gentle giggle that I remember well from our time together in person years ago. Tabasamu initially chose to interview by Zoom and endured challenging internet connections while his bright energy shone through his pixelated video image until I could appreciate it in person, not only in interviews but also on the dance floor of a local club where we enjoyed "vibing," as he puts it. Robinson also first chose to interview by Zoom and then entertained my follow ups by WhatsApp before we could meet in person, allowing him to come to an interview with an ear of roasted corn he had just purchased on the street and generously offer for me to snap off a half for myself, a welcome and unexpected benefit of the in-person format.

Others have been present in this project less through interviews and more in fieldnotes as characters in the story of our collaboration: Chupaki, who always greets me with a warm slap of a handshake that feels both intimidatingly cool and inviting before tossing me greetings in the latest slang,

making good on a past promise to teach me Kiswahili mtaani, *of the streets*; Zawadi, who jauntily tossed peanuts one by one into his mouth one day while authoritatively explaining the earth's tilt and rotation to another staff member sitting in the communal tea room as I sat nearby delighting in the poetic moment and taking notes as inconspicuously as I could; Minani, who could barely contain an enthusiasm for regularly explaining Kiswahili vocabulary to me based on a wide and impressive knowledge in at least five languages as I scribbled in my notebook, as ever struggling to keep up; Amani, whose quiet confidence and critical questioning encouraged me that this project was of interest to my colleagues and worthwhile. And there are still others with whom I did not have a chance to discuss pseudonyms due to their busy schedules of teaching Communication Skills to classes of three hundred plus students or Spanish to aspiring tour guides in the Department of Tourism, or traveling for their own PhD studies in France or Dar es Salaam - who are in one way or another part of the wider story of how we worked together, co-laboring, both as individuals and an eclectic, vibrant, and dynamic whole.

### Research Site

The site of this research is our collaboration, and this setting can be thought of in myriad ways that incorporate different perspectives on space and research. In a theoretical sense, this setting can be conceptualized as an abstract space in-between, constituted by our interactions. Due to the unique circumstances of collaborating internationally in a global pandemic, these interactions have taken place in many forms: in person; in the digital realms of e-mail, Zoom, WhatsApp and the like; in our shared yet separate memories; in stories we tell and re-tell ourselves and others. As Gloria Anzaldúa (1987), Homi Bhabha (2004) and other critical voices point out, in-between spaces are dynamic and generative, and the identities that arise from them reflect historical complexity as well as the labor of constant negotiation. Likewise, Vavrus and Bartlett (2013), inspired by Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, remind us that spaces of international collaboration produce *friction* with creative potential, as when two sticks rub together to spark a flame such that "heterogeneous and unequal encounters can lead to new

arrangements of culture and power” (Tsing, as cited in Vavrus and Bartlett, 2013, p. 3). Though hybrid forms born of the friction of unequal power dynamics should not be taken as a decolonizing panacea (see, for example, Sandhu and Higgins, 2016), it is this interactional, co-laborative dynamic itself that structures the overarching setting and focus for this study.

In the geopolitical sense, this study is rooted in Tanzania, also known as the United Republic of Tanzania (URT). Situated along the coast of east Africa, Tanzania has long been a crossroads of intercultural connection and exchange. This rich history is made manifest in its official language, Swahili or *Kiswahili*, loosely translated as the “language of the people of the coast,” with Bantu and Arabic roots peppered with vocabulary from German, Portuguese, English and other languages of contact. Swahili is the unifying national language among approximately 120 other ethnic languages in the country (Qorro, 2013). The use of Swahili language was advocated in anti-colonial sentiment after independence from Britain in 1961, and it continues to be used in government and primary schooling today (Qorro, 2013). English serves as an additional official language though used by a much smaller set of the population, and it is more present in urban areas and spaces of higher education, tied to wealth and higher social status (Blommaert, 2019).

This study is also based geographically and institutionally at Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA), a public university in Tanzania nestled in the lush, tropical foothills of the Uluguru mountains. Established in 1965 as a college for granting diplomas in agriculture, SUA became an official university in 1984. As of 2015-2016, during my first visit to campus, it had 8,234 students across undergraduate, graduate, and certificate programs (Sokoine University of Agriculture, 2020). By 2022 when I was conducting in-person research for this dissertation, the student population had swelled to 15,014, almost doubling in size in just seven years (Sokoine University of Agriculture, 2022). This is in part due to deliberate efforts by the Tanzanian Commission for Universities (TCU) to increase the number of students enrolled in higher education (TCU, 2016) as well as the legacy of Education for All policies

which aimed to provide universal primary education with recipients now approaching university age and creating a bottleneck effect in higher education in Tanzania (Rwiza, 2014). While current policies in countries such as Tanzania facilitate access to higher education, most do not furnish the necessary administrative or material support to meet the rising demand including relevant professional training for teachers and suitable infrastructure (e.g., Foley & Masingila, 2014; Lukwale, 2016). This tension between access and reality serves as the backdrop which motivated me and my colleagues' choice to collaborate on a research project investigating strategies for teaching large classes and how they are currently responding to this phenomenon, as will be discussed in Chapter 4.

As hunger for higher education increases in Tanzania, SUA finds itself expanding to accommodate the rapid growth. Also, since my last visit in 2015, SUA has grown to encompass five campuses spread across the country. Two of these campuses (Main Campus, also known as Edward Moringe Campus, and Mazimbu, also known as Solomon Mahlangu Campus) are located in the town of Morogoro. Morogoro is a bustling, mid-sized town of around 312,000 people which boasts multiple other universities and educational institutions. The town itself is a waypoint on the main roads between the port of Dar es Salaam to the east, and the capital city of Dodoma to the west, and the surrounding area is primarily agricultural. Morogoro is where I was based when I was able to travel to Tanzania in 2022 as COVID-related travel restrictions eased, and Mazimbu campus is where the Department of Language Studies is based.

While the mission of SUA is "to promote development in agriculture, natural resources and allied sectors through training, research and delivery of services," (Sokoine University of Agriculture, 2020), national language policies necessitate the provision of English language courses in service to the university's mission. In the Tanzanian education system, Swahili is the medium of instruction at the primary level, with English taught as a subject, then at the secondary level, English becomes the medium of instruction, as instituted in 2009 (Qorro, 2013), and English continues as the medium of instruction at

the tertiary level (Tibategeza and Plessis, 2018). However, in practice, English remains a minority language in the country, partly a factor of inequitable access to adequate English learning, and most students arrive at SUA not able to complete university coursework in English (Komba and Mohamed, 2016; Mohamed and Banda, 2008; Nyinondi, Mhandeni, and Mohamed, 2017). The university-at-large looks to the Department of Language Studies to ameliorate the English language struggles of the majority of the student body (Mohamed and Banda, 2008; Mohamed, 2018). This situation is similar to that of other Tanzanian universities where, as early as the 1980s, “communication skills” courses have been offered as a solution to prepare students for the academic and English language demands of university learning (Komba and Mohamed, 2016; Mohamed, 2018). However, current efforts at SUA to support the language needs of students remain constrained by institutional and structural barriers including an emphasis on high stakes summative assessment, large class sizes of up to 400 students, and a lack of supportive language learning environments and materials (Komba and Mohamed, 2016; Nyinondi, Mhandeni, and Mohamed, 2017). To explore and realize strategies for mitigating these challenges, the Department of Language Studies partnered with iAGRI, a consortium funded by USAID (iAGRI, 2015) and assisted by the US Embassy, on a number of projects to better support English language learning, including the curriculum revision project that originally brought me to SUA (Komba and Mohamed, 2016; Mohamed, 2018).

In the relational sense, then, the setting of this study can also be conceptualized as my ongoing professional and personal relationship with my colleagues at SUA. This relationship began in 2015 and is still growing such that it does not end with this study, as my colleagues often reminded me throughout the course of my research. Over the past seven years, our collaboration has ebbed and flowed across time spent in relationship in various locales and contexts: in tea rooms, in their offices, in their cars, in their classrooms, in conference rooms and hotel lobbies, at restaurants and night clubs, on buses and three-wheeled bajajs and walkways. I am invested in continuing this relationship with the department

into the future as well as rethinking our present in the context of a past (Mamdani, as cited in Makuvaza and Shinza, 2017, p. 6). I wanted to both honor and critically approach our relationship within the wider frame of ongoing coloniality as manifested in English language politics and suspect notions of “partnership.” Given the complicated history of English language as both a ghost of colonial past and means to an empowered future (e.g. Blommaert, 2019), and the way that partnerships can further ingrain the power imbalances they seek to rectify (e.g. Omanga and Mainye, 2019; Trent, 2016), I sought to examine how we negotiate power as partners, from our own locations within the surrounding complexities and drawing on our trust built over time.

### Research Questions

This study is guided by the following questions:

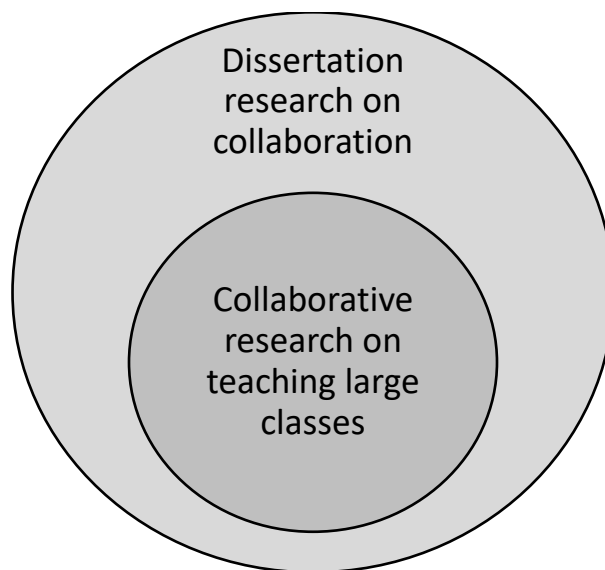
- How do we negotiate the identities available to us in the course of collaboration?
  - How do we make sense of our identities vis a vis larger discourses around English language teaching and use, including but not limited to:
    - English and colonialism/coloniality
    - English and race
    - English and development
- How do our identities shape our practices as we work together?
- How can we use these insights to decolonize collaborations in English language teaching?

### Methods

#### Overview

This project is an ethnographically oriented study of collaboration in English language teaching through the lens of teacher identity. Working from a goal of reciprocal benefit, I approached department members with my intention of studying international collaboration and then asked about what project they would like to complete that could benefit their department or address current needs.

Through a process of consensus building (Chilisa, 2020) and participant design (Bang and Vossoughi, 2016; Leavy, 2017) further described in my description of Phase 1 below as well as Chapter 4, we shaped and carried out a joint research project. This separate yet intertwined research project focused on which strategies department members are currently employing to teach large classes of 300+ students in communication skills courses. As a result, my own dissertation research examined our process around creating and conducting collaborative research on teaching large classes, and the relationship between the two sets of research is illustrated in the following figure.



*Figure 1: Relationship of dissertation research on collaboration to collaborative research on teaching large classes.*

The focus of this dissertation is then the collaboration that occurred between myself and my colleagues in the process of conducting a joint research project. Drawing from a variety of ethnographic approaches including critical ethnography (Canagarajah, 1999; Madison, 2005; Motha, 2014), autoethnography (Behar, 1996; Hughes and Pennington, 2017), and digital ethnography (Murthy, 2012), I aimed to collect rich, holistic data around this process that interrogates power and honors relationships. Guided by principles of participatory design research (Bang and Vossoughi, 2016; Leavy,

2017), I have woven together multiple qualitative research traditions as follows in order to investigate the rich and complex terrain of international collaboration in English teaching and teacher identity.

### Critical Ethnography

Researchers of English teacher identity (e.g., Duff and Uchida, 1997; Motha, 2014) have often utilized ethnographically-oriented methods in order to access the richness of data needed for identity study. Ethnographic data can highlight the process of identity formation and local conceptions of identities which resist imported essentialized categories (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005) and can provide textured, layered information from different points in time in order to account for the dynamism of identity, which is always relational and in flux (Mishler, 2006). Ethnographic data can also inform an understanding of larger social contexts and discourses in which identities exist while acknowledging their emergent and partial nature (Benwell and Stokoe, 2006). The focus on how identities are formed in a specific social context can shed light on “how existing [identity] categories might be appropriated, challenged, and reformulated in the service of greater malleability in identity work” (Varghese et al. 2016, p. 561).

Importantly, this project takes a *critical* approach to ethnography, in the sense of interrogating a group’s “access to economic, political, and cultural resources” (Carspecken, 1996, p. 204) and applying macro-theories to microethnographic data (Starfield, 2015, p. 142) for the purpose of social change (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). My critical approach highlights complexity (Geertz, 1973) and everyday resistance of hegemony (Canagarajah, 1999) while also incorporating consideration of my own position as researcher in acknowledgement that no research is value-free (Talmy, 2015, p. 154).

As theoretical framing, critical qualitative research takes truths as multiple and situated, with the goal of describing contexts rather than proving theories (Holliday, 2015) and making complexity visible. It values multiple perspectives through crystallization (Richardson and St. Pierre, 2005) or assemblage (Hughes and Pennington, 2017, p. 23) of a range of people, literature, and data sources. It

purposefully employs “multiple methodological practices, empirical materials, perspectives, and observers... [to] add rigor, breadth, complexity, richness, and depth” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, p. 5).

This study has employed multiple methodological practices, including autoethnography and critical discourse analysis, to exercise rigor through depth.

### Autoethnography

While not a pure autoethnography, this study has employed autoethnographic elements as a way to shift the gaze and bring critically reflexive (Hughes and Pennington, 2017) attention to the role of individuals such as myself – white, Western, American, female – in international collaboration in English language teaching. This reflexivity was accomplished through use of autoethnographic methods and sensibilities, defined as “the use of personal knowledge and membership to explore cultural practice” (Tedlock, 2013, p. 358, citing Goodall, 2000; Ellis, 2004) or “a form or method of research that involves *self-observation* and *reflexive investigation* in the context of ethnographic field work and writing” (Maréchal, 2010, p. 44, emphasis added). These sensibilities were employed through participant observation and personal journaling as data collection methods, described further below, and allowed me to engage with my own whiteness and Western-ness which one must acknowledge in international collaboration to highlight complicity in ongoing coloniality.

### Digital Ethnography

Due to the complexities of doing research during a global pandemic, this critical ethnographically-oriented study has taken a hybrid approach that included in-person and digital data collection modes. A combination of physical and remote modes for collecting ethnographic data can empower wider participation especially of marginalized voices (Murthy, 2012; Seymour, 2012), allow greater participant control over their representation (McCoyd and Kerson, 2012; Seymour, 2012), and yield interviews that are more self-reflective and cohesive with participants’ lives (James and Busher, 2012; McCoyd and Kerson, 2012). Though in-person research ended up yielding richer, more resonant data in the end, I was encouraged by the words of Dhiraj Murthy (2012, np): “As ethnography goes

digital, its epistemological remit remains much the same. Ethnography is about telling social stories... [and] with the introduction of new technologies, the stories have remained vivid, but the ways they were told have changed.” As a result, I began collecting data digitally until in-person travel was deemed safe for myself and my participants, the timeline of which is outlined below. This analysis considers data collected both digitally and in-person with context noted as possible to inform deeper understanding.

### Participatory Design

To facilitate this hybridized approach to ethnography, this project adopted a participatory design orientation. Rooted in social justice traditions, participatory design “values collaboration, power sharing, and different kinds of knowledge (scientific, lay, experiential)” (Leavy, 2017, p. 224) by directly involving the affected communities and stakeholders in the research design process. However, it also takes for granted that partnerships in research are power-laden and subject to “ongoing fragility and negotiation” (Vakil et al., 2016, p. 199), making partnerships themselves worthy of careful attention and analysis with regards to their successes as much as in their challenges (Bang and Vossoughi, 2016; Vakil et al., 2016). Though not a “full research partnership,” this research was more similar to the “principal researcher as leader with community input” model articulated by Leavy (2017, p. 238), in which community members are continuously consulted and invited to participate at the capacity available to them. While still seeking to make visible and disrupt “historically powered relations” (Bang and Vossoughi, 2016, p. 184), this project attempted to adhere to the major principles of participatory design including politicized trust (Vakil et al., 2016), cultural sensitivity, multiplicity, and flexibility derived from a balance of openness and structure, with methodology that is necessarily recursive and responsive to evolving needs of the community over time and mutual benefit (Leavy, 2017).

### A Note on Ethics

As a critical study, this project has centered responsibility and care by honoring relationships with participants through building trust and mutual benefit into research design (De Costa, 2015, p. 249) both externally and internally. Externally, from an institutional standpoint, my plan for working ethically

with human subjects was reviewed by the University of Washington Human Subjects Division (HSD) and determined to be of exempt status (IRB ID: STUDY00012077). In addition, my study was reviewed and approved by the Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology (COSTECH), and I was granted a permit for research within Tanzania (Permit No. 2022-266-NA-2022-015). Furthermore, this study was reviewed and approved by the Sokoine University of Agriculture via the Senate of the Directorate of Postgraduate Studies, Research, Technology Transfer and Consultancy (DPRTC) (RPGS/AS/03/2022).

Internal to the study, however, my first responsibility remains towards the participants, taking myself as researcher accountable for their representation and its effects (Madison, 2005) as well as mindful of material and social differences between researcher and participant in terms of labor expected from each (Horner, 2002). To do this, I outlined and attempted to minimize the labor expected of my participants, though the balance of labor remained a dynamic site of reflection and analysis that will be discussed throughout. In addition, I asked a member of the department at SUA and participant to serve on my dissertation committee as a measure of accountability to the SUA community, making sure that someone from the same group as participants has real power and voice in critiquing my representations of their community. Furthermore, I drew heavily on the practice of reflexivity, or “the researcher/writer’s ability to reflect on their own positioning and subjectivity in the research and provide an explicit, situated account of their own role in the project and its influences over the findings” (Starfield, 2015, p. 141) throughout this research process. I remain committed to *critical* reflexivity, as when “[researchers] *view themselves as complicit* (at least partially) in the problems they perceive” (Hughes and Pennington, 2017, p. 19, emphasis added). I believe that these measures have built and tended to structures of accountability to myself, my participants, our institutions, and ongoing efforts to bring increased equity to research and collaboration.

While I have tried to honor both internal and external criteria for ethical research, I also wish to frame ethics as an ongoing conversation between researcher and my varied contexts and state that I

have tried my best to make ethical choices with the time and resources at hand. Specific ethical considerations relevant to participant consent and data collection are included in relevant sections below. In general, I tried to stay not only critical but responsive, often recasting “traditional” or normalized social research practices through the lens of an Ubuntu research ethic (Chilisa, 2020) which is guided by principles of harmony, reciprocity, consensus building, and social responsibility to community. As Bagele Chilisa states, such an approach to research can “disrupt and decolonize dominant deficit thinking by promoting compassion, care, togetherness, empathy, and respectful ways of doing research that allow[s] researchers to see themselves in the researched,” (2020, p. 241, citing Swanson). I see this lens as another move towards decolonizing research in my field as well as relationships with The Other, and my resulting reflections are interwoven throughout this analysis. Yet, I have also struggled with the ethics around appropriation in this case and what it means for me as a white researcher from the Global North to be taking on a philosophy inspired by ideas of Ubuntu and the re-colonizing potential of this move. These tensions will be explored more in my analysis in Chapter 5 and suggestions for future research in Chapter 6. Furthermore, my desire to resist coloniality’s influence on my processes of research and analysis has been a challenge in representing gendered interactions as a white woman, understanding the weight of colonial history on how I represent them (e.g., Appleby, 2010; Hamad, 2020), as grappled with in Chapter 5. As a result, my analysis of gender is another area in which I have tried to employ ethics relationally and to the best of my ability while acknowledging that flexibility is needed and ongoing.

### Funding

To make this project a reality, I applied for and received financial support from multiple sources. In sharing those sources here, I wish to acknowledge my complicity in the messiness of money and global (in)equity as tied to ongoing colonial power. I was reminded of this complicity when looking at a

recent brochure for one of the fellowships I received, the Boren Fellowship initiated by David L. Boren, former U.S. Senator and Governor of Oklahoma who, according to said brochure, stated,

Never in our history has it been more important for America's future leaders to have a deep understanding of the rest of the world. **As we seek to lead through partnerships**, respect for and understanding of other cultures and languages is absolutely essential.

While these intentions are noble on a surface level, I was struck by the fact that even as I seek to critically examine the nature of cross-cultural politics in order to cultivate global equity, the money that allows me to do so is explicitly tied to imperial goals as realized through the vehicle of partnership. With these and other caveats in mind, I am grateful to have received funding from the following sources: the Boeing Fritz International Research Fellowship from the University of Washington Graduate School which allowed for three months of research involving international travel; a Boren Fellowship from the US Department of Defense (DoD) administered by the Institute of International Education (IIE) which allowed for an additional three months of research accompanied by Kiswahili language learning in exchange for one year of federal service. In addition, to allow time for my data collection and analysis, I applied for and received fellowships of one academic quarter each from The University of Washington Graduate School and the University of Washington English Department. I also received monetary support from the African Studies Ottenberg-Winans Fellowship twice to assist with the costs of internet as well as research permits and visas to be able to complete this research in its hybrid form. In this way, I have benefited from my alignment with economic and institutional power as well as the communities therein supporting critical reflection and resistance.

### Timeline

Overall, data collection for this project took place over 18 months: one year of online interaction (January 2021-December 2021) combined with six months of in-person interaction in Morogoro, Tanzania, separated into two segments of three months each (March-June 2022 and September-

December 2022). This combination of digital and in-person interaction as well as the staggered nature of data collection was a result of fluctuating travel advisories during the COVID-19 pandemic and differing sources of funding with varying guidance during a highly unpredictable and dynamic time. Data was thus collected in three phases overall, with key research and collaborative project activities as shown in the table below and explained thereafter.

Phase	Time Period	Activity	Mode/Location
1	January 2021-December 2021	Set Up Collaborative Project	Online
2	March 2022 -June 2022	Work on Collaborative Project	Morogoro, Tanzania
3	September 2022-December 2022	Revise and Reflect	Morogoro, Tanzania

*Table 1: Phases of data collection with respective time period, activity, and mode/location*

#### Phase 1: Set Up Collaborative Project - January 2021-December 2021, Online

In this initial stage, all activities were completed remotely. I invited participants (Appendix A, B) and gathered community input to build a shared understanding of issues through an initial survey (Appendix C). This was accompanied by first round interviews (March-June 2021) (Appendix D) which asked about participants' professional and linguistic background as well as experiences in teaching and working collaboratively with foreigners and then second round interviews (September-December 2021) (Appendix E) which explored the stakes, expectations, and constructive feedback on our proposed project plan. I also hosted 3 group meetings via Zoom during this period to discuss, decide, and shape the collaborative project based on department needs. During this time, I also conducted initial analysis of emergent themes.

#### Phase 2: Work on Collaborative Project – March 2022 -June 2022, Morogoro

During this stage, all activities took place in person in Morogoro, and colleagues and I worked collaboratively on our project. I conducted third round interviews (Appendix F) which focused on follow up from other interview responses and group meetings as well as views on our collaborative process thus far. I also hosted five group meetings in person in order to introduce my larger dissertation project to a larger audience and work on our collaborative project. I drafted and gathered feedback on the product of collaborative project. Additional participants whom I was able to connect with in person joined at this stage, and they were interviewed according to a combination of round one and/or two protocols. I also continued to conduct initial and recursive analysis of emergent themes with the addition of more data.

### Phase 3: Revise and Reflect - September 2022-December 2022, Morogoro

During this stage, all activities took place in person in Morogoro. In another group meeting, I shared my analysis of the process with participants for their critique and feedback which then shaped continued analysis. I then conducted fourth and final round interviews (Appendix G), focused on feedback to my analysis and overall reflections on our collaboration. Further additional participants who were not present during Phase 2 joined at this stage. I also continued recursive analysis of emergent themes with the addition of more data. I revised and completed our collaborative project and made it available for department use.

### Participants

The primary participants in this study were myself and 12 staff members of the Department of Language Studies at Sokoine University of Agriculture. Not all department members were participants in this study. As of November 2022, there were 13 active members of the department total, including nine with whom I have worked previously, comprising one Senior Lecturer, five Lecturers, five Assistant Lecturers, and two additional teaching staff, all overseen by one member serving as Head of the

Department. The vast majority of the staff (12) are men, and one (1) staff member is a woman, in line with a general trend towards male overrepresentation in positions of authority in higher education at SUA and in Tanzania in general (Nyoni and He, 2019). All department members are from Tanzania, and almost all hold advanced degrees, including five with doctorates and six with master's degrees as of 2021. At least four members were working towards PhDs and/or master's degrees while this project was being completed, and those who were working on PhDs were granted "study leave" away from teaching responsibilities on campus and so may have been present only intermittently during the course of this study. The academic backgrounds of the department members represent a range of related fields such as linguistics, French language, English language and literature, Spanish language, TESOL, education, and psychology (Department of Language Studies, 2021), reflecting a multidisciplinary ethos within the larger College of Social Sciences and Humanities where the department is housed. Their teaching experiences range widely in number of years and contexts, though most have been teaching at SUA for multiple years with the exception of two members who were newly hired in mid-2022. All staff who are not on study leave teach in some capacity; most teach Communication Skills I and II, foundational academic skills courses which serve general population students at the university, in addition to other courses such as Spanish and French language. In addition, all members of the department carry out additional duties and service to the university, including serving on committees, conducting and publishing original research and writing, supervising graduate and undergraduate research, professional development workshops and courses, and outside consultancies.

All members of the department were invited to participate in this study through a combination of email, WhatsApp, and in-person invitations. Not all department members chose to participate. If interested, participants were asked to give informed consent (Appendix B), apprised of the project background and aims as well as their rights as participants, both in writing and orally. Participants had the right to choose to participate anonymously and/or withdraw participation at any time. I also offered

participants the choice of a pseudonym that I could use to refer to them in my analysis or use their actual name, and the names in use throughout are a reflection of those choices.

In general, as a reflexive researcher, I approached the process of consent as an extended conversation. I provided what is required by my institutions, and I made these terms explicit at the outset but also aimed to discuss these terms and their cultural implications with my participants as a topic of conversation throughout the research process, as inspired by participatory design (Leavy, 2017) and in order to further reflect on the epistemological assumptions of my own work. Where relevant, some of those reflections are included as data and described in the analysis chapters which follow. For example, Table 2 which describes participants is a product of negotiation of participant preferences through discussion. I initially thought to include a table with basic biodata about each participant, as is customary in social science research; however, I was concerned that much of the typical information I might include (such as courses taught, or years of employment at SUA) may reveal participants to each other. After seeking participants' views individually through interviews and informal conversation to build consensus (Chilisa, 2020), it seemed like the best choice would be to refrain from singling out and potentially exposing participants with individual information and instead present them in three groups, as outlined below. This process represents one of the many ways in which I sought to be responsive and reflexive throughout this study by reframing normalized research practices through an Ubuntu-inspired lens (Chilisa, 2020) as small steps towards decolonizing, while still holding concerns about theoretical appropriation. Likewise, I have tried to represent participants in writing as individuals and whole people with distinct personalities, opinions, and experiences wherever possible to counter the perhaps colonial inclination to view them as monolith while still respecting their right to confidentiality. It has been a difficult balance to strike, and my work in this area is ongoing.

In the end, there were three layers, or waves of participation which structured the three groupings of participants reflected below. Initially, I sent a formal email (Appendix A) to all members of

the department who were active when I began my first phase of data collection remotely in January 2021, and I followed up with more informal WhatsApp messages with those who I had met before in order to personalize my invitation. At that time, six members of the department (Kajani, Rahim, Makamba, Mkude, Tabasamu, and Robinson) agreed to participate. That these six agreed initially did not surprise me as I had worked with all of them before in 2015. This group then formed the “core” group of participants with whom I conducted two interviews, an initial survey, and two group meetings during my first phase of data collection (January-December 2021) which was remote due to the ongoing pandemic. Once I was able to travel to Tanzania in person for the second phase (March-June 2022), I was able to have in-person contact with two additional staff members who eventually agreed to participate: Chupaki, who I had also worked with in 2015, and Zawadi, whom I was meeting for the first time in 2022. I was able to develop or re-develop relationships with these two participants to the extent that I felt comfortable asking them if they would like to be interviewed individually while they also participated in group meetings with the six core participants, and these two then formed a “secondary” layer of participants. However, during a group meeting in the second, in-person phase of data collection, there was some direct social pressure from a senior staff member for all department members to participate (GM040622), after which two other unnamed participants consented (the story of which is outlined in a future chapter) but left me wondering about their actual individual interest or willingness. I decided to be guided by our unfolding relationships with each other, and in the end, I did not perceive a certain level of interest from them to the extent that I felt comfortable approaching them for interviews. While I admit that this approach to interviewing is slippery and not necessarily equalizing, I found it important to center relationships (Chilisa, 2020; Madison, 2005) in contrast to the institutional or social pressure that participants may have been facing. I see this turning towards relationality as a general practice with potential for decolonizing collaborations, further explained in Chapter 6. As a result, I formulated a “tertiary” layer of participation to describe participants (including Minani, Amani, and 2

unnamed participants) who joined my study in the second or third phases of data collection in person (March-June and September-December 2022) and participated in some group meetings but gave no individual interviews. This fluid unfolding of participation in my study in many ways reinforces the notions of interdependence and *identity-in-community* which will be discussed in later chapters as resistance to colonial arrangements of identity, research, and collaboration. In addition to highlighting the importance of established relationships and power of face-to-face contact in facilitating those relationships in settings such as Tanzania, it seemed that participants were open to contributing to our project in principle and offering the time and energy they had available when they had it, expecting others (such as myself) to not take it personally when they could not be present - the give and take of interconnection and working as a community.

In assigning “layers” to participants’ involvement in this data, I do not wish to imply that some participants are more important, knowledgeable, or dedicated than others. Rather, I have put participants into groups to reflect 1) relationships that I had with participants prior to my data collection for this project and 2) the length of time of their involvement in our collaboration for this project, resulting in more presence and potentially more representation in group meetings and interviews. I share these layers to transparently explain why some names and voices may be more heavily drawn on than others in my analysis as a factor of our relationship or more data featuring that participant. These layers are described in Table 2.

Participant Layer	Description	Participants by pseudonym
Core	Participants who I had pre-existing relationships with and were recruited in the first phase of data collection (remote, beginning in January 2021),	6 total: Kajani, Rahim, Makamba, Mkude, Tabasamu, and Robinson

	involved in the majority of group meetings, and gave 4 individual interviews.	
Secondary	Participants who I may or may not have had pre-existing relationships with prior to data collection and were recruited in the second phase of data collection (in-person, beginning in March 2022), involved in some group meetings, gave 1-3 individual interviews.	2 total: Chupaki and Zawadi
Tertiary	Participants who I did not have pre-existing relationships with and were recruited in the second phase of data collection (in-person, beginning in March 2022) or third phase (in-person, beginning in September 2022), involved in some group meetings, gave no individual interviews.	4 total: Minani, Amani, and 2 unnamed participants

*Table 2: Participants at Core, Secondary, and Tertiary Layers*

### Data Sources

In adopting an ethnographically informed methodology, my data was collected from various sources and modes. In the section below, I describe the collection of my five main sources of data: 1) field notes from participant observation; 2) interviews; 3) group meetings; 4) personal research journal; and 5) key documents and artifacts. Interspersed with their description, I also theorize how these have contributed

to a holistic, situated understanding of my topic. Throughout this dissertation, the data that I am drawing from in order to illustrate an idea is marked according to its source followed by the date collected, as summarized in Table 3.

Data type	Label (+ Date collected monthdateyear)	Notes on Label
<b>Field Note</b> (from participant observation, also referred to as “observational note.”)	FN  Example: FN021521	Label includes my notes on an interview, document or artifact. Field notes are my words and/or perspective on the data whereas a label of KDA or INT denotes data from that source itself, in participants’ and/or their/our words.
<b>Interview</b>	INT  Example: INT021521	In the event that interviews were conducted on the same day, the label reflects the date and a letter (e.g., A, B, C) to denote the order collected.  For interviews via WhatsApp that continued over the course of a few days, synchronously or asynchronously, I have used the date that the interview was <b>initiated</b> or <b>received</b> (in the case of email).
<b>Group Meeting</b>	GM  Example: GM060821	
<b>Personal Research Journal</b>	PRJ  Example: PRJ021221	Includes all journals, personal (e.g., 2015, 2018) and research-forward journal (2021-2022)
<b>Key Documents and Artifacts</b>	KDA  Example: KDA021521	An observational note regarding a key document is considered a field note (see below).  For certain documents (such as PowerPoint slides), I have labeled the data according to the date created or presented.

*Table 3: Data types with descriptions*

1) Field Notes from Participant Observation (FN)

I functioned as a participant observer, or “participant as observer” (Gold, as referenced in Merriam and Tisdell, 2016, p. 144), both participating in our collaborative project and observing the process of collaboration as data. This incorporated self-reflexive attention to my own actions, words, and thoughts as well as those of others I worked with. As a result, I observed personal communications and interactions online and in person including meetings, informal exchanges, and any other events that constituted our working together on a shared project or gave contextual insight. This data took the form of field notes on events, interactions, and reflections related to our collaboration which I recorded in writing electronically and by hand in a notebook with the date noted. Additionally, some field notes were composed into analytical memos (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016, p. 158) which attempted to illuminate common themes between field notes and other data sources, such as interviews, to conduct preliminary analysis of events to aid iterative revision of conclusions later. However, as my project evolved, I found my personal research journal to be a more generative site of processing themes across sources, as will be discussed later.

Participant observation is an integral part of ethnography, conceptualized by Theresa Lillis as “*sustained involvement in contexts of production*, [which] enables the researcher to explore and track the dynamic and complex situated meanings and practices that are constituted in and by [the research topic]” (2008, p. 355). This suits ethnography’s focus on a specific context and everyday behaviors, rather than experimental settings, from which to draw a range of data sources via observation, informal conversation, and “prolonged engagement” in the research setting (Starfield, 2015, p. 138). My simultaneous participation and observation furnished a “thick description” (Geertz, 1973) of the context in which we worked - rich, layered, detailed and focused on the local, social meaning of words and actions. While it was at times a struggle to simultaneously participate in and analyze my own

experiences as well as the reported experiences of colleagues, ultimately this dual role proved fruitful for a more intimate understanding of what it means to collaborate across difference in our context.

## 2) Semi-structured Interviews (INT)

I also conducted interviews with my colleagues, aiming for 3- 4 interviews with each colleague during the research process, taking place at the beginning, mid-points, and conclusion of my data collection period. Across the 12 members of the department who participated in the study, this resulted in 28 interviews total. Not all participants were interviewed; I was guided by my relationship with each participant such that who was interviewed and how many times was based on rapport, proximity, and level of social comfort as perceived by me. As a result, core participants, with whom I had existing relationships, were interviewed more often (4 times), and participants added later interviewed less or not at all. Interviews were generally 1-2 hours in length and conducted mostly in English with frequent phrases or interjections in Kiswahili, usually occurring organically and initiated by either me as interviewer or the interviewee.

The interviews were semi-structured in the sense that I had specific topics and questions that I wished to ask (Appendices D-G), but the topics and foci shifted over the course of the interview with participant and researcher interest. Initially, I asked questions related to participant professional and educational background, motivations in teaching and learning English, self-perception, experiences working collaboratively, and opinions and experiences related to language use and cross-cultural interaction, and future interview questions were formulated based on those responses and shared experiences as our work progressed. Later interviews functioned more as member checks (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016) in which I would share my own impressions and preliminary analysis with participants for their feedback and perspectives with additional member checks via group meetings, described below.

Methodologically, I used interviews to elicit personal opinions, past experiences, and other phenomena that I may not otherwise have been able to access, and they helped to crystalize other data

such as key documents and my personal research journal (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). I took an “active” interview approach, viewing the interview as an interactional site in which interviewer and interviewee are both active participants in making meaning (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995, p. 3). As a result, interviews were more conversational in nature; I have conceptualized interviews as a focused conversation to invite reciprocal questioning and sharing of information, including sharing of my own reflections and experiences. Interviews were audio recorded (given participant permission, format accessibility, and varied quality due to internet bandwidth) and then transcribed to include key paralinguistic elements such as pauses, laughter, and backchannelling, accompanied by field notes in order to highlight the social context in which the interview took place (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995; Pavlenko, 2007; Potter and Hepburn, 2012). All interviews were partially or fully transcribed, either by me or professional service under a confidentiality agreement, as allowed by my budget, time, and volume of data.

Due to the complexities of the global pandemic and working across space and time, these interviews were conducted through a hybrid of in-person and digital contexts. Though ethnographic interviews are traditionally conducted in person, researchers have incorporated digital technologies such as e-mail, social networking sites, and messaging platforms as a way to “release of the interview from its imprisonment in time and place” (Seymour, 2012, p. 73) and honor participant choice in how they prefer to be interviewed (McCoyd and Kerson, 2012; Seymour, 2012). Although “access to [technologies] remains stratified by class, race, and gender of both researchers and respondents,” (Murthy, 2012, np), Seymour (2012; np) reminds us that “‘giving a voice’ means more than providing the researched with an opportunity to speak: it involves creating the appropriate means and communication context for the research participants.” Therefore, the core participants were initially asked about which mode they preferred for interviews, given the options of Skype/Zoom (video or voice only), e-mail, WhatsApp texting, WhatsApp voice memos (Appendix C) while I remained open to other suggestions they may have had for interview methods that suited their needs. As noted by James and Busher (2012: np), I

believe that my previous relationship with participants as “fellow professionals” allowed us to “build on pre-existing relationships of trust and develop open and honest dialogue” via multiple modes. In the end, interviews were conducted by email, Zoom video and/or voice, WhatsApp texting, WhatsApp voice memos, and in-person in a location of the participants’ choice on the SUA campus.

In analysis I have tended to lean more heavily on data from interviews because they constitute an interactional space in which we are deliberately positioning ourselves. Interviews also represent participants' words and perspectives, as much as it is possible to represent a perspective, and I want to privilege their meaning-making as much as possible as a critical, decolonial move towards collaborative knowledge production (Motha, 2009).

### 3) Group Meetings (GM)

In order to work together on our collaborative project, I also held a series of group meetings in which we could share ideas, discuss issues, plan actions, and offer feedback on analysis. In total, there were 9 group meetings, 3 of which happened on Zoom and 5 of which happened in person on the SUA campus in Morogoro, Tanzania. For each meeting, all participants who had consented at that time were invited, in addition to other members of the department who had not consented but may have wanted to be present to offer their perspectives. Not all participants attended all meetings. These meetings varied in structure depending on the goals and attendees, as alluded to in the initial story of this chapter. Generally, each meeting had a chairperson decided prior to or at the meeting and this person was often me or SUA staff in positions of authority (Rahim, Kajani, or Mkude), though often multiple people took up leaderships roles related to leading or chairing within the same meeting. Perceived leadership of meetings was also an interesting point of observation for my analysis and will be discussed throughout. Meetings also functioned as an additional space for member checking via short presentations of my ongoing analysis with time for questions and feedback from attendees. Group

meetings were audio recorded and partially or fully transcribed, either by me or professional service under a confidentiality agreement, as allowed by my budget, time, and volume of data. Transcriptions were also accompanied by field notes as well to furnish a deeper understanding of the context in which they occurred.

Group meetings emerged as a key site of interaction for our collaborative work, a shared space in which we negotiated our identities through positioning while working together on our shared project. Including them as a source of data honors a focus on building consensus as part of an Ubuntu-informed research ethic, which Chilisa (2020) sees as a communal process achieved via “respect for self *and* other” (emphasis added). She explains, “... there may be a hierarchy of importance among speakers, but every person gets an equal chance to speak up until some kind of agreement, consensus, or group cohesion is reached” (p. 34). She cautions that “agreement and consensus, should, however, not be confused with outmoded and suspect cravings for an oppressive universal sameness,” maintaining that “True Ubuntu takes plurality seriously” and ultimately values “alterity, autonomy, and cooperation” (Chilisa, 2020, p. 234 referring to Luow). In this way, while not all voices are represented equally across the various group meetings, they provided yet another way to “create the appropriate means and communication context for the research participants” (Seymour, 2012; np) to offer their thoughts and social presence to contribute to collective knowledge-making.

#### 4) Personal Research Journal (PRJ)

Throughout the data collection process, I engaged in personal, reflective writing in the form of a journal. This journal recorded events as told from my perspective as well as reflections, memories, connections, questions they evoked. I generally journaled every day in conjunction with daily field notes when researching in person and generally twice per week while researching remotely. I typed the journal on my laptop for ease of analysis later, but when needed, some entries were typed on my phone or hand-written on paper or other accessible material and then typed and transferred to the laptop

version. Files were backed up regularly on Google drive as well as a hard drive. My total research journal is approximately 300 pages, single-spaced, at the time of writing this chapter. In addition, I referenced past personal journals I had written while working in Tanzania for three months in 2015 and traveling as a tourist for one month in 2018 for additional insight into the history of my relationship with SUA colleagues as well as perspective on my evolving perceptions and experiences.

The research value of journaling is drawn from autoethnography which utilizes personal forms of writing that are often creative or artistic in nature (Muncey, 2010; Spry, 2001; Tedlock, 2013). This form of research engages emotions as instructive (Mulvihill and Swaminathan, 2017, p. 96) and invites vulnerability as a way to deeper understanding, especially when interrogating one's own positionality and privilege (Behar, 1996; Hughes and Pennington, 1997; Spry, 2001). Incorporating autoethnographic sensibilities in this way allowed me to engage in my own identities as white, female, foreign, and other positionings as co-constructed and further, to describe the events of the study to deliberately make my own actions visible in these processes. Importantly, this personal writing was then balanced and compared with data from other sources to circumvent navel gazing (Canagarajah, 2012b, p. 119) and the normalizing of whiteness (Ryden, 2012). In this project, my journal was balanced with data from observations, interviews, group meetings, and key documents in order to situate my own reflections in wider dynamics.

#### 5) Key Documents and Artifacts (KDA)

I also sought and examined key documents and artifacts related to our collaborative work. Defined broadly by Merriam and Tisdell (2016), documents and artifacts is an "umbrella term to refer to a wide range of written, visual, digital, and physical materials relevant to the study... that represent some form of communication that is meaningful to participants and/or the setting" (p. 162). In this study, documents and artifacts included: the curriculum and student activity book we previously created in 2015, SUA policies related to language and English, the websites of SUA and of the Department of

Language Studies, PowerPoint slides that I created for related presentations with my colleagues, drafts of colleagues' written work with constructive feedback they requested from me, and any other relevant documents or artifacts that emerged as relevant in the course of our work.

I examined these documents and artifacts broadly as "texts," conceptualized as both discourse (language in use) and Discourse (ways of being in the world) which both reflect and influence ideology (Fairclough, 1995; Gee, 1996/2012). Texts can be useful for examining norms and values as well as the ideological struggles they enact (Fairclough, 1995; Wodak and Meyer, 2016). As with my other data, these texts were situated among other sources such as observations and interviews to formulate a well-crystallized study.

### Data Analysis

The analysis of these various sources is qualitative, inductive, and iterative, looking for emergent patterns across ethnographically-derived data (Starfield, 2015; Sheridan, 2012). I used Dedoose software to assist with the organization of data and patterns across different sources, though importantly, I as researcher coded the data myself and made sense of emergent themes and their meanings. The first step was to analyze data through a process of open coding in order to develop and begin to apply possible codes before looking for initial patterns and themes in coding and then analyzing how the themes interact in meaningful ways in order to revise conclusions and codes iteratively (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). As such, this ethnographic orientation to analysis was holistic, looking at patterns across multiple data sources (Lillis, 2008) with meaning built through the interconnection of these elements (Holliday, 2015, p. 55) in order to "understand various participants' perspectives and to locate these perspectives within larger social, economic, and political forces" (Sheridan, 2012, p. 80). Additionally, this ethnographic orientation to data analysis privileged insider experience over outsider academic theories, describing over evaluating, and emergent patterns in data over hypothesis-testing evidence

(Sheridan, 2012, p. 81) and made use of member checks (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016) to construct meaning collaboratively with participants throughout the research process.

I have also privileged the study of and attention to language, or D/discourse (Gee, 2012), as a way of forming identities vis a vis relations of power. In analysis of language, I have employed critical discourse analysis (CDA) as an ideological framework, or an orientation to critical questions as constituted by and through language (Wodak and Meyer, 2016). This privileged attention to how power was “expressed, constituted, legitimized... by language use” (Wodak and Meyer, 2016, p. 12) in certain data, involving close analysis of linguistic elements and how they negotiated relations of power through talk (Fairclough, 1995; Gee, 2012; Mills, 2004). I have employed CDA here as part of critical ethnography to add “rigor, analytic accountability and elaboration of ethnographic description” (Talmy, 2015, p. 163). However, due to its intensive nature and time constraints, this method of analysis was applied as an overall framework and approach to language rather than a systematic analytic applied across all pieces of data. As such, language determined to be relevant to emergent themes was treated with a “three-pronged approach” that jointly considered its linguistic form, ideational content, and social context in which it was used (Pavlenko, 2007, as cited in Higgins and Sandhu, 2014, p. 54). I have focused on how language has shaped and negotiated the identities of myself and my colleagues across interwoven contexts within our collaboration.

As one particular tool within CDA, I have relied on positioning theory (e.g., Davies and Harré, 1990) to interpret my own and my colleague’s words and ways of being by examining how we position ourselves and The Other to make sense of our experiences in collaboration. As such, I have paid particular attention to how myself and my colleagues “discursively display” our identities in relation to The Other (van Langenhove & Harré, 1999, p. 131) through “[deliberate] self-positioning” in talk about our choices, expertise or unique point of view, or biography/life events (van Langenhove and Harré, 1999, p. 24). I have then incorporated this talk to formulate resulting identity positions in terms of

attributes such as “busy,” stories such as “foreigner who knows about Tanzania,” or complementary roles such as “benevolent giver/in need” (Van Langenhove and Harré, 1999, p. 16). In doing so, I have deliberately focused on the process of identity formation or how identities are formed locally in interaction rather than importing essentialized categories a priori (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005) in order to privilege local, interactional knowledge making practices.

I have also taken this study as an opportunity to analyze my own assumptions and global injustices in knowledge production about identity itself (e.g., Santos, 2014). For example, while more typical, historical identity categorizations such as race and nationality remain highly relevant in our relationships and are discussed throughout, I am also attempting to move “beyond mere categories and produced within and by other systems of oppression” (Varghese et al., 2016, p. 561) and consider other ways of being that were opened up through examining our identity formations as they have emerged through the lived experience of our collaboration. Additionally, my awareness of the intersectionality of historical identity categorizations (Crenshaw, 1991), particularly of race and gender, also introduced a layer of ambiguity of how to responsibly theorize one without attendant and ethical attention to the effects of the other; I was often stymied in theorizing around our interactions as gendered, given my position as a white woman and understanding that colonial narratives incumbent upon relations between Black men and white women can reinforce colonial power and violence (e.g. Appleby, 2010; Hamad, 2020). This struggle will be addressed further in Chapter 5, and I aim to be transparent about my analytical misgivings as an additional measure of decolonizing identity study. In further considering these identities and resultant discourses in relation to Africanist concepts of Ubuntu (e.g. Chilisa, 2020; Makalela, 2015; Sarr, 2020) or hunhuism (e.g. Madzima, 2014), leading to my own emphasis on a *discourse of interdependence* and *identity-in-community*, I am also attempting to redress asymmetrical access to means of academic knowledge production about identity (Sandhu and Higgins, 2016) and offer other possibilities for relating to one another across difference in more equitable ways that can move us

all forward. The attendant ethics of how to do this responsibly from my own positionalities will be further explored in Chapter 5 and 6.

“Yeah, I’m here”

In this chapter, I have explained my plans and intentions behind how I conducted this research in the hopes of presenting myself as, to echo Paltridge and Pakhiti (2015), a “dependable” and “trustworthy” researcher and storyteller. However, as any qualitative researcher or storyteller can tell you, plans and intentions do not often match the realities of the field, and the boundaries between aspiration and actuality, clarity and uncertainty, Self and Other quickly shimmer and begin to blur.

Overall, this project highlighted for me a sense of interdependence between myself and my colleagues. I had intentions and plans, but none of them would have mattered without my colleagues’ willingness and desire to stay present throughout the many uncertainties and challenges that we met in reality. I’m reminded of an interview with Tabasamu, our second interview to discuss our prospective plans for the research project on large classes (INT102121). In retrospect, the interview is painful to listen to; the sound is choppy, and our conversation is often disconnected due to the tenuous internet connection. While he’s speaking, the audio cuts out infuriatingly often, usually in the middle of a brilliant or intrig...

-ing thought, only to return five to ten seconds later. I then scramble to fill in the

gaps in my own mind

and then attempt to summarize for clarification on my next turn to speak. Or I’ll be responding to the fascinating contrast he’s making about the concept of culture versus identity and suddenl-

“Hello. Hello.”

“Hello? Can you hear me?.. Hello?... Hello?”

The word “hello” appears 106 times in this transcript. Our conversation went on like this for an hour and twenty minutes. An hour and twenty minutes! Both of us somehow, still, staying with it.

“Hello, Renee?”

“Yes, hello.”

“Hello, Renee?”

“Hello. Can you hear me? ... I’m here. [Tabasamu], are you there?”

**“Yeah, I’m here.”**

As I re-listened to the audio, the memory of my frustration was palpable, my exhaustion. It was good to hear on the recording that this frustration did not seem to seep into my voice. We both stayed remarkably calm, and it’s significant that neither of us gave up.

We kept trying to connect, in different ways that were available to us. He kept his Zoom video on, while I switched between having video on and off, stating out loud that I thought it was better for the internet connection to keep it off. Eventually he told me that having the video on was helping him follow what I was saying, so I keep it on, hoping that the combination of movement and voice would suture the broken audio quality. In the end, when I could no longer hear him for some reason, but his video was still visible, we pantomimed to each other, pointing to our ears and gesturing “no.” I typed messages in the chat to suggest that we stop for the day because of the connection, but that I appreciated his patience, and wished him well on his upcoming travels he had mentioned. I offered that he could use WhatsApp to leave me a voice memo or a message if he had further thoughts to add, as I had done in other interviews where we were cut short.

It's remarkable that this one-hour twenty-minute test of patience was, in fact, our second attempt in that week. Our first attempt had been even worse; the connection was so choppy, we couldn't

understand each other at all. But we showed up, again, wanting to connect, somehow. Reflecting later, I wrote in my journal:

...as frustrated as I was, he was also probably frustrated, and as much as I stayed in it, stayed patient, he was also doing the same. I thought it important to make a note of that, to be able to see the bigger picture beyond just my own frustration. If I am being patient, I am also being returned patience. He stuck with it just as much as me, and from my own experience, I know it is not easy to keep with it, keep the conversation going, keep repeating yourself and trying to keep the conversation coherent... I'm thinking of that idea of **trust, and willingness** – that these things make a real difference, or rather, these things shine when we're in stressful situations like this together. We trust that the other is also trying, and we are willing to try to connect with them too. We're both reaching. (PRJ012521)

And so it would go for the rest of the project, building trust between us, borne of a shared history and a seemingly dynamic willingness to participate that asked more questions than it answered. Inasmuch as I tried to center reciprocity, flexibility in designing this project, my colleagues met me with the same, encouraging me to see myself as not a single researcher but part of a larger professional community – a community that was nonetheless composed of individuals striving towards their own as well as our shared goals in sometimes very different ways.

## Chapter 4: Analysis: Focus on Colleagues

“We are not just *participants* in the sense of you know, like respondents, uh-uh. (laughs from the group) We are *researchers* because this is a collaborative activity.” (Rahim, GM041422)

“...Let us think of the *participants*, the *researchers*. What do we want and will be beneficial to our side?” (Robinson, GM041422)

These words spoken by Rahim and Robinson at our fourth group meeting gave a name to the identity broadly available to my colleagues in the course of our collaboration: *participant-researcher*. This role was taken up by colleagues as participants in both my dissertation and our shared research project while also serving as co-researchers in the research project. As this chapter will show, this role was co-constructed throughout the process of our working together; the words and actions of both myself and colleagues discursively shaped the professional identity of colleagues as *participant-researchers*, with positionings for colleagues as *in need*, *connected to resources*, and *expert* as both reifying and complicating this role. However, as our project progressed, there seemed to be a tension inherent in this dual role of both *participant* and *researcher* which required negotiation on the part of my colleagues in the course of our working together. In negotiating this tension, colleagues drew on a discourse of *interdependence* to make sense of their role(s) in our collaboration. Overall, a sense of interdependence as well as colleagues' agency in our process contests typical colonially derived working dynamics; however, at the same time, colleagues resisted discourses of coloniality and race in English language teaching to make sense of our collaborative relationship. Overall, this points to alternate ways of thinking about identity (*identity-in-community*) that could be helpful towards cultivating more equitable relationships and decolonizing collaborations in English language teaching.

## Part 1: Positionings

In this section, I trace the discursive co-development of the positionings made available to my colleagues in the course of our collaboration: *in need*, *connected to resources*, and *expert* which served to make sense of their role as participant-researchers. As narrative framing, I relate the overall story of how our current collaboration, a joint research project on teaching large classes, came to be and highlight how we co-constructed their role over time, from “more than participants” to “researchers” to participant-researchers in our shared project, heavily influenced by my own initial framing of our project as collaborative. I also foreshadow my own, resultant role as Principal Investigator (PI) which will be explored more fully in the next chapter. Importantly, I allude to points of resistance and interconnection to foreground the notion of interdependence which also led to tensions and implications for our respective notions of collaboration which will be the focus of Part II.

### Introduction: “You’re still pulling me to choose.”

We’re sitting in the tearoom, a lounge-like space in the main office building on the Mazimbu campus of Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA). The tearoom is a well-worn space with armchairs, a couch, and coffee table that have seen better days, but when tea is served, the room brightens and comes alive with laughter, conversation, and community. At around 10am every day, or whenever the tea happens to be done brewing, staff filter in from all over campus to exchange greetings, pour a mug of sweet milky chai, munch on golden brown mandazi *doughnuts*, catch up on gossip, and debate the merits of various soccer teams across the bustling room.

For now, it is early morning and quiet, and Tabasamu and I have agreed to meet there for our third interview. It’s invigorating to be together in person after negotiating our previous two interviews on Zoom and WhatsApp across distance, time zones, and tenuous internet connections. We sit in the back of the tearoom across a wooden desk on which his cell phone occasionally buzzes, obligating him to answer and continue to parlay between a renter and a carpenter who is to fix a door on a house he owns in a village across the country as a source of extra income. Many colleagues seem to have such

side hustles, as I call them, which often occupy their energy and attention while we interact, phones frequently abuzz with calls from family, friends, fellow colleagues, potential customers and social connections of all kinds. In this moment, Tabasamu apologizes profusely, but “*hamna shida*” *no problem*, I tell him, and we begin again when he is done.

Before getting into my questions, I ask him to choose a name for himself, a “Tanzanian” name that I can use when I refer to him in my write up. He smiles in understanding and gently refuses.

“Of course, I should leave this for you. I will be very comfortable if you choose any that you can think that is...”

“Okay,” I concede, briefly. “Is there is there a name that is significant in your family? Maybe a family member who you admire very much?” Again, he refuses.

“I admire them all,” he says, laughing. “I think because I have chosen to be anonymous, and if I come also choosing a name, it is like I could have to use mine. So, what I think is you can choose a name, and I can accept that [...] Because I have said in the beginning, I like to be anonymous. Then if I come again to choose a name, it is as if I should have to use mine. So, I think I leave that freedom to you that you can choose, and I will be comfortable.” It’s not clear why he’s resisting, and I don’t have a chance to clarify as he keeps talking, and I don’t want to interrupt. He suggests that I choose a name that I think is “suitable” or “reflective” of him. Uncomfortable with this power, which I had offered to him and he refused to take, I hesitate. He reiterates his stance and offers advice to me as a fellow researcher, saying, “At the end of the day, I think it is you who have freedom to say. If you use a symbol. If it’s not possible to use a symbol, use a letter. Sometimes it’s one letter, sometimes it’s two letters. Maybe you say the interviewee X, or the interviewee A.” He speaks from experience; he is currently conducting research for his own dissertation, after all. Re-negotiating, I try positioning myself as a learner, proposing a few possible Swahili names and asking if they are common, how to spell them. I include one from a popular song of which I sing the chorus and he recognizes. He plays along, laughing and

explaining some Swahili grammar as I try to elevate and engage him in this naming process. After I narrow it down to two names, I ask which, “Which do you prefer?” He stops talking, pauses for a longer moment, and smiles slyly.

“You’re still pulling me to choose... to decide.”

He says it laughingly, but I feel caught. Seen. Trying to force a choice on him which he did not want to make. I still don’t understand why: because he didn’t want another name? Because he couldn’t think of one? Because he did not see it as his place? What I do know is he effectively resisted and retained a certain agency, though it was not the agency that I had imagined for him.

When I tried to re-position myself in order to smooth the edges of the researcher-researched hierarchy, he put me back in my place – researcher who should be the one choosing rather than *still pulling* him as participant to choose. Thus, while overall my colleagues took up the roles of both participant *and* researcher in our collaboration, there seemed to be certain lines that some were not willing to blur, certain roles they were not willing to fill, and trying to figure out why feels like I am pushing against a wall between us that is felt but not seen.

The Role of Participant-Researcher: “You are the researcher, but it's a joint thing.”

How did my colleagues’ identity of *participant-researcher* come to be? Looking back at key documents and artifacts (KDA), group meetings (GM), interviews (INT), field notes (FN), and my personal research journal (PRJ) reveals that this identity was co-constructed through our interactions and consistently re-negotiated throughout our collaborative process. On my part, I explicitly positioned my colleagues as *more than participants* in various ways starting from the inception of the project. In my email to recruit participants, I explicitly positioned my colleagues as “collaborators” in writing, “I invite you to participate as a *collaborator* on the project to benefit the department; we will decide together what the project should be based on current needs.” (emphasis added, KDA010721) At the time, I did

not know what our project would be, but I knew that I did not want to invite mere participation in the project but rather input and co-agency in its shaping so as to be responsive to the needs and anticipated benefits of the group (Bang and Vossoughi, 2016; Leavy, 2017). I also wanted to actively resist the colonial legacy of many research “partnerships” between Global North and Global South which limit the agency of supposed partners to set the research agenda and shape the project according to their needs (Grieve and Mitchell, 2020; Ishengoma, 2017; Omanga & Mainye, 2019). Instead, I sought an Ubuntu-inspired research ethic which embraced reciprocity, consensus, and mutual benefit as central tenets (Chilisa, 2020) as a consciously decolonial move. My resulting positioning of colleagues as “co-collaborators” was furthered in the consent form, which I attached to the email and graciously intoned,

I invite you to participate in this research as a **co-collaborator**. As a result, I will always welcome your **feedback and opinions** on research procedures, including this process of informed consent. Please consider this research an **open and ongoing conversation**. I truly appreciate your willingness to join me – thank you! (KDA121020)

In my own idealization of this project, my colleagues would be more than *just* participants; I asked for their “feedback and opinions” from the outset. Once the colleagues who were to become my six core participants consented, I sent them an initial survey by email asking about current needs of the department with regards to English teaching, some challenges that they were currently facing in English teaching, and any ideas for projects that we could work on together to address those needs (KDA010721; Appendix C). As the six core participants responded via email, I compiled the responses and kept a list of suggested project ideas. I noticed that large class sizes were mentioned by all of the participants as a challenge in the survey, though this challenge was not directly mentioned in any of the potential project ideas. As I conducted first round interviews with participants to discuss their professional background and current work at the university, again the idea of teaching large class sizes came up very frequently as a challenge. For example, on our first interview via Zoom, Tabasamu referred

to the challenges of trying to put into practice communicative methods for teaching English that he had learned from a workshop while feeling constrained into “lecturing” his large class of up to 500 students where individualized and participatory pedagogy seemed to too difficult to manage despite his desire to teach differently (Tabasamu INT051321). Similarly, via WhatsApp voice memos, Mkude reiterated his “love” for teaching which contrasted with his loathing of assessing “500 essays” which is “too laborious, too tiresome [...] it takes a lot of time, so it cannot make someone enjoy the teaching process.” (Mkude INT032021) He further mentioned the related challenge of keeping students “engaged” in large classes, which he sought to remedy through using WhatsApp in innovative ways to increase opportunities student participation, suggesting that instructors were coping with this issue in community-driven ways that intrigued me (Mkude INT032021). Considering these ideas from interviews combined with survey responses, I then added the idea of a research project on teaching large classes to the list of project ideas because the issue seemed prevalent and meaningful in participants’ contexts.

I then sent this list of ideas and a short summary of the responses to the initial survey in an email to the six core participants. We then discussed this list of project ideas in Group Meeting 1 on Zoom, and I noted that I had added the idea for a joint research project saying, “This was an idea that I proposed based on the fact that large class sizes was overwhelmingly one of the main challenges that colleagues have discussed so far” (Renee, GM060821). In the end, no clear winner emerged; one colleague expressed interest in a project for to create promotional materials for the department’s language center, and another expressed support for the research on teaching large classes, but as Rahim said in concluding, “... in respect to what we, what the department needs, the department needs so many things, I mean, needs are many, and they are easy to propose because they are there, you just have to pick them (laughing)” (GM060821). He then suggested that as “chair” of the meeting, I should take what had been said and make a decision. At the time, I interpreted his comments as a mandate for me to decide the project on my own, though looking back at his words reveals a more subtle mixing of

“we, you” and an underlying discourse of interdependence that resisted my own individualism, as will be explored in the next chapter. At the same time, colleagues such as Makamba encouraged me to choose a project that was “doable” or “workable on [my] side” (GM060821). I struggled with this lack of clarity of roles. Ideally, I wanted the participants as co-collaborators to choose a project that was most meaningful to them in order to subvert traditional researcher-participant hierarchies (Bang and Vossoughi, 2016; Leavy, 2017), but in this group meeting, colleagues seemed to be resisting making this choice themselves in favor of allowing me to take what I had heard and deliberate while coordinating an ongoing process of consensus (Chilisa, 2020), as encouraged by Rahim (GM060821). He made a point to emphasize our interdependence in this project decision as well as its eventual fruit:

... perhaps, we need a bit of time from our side, because **even if you are the main player here**, but of course **we also have to chip in**, in some ways, in whatever ways we can be able to [...]we will have to chip in if we decide on a particular, or any of these activities, so it means, yeah, **there is lots of interdependence** in terms of you know what can be done together, that's it. And that is, of course, is a joint activities, because **you are the researcher, but it's a joint thing**. (GM060821)

Even while encouraging me to reflect on my own, taking what people had said and making a decision, he took care to highlight the “interdependence” of our working relationship, that colleagues would have to “chip in” as part of this “joint activity.” The idea of interdependence emerged more over the course of our collaborative process and eventually became a major theme I engaged with, as will be discussed below.

While the idea of our interdependence and joint investment in collaboration sounds reassuring to me, a more critical part of me wonders about the extent to which in these moments colleagues are saying what they think I want them to say or what they think each other want to hear. I had introduced my dissertation project as focused on “collaboration” and had already noticed colleagues heartily taking

up the idea and value of “collaboration” in interviews (e.g., Robinson INT032821) such that I felt coddled or catered to at times. As the next chapter will detail, I see that my ongoing relationship with the department represents a connection to resources, visibility, and other potential benefits which could motivate colleagues to appease me, not mention the colonially rooted accommodation of white foreigners in general, such as later referenced by Zawadi (INT050622). In this regard, I realize the importance of viewing our actions critically within the framing of colonial, racialized discourses that structure our interactions. At the same time, I am also reluctant to speculate too invasively into colleagues’ motivations behind their comments, recognizing the thin line between identity study and psychoanalysis (Block, 2006; Hall, 2000) and the fact that applied linguists are not practically-trained psychoanalysts. Further, such analysis into motivations can be intrusive as well as ill-suited for analyzing observed phenomena in social science such as behavior versus the inner workings of the mind (Block, 2006, p. 46). Likewise, considering the colonial and racist tendency to privilege white-aligned colonizer perspectives as truth over the lived experiences and knowledges of racialized individuals of the Global South (e.g., Said, 1978; Santos, 2018; Spivak, 1988), I am reluctant to reinforce these habits of mind via my own analysis. This struggle between listening to my colleagues as a fellow colleague, critical researcher, and conscious outsider has continued throughout our collaboration.

After our first group meeting, following Rahim’s advice to reflect on what I had heard and come to a decision, I journaled about our project options and settled myself on the idea of a joint research project on how colleagues teach large class sizes. I outlined my reasoning: it had the potential for mutual benefit if we were to share or publish our findings in a way that would be useful to colleagues; it was feasible given our hybrid work situation due to the ongoing pandemic; and it suited my skills in academic reading and writing and also what I could manage working from afar (PRJ092221). I then proposed this project in second round interviews with the six core participants in order to build consensus (Chilisa, 2020) and start to jointly imagine what that project might look like. In my

questioning, I continued to position my colleagues as *more than* participants, *co-collaborators*, and I began to extend the conceptualization of their collaboration to suggest that they could be *researchers* as well. I asked them about who the participants in this project might be, what research methods “we” might use, and what “our” data might look like. In this way, I discursively implicated them as researchers while also trying to hold space for mutual imagining of our shared work and its possibilities.

More Than Participants: “I think we'll give it time, even if we are occupied with a lot of fish to fish”

At the same time, I also asked about the capacity of my colleagues to carry out research for this project and mentioned my related concerns. From the very beginning of my dissertation process, I had been wary of asking or expecting too much of my colleagues in terms of labor. As Bruce Horner (2002) points out, critical ethnography often preaches collaboration as a way of “contesting the hierarchical relationships between ‘researcher’ and ‘informant’” (p. 565) without consideration of material and social differences between sanguinely labeled “collaborators” in terms of labor, time, interest, and other complexities involved in such relationships. He notes that “collaborators” in the real world and especially education settings often do not have the time or energy to be able to prioritize collaborative research in the intimate, demanding ways that critical ethnography often uncritically expects of them. I had also wanted to avoid a racialized, colonially derived dynamic in our collaboration where, as expressed by a participant in Emmanuel Kumi and Palash Kamruzzaman’s (2021) study of Ghanaian development workers, ““We do all the donkey work and they take the glory” (p. 1168) - that is to say the “local,” African counterparts complete the bulk of the work towards a shared project only for the foreign, Global North-based collaborators to claim credit and managerial (often white) superiority (Omanga & Mainye, 2019; Thörn, 2016). Keeping these pitfalls in mind, I attempted to transparently outline the time commitment and labor I was asking from participants in my initial recruitment email, stating,

I invite you to participate as a collaborator on the project to benefit the department; we will decide together what the project should be based on current needs. If you choose to participate, I estimate that it will take 3-6 hours per quarter (3 months) of your time: 1 hour for 1 individual interview per quarter (3 total), 1.5 hours for group meetings (approximately 3 total), and up to 3.5 hours for outside collaborative work such as document editing, email communication, etc. (Renee in KDA121020)

As the idea of a joint research project began to take more shape in my own mind, I decided to express my concerns that asking colleagues to participate in such a project may be asking too much. I was already aware of colleagues as “busy” individuals with their own lives and priorities, and I did not want this project or my dissertation research to be an extra burden on them. In the second-round interviews, I asked directly about colleague’s capacity for completing a research project and was met with generally reassuring responses. When I asked if colleagues would have enough time to work on the project I was proposing, I was told, in a nutshell, “[research] is part of our job” (Rahim, INT102721). In general, colleagues emphasized that they were expected to conduct research and publish as part of their obligations as university “academicians” (Kajani, INT102521). While my concerns were couched in the perhaps problematic positioning of colleagues as “busy,” Mkude (INT110121) affirmed in his second interview via Zoom that it was true they were busy, but collaborating on such a project was not only normal but professionally expected of them by their own institutions:

Renee: Okay, okay. Yeah, I think a general concern that I have about this is that it's asking, or rather, it's creating a lot of work for the members of the department who already have a lot on their plates. So, I'm trying to think of ways to make it less burdensome. I mean, do you think that is a concern for this project, like people won't have enough time, or they're too occupied with other tasks?

Mkude: Uh, actually, **we are occupied, but doing projects is one of our priorities.** So, I hope each one of us can give it time. I'm sure we're going to give it time, because we are taught by our university that at least in a year, one should be able to publish at least two articles. So, it is **one of our core values, so I think we'll give it time even if we are occupied with a lot of fish to fish?** We can give it time (laughs).

Mkude upheld my notion of colleagues as “busy,” but emphasized that publishing original research was one of the “core values” of university staff resulting in a professional incentive to commit time to our shared project. His comments, however, foreshadowed the tension that participants as co-collaborators would later feel due to “time” and having “a lot of fish to fish.” At the same time, he expressed a *need* for colleagues to publish, a need which they fill on their own through writing academic articles, for example, and which our collaborative project could help fulfill in addition. In his interview via Zoom, Makamba (INT102021) echoed the idea of colleagues as *in need* of participating as co-collaborators due to professional obligations:

Renee: ...So, do you have any insight into if people have available time or energy for a project like this?

Makamba: Given my experience, the answer is yes. Because for now, I know a couple of people who have finished their PhD's and actually **they are in need of** writing papers. You know, university jobs have something to do with the writing. So, writing articles, writing papers, books is very important. Talking about people like [colleague name], for example, [colleague name], or [colleague name], all these people want some kind of articles for them to be promoted. So, **if you have got something good like this one** where you can be promoted, where you can [make] recommendations, **that may change the society or may change the university.** It's also **important.**

Renee: Okay, good. That's good to know.

Makamba: Which is my hope that people will do that.

Renee: Yeah, okay. So, you think there will be some **personal motivation** to be part of it.

Makamba: Absolutely, absolutely.

Makamba emphasized support for the project in this moment, though as I came to be reminded later, commitments are dynamic, and collaborators often become occupied with more “fish to fish.”

Makamba's comments also echoed the idea of social investment in the project as a “good one” that “may change the society or may change the university,” reinforcing the perception of colleagues as interested in personal as well as wider societal benefit. In this way, colleagues discursively took up the role of *more than participant*, extending the “participant” identity to include “personally and professionally motivated” in the labor and anticipated benefits of our collaborative project.

Researchers: “I believe this should be teamwork.”

As our project idea evolved, however, the more distinct role of “researcher” became more available to colleagues, along with increased the responsibilities expected of participants. During our second full group meeting which took place via Zoom, colleagues began to take on more of a “co-collaborator” identity for themselves. Prior to the meeting, I had taken it upon myself to draft a proposal for our research project as a way to compile and synthesize the ideas I had heard and discussed in the second-round interviews, including some background on the issue of large class sizes and possible methods as suggested by colleagues in interviews as well as next steps for group discussion. I shared the proposal as a Google document with the six core participants via email, and half of them posted comments and suggestions on the document prior to the meeting, precipitating the engaged discussion which followed. I had also taken it upon myself to take notes of the meeting on a Google Doc, which I announced at the beginning of the meeting, so that other colleagues who couldn't be present could stay

abreast of our process (GM010622). As colleagues spiritedly exchanged possible ideas, I listened happily and clacked away at my keyboard, trying to keep--

“Renee, are you there? Are you taking notes?” Rahim asked.

“Yes, yes, I’m there. Sorry, I’ve continued to be on mute,” I laughed.

“Yeah, that’s okay, because we expect you to be our chair anyway (laugh). That’s why I keep on asking...”

Rahim checked in a few times like this during the meeting (“Renee? Renee, are you listening?” “Yes, yes, I’m listening. Sorry, I was on mute”) as I juggled “chairing” the conversation, mentally processing and responding when I could, and fielding cross-cultural Zoom etiquette while also taking notes for the group and for myself as a researcher. As Rahim aspired at one point, “I hope Renee is getting notes of those very beautiful points.” My thoughts exactly.

Early in conversation, Kajani took a clear stand towards action:

Yeah, I think now that we need to move forward. **We’ve agreed some of us will have to do some works so that we continue.** As we wait for Renee and [colleague name] work on the permit, **who is going to take the literature review? I believe this should be teamwork. That should be our work,** work on the literature review, and maybe we need to set the deadlines when we should share whatever we should have accumulated before **we send to Renee for a compilation.** (GM010622)

He cast the task of literature review as “our work,” referring to colleagues and seemingly in response to “my work,” which was to be securing a research permit and “compiling” the literature review. His invocation of “teamwork” suggests a recognition of labor of The Other (in this case, me) and a motivation to contribute in return. Robinson immediately echoed these sentiments, referring to the

background “Renee has written” which necessitated a literature review co-constructed by colleagues in Tanzania, saying, “[...] we have to sit down physically if we have time here in Tanzania [...] We sit down and write in collaboration with Renee over there.” (GM010622). Mkude reinforced the idea of his colleagues working on the literature review, suggesting “doing it in a smaller teams, dividing those subsections into smaller teams. And then later, [sharing] it in the Google document, or [finding] find any way of each team to share the ideas to the whole group.” (GM010622) As explored more in the following chapter, these ideas were an interesting contrast to my own assumptions before the meeting, that I was going to complete a literature review alone in isolation. In this way, my colleagues effectively drew on a discourse of interdependence that challenged my assumption: in relation to the labor I had already contributed to the group, they would take on the labor of organizing themselves in collaboration with each other to contribute to the next steps of the project to “move us forward,” as Kajani had said.

By the end of the meeting, we agreed that I, as suggested by me and to be assisted by Rahim, would create a “template” for a literature review with headings for needed content as well as a Google folder where we could jointly upload any readings we found. We seemed to come to a consensus that “we create the document and everyone chips in” (Rahim, GM010622) and “come rain, come sun, by the end of March we have this document ready so that when the next semester begins, then we are also embark our data collection process” (Kajani, GM010622). I drafted and shared the document with Rahim who approved, and then I shared it with the group as well as a link to a Google folder with some relevant readings I found but didn’t have time to read at the moment. As weeks went by, our document sat fallow. I became busy with my own work – graduate school and excitedly but nervously preparing to travel to Tanzania in person - and I assumed the same was true for my colleagues. I was stressed about not having accomplished what we set out to do by the deadline we had established, but as I told my advisor before departing, I was looking forward to shifting back into “Africa mode” as I called it in which, based on my prior experiences, time and deadlines are more flexible, and personal relationships take

precedence over work plans and goals. I confided in my journal, “Haven’t worked on our lit review, but it will work itself out. I’m guided by their ways of being around this labor” (PRJ030822). I trusted that my relationships built with colleagues over time could serve as a type of ontology that would facilitate our evolving negotiations of whatever our work was to be.

I arrived in Dar es Salaam on a humid night in March. During my first few days in the country, while battling jet lag and spending a few days in a hotel waiting for my delayed baggage to arrive, I dove into the repository of articles I had saved to our Google folder. I finally had some time, so I read and took detailed notes in another Google document which I later shared with the group, thinking it could be helpful in working towards a literature review. It felt good to be focusing on our shared work again, since my individual writing and travel preparations had taken up so much space in the prior weeks. I arrived in Morogoro exhausted, in awe and happy to finally *be there*, looking forward to what was to come.

Principal Investigator (PI): “... is that true? Am I doing all the work?”

Our first meeting in person, Group Meeting 4, felt refreshing, dynamic, and reassuring. The conversation was buoyant, and I mostly sat back and listened. As we discussed methodology more deeply, the identity of my colleagues as *more than participants* in the project solidified as “researchers,” a term explicitly used for the first time by Rahim during this meeting (GM041422). Prior to the meeting, I had presented an overview of my dissertation project design and goals to a larger campus audience, at the request of senior colleagues Rahim and Kajani in part to “let people know our department is lively – things are happening here” (FN033122). I connected their desire to the expressed need for department visibility, as I will discuss below. At the presentation, I again pitched the idea of the shared research project on large class sizes and proposed a group meeting with “collaborators” to discuss next steps including designing research methods, instruments, and a data collection plan (KDA040622). The group meeting took place a few days later. As we narrowed the scope to focus on only the SUA context, Rahim,

who I had in effect asked to be the chairperson of the meeting, shifted the conversation to methodology, saying,

Now second or third point is, we have **two categories of researchers**. We have the main researcher, I mean the researcher from another university, and researchers from this university, so we need to find out all those. and I think **researchers from this university actually know in and out of what's going on in their department**. The researchers from outside the university is Renee, herself, perhaps would require to do more of the observations than we will, and as far as we are concerned, **what will be our role?** (GM041422)

Here, Rahim interpellated the co-collaborators as “researchers” for the first time, in the context of making a distinction between me as an outsider and his SUA colleagues as insiders. As a senior member of the department and chairperson of the meeting, it seemed like his pronouncement of “researcher” carried a social weight for the group in terms of discursive power. He then went on to elaborate the possible role for this insider category of researcher by suggesting “peer review” or peer observations as a method for our project which he explained as “going to a class of their colleague and observing him or her [...] us collecting data from our department.” In the same turn, he further called participants in, inviting them to consider and shape “their role,” which he followed up by asking “Do we visit each other's [classes], or what do we do? And if we do, what sort of things are we looking for?” He explicitly named the assembled department members as “researchers” as well as invited increased agency on their behalf. Meeting attendees proceeded to comply with gusto, offering extended feedback and engagement around the merits and mechanics of various research strategies throughout the rest of the meeting, eventually reaching consensus around a plan to hold a focus group discussion with colleagues in the department complemented by classroom observations carried out by myself and colleagues as “peers” over the course of the following weeks.

However, as the meeting came to a close, I was slightly taken aback as I, cast in the role of PI, was swiftly assigned by Rahim to draft a guide for classroom observations as well as a script for the focus group, in addition to an updated template for our literature review and then distribute the documents by the end of Easter break, or 4 days after the meeting. In that moment, Rahim had motioned to bring the meeting to a close, proposing, “[...] So why don't we do this. Let's say, let's agree that the PI communicates template for guides by end of Easter, perhaps. And then individually we start organizing our observations with colleagues...” (GM041422). After he finished speaking, I jumped in to clarify, and Rahim replied, “Yeah [...] So by end of Easter, we'll have that guide points from you, and then from there, we'll organize ourselves in terms of visiting each other's classes, and we'll reflect on ourselves and read literature.” (GM041422) I was surprised, and confused, to be assigned this work as an individual, given the engaged group discussion we had been having throughout the meeting. Looking back at the transcript later, I noticed these expectations for me had been subtly built up over time, with smaller hints and requests such as Robinson remarking, “I would ask you the PI to keep on reading (Renee laughs). Read, and if you find somewhere you get stuck, you may ask someone to share, to help, yeah, thank you. But the literature review written by many I'm not sure if that will have a good flow.” (GM041422). Likewise, when Tabasamu expressed concern that we did not all have a handle on key ideas from relevant literature, Rahim replied, “These are things what we are asking Renee to also consider when he prepares that guide template for observation, for focus group discussion questions, and then literature review issues perhaps, that is what we are asking.” (GM041422) In the meeting itself, I had been generally reluctant to speak, both wanting to listen to colleagues and not exert too much influence, but also not finding a time when it felt right to interject unless I was asked a specific question (PRJ041422) as well as preoccupied with taking notes in my role as participant observer. Later as I wrote in my journal, I reflected on the tensions brewing within my own position as “PI,” both researcher and co-collaborator, as well as graduate student in the field:

[...] I'm also so exhausted and feeling close to capacity with how much research activity I can handle. The thought of hopping in to arranging 8 more interviews, on top of the other activity that **got dumped on me today** (create focus group questions, field guide for observations, enhanced literature review – due by “end of Easter” aka. 4 days from now) is too much. It's funny how that work was **assigned to me as “PI” (the role I was cast in today)** right at the end. Luckily, [Makamba] spoke up for me again (bless his heart) and [Mkude] offered to help. I confirmed this with him at the end of the meeting, and I'm grateful that I will have (hopefully) at least some feedback or input. **It's hilarious how participatory research makes such a big deal out of collaborating** ([Makamba] referred to this again as a collaboration, in order to advocate for me to have some help), **when in the end, my participants/co-collaborators are looking to me to do all the work... is that true? Am I doing all the work?** I've been here before with the book – telling myself I'm doing all the work and then. (PRJ041422)

My awareness of differential, intersectional dynamics around race and gender me led to position myself differently towards this labor. I pondered the nature of the reality I was narrating for myself, that the work “got dumped on me” alone, how different it seemed from the participatory ideals that I had set out to aspire to (Bang and Vossoughi, 2016; Leavy, 2017), and how it seemed to echo the “cognitive labor” often implicitly expected of women (Daming, 2019), explored more in Chapter 5. On the one hand, the allocation of this labor had happened so quickly, I felt like I had little agency in accepting it, and it seemed squarely placed on my shoulders by the collective will of the group. On the other hand, I was also wary of my perception that I was “doing all the work” because I saw clear allusions to white supremacy culture of individualism and the belief of “I'm the only one,” as illuminated by Tema Okun (2021). Okun elaborates that these values can appear for white people in a workspace or organization as “a belief that you are responsible for and are qualified to solve problems on your own” and “[romanticize] a leader (or yourself) as the center of a movement, idea, issue, campaign.” Wanting to

resist those beliefs and their toxic effects, I struggled with my very perception of how our workflow was taking shape. Was there indeed an imbalance in our labors, and if so, were my colleagues resisting the labor of “researcher?” Had the blossoming of their role perhaps taken them by surprise as much as it did for me?

However, during and after the meeting, the identity as “participant researcher” seemed to be taken up by colleagues in their discourse around our shared project as a continuation of their role as co-collaborators. For example, when I asked Tabasamu (INT051222) in our third interview, “What do you see as a contribution of each party to our research project on large classes? In other words, what is each person contributing so far?” he spun the dual role of participant and researcher as “important,” reflecting,

I think... we have levels, of course, as we discussed that last time. Not levels... we’re talking about the parts of the project. There are some parts that, each part that should be discussed in some ways. Of course, we have the methodology part. How the participant will be there, and **one of the thing we said is that most of the participants will be in that direction, will be participating as, I don’t know what I can say, as the respondent or the informant** because you are the one to go to the class. You have to also to interview your colleague. So, that is one of the parts because **we are the researcher, but at the same time, we are involved.** [...] You are the one that will go to the class, who will report something about whatever. **So, this is one very important thing.** (INT051222)

Tabasamu echoed the idea of “levels” that circulated through and after the meeting – levels (or categories) of researcher as well as levels of participation. It was now clear that participants were formally drafted into collecting data through observing and talking with fellow colleagues, and in the context of my original question, Tabasamu’s answer frames the duality of this role as an “important”

contribution that colleagues were making towards our shared project, *not only* participants but researchers as well.

Overall, colleagues seemed to embrace the roles of both participants *and* researchers as our collaboration continued to take shape. As the next section will detail, throughout group meetings, interviews, and casual interactions, they emphasized its benefits and explained their investment in the role via continued positioning of themselves in particular ways: 1) *in need*; 2) *connected to resources*; and 3) *expert*, which all served to make sense of their role as participant-researchers. While some colleagues did perceive an imbalance in labor, as will be discussed later, they countered this dynamic by drawing on a discourse of interdependence, emphasizing the importance of relationships, expansive notions of time, and a sense of interconnectedness in order to negotiate the tensions between us as well as the tensions inherent in balancing their dual role of participant and researcher.

In need: “We need many to read our work”

As illustrated in comments from Mkude and Makamba above, a primary way colleagues positioned themselves with respect to our shared work was as *in need* of credit for promotion as well as visibility or recognition for professional activity. Mkude emphasized that the university expected its staff to complete and publish research as one of their “core values,” and Makamba confirmed that the need to publish was especially timely for colleagues looking to advance professionally. Makamba’s remarks also positioned communal others as in need of this research, such as “the society” or “the university” which may benefit from its insights, conveying a sense of interconnectedness with others that co-exists with the personal professional benefit of publishing papers. Robinson likewise underscored the interconnected nature of visibility, suggesting in Group Meeting 4 that we expand the scope of our research to include other departments as a kind of “political manipulation... tactic, political plot” he laughed, to “popularize” our project because “we need many to read our work.” Later, this need seeded abstracts (GM052322) which bloomed into acceptances to two international conferences held in the

U.S. in March 2023, where three colleagues and I were able to share insights from the large class sizes research with wider audiences in the Global North, much to my colleagues' delight (PRJ032723). In this way, colleagues were keenly aware of their need for wider visibility of their work as well as their ability to agentively shape our project to meet these ends. As my analysis continued, I became simultaneously aware that colleagues' emphasis on their own needs and how I can fill them legitimates my presence and may be another form of accommodation of my presence, in my presence as well as the presence of other colleagues as in a group meeting, and this accommodation may fuel ongoing colonial mentalities, as will be discussed later and in the following chapter.

Relatedly, colleagues also highlighted a collective, institutional need for "visibility," as Kajani termed it (PRJ040622), as a department within the university which our shared project could also help fulfill. I first started to take notice of this need when Rahim and then Kajani asked me to give a presentation about my research soon after my arrival. I thought I remembered reading in information about the university research permits that as a "Research Associate," my official title, I was expected to share knowledge with the university community in some way. However, I came to understand that making my presence and relationship with the department more visible also had benefits for my colleagues. While talking to Rahim and Kajani about the presentation in Kajani's office, they spoke mostly with each other in Swahili, and Kajani broke into English to say that they should "advertise" the presentation via email, WhatsApp, and Facebook and include a Zoom link to let the "whole SUA" know "our department is lively" and "things are happening here" (FN033122). When I asked how many people would likely be in the audience, Rahim remarked, "If you present to two or two hundred people, it doesn't matter," which startled me but didn't seem to concern my colleagues. Kajani asked if I could create a Zoom link, a description of my presentation, and a photo of myself to and send to the department IT representative, who seemed to act as a de facto publicist; he later explained to me that the department was competing against other depts and universities for the most traffic on their

websites, which combined with views of YouTube videos (of which those from international locations such as the US were most prized), clicks on colleagues' articles posted on ResearchGate and other metrics are calculated somehow and given university awards (FN040622). Kajani later confirmed the notion of competition between departments, colleges, and universities as tied to web presence, to which my presentation was a "big contribution" (INT042722). During the presentation, thankfully with a much smaller audience than two hundred, I tried to focus on my own words as the IT representative and colleagues circled around the room taking photos and videos, cameras beeping and flashing as I pontificated on collaboration and critical research. After my presentation had ended, Rahim stood up to thank the assembled audience members which included a higher up from the college, a man I had never met but whose status was apparent in everyone else's deference and excitement. Rahim addressed him directly in his closing remarks, saying his presence was "encouraging," adding "should we need assistance from your side, perhaps, we would expect to get that, you know, promptly, you know, even, it shouldn't have to be a soda, it could be more like..." (GM040622). As he trailed off and laughter pattered around the room, I understood Rahim was implying that the superior was expected to be more likely to grant funding or other administrative assistance to the department as a result of having attended this presentation. I smiled along with the crowd and tried to look worthy of funding. Later as people filtered out of the room, Mkude asked me to go outside with the IT representative for another video recording, this time a short summary of my research, coaching me with comments such as "mixing Swahili and English, it will be better." After two takes, they hovered around the camera to review as I stood in the courtyard not sure if I could leave (PRJ040622). I felt uncomfortable thinking about the role of race and specifically my visible whiteness in "advertising" that the department was "lively" (e.g., Jenks and Lee, 2020; Ruecker and Ives, 2015). I decided to ask Kajani about it directly in our third interview, though I stumbled over my words, feeling like I was approaching a boundary of sorts:

“Yeah, I mean, do you think that having it be, like, me as a foreigner, as a *mzungu*, do you think that creates more visibility?” The quick and definitive nature of his response surprised me.

“I don’t think the color matters much. What matters is what was the *mzungu* doing through our presentation? What was the presentation all about? What does this presentation mean for the community? So, that’s what matters. Even if we had a black man doing a presentation, but this presentation is being viewed by several internationals, it matters a lot. Of course, the name perhaps would attract some people, Renee Lynch. Wow, Lynch, that sounds like a foreign name. So, one would, why should this be in this department? Perhaps that will attract some people.”

“Yeah, so curiosity based on the name.”

“Yeah, that is based on curiosity, sure.”

He reassured me that the “color,” echoing the Swahili word *rangi* meaning *color* and used for *race*, “doesn’t matter much.” My foreignness may garner visibility in terms of my name, or the relevance of my content, or who in my own foreign community may view a recording afterwards, but not my race. This moment exemplifies the common dance I engaged in conversations around race with my colleagues, which is discussed more below – wondering, asking, demurring, redirecting. Instead of focusing on race, Kajani asserted that “what matters” is asking “What does this presentation mean for the community?” He adjusted the frame of our conversation beyond individuals and their perceptions to include a wider, more interdependent view of our relationship in which we might both get what need, focusing on the ends rather than worrying ourselves about the means. In moments like these, I wonder: is this another way to accommodate or placate me, a *mzungu* (*white foreigner*) and guest who colleagues want to keep happy in order to maintain their connection to the visibility and other potential benefits I represent? If it were not for me in Kajani’s office asking the same question, would he give the same blithe answer? And if we all get what we need, to what extent is it a problem?

Shortly before I left Morogoro in June, Rahim similarly reiterated that my collaboration with the department had been “very instrumental” in the department as a result of increased visibility, but he described our collaboration and the resulting visibility as developing over years that we had been working together which had “added lots of value and meaning of our existence (laughing) at SUA” (INT060222). He spoke of a grant that the department was given shortly after I had left in 2015 to build a new language learning center and connected that grant to my presence in that it had come from an intermediary NGO working in partnership with the US Embassy, which I was affiliated with, and SUA. Rahim confided,

You will need to know perhaps that **your involvement in the department has changed a lot**, has changed a lot in terms in the way people operate, **in terms of the way people look at things**. Also, in terms of the **way how people look at us as a department** [...] Yeah, so those days when you were coming and giving those, I think it was you facilitated a training, one of those places there. So, those were **very, very useful, and they went a long way to make the department recognizable or recognized as an entity which has contribution to make in the world** being the university as a whole. So, we do appreciate all these efforts that you’re making. If you come back, fine, you’re welcome. (INT060222)

Rahim was encouraging me to see visibility as a benefit of the whole of our collaborative relationship, beyond just the research project at hand but extending back over several years and interconnected with other partnerships that had “gone a long way to make the department recognizable.” Rahim’s comments highlight that our professional relationship had helped garner attention and benefits in other ways that had, in his perception, resulted in real, monetary gains. With his closing comments about me being welcome, I flashed back to my first day back on campus just three long months prior when Kajani introduced me to new colleagues by saying I was the one who had worked with them on the textbook they still use, saying “That is why she is always welcome here.” I am aware that, beyond the normal

ukarimu/*generosity* I feel in Tanzania, this welcome is a result of our history together as well as an ongoing opportunity we represent to one another to fulfill needs through our shared work.

Overall, colleagues' positionings of themselves as "in need" is seemingly in line with Ishengoma's (2017) assessment that "the majority of (if not all) Southern researchers enter such collaborations for financial and other gains, such as access to professional resources and to be eligible for opportunities such as attending international conferences and training programmes" as opposed to Northern researchers largely seeking "to gain access to unique data and fieldwork opportunities, and to contribute to development" (p. 178). While this contrast in needs can potentially lead to tension in cross-cultural research partnerships as priorities may clash (Grieve and Mitchell, 2020; Ishengoma, 2017), my colleagues seemed to be making their needs clear while also agentively shaping our project activities with those needs in mind. While they positioned themselves as "in need," they also made it a point to me to highlight that our collaboration was of benefit to them and their communities in both anticipated and already achieved ways. Their seeming investment in our ongoing collaboration as both rooted in a past and also ongoing evoked more of a long term, reciprocal approach to our collaboration (Chilisa, 2020) that may be more akin to the "patronage" notion evoked by anthropologist China Scherz (2014) in which interdependent partnerships, such as between the Ugandan communities and NGOs she studies, emphasize labor in exchange for longer-term protection that can be called upon when needed. She offers the example of community members in need establishing a bond with an organization which then obliges care, such as with doing work for the nuns at a local church who can then take in their children if or when they are not able to care for them themselves. This style of relationship may provoke a clash of ethics between communities and organizations seeking "sustainable" development, meaning independent and self-reliant, instead of *interdependent* and rooted in mutual benefit (Scherz, 2014). The needs of both are still met, though perhaps not as the traditional giver expects. In this way, my colleagues seeing and using our relationship to fulfill their needs for credit for promotion as well as

visibility or professional recognition is a move towards reciprocity in which everyone gets and gives something.

Connected to Resources: “We also have something to contribute towards that”

Another way that colleagues took up the role of participant researcher was as *connected to resources*, with an emphasis on the *social* resources at their disposal that could benefit our shared work. As early as our first group meeting via Zoom, Kajani asserted that colleagues’ classrooms and teaching practices could be a source of data for our shared research project, expressing

[our project] could be a part of, you know, research that **doesn't necessarily require your resource** because **we have the classes, we attend the sessions, and you know we collect data through teaching**. So [name] has a class, could introduce WhatsApp session, you know, and see how practical then we come up with - while doing the other project activities. (Kajani, GM060821)

Kajani made a notable contrast between a project that might “require [my] resource” and a project that would make use of what they could offer, namely their classes as a site of data collection for our research. This theme of offering social resources continued as we discussed project possibilities in second round interviews, hashing out our research design and scope. For example, both Robinson (INT101321) and Mkude (INT110121) mentioned social connections at different universities which could facilitate recruiting participants there, if we chose to have multiple research sites. Mkude cited two colleagues and their social connections as resources for us, stating, “Okay, so they have colleagues from Muslim universities, and they have taught at those universities. I think going for permission to do that, it might be easier because we are, we have a channel to go through” (INT110121). He highlighted the value of having a “channel to go through” in order to garner permissions and participants at different sites, something which he advocated for as adding value to our overall project.

I personally benefitted from colleagues' social connections as invaluable resources in the process of securing permits for my research from SUA and Tanzania's national research commission. Rahim proved an indispensable fixer and cultural broker who, on multiple occasions, facilitated the necessary steps for me to be officially sanctioned as a researcher by the university and COSTECH, Tanzania's governing body on research. He personally visited the relevant offices to ask about the process, communicated with me regularly to coach me through the applications, wrote letters on my behalf, fielded phone calls, and critically, smoothed over different interpretations around my use of the word "decolonization" in my application materials. As Rahim explained to me in an email and in person meeting after I had arrived in Tanzania, my project title, "Decolonizing Collaboration in English Language Teaching," had "raised some eyebrows" among the university staff reviewing my research application (FN033022). He explained that the term "decolonizing" could evoke protestations such as "but we are a free country," and while "nobody denies [colonization] exists" (FN033022), the context of doing this project at an agriculture-based university with an audience of non-specialists in our field meant was called upon to "clarify what the project was all about in writing" and "[explain] these linguistics concepts to non-experts" (KDA030522). He did this by revising my one-page description of my research and adding some explanations of key concepts and suggesting revised title utilizing "post-colonial" rather than decolonial (KDA030522) which satisfied the committee and also provided me with some vital insight into local conceptions of coloniality, further discussed later in this chapter. All of this was accomplished via Rahim's ability to perform "linguistic gymnastics," as he described it (FN033022), to bridge academic cultures vis a vis his long history of relationships and respected position at the university - social resources without which my ability to do research may have been impossible. Similar to the local staff at development agencies in Sundberg's (2019) study, "by appealing to his identity as a fellow Tanzanian" Rahim was able to negotiate my research agenda "in ways that those partners would most likely interpret as paternalistic and neo-colonial if coming from an [individual] from Europe or

North America” (p. 452). As echoed by Kumi and Kamruzzaman (2021), these social resources benefit foreign partners such as myself in tangible ways that are often overlooked and underappreciated yet integral to North-South collaborations.

Throughout our research process, colleagues referred to their own similarly valuable social connections that helped them accomplish their own professional goals, such as good relationships with TELTA (Tanzanian English Language Teachers Association) and the RELO (Regional English Language Officer) at the U.S. Embassy that could yield proposals and funding to participate in the highly valued international conferences we were jointly applying to (Kajani, INT042722, GM052322). In resonance with a sentiment that Africanist scholars have described as Ubuntu-like (e.g., Madzima, 2014; Makalela, 2015), these experiences connote relationships as currency; relationships are valuable in themselves but also valuable towards achieving an end. My colleagues’ positioning of themselves as connected to such relationships as resources underscores a discourse of interdependence in which relationships get things done or make things happen, and my colleagues offered their relationships as important resources for our shared work. As will be discussed later, however, colleagues confided that these social resources also come at a cost. Relationships have to be maintained, requiring investment of time and energy from participants that can sometimes come at odds with, or create tension within, their participation in collaborative work.

Colleagues also positioned themselves as connected to social resources in terms of their own achievements and capabilities as a sort of human capital that would also benefit our shared work. At many points, they made an effort to show me or make it known that they had projects and products of their own that could possibly “add value” (Rahim INT060222) to our collaboration. For example, Chupaki (INT050922), Kajani (GM052322), and Rahim (INT060222) mentioned publishing books in the recent past or simultaneously while working on our project. Mkude (INT110121) shared a research project that he had recently undertaken with two other colleagues on the use of social media in teaching large classes

that had connections to our proposed research. When discussing submitting our project for an international conference at a group meeting, Kajani suggested that we could submit more than one abstract because other colleagues had work that was worthy of presenting. In suggesting this, he framed their work in terms of possession using the verb “have” to describe their work, stating “I know we have [colleague’s name]’s way of handling large classes [...] So, we can think of having the [colleague’s name]’s and the other [colleague’s name]’s approach. So, we submit two, and we have two people submitting, one having these people, and one having this.” (GM052322). He effectively promoted the perspectives of other colleagues as a resource that would allow us to expand our proposal options, framing their work as human capital that could be employed to increase our overall chances of being accepted to the conference. In the same group meeting, Kajani also positioned me as a department resource in a similar matter, stating in mixed Swahili and English, “tuna native speaker”/*we have a native speaker*, which he implied would also help our chances of our conference proposal being accepted (GM052322). In this way, social relationships are resources that can be spun into material ones; as highlighted above, collaboration can result in funding (i.e., Rahim INT060222) or other tangible benefits. Colleagues’ perceptions and experiences reiterate that social resources function as a type of insurance that can develop into material resources when needed.

In this same vein, colleagues also asserted their own connections to *physical* resources at times. For instance, during a group meeting when Robinson nominated Kajani to be included on our group conference proposal which was limited to four presenters, Kajani attempted to decline stating that he had other opportunities to participate, sharing, “I’m thinking of submitting another paper where I can ask fund through [another professional organization] so...” (Kajani GM052322). His assertion that he had other avenues of being accepted and funded to attend the conference subtly resisted the idea that he was lacking in resources. Importantly, colleagues positioning themselves as well-resourced in terms of money or means of mobility was a form of resistance when I or dominant discourses may have

positioned them otherwise, perhaps a way of taking up a position of power when I attempted to discursively dis-empower them by implying they “needed” my resources. For instance, as will be detailed in the next chapter, Makamba (INT102021) refuted my offer to reimburse participants for their internet usage during our online interviews and meetings. He explained that it wasn’t necessary because the meetings were not frequent enough to warrant me giving participants money and that he personally had purchased the “most expensive” bundle of internet credit which had improved the clarity of our connection. Later, Kajani similarly preempted me offering physical resources to the department (PRJ050522): he had asked if I would be willing to leave my digital voice recorder with the department when I returned to the U.S. so that they could use it for their own research purposes. He asked how much it was, and I said 30-40 USD, to which he remarked “not expensive,” and said “we” could give you money and ask to send or bring it, but that might be difficult, or we could get one here in Tanzania, but it will probably be a “fake” one. Robinson, who was in the office as well at the time, agreed, so Kajani swiftly concluded that I should leave the recorder here for the “department” to use, and erase my audio before I go. I agreed; many colleagues had admired the recorder when I used it in interviews with them, though I was slightly uncomfortable with the idea of erasing my audio files in the event I lost my data somehow, I initially thought that I would leave the recorder behind as a sort of gift or donation, which made sense to me – I could get another one easily after all. However, when I saw Kajani a few days later, he asserted that he would pay me for the recorder, saying that he didn’t want me to have to incur any unexpected costs related to doing research, and that as a department they have funds and can use them (PRJ052522). Though I was internally tempted to offer to pay half or just donate it, I didn’t resist. It seemed like he had made up his mind as he spoke to me in fast Swahili and I labored to keep up linguistically. In the middle of his flow of words, I caught a new term, “kugawa,” which he defined for me as “give for free,” which he did not want. It seemed to be a matter of pride and assertion, and it did seem fair to me, so I accepted the envelope of cash he later gave me. It felt like notable reversal of sorts:

I, the supposedly well-resourced *mzungu*, accepting money from the well-resourced Tanzanian. The action seemed knowing, on both sides, that Kajani was deliberately resisting the image of a helpless African taking donations by mobilizing the physical resources at his disposal which were present *in addition to* the social resources – in other words, that he had both. In an earlier moment, while discussing international travel to a conference, I had attempted to position my colleagues as at a disadvantage in terms of obtaining visas, but again, Kajani resisted (INT042722):

Renee: Yeah, on the note of travel, I think that also sometimes getting visas can be an issue. I mean, it's rather **unfortunate** that it can be **more difficult for a Tanzanian to get a visa for the US than it is for the US to get one for Tanzania**, which I don't know...

Kajani: If there are better grounds, I suppose those **visa issues are easily sorted out** because as **we've been on good term with the RELO's office** so they can back up our...

Renee: Okay.

Kajani: Yeah.

While I positioned “Tanzanians” as “unfortunate” in terms of means of travel mobility, Kajani made it clear that a social relationship, such as being “on good term” with the Regional English Language Officer (RELO) at the U.S. Embassy, was also a worthy resource in service of, or equal to, the physical resource such as a passport that would facilitate greater ease of international travel. In this way, it would seem that colleagues could position their own identities as a resource, emphasizing the fact that they see themselves as connected to communities which allow them to draw on those communities’ resources which then benefit themselves and our collaboration. Rahim echoed this idea during our second group meeting when he positioned the Tanzanian perspective that my colleagues could bring to a literature review as a resource in itself, as he contended,

[...] some parts of this [research proposal] document **may need collaborative activity or collaborative work**, but of course, we'll have special focus. For instance, in literature itself, I would believe that if you're talking of a theoretical sort of literature and conceptual issues, **maybe yes, in America, yeah, we could have lots of resources around that area**, but if you're talking of empirical literature and previous studies on large classes, I think Tanzania will also feature prominently around that. **So, we also have something to contribute towards that.**

(GM010622)

Similarly to Kajani, Rahim seemed aware of a possible, preconceived imbalance in terms of who can contribute what to a collaborative research document such as literature review. He presented a contrast between the "theoretical" and "conceptual" resources available in America and the "empirical," practical knowledge rooted in the Tanzanian perspective. He seemed to assert their identities as Tanzanian as a resource in this case, affirming "we also have something to contribute towards" our "collaborative activity."

Expert: "We have expertise as you've seen"

Thus, colleagues also positioned themselves as *experts* in many interrelated facets of our project including the Tanzanian context, their own teaching, and research knowledge and skills. Frequently in interviews and group meetings, my colleagues made it a point to inform me about various aspects of Tanzania including its political economy (Zawadi INT050622), history (Rahim INT060222), education system and policy (Robinson INT101321; Mkude INT110121; Kajani INT042722), and cultural communication styles (Makamba INT042822). In almost all cases, their insights were very helpful in providing needed background for my dissertation as well as our collaborative project, such as Rahim's ready knowledge of the definition of "large" class according to the Tanzania Commission for Universities (TCU) (GM041422), or Robinson's ability to tie the increase in university class sizes to specific changes in student loan policies during the administration of former President Kikwete (INT101321). Thus, my

colleagues often drew knowledge from their own experiences and identities as Tanzanians, allowing them to take the position of “expert” in their own context and my/our research of it.

Likewise, colleagues often expressed a type of practical expertise in teaching, including the teaching of language and pedagogy for large classes, rooted in their own experiences in this vein. While they may not have presented themselves as “expert” per se, in many moments, colleagues performed their professional identities as teachers who are confident and well-versed in what they do. For example, in interviews, colleagues took the opportunity to self-assuredly describe to me their pedagogical choices and systems such as Kajani (INT102521) and Mkude (INT110121) using online platforms to provide students opportunities for linguistic interaction, Zawadi (INT052622) organizing student presentations to facilitate large class discussions, and Chupaki (INT050922) creating a textbook of interactive materials for his classes. Colleagues also positioned each other as experts in aspects of teaching, such as when Chupaki told me in an interview,

... because **we believe [Makamba] is good in critical thinking**, and when it comes to that portion, that component, **we normally invite Mr. [Makamba] to train our students because personally, I admit I’m not good at critical thinking**. So, when I’m about to teach that component, then I’m having Mr. [Makamba] to teach my students. (INT050922)

This perception of Makamba and practice of inviting colleagues to teach certain subjects in their classes was echoed in group meetings and informal conversations as well (e.g., GM052322).

This collegial respect for each other’s’ expertise in teaching also reflects a sense of balance or collective expertise *through* interdependence among the colleagues of the department. As stated by Kajani in our first interview via WhatsApp, “...where [I] am weak my colleague would be strong, thus my weakness would be covered” (INT031621). This emphasis on interdependence calls to mind an Ubuntu-like respect for self *and* other, as Chilisa puts it (2020, p. 234), and suggests that a sense of oneself as part of a community, an identity-in-community, fosters a social network which facilitates interconnected

individuals working together to accomplish shared goals and lends professional confidence. When asked in interviews about their strengths as teachers, colleagues were able to mention an array of other admirable professional qualities such as knowledge of and adaptability in various teaching methods (Tabasamu INT051321; Mkude INT032021; Zawadi INT052622), perseverance and positive, lasting collegial relationships (Rahim INT041321), and continuous learning and as well as encouragement of continuous learning in students (Robinson INT032821). Overall, this ready engagement and confidence in pedagogical matters underscored the fact that colleagues seem to feel comfortable and capable as teachers. As Makamba expressed in an interview discussing the feasibility of researching how colleagues are handling the teaching of large classes, “The classrooms are our venues actually, our homes. They’re second homes. So, [our proposed research project] is possible. I hope it is possible, and it is doable.” (INT102021). The position of expert-like or capable teacher thus served as another aspect in which colleagues could fulfill the role of participant researcher.

Colleagues also often positioned themselves as well-versed and confident in research knowledge and skills. Again, while not explicitly claiming the title of “expert” in research, many implied through words and actions that they could contribute to our project by virtue of their own backgrounds and experiences as researchers. At the time of my study, at least three members of the department had recently completed PhDs and conducted their own research in varied areas including African and Bantu linguistics and teaching pedagogy, and two members were actively conducting research for their own dissertations focused on multimodal communication and African linguistics. Indeed, the trials and tribulations of conducting research and completing a dissertation were an important source of bonding between myself and my colleagues as we undertook a joint research project, and I often received advice and input on the topic of my own and our shared research. Throughout our many discussions in interviews and group meetings, colleagues frequently exerted informed opinions about, for example, the value of multiple data sources (Rahim INT102721), how to organize ourselves for collaborative

creation of literature review and research tools (Mkude INT110121), the purpose and need for literature review (Tabasamu INT051222), the need for “triangulation” in our data collection (Robinson INT101321), the process of crafting research for conference presentations (Kajani INT042722, GM052322) just to name a few. They also often named other colleagues within the department as experts or resources for research-related questions based on their expertise, such as Makamba recommending Mkude for assistance in drafting research instruments saying, “Compared to others, from even myself, I think the guy is good when it comes to research” and “I trust the guy.” (INT042822) Though he was reflective to add, “I'm not saying that other people are not good, but I have worked with him so much, so I know the guy. I haven't worked with other people in the department, so I might be wrong judging other people,” (INT042822) his positioning reflects a sense of confidence in fellow colleagues as expert or capable in the technical aspects of research that would benefit our shared project. This theme appeared in colleagues' commendations of others' qualities that could serve our work, such as Kajani recommendation that I talk to Mkude as someone who recently conducted a similar study to ours and could “add some information and maybe an approach on how to come up with this envisioned project” (Kajani INT102521), or Makamba's encouragement of using Rahim as a “our senior” with a “position in [Renee's] study” in order to motivate other colleagues in the department to participate (GM060821). Likewise, in our last interview before I left Tanzania for the U.S., Rahim encouraged to me to refer others “from that... side of the world” who may be “interested in a similar study” to the department because “we have expertise as you've seen,” citing specific members and African and Bantu languages, applied linguistics and discourse, online pedagogy and curriculum among their subject areas (INT060222). Other conversations with colleagues seemed to affirm Rahim's perceptions in this regard, with Kajani positioning himself as interested in a guest lectureship in African linguistics at a U.S. university (Kajani INT042722) and Robinson taking care to explain to me the differences between the open and closed syllable systems of Swahili versus English as well as other

linguistic technicalities (Robinson INT032821). Overall, colleagues' positioning of themselves as experts further enhanced their roles as participant-researchers, legitimizing their contributions to our shared work.

## Part 2: Tensions and Implications

This section describes the tensions that colleagues and I felt as a result of the demands of their "dual role" as participants *and* researchers in our collaborative project. I engage with our differing perceptions of labor and balance in our shared work and outline how colleagues negotiated the tension through a discourse of interdependence by emphasizing relationships, collaboration, reciprocity and ultimately, a more expansive and fluid view of collaboration. This view implies a sense of identity-in-community, or seeing oneself as part of a larger social whole, which can possibly serve as a decolonial ontology for collaboration in ELT. However, I also engage the potential drawbacks of overlooking racialized and gendered power dynamics in favor of emphasizing interdependence, and I share competing conversations with colleagues around localized notions of coloniality which serve to complicate my own perspectives and sense of self as a co-laborator, further explored in the following chapter.

Challenges in Collaboration: "The problem also for us, some of us, is like we are playing dual role"

Given the overall enthusiasm and investment voiced by my colleagues, I expected them to be rather involved in the labor involved in our joint research project. However, in practice, the dual nature of the role of participant-researcher seemed to be a source of tension for colleagues, as explained by Rahim in a 3<sup>rd</sup> round interview: "The problem also for us, some of us, is like we are playing dual role. Okay, you are a participant at one point, but you also a researcher at another point." (INT060222) In this conversation, he went on to illustrate that this duality had challenges, for example, if colleagues as researchers wanted to utilize data from their professional evaluations for our research on large class sizes. This data is typically not available to the teachers themselves, and so expecting participants as

researchers to access this data would create ethical issues because it would compromise the privacy of their own and other colleagues' data. While this is a concrete, logistical example of the complications of the "dual role," the position of participant-researcher seemed to be a site of struggle with implications for how we see each other and our collaborative work.

Despite being very willing *participants*, as the project progressed, I was surprised that my colleagues were not as present as *researchers* as I had imagined they would be. My perception was that I ended up doing a large portion of the work on our research project including: coordinating and scheduling many group meetings, taking notes during group meetings, drafting and emails after group with summaries and action items, deciding and communicating changes in data collection deadlines, facilitating and transcribing the focus group discussion, maintaining and organizing files on our shared Google drive, and drafting, revising, and submitting a conference proposal. I also conducted preliminary analysis of our data, which at the time of analysis, consisted of seven "peer" observations, four of which had been conducted by me and three by two other colleagues (KDA053122); I then presented this analysis to the group for discussion which I likewise facilitated (GM052322; GM053122).

In many respects, these tasks may make sense within my role anointed as "PI," and this may have been the type of labor that my colleagues simply did not have time for, given their normal professional and personal responsibilities, or "a lot of fish to fish." At the same time, I found myself struggling to balance the demands of this labor as well as my own dissertation research in the field, and I wondered if there was a possible imbalance in our shared project. While I had been wary of taking on two research projects, I had expected that the second one, our research on large classes, would be more "collaborative" therefore easing the overall workload. However, as Vavrus and Bartlett (2013) remind us, co-laboring, or "laboring together," is challenging in nature and involves different labor for differently positioned colleagues, and I was surely feeling the strain as well as confusion on how to make sense of it.

While this seeming imbalance prompts me to re-examine my own expectations for our collaboration, as my colleagues encouraged me to do as discussed later, in addition to racialized narratives of individualism (Okun, 2021), I also wondered what sense to make of it from the perspective of my colleagues' experience. How did my colleagues perceive the nature of our respective contributions to the project? Was the dual labor inherent in being a participant-researcher simply too much to ask or expect of my colleagues, or were they actively resisting the identity of "researcher?" If so, why?

Tensions: "Sometimes collaboration is somehow not very good."

Many colleagues affirmed that our collaboration in the shared research project was not equal in various ways. When I asked in third round individual interviews what each "party" was contributing to our shared project, five of the six core participants suggested that as researchers, colleagues were not contributing the same amount of work into our shared project as I was. For example, when I asked Kajani, "What do you see as the contributions of each party in [our current research] project?" he hesitated then intimated a sense of imbalance:

Very tricky... very tricky. What's the contribution? How do I respond to this? **Should I say 50/50?** I want to be fair, as **you are doing a big part of it** because you developed the tools, you know. You are doing the observation. Of course, letting you into our venue is also a contribution to the process. Having time like this is also a part. So, **maybe 60/40**. As a researcher, **you are going ahead of us**, but at least **we still go slowly**, you know, **add the value to the project**. (INT042722)

Kajani labeled our respective contributions as "60/40" with me "doing a big part of it." However, he also highlighted that the contributions of colleagues were still present but in different forms, such as offering the physical space for observations and time for interviews as well as the requisite energy and emotional labor. Tabasamu was less equivocal in his assessment:

[...] **sometimes collaboration is somehow not very good. Of course it is not bad, not bad, but not yet that extent that we need** because you need everyone to share on time if you get something. The last time we had agreed that we will go to do for whatever we are doing, and we will share. Do anything, and we share... **So, how many have done that and shared? Is it only Renee?**

Renee: So far, that is what I see. Yes. (laughing)

Tabasamu: So, that is my evaluation. (INT051222)

In this case, Tabasamu was referring to our agreement to share articles in our Google folder towards creating our literature review, a pattern which repeated later with our observation data where only two other colleagues conducted observations and shared their completed forms. Tabasamu also seems to affirm my own suspicions that it was “only Renee” who was contributing in this way, which I agreed to, then laughed nervously in admitting out loud, not wanting to find fault or place blame on my colleagues. Rahim, however, commented similarly, sharing,

**... you’ve played your part very, very well, but of course we didn’t, maybe only as perhaps participants or respondents, but we also needed to do more, like going to other places [...]**  
**Perhaps that's what we should have done.** (INT060222)

Rahim’s words lend a slightly regretful tone or perhaps a sense of guilt that colleagues performed more as “participants or respondents” than as researchers. He offers that “we also needed to do more,” perhaps in terms of data collection or other labor. Like me, my colleagues seemed to be emotionally affected by the sense of imbalance, as exemplified in Makamba confiding that he was worried about not having read sufficiently to contribute to our literature review, saying that it “disturb[ed] him” because his “delivery is not the way [he] expected” (INT042822). In this way, colleagues confided a felt struggle

similar to mine in trying to fulfill multiple roles in our collaboration and having to balance the demands of each in relation to our expectations of ourselves and The Other.

Importantly, colleagues cited some practical issues affecting their ability to participate fully in the labor of researchers including laptop problems (Tabasamu, INT051222), unfamiliarity with Google Drive (Robinson GM041422), time conflicts including Tanzanian public holidays and an unpredictable “timetable” of university activities (Rahim PRJ051622, Robinson INT051222), Zoom and internet connectivity issues (Makamba INT042822), concerns about privacy of information if we were to use teacher evaluations as data (Rahim INT060222), and frequent power cuts – all of which not only logistical challenges but lived challenges as well, affecting the capacity that colleagues have to focus on our project when seemingly more serious matters are at hand. During one such power cut, as I interviewed Rahim in his office, he put it well:

**People live in tension** because of those activities. **It’s not because of this particular study**, uh-uh. It’s because of **the nature of how we operate**. We don’t have power right now, so people will be thinking, okay, **where will I get power**, for instance. You see, and as you are attending this interview for instance, here you are thinking okay, **now, when I leave here, would I just be idle, or where will I find power, and how will I get there?** And all those kinds of things - **how will I go and teach in my class?** (Rahim INT113022A)

His words articulate that these challenges were not a reflection of colleagues’ commitment to our project but rather, lived realities and “tensions” that they must constantly negotiate. For my part, in this moment, I responded by assuring him that I did not place “blame or fault” on any colleagues, and that I understood they were operating amongst many tensions and competing priorities as we worked together. Rahim responded in kind, reasserting, “[...] it's not something that you can say it is somebody's maybe fault. It's a - it's a chain of events, and you can't say where does it start and where does it end”

(INT113022A). As he noted, such logistical issues are important to see as part of larger, structural inequities which highlight the real material challenges facing North-South collaborations (Vavrus and Bartlett, 2013) as well as the imbalances in this regard that are often overlooked to the detriment of equitable relationships that acknowledge and honor those differences (Horner, 2002).

Participant-Researcher in a Discourse of Interdependence: “Tomorrow it could be you, right?”

As was a common theme throughout, however, colleagues broadly made sense of our perceived imbalances by drawing on a discourse of interdependence which emphasized 1) the importance of social relationships, 2) the value of collaboration, 3) reciprocity between us, and 4) a more expansive view of “collaboration.” Overall, this lends a sense of identity-in-community, or seeing themselves as part of a larger social whole, which can possibly serve as a decolonial ontology for our collaboration, though not without drawbacks.

Most commonly, when colleagues were not able to fulfill their role as participant but especially as researcher, they explained by saying they were “busy” in various ways. This self-positioning was very common across data sources with colleagues citing teaching responsibilities (exacerbated by large class sizes), administrative demands, and social obligations as some of the many responsibilities vying for their time and attention. Colleagues typically seemed to explain themselves in this way to assure me that “it’s not personal,” they just have other priorities in their social and professional lives, and this creates tension between the many “fish to fish.” In some ways, this may be a normal fact of life and collaborative research, as foreshadowed by Horner (2002), as well as familiar to my own context at an American university. Notably, colleagues positioning themselves as “busy” was often tied to the obligations of maintaining the social relationships that also served as the social resources they drew on in times of need. As Rahim explained to me, “PR is top” (PRJ051622), in the sense that public relations (PR) or maintaining one’s image as an active part of a community, tends to take precedence over other types of obligations; in the moment he explained this, he was lamenting having to miss teaching his class

yet again in order to attend a “workshop” for staff organized by the college. The workshop had been announced on short notice, and he had already missed many other days of teaching due to public holidays and being tapped for other, similar administrative events and workshops. He seemed to feel frustrated and annoyed with the tension between competing priorities, but knew that ultimately, he had to attend the workshop in order to respect the request of a higher authority and appear engaged and invested in that professional community which, as mentioned previously, would support him and the department “should they need assistance” (GM040622). As another example, Tabasamu informed me in our third interview that that evening, he had to travel to Dar es Salaam, a 4–5-hour bus ride, in order to attend a presentation that his PhD supervisor had invited him to. He explained his need to travel as, “I go this way, and I go that way, and sometimes the supervisor needs that,” (INT051222) citing the need to be present for the sake of his supervisor and presumably their social connection rather than his own personal desire or convenience. Yet, at the end of the interview, he made sure to inform me that any “delays” in his communications or perceived lack of participation in our shared project had not been “purposeful” or “intentional” but rather “because of maisha/life” (INT051222) – he was simply “busy” with his PhD studies and other affairs, so I should not take his actions personally. Many colleagues mentioned similar sentiments to me in passing, in effect positioning themselves as members of communities who needed them and intimating that their social resources they offered to our project came at a cost in terms of their availability for other labor in said project. This phenomenon reminds me that the professional *is* personal, and in a context like Tanzania where “relations and social is most valued” (Rahim, INT060222), there is often less separation between personal and professional life than I am used to believing exists in the highly capitalistic American labor market. For my colleagues, the primacy of relationships within a social system of interdependence is paramount, and I should understand this way of being as part of our collaboration.

Indeed, colleagues also upheld the value of collaboration as another way of negotiating imbalance between us and underscoring interdependence. In a few cases, when an imbalance was noted, colleagues responded by suggesting or spearheading more collaborative action. For instance, in our fourth group meeting as we discussed creating the tools for our research, Makamba interjected to remind the group that “the research is somewhat or to a large extent collaborative” before asking, “So [Mkude], will you assist Renee?” (GM041422) Mkude took this offer up immediately, affirming, “That's what I wanted to say, yes. I've been dealing with issues of focus group discussion, observations, so, I think I can assist also.” Makamba noticed that the labor of creating tools was being assigned to me alone, and so he motioned for Mkude to help in the spirit of maintaining “collaborative” research. Mkude had also seemingly observed this imbalance and wanted to offer his own expertise as a contribution to our shared work. This echoes back to our first group meeting when Makamba advocated for me to choose a project that was “doable” or “workable on [my] side” (GM060821) rather than strictly beneficial for my colleagues; he gestured towards inviting a more collaborative aspect to the project decision in that it was also a matter of meeting my own needs and capacities.

As such, colleagues also emphasized the reciprocal nature of our collaboration, positioning me as *in need* and themselves as able to fill those needs via positioning as *connected to resources*, another way of negotiating any possible imbalances. Throughout our collaboration, colleagues frequently positioned me as *in need*: in need of data for my dissertation, advice on PhD research, cooperation from colleagues, and their social connections as resources from which “Renee will be ready to benefit” (Rahim, GM041422). For instance, in our third interview when Kajani was discussing the possibility of widening our project scope to include instructors in other departments, he noted offhandedly, “You can't confront them, obviously. We will have to request to them, you know, so that would be also a contribution to the project.” (INT042722). In this way, he positioned me as *in need* of the social access, which he could provide, to additional research participants, reinforcing the positioning of colleagues as

*connected to resources*. Positioning me as *in need* also provided additional opportunities for colleagues to asserting their expertise in areas such as research and Tanzanian culture. Colleagues were also keenly aware of themselves as participants in my dissertation research and often performed the role of “good participants” by stating that they were open, available, and agreeable to whatever I needed from them and encouraging me to contact them anytime to ask. Zawadi exemplified this as we reached the end of our first interview together in the tearoom shortly before tea time was to start; I noted the time and moved to wrap up, and he was remarkably insistent that we could find another location and continue the interview, continue after tea time ended, or arrange another interview “so that we finish up your questions,” encouraging me repeatedly with phrases such as “no problem” and “be comfortable” (INT050622). This was a common sentiment in interviews as well as group meetings, such as in Group Meeting 3 where Rahim strongly encouraged the department members in the audience to consent to participate in my research project if they had not done so already, urging that everybody should

[...] really try to cooperate this day, with Renee - **tomorrow it could be you, right?** [...] when you miss this participation, you can feel what it is like not to really get participants in your work. So I should also encourage those who still feel like I am pulling their legs to really participate in our work to do so wholeheartedly. (Rahim, GM040622)

Rahim put his encouragement in terms of interdependence: participate and help out this researcher because “tomorrow it could be you.” He and others overall emphasized our interconnectedness in this research process; as co-collaborators, we need each other, and while our labor may look different, we are both striving to benefit from this collaboration, and so we should contribute what we have.

Overall, both directly and indirectly, colleagues encouraged me to shift my notion of collaboration to a more fluid, interdependent form of co-laboring (Vavrus and Bartlett, 2013) which was more expansive and responsive to our context. In our third interview, Rahim for example, explicitly advised me to adjust my “expectations,” asserting that collaborating is not about replicating duties

between collaborators but rather “balance” and “fit” – we strive for balance, and we do the labor that we are best suited for “at that time.” (INT060222) He negotiated the tensions inherent in “balancing” our roles via a rhetoric of time, flexibility, and emergent expectations, as detailed in the closing story of this chapter below. This more expansive perspective was resonant with Kajani’s earlier comments that “As a researcher, you are going ahead of us, but at least we still go slowly, you know, add the value to the project.” (INT042722) His recognition that I may “go ahead” of the group but they(we) “still go slowly” to “add value” belies the importance of relationships over deadlines, continuity over immediacy. Both Kajani’s and Rahim’s comments also emphasize something more akin to equity than equality; we contribute what we can, when we can, given who we are. When I voiced my concerns in certain interviews over a possible asymmetrical or colonial power dynamic with me being positioned as PI, which I mentioned was uncomfortable for me, many colleagues simply affirmed the need for a leader in this work as a necessary part of collaboration. As Tabasamu noted, “[...] it is not possible to sit in roundtable and do each and everything from there. There’s something that will go to be outside that, and you are doing that for the interest of the collaboration.” (INT051222). He acknowledged that there may be labor I would undertake “outside” of a more horizontal “roundtable” dynamic, but that this would be “for the interest of the collaboration,” or the good of the group, which justifies it. Echoing Rahim’s idea of “fit,” colleagues also held me up as “best fitted” for this role of leader in a sense, with Rahim for example casting me as a “neutral person” and therefore best suited to handle data that should be confidential from the group (INT060222), or Robinson stating that I am “good at leading” because I “bring people together” in a way that he thought was not otherwise common for the department (INT051222). Overall, my colleagues encouraged me to change what I thought of as “collaborative,” relying less on factors such as individual labor and rigid power dynamics and more on the well-being of our group and contributing what we have by virtue of who we are. This more interdependent approach seemed to illustrate what Chilisa (2020) explains as an Ubuntu research ethic

that can “go beyond Euro-Western research issues of power that mainly focus on the ‘I the researcher’ and the ‘you the researched’ to involving I/we relationships that see reality differently” (p. 241). For me, learning to see the I/we relationships has been profound, especially while conducting research in a global pandemic, across distance, highlighting experiences of shared humanity and attendant opportunities for reflection on my own identity-in-community, as well as the histories in which it is entangled.

In retrospect, my colleagues’ negotiations of their role as participant-researchers via a discourse of interdependence contests typical colonially derived working dynamics of North-South partnerships in many ways. Colleagues are positioning themselves as professionals with something to offer, particularly social resources and relevant expertise, which moves us away from a sole focus on material resources and subverts “the operating assumption on the part of both partners that Northern institutions have more resources and expertise to contribute and that Southern institutions are merely beneficiaries with less or nothing to offer” (Mlambo and Baxter, 2018, p. 38, citing Etling & McGirr, 2006). This positioning can combat the deficiency mentality that Southern partners may feel (Mlambo and Baxter, 2018; Grieve and Mitchell, 2020) which is often purposefully cultivated by Northern partners for their own benefit (Thörn, 2016). A focus on interdependence also challenges my own perceptions that I am “doing all the work,” which confronts white supremacy thinking (Okun, 2021) and instead offers someone like me the opportunity to cultivate identity-in-community as a path towards more authentic allyship. Intriguingly, if it is indeed true that I am “doing all the work,” that imbalance also subverts the colonially-derived pattern in many Global North-Africa research relationships in which African counterparts serve as “more or less ‘glorified data collectors’” working on behalf of Northern-based scholars who do not “have the time to ‘muddy their hands’ in the field” (Omanga & Mainye, 2019, p. 273). Whether through conscious refusal or loss to competing priorities, my laboring on behalf of my colleagues represents an important reversal that is worth looking at more closely with regards to gender and other intersectional factors, as

will be explored in the next chapter. Our dynamic also seems to counter Ishengoma's (2017) critical reading of North-South research partnerships in which Southern researchers have no control or agency in shaping the research agendas. In this case, I attempted to benevolently give control to my colleagues in, for example, choosing which project idea we would pursue, yet they seemed to resist that power, preferring instead an interdependent approach that honored what I wanted and needed from our project *as well as* their own needs, in line with an Ubuntu-like respect for self *and* other (Chilisa, 2020, p.234). They seemed to exercise a type of agency in redirecting my focus as such, which is also worth looking at more closely, considering the converse de-emphasis of coloniality and particularly of race, as discussed below. As reflection on our collaboration has shown, however, highlighting interdependence and seeing ourselves as part of a community (identity-in-community) provides an opportunity to bring into focus the "I/we relationships that see reality differently" (Chilisa, 2020, p. 241), and act more responsively to our localized context. The collaborative spirit I sense among my colleagues may actually be more resonant with the "patronage" model described by Scherz (2014). Our collaboration is still about fulfilling our respective needs but less on the terms that I attempted to set out from the beginning. In spite of that, or perhaps as a result, I do feel the appreciation that Rahim spoke of (INT060222) as part of the ukarimu/*generosity* I consistently receive from the department, SUA, and Tanzanians as a whole. Interestingly, Kajani once defined ukarimu for me as "more than kindness," (PRJ042722) and I have felt it as an invitation of sorts into a social contract; I help you and you help me, and we commit to doing this whenever, however, and for however long we are able. However, I am less and less able to see these relations as divorced from the colonial contexts which brought us into contact in the first place, and those ghosts continue to linger beside us.

Unsettled Curiosity: "Kufukuwa makaburi/To dig up graves"

While my colleagues' comments and reassurances via a discourse of interdependence did feel validating (*we are collaborating, we are contributing what we have for the good of the group, and we*

are *mutually* benefitting), they also frequently made me wonder about the circulation of discourses in English language teaching and coloniality and particularly race, such as whiteness as “neutral” (e.g. Flores and Rosa, 2015) and native speaker saviorism (e.g. Jenks and Lee, 2020) as legacies of the colonialism in which our work is steeped. As the next chapter will detail, I felt uncomfortable with these connections, and wanted to open a wider conversation with my colleagues about how they saw coloniality affecting our collaboration. However, mentioning coloniality or decoloniality, or trying to break out of entrenched roles of researcher and researched seemed to spark tension, as seen in my colleagues’ struggle to act as researchers simultaneous to participants. On a microlevel, I believe this could also apply to the story of Tabasamu at the beginning of this chapter; he did not want to choose a name for himself despite me offering it to him as an opportunity for decolonial agency, and he called me out when I tried to smooth the edges of the hierarchy – “*you’re still pulling me to choose.*” All of this seems to point to underlying tensions and deeply-held notions that are murkier and muckier than we were able to articulate, though we did try.

A major downside of the discourse of interdependence that runs through my colleagues’ sense-making of our collaboration is that it seems to gloss over coloniality and racialized and gendered hierarchies. It follows that likewise, the effects or even presence of racial dynamics were downplayed as well in my conversations with colleagues. Interestingly, while both colleagues and I often positioned ourselves as “critical,” espousing ideas such as critiques of native speakerism (Kajani INT042722, Robinson INT042922) and teacher-centered pedagogy (Mkude GM052322) or the relevance of Ngũgĩ’s *Decolonizing the Mind* (1986) to my dissertation project (Makamba INT042822), colleagues did not directly express connections between these concepts and our own working relationship. It is not clear if this was because colleagues did not perceive connections or if they were simply reluctant to discuss them with me, but positioning ourselves as “critical” and able to see the bigger picture doesn’t preclude us from reinforcing those same dynamics. What is clear is that colleagues seemed to have mixed

opinions on the relevance of coloniality to our collaboration. When I initially presented an overview of my dissertation project for the department and wider SUA community, the responses of department members in attendance questioned the presence of coloniality in as a key concept in my dissertation work; for example, during the Q&A session after the presentation had ended, Robinson commented that he did not “see [coloniality] as the major or main theme” and concluded, “I think I would suggest even to remove if possible to remain with that main theme that you found” referring to collaboration and large class sizes and thereby forgoing coloniality as a foundational notion in my work (GM040622). Mkude followed up, adding, “Yeah, it is the question I wanted to ask you. Why should you associate identity with colonialism?” Zawadi continued this line of inquiry immediately after, asking, “[...] what do you mean when you are referring to the identities?” commenting, “our identities are clear, we are identified by our... the language speak, the race, some sort like that... [and] we teach people of the same identity,” seemingly likewise perplexed about the relevance of interrogating our identities and especially as a function of colonial power.

I decided to follow up on this skepticism around the relevance of coloniality further in interviews, both intrigued to learn more about their ideas but also curious about how the social context of presentation Q&A had possibly affected my colleagues’ reactions. Indeed, some of the confusion may have been due to terminology; Makamba commented during my initial presentation that perhaps “imperialism” was a more familiar term than “coloniality” in the Tanzanian context (GM040622), also offering “globalization” as another alternative in his follow up interview (INT042822). Additionally, other colleagues suggested “neocolonialism” (Kajani, INT042722; Zawadi, INT050622) or “capitalist” (Kajani INT042722) in order to express the idea of the ongoing global imbalance of power. In general, however, colleagues seemed to downplay the significance of coloniality and its related concepts as a factor affecting the professional relationships between me and department members. When interviewing Chupaki, for example, after he affirmed the flexibility of specific terminology around the concept, I

asked, perhaps too directly, “Do you think that colonialism affects the working relationships that we have?” His response voiced a nonchalant ambivalence:

**Well... I don't know, but I guess it's okay with me, the colonialism, yeah.** Historically, probably when we were taught in secondary schools that we were used to the term colonialism, you know that time, that period during, you know, the time when our forefathers were actually taken as slaves to wherever, to Asia, so probably we are thinking of that period. Okay, yeah.

**But for you, because you are looking at the situation now, the thinking perceptions, I guess there is no problem.** (Chupaki INT050922)

He seemed generally uncomfortable in this section of our interview, pausing and backtracking often, suggesting reluctance while trying to accommodate me as much as possible. He went on to reference a course he had taken for his master's degree at a Tanzanian university that discussed “linguistic imperialism,” which he defined as

[...] a kind of... **indirect, probably, colonialism that you are forced to think, you know, to believe that other people's ideas maybe are better than yours.** If you speak, for example, Kiswahili in the classroom, then you're not educated [...] So, **this time you are not, I don't know, enslaved. You're not taken somewhere, but it's in the way of thinking** that, well, if you speak like this, then you're civilized. If you speak like that, you're not civilized (Chupaki INT050922)

In this way, it was clear that he was familiar with the terminology and broader concept of ongoing colonial mentalities, especially with regards to language and in the African context (Ngũgĩ, 1986; Phillipson, 1992). After explaining his understanding, however, Chupaki was careful to qualify that the course in which such concepts were discussed “has a lot of debates because even the authors themselves were debating that this is not it, this is not that. You see?” (INT050922) as if to signal an ongoing uncertainty or a personal reticence towards taking up these ideas or expressing them to me as

directly related to our current collaboration. It makes sense that my colleagues would want to avoid directly discussing concepts such as coloniality with me, a racially coded colonizer, either out of distrust or fear of offending me. As an interviewer, I felt the tension of these moments, wanting to both respect the interviewee's felt boundaries but also wanting more.

On the more extreme end, some colleagues clearly expressed that coloniality and its related terms was indeed a sensitive topic and that my bringing it up could arouse suspicion. Put more bluntly, Kajani stated in his interview that speaking of colonialism was akin to "digging up graves":

[...] if I take my stance, you know, **talking of colonialism is something past. So, why should you be interested with the past?** Are you trying to, in Swahili we would say **kufukuwa makaburi [...]** **Dig up the grave. So, why are you interested with colonialism? Are you trying to look up with the new way of colonizing us?** So, looking at it... but reading the attribute, you are not interested with colonialism, but you are thinking of how this thing affects the collaboration. And that's why I said **maybe to be in a better chapter, just use a different term that is not going to fukuwa makaburi** (laughs). (INT042722)

As Kajani vividly illustrated, bringing up the dark past is by nature unsettling. When the conversation is initiated by someone like me, there is an added, felt layer of the potential to recolonize, or "trying to look up a new way of colonizing [the Other]." Kajani suggested a shift in vocabulary, echoing the "linguistic gymnastics" performed by Rahim to navigate the politics of decoloniality in my research permit application (FN033022), but my experiences in similar discussions make me wonder if the key to opening up these types of conversations between us, about us is as simple as language use. In other cases, colleagues in interviews openly and vibrantly discussed the connections between collaboration and coloniality (or neocolonialism) on a larger scale such as Tanzania's macroeconomic policies and the politics of development funding (Zawadi INT050622; Makamba INT042822; Kajani INT042722). However, there seemed to be a general reluctance to connect ideas of coloniality to our present collaboration, and

I wondered if coloniality might be easier for colleagues to see or discuss at the macro, abstract level versus the micro, more personally implicating level. This pattern speaks to the inherent challenges in cultivating open conversation around these issues on cross-cultural collaborations; though we positioned ourselves as informed scholars of critical theory, we are not precluded from complicity in our silences.

As both researcher and colleague, I struggled with how much to push against this felt boundary given my own ever-present convictions and desire to uproot colonial ideologies. After sensing this boundary in multiple third round interviews, I decided to broach it more explicitly with Tabasamu (INT051222). As we discussed my recent anointment as “PI” in our project, I vented some of my related concerns that as a “white person” and “outsider” who is also “the only woman” in the department, I was uncomfortable with the authority the role lent me and what that power meant in the context of “colonialism.” Tabasamu listened and acknowledged my concerns, saying they “made sense,” but then went on to suggest that we may think differently about identity. He agreed that it was “good behavior” for me to be “feeling, thinking, and analyzing” those specific factors, but that he himself “doesn’t think” about those as issues. As he explained,

I am not thinking about ‘the only woman,’ **I don’t think about colonialism**, and I’m not thinking about ‘outsider.’ **I do realize sometimes, we don’t have these things.** For example, **even in my mind, I don’t think about anything that (laughing)** How? ‘Because I have a wife, I have a..’ There’s no way I will say, ‘I don’t say this because’ - **there are those stereotypes that we have sometimes, but not everywhere that you can...** For me, what I see is you are very perfect. Why? Because you are the one which started drafting it. And that is a very good thing [...] There is nothing like the issue which is... I know that you have a lot that you can lead me. **You have a lot to lead me, but because of color, not because of outsider, no. But you have**

**that ability.** And what you are talking about, is something. There is something. **But also I have also something.** (Tabasamu, INT051222)

He went on to assert his own authority on knowledge related to Kiswahili and the context of our research project, again positioning himself as “expert” and “connected to resources” to illustrate that he “also has something,” and in this way countered my concerns about a power imbalance. While he seemed to acknowledge the validity of my apprehensions about identity-based power arising from ongoing colonial mentalities, he countered by asserting his own interrelated power and our resulting interdependence in contributing in our own ways to our shared work. In this way, his discourse of interdependence neutralized my discourse of coloniality, suggesting that that while the concept of coloniality was important to me, such framing was not necessarily important to my Tanzanian colleagues in terms of sense-making of our experiences of collaboration. At the same time, in retrospect, I am struck by just how much we were negotiating in this one moment: his role, my role, the role and very concept of identity vis a vis power. This is just one exchange which demonstrates the highly complex and persistently active nature of our negotiation of shared discourses of sense-making, with cracks forming in our own boundary walls which have not yet crumbled. Tabasamu’s simultaneous positioning of me as “perfect” with “ability” and “a lot” with which I can “lead” him while insisting this has nothing to do with “color” in fact reaffirms my concerns that I will lay out in Chapter 5, that my presence and role as leader reinforces the neocolonial ideology that “Western whiteness remains a signifier of expertise, whether real or perceived,” (Pailey, 2020) and leaving these perceptions unacknowledged reifies their power.

Similarly, discourses around English and race were generally resisted by my colleagues and rarely taken up openly in conversation with me, such as when Kajani had asserted definitively that race did not matter in my visibility for the department (INT042722). This general reluctance was confirmed by Zawadi in an interview which stood out to me for its conversely open discussion of race. When I remarked that the open conversation we were having was rare, he explained that in Tanzania, “the issue

of race is [...] not given priority.” (INT050622) When I inquired about why, he responded, “... we live as one community though we have different tribes [...] we live as one. So, race, we don't leave it as something we should consider, no.” This response seemed to resonate with Rahim’s earlier remarks in a first-round interview (INT041321) that that Tanzanians in general don’t think about race because of the influence of Ujamaa (Kiswahili, meaning “familyhood”) policies enacted by post-independence president Nyerere that sought to cultivate national unity and cultural cohesion, which may fuel social pressure to downplay racial and ethnic difference in the name of national unity. In his perception, specific identity factors such as gender, race of class, “are, to a great extent, played down” because “any signs or any show, any demonstration of such distinctions may really invite [...] negative reactions from people” (INT041321) such as being disliked or seen as not “approachable” by the wider community. He was insistent that this was not a matter of differences not existing, but rather a social preference, especially among those in positions of power, to “always want to be part and parcel of the people. They want to mix, they want to interact, and they want to tell everybody else that, okay despite their riches, despite their positions, they are just like anybody else” (INT041321). Essentially, he seemed to suggest a social reality in which discussions around social difference such as race can be divisive and uncomfortable and are thus avoided. In his final interview, Kajani (INT111622) went even further to suggest that it would be “decolonizing” to purposefully not use labels of identity, such as those attached to race, because, as he stated,

...that’s what your study is all about, decolonizing this mentality. Now, **you can’t decolonize the mentality if you put those mentality in practice** [...] You can’t eliminate them just by exposing them. To me, you kill them. Kill those elements of superiority, inferiority. **Kill those racist terms so that you match together** [...] **Just ignore them.** Why should I call you mzungu, for example? If we are all teachers, why can’t I call you mwalimu? Calling you mzungu, I draw attention on it. What’s so special with that, you know?

As he noted, it is possible that simply using terms about race may seem “racist,” a theme that seemed salient in my final round of interviews in which I inquired about our noted lack of discussion about race. Kajani’s comments align with the argument that a discursive colorblindness may provide an avenue to “kill those racist terms” in favor of emphasizing social similarities rather than difference. While I personally do not agree with the ethos of “just ignoring” social differences, I see how Kajani’s words may be resonant with my own urge to move beyond categories of identity rooted in oppression (Varghese et al., 2016) to purposefully seeking other ways of being.

However, importantly, in addition to a cultural preference for cohesion, Zawadi added another reason for avoidance of open acknowledgement of race: ongoing white supremacy. As he expounded, “But second, it is because due to this foundation and due to colonial mentality, when you are from the other race in Tanzania, you get cooperation. You get cooperation, yeah, you get cooperation.” (INT050622). He then explained that whiteness is associated with a “higher position,” that “this race is financially strong, technologically strong [...] well off,” explicitly positioning me as part of that racial group by punctuating, “Your race is associated with that perception.” He had been unambiguous earlier in the conversation about these perceptions as a function of coloniality, stating that when Tanzanians use the word *mzungu* (white foreigner) “what is in the mind is that is someone who is in a higher stage of life. Yeah, in a higher stage. That coloniality, that mindset is still there.” (Zawadi INT050622) In this way, he linked the colorblind rhetoric of Ujamaa-inspired Tanzania society with ongoing white supremacy as a legacy of colonial power, drawing connections between race and social inequalities still present today. This acknowledgement was a marked contrast to the more subtle yet nagging currents of white supremacy I perceived in notions of me as a “native speaker” (e.g., Robinson INT051222; Mkude INT042422) or PI and “leader” (e.g., Tabasamu INT051222), as I will delve into in Chapter 5. My questioning about the role of race in these perceptions often yielded couching in talk of nationality, such as Robinson explaining that his definition of “native speaker” was someone from the U.S. or U.K., rather

than acknowledgement of whiteness as expertise or nativeness (Pailey, 2020; Ruecker & Ives, 2015).

Rare moments of openness, such as Mkude intimating that Blackness affecting students' perception of his legitimacy in teaching (INT032021), suggest that some colleagues may perceive the racialization of language and language teaching but are nonetheless reluctant to apply this analysis to our collaboration, or discuss it, or discuss it with me.

While limited, additional data may suggest that colleagues could be drawing on additional discourses present in English Language teaching, such as discourses of "development" in emphasizing the need to teach English in order for students to procure jobs (e.g. Chupaki INT050922; Phillipson, 1992) or discourses of neoliberalism in higher education which emphasize competition and students as customers (Rahim INT060222; Fairclough, 1995) in order to make sense of their identities as teachers and co-collaborators. Admittedly, I had not asked after these discourses as much as I had inquired about race and coloniality due to my own convictions that coloniality and race as a main mechanism of coloniality continue to form the bedrock of the fields of English language teaching (Motha, 2014) as well as much of Global North-South collaboration under the auspices of progress and assistance (Pailey, 2020).

The absence, or in some cases subsuming, of discourses of coloniality by my colleagues' silence, reluctance, or discourse of interdependence is worthy of increased attention. Our shared aversion to openly discussing connections between coloniality and our collaboration is troubling because postcolonial theory reminds us that the role of coloniality and race specifically is often obscured (Spivak, 1988), and dominant ideology is often naturalized, normalized via discourse to maintain its power (Fairclough, 1995). In English language teaching, this reinforcing of obscurity can leave drivers of white supremacy such as nativeness, expertise, and saviorism unchecked and unchallenged (Flores and Rosa, 2015; Jenks and Lee, 2020; Motha, 2014; Ruecker and Ives, 2015). In these cases, a discourse of interdependence could function as colorblindness, which reinforces racial hierarchies because it allows

the discriminatory effects of racism to continue while whiteness becomes coded as “neutral” or “normal” with power fortified by silence and denial (e.g., DiAngelo, 2018; Flores and Rosa, 2015). As astutely noted by Trent (2016), “an approach to teacher relations based on compromise and accommodation” (p. 316), as he noticed in his study of collaboration between “native” and “local” teachers in Hong Kong, does nothing to challenge or change the power relations which uphold colonial logics. He concludes by stating that similar studies must “[acknowledge] the role of conflict and contestation in identity construction” and “make conflict more visible” (citing Foucault, p. 316) in order to chart a path forward.

At the same time, I feel torn. I do not wish to provoke conflict with my colleagues, and I want to take their opinions and experiences seriously. I see the converse potential to enact coloniality by disregarding their perspectives and assuming that mine is the only enlightened and rational way of the world, naturalizing my own gaze and perspectives as knowledge (Said, 1978). And yet, I have a sneaking suspicion that there is just a lot left unsaid, much more to say. I wonder if we will ever have those conversations or just continue inching towards the edges but respecting the established boundaries between us and retreating back into the colonial shadows.

#### Conclusion: “It’s not the end of the story”

On my last day on campus before departing Morogoro in June, I sat interviewing Rahim in the language center (INT060222). We were discussing different notions of collaboration, and I remarked on this saying, “I’m aware that I think I came here with certain expectations, you know, of like, we work together, we’re horizontal, we’re on the same level [...] so, it’s interesting to have that be changed a bit?” His response encouraged me to take a more dynamic view of collaboration, as he asserted,

... it's all about what roles, **the balance people need to play to maintain the balance. It's not really about duplicating activities.** Like if you do this, and I do that, same thing maybe – ah, no. It’s about perhaps **due to your positional nature, your best fit is to do this. My position, I’m**

**best fit to do this. That still is collaborative work. It's still a collaborative work.** If you come to my class and observe my class, I'm collaborating. This is also what you know, it puts the sense of what research is all about. **There's no research of one person, by the way.** You see, research normally involves many people, but it's all about their contributions, and how do you acknowledge their contributions? [...] it seemed maybe that a lot of activity perhaps is at a preliminary stage, okay, you are most fitted, but **it's not the end of the story. This thing continues.** (INT060222)

He reminded me that our relationship is ongoing and will likely continue after this point in time. For the past seven years and counting, we have been connected in some capacity, near or far, building on our interactions and offering what we have in order to get what we need at that time. He reminded me of the undeniable interdependence between us and the need to continually re-consider my own perspectives and assessments. Towards the end of the interview, he cautioned me,

So, don't find it, or **don't see that, you know, this collaboration is lopsided in the sense that, okay, is one side doing neither thing, no. It's not about that.** It's about, okay, roles distribution seems to be **limited by certain realities**, including being interested parties in the study itself. (INT060222)

In effect, Rahim reminded me that working together is a true labor, an act of co-laboring (Vavrus and Bartlett, 2013), and I would do well to adjust my expectations: what if our collaboration is more about equity than equality, more of a long game, a matter of who fits what role best at the time, given who they are? I can bring my own ideals, but those must be adjusted for the realities; for example, if I expected a more horizontal relationship, that may not have been possible due to our small number, our research design, the needs to keep certain data confidential, and other constraints he mentioned. In many ways, his ideas echo an Ubuntu research ethic (Chilisa, 2020), reflecting many elements of the

overarching discourse of collaboration through a lens of interdependence: respond to the phenomenological moment, think bigger picture, respect self and Other. While I am still troubled by the ways in which these values can potentially reinforce the colonial patterns I wish to unsettle, my experiences in this way encourage me to see myself as part of a community rather than a self-reliant researcher, graduate student, or colleague; “There is no research of one person” (Rahim, INT060222). I am called into an *identity-in-community*, an identity that is nonetheless shifting, responding moment by moment.

## Chapter 5: Analysis: Focus on Self

Renee: Should I be the one to give the tasks?

Tabasamu: You are the one.

Renee: Me, I'm the one?

Tabasamu: Yeah.

Renee: Why, why?

Tabasamu: (whispering) *P.I.*

Renee: *P.I.*?

Tabasamu: Yeah. You are the one.

(Tabasamu INT051222)

Renee: Yeah, [the role of PI is] something that I struggle with because on one hand, I want to listen to the group and to see what people have to say. (Call to prayer in the background) and I myself, my personality, I'm not comfortable with leading, but also, I want to be conscious of, you know, the power that I could have in the group as a native speaker, or perhaps as a mzungu or a white person, you know? I don't want to be telling everyone 'you do this, you do this, you do this.' However, sometimes I wonder if that creates some confusion. Like if I should be acting as a leader more strongly. So I wanted to get your insight on that.

Mkude: To me, I don't see that to be a problem, and you shouldn't worry of doing it because any activity is done, what is done by more than two people, it must be somebody who directs that this should be done this way, this should be done this day. Yeah, I think that is okay. Yeah. So, you are, as our peer, *principal investigator* in this research.

(Mkude INT042522)

As the interactions above intone, the role that became available to me in the project I shared with my colleagues was that of *Principal Investigator (PI)*, and this chapter focuses on how I negotiated this role, as well as my ambivalence around it, throughout the course of our collaboration. It details the discursive co-construction of my positionings as *benevolent giver*, *well-resourced*, and *foreigner who knows* which served to make sense of the PI role for myself and my colleagues. Examining these positionings together draws troubling allusions to the literary figure of Lady Bountiful, a white woman teacher or missionary whose work furthers the interests of the imperial project. The connections between my positionings as PI and the archetype of Lady Bountiful reinforce ongoing coloniality in our collaboration in English language teaching, and recognizing these connections as well as the complexity around considering gendered relations as also racialized provoked an internal struggle for me which in turn complicated the process of our collaboration. In negotiating the role of PI, however, I also drew on a discourse of interdependence by aiming for Ubuntu research ethic which centers relationality and consensus and simultaneously served to resist coloniality in our collaboration, and my negotiation of the PI role in this vein ultimately provides an alternative framing for identity, *identity-in community*, made possible by our collaboration. While embracing a discourse of interdependence detrimentally glosses over racial and gendered power dynamics as well as the complexities of studying these intersectionally and responsibly and raises concerns about theoretical appropriation for colonizer gain, continued grappling with these ideas underscores the generativity of *identity-in-community* towards decolonizing collaborative relationships.

### Part 1: Positionings

In this section, I, detail the positionings made available to me in the course of our collaboration:

*benevolent giver*, *well-resourced*, and *foreigner who knows* which served to make sense of my role as PI in our collaboration. I then turn to the allegory of Lady Bountiful to analyze how these positionings contribute to ongoing coloniality perpetuated at the intersection of whiteness and femininity. Along the

way, I also note important points of resistance and interconnection to highlight the overall co-constructedness of our identities as well as the tensions within this process. I also hint at the internal struggle that awareness of my contributions to ongoing coloniality by virtue of the Lady Bountiful archetype provoked for me, the effects of which on our collaboration will be explored more fully in Part II.

Introduction: “Why are you running away from helping us?”

It’s afternoon in late May in Morogoro, and I’m very hot and sweaty (PRJ052422). I’m walking with my colleague Chupaki down the major road through the main SUA campus, propped up against a background of lush tropical mountains and swarming with students, *boda* motorbikes, and three-wheeled *bajajs* that beep and vie for my fading capacity to pay attention. Chupaki is striding excitedly next to me, talking fervently about the class of approximately 100 students I have just taught in a sweltering lecture hall (“It’ll be good for your experience,” my colleagues had said, referring to our shared research on teaching large class sizes as well as my own dissertation research). Chupaki was assigned to accompany me as a sort of handler, which I appreciated more later during class as he rustled up some whiteboard markers and changed the microphone batteries when sound quality was rough and crackly, which was often.

This was the second class of mine that he attended in such a capacity, and both times he introduced me in glowing terms that made me uncomfortable. He referred to me as “Dr. Renee” (not true, yet), and branded me as “the best” and “an expert” and boasted about how I wrote the Communication Skills I book, reminding students that they took that course in the past. He added that I am helping to make sure that SUA’s curriculum “reaches international standards,” all of which has made me feel gross and over-hyped. I felt like a lion in a circus, made to seem more powerful and impressive by the boasts of a carnival barker, only to be let loose from the cage and expected to perform but feeling far less fierce than advertised.

As we trudge along under the jua kali (*fierce sun*), he is again extolling how it was great for the students to have a class with a “native speaker,” because “many of us” hope to study “internationally,” and so when I teach, students can see if they can follow the lesson, understand my speaking, and so on. I flash back to an interview a few weeks ago in which Mkude commented that “native speakers” are useful as teachers here because colleagues in the department hope the students will study abroad, so they need to have exposure to “native-like” language (INT042522). I also flash back to readings such as Jenks and Lee (2020) and Canagarajah (1999) and similar discussions in my graduate classes which have pushed back against the concept of native speaker expertise, acknowledging it as rooted in colonial practices and white supremacist ideologies that perpetuate inequity in English language teaching.

In the moment, I try to resist Chupaki’s accolades, but don’t know what to say exactly; I’m so hot, and my brain is melting out my ears in my post-teaching haze as we weave our way down the busy, noisy, dusty road. My resistance eeks out in some non-specific, skeptical sounding noises: “Well... I’m not sure about that... about the idea of a native speaker...” He carries on to say that it was good for students to have exposure to my “international” style of teaching that is more aligned with “international standards.” I respond that I’m not sure the idea of “international standards” is correct, and often, what is considered “best” just means that it was developed in the “West,” and it may not work for the context here, as when communicative language teaching clashing with the emphasis on exams here at SUA, echoing complaints I’ve heard from colleagues who have said that if students know what will be on the test and what won’t, they are not motivated to participate in activities. Chupaki retorts that, then I should help the department to improve their assessments, and I demure, “Well, I know that there are many complexities here, and the university may have certain constraints...” Then he shoots back heatedly, “**Why are you running away from helping us with assessment?**” The directness, and aptness, hits me, almost stopping me in my tracks.

“Because I’m not an expert in the context here,” I sputter. “When I teach writing, I teach, like, 23 students, so the way I assess them is very different.” I continue haltingly, conversationally grasping at rubrics as a possible tool which colleagues have mentioned to me as helpful, but we have reached the point in the road where I am to continue in one direction and he in another, so our conversation comes to an abrupt end. I say I will come see him in the language center tomorrow, and I intend to, to follow up on this idea of me “running away from helping” them.

I can see it, after all – my own reluctance to take on the position of expert, critic, knower of what’s best and how to do it could be perceived by my colleagues as “running away.” From what, though? From expectations, responsibilities, unspoken promises unfulfilled? I want to explain myself more, that people like me (nice, white, from the Global North) taking those roles of expert or enlightened critic is part of the problem in my view. I want to ask if that ever came up in the masters class he talked about, the critical one that talked about the politics and coloniality of English (INT050922). I want to ask more about his idea of my “running away” and how that affects him/the department, how it reads to them.

When I do follow up after a group meeting a few weeks later, as colleagues are filtering out of the room, I ask Chupaki what he meant by his comments about me “running away.” (FN060122) He says he “just meant we have a lot to learn from you” and reiterates that the department is still using the Communication Skills I and II curriculum “that was your work.” Again I attempt to resist: it was *our* work, we did it *together*, and I’m *not* an expert. “You are,” he insists. I’m up against another wall, it seems, and it won’t budge, so I let it go for now.

The Role of PI: “I can do that, yeah.”

As discussed in the previous chapter, my explicit naming as *Principal Investigator* (PI) of our shared research project came as somewhat of a surprise to me. Analysis of key documents and artifacts (KDA), group meetings (GM), interviews (INT), field notes (FN), and my personal research journal (PRJ)

suggests that this identity was at first subtly and then explicitly co-constructed through the words and actions of myself and my colleagues. In fact, it was not until the fourth group meeting I had with my colleagues (our second in person, taking place on my first trip to Tanzania) and after almost an hour into the meeting that Robinson first mentioned the term *PI* (GM041422). As we were discussing the idea of conducting a focus group of instructors for our collaborative research project on the teaching of large classes, he invoked the idea as Rahim and Mkude chimed in:

Robinson: I think for us to set [a list of focus group questions], we need to be very well conversant, maybe, aware of what we are writing about, and what are the major questions that we want to answer in this work. I think the, the, do we say... **PI**? The **PI**, eh? The **PI** should help this, the **PI**-

Rahim:-**Principal Investigator**-

Robinson: (laughing) -the **PI** has a lot about the feeling-

Rahim:-this is what I was-

Robinson: -the planning, plus whatever. I think **PI should guide us**, building the - we cannot just, we come here, the focus is that we focus on instructors. That is one. But the **PI will set questions**, of which we do not know right now. Once we know the questions, we are doing to manipulate the answers-

Mkude: -that's what I said-

Robinson spoke to the desire for an overarching figure, a person who would “guide” the research and perform the labor of planning the focus group and setting the questions as well as informing the group members so that they may be “conversant” in their role as co-researchers. Immediate agreements from Rahim and Mkude indicate that they, too, had sensed this need in our project and had voiced it prior in

perhaps more subtle ways. On my side in this moment, I was trying to follow the discussion and process what my colleagues were implying while taking field notes as part of my data collection, the constant dance of participant observation, when Rahim turned to me and pointedly offered the task of drafting focus group questions, which I automatically accepted.

Renee: -ok ok, I see-

Robinson: -the PI-

Rahim: -So, yeah, you, **will you set those questions for focus group discussion?**

Renee: **I can do that, yeah.** Yes.

In this moment, I believe I was acting on impulse, my reflex to say “yes” when people ask me to do things. I immediately agreed to the task at hand saying, “I can do that, yeah,” taking on the *labor* of the role while slowly, simultaneously realizing that the labor seemed to come with a title, “*PI*,” that my colleagues were now formally calling into existence. In retrospect, it may have seemed like I was also taking on the role of PI in this moment, despite my ongoing intention to avoid any form of a leadership role.

The title of “PI” came with an authority that I did not want and had tried to avoid from the start of our project, and throughout our collaboration I expressed ongoing ambivalence towards taking on a leadership role. In my view, someone like me occupying such a role would signify and enact longstanding patterns of colonialism in which white foreigners from the Global North occupy positions of authority. These patterns are still prevalent today in international development (e.g. Pailey, 2020) as well as North-South “partnerships” in education and other fields which continue to place individuals from colonizer nations into positions of power and influence (e.g. Omanga and Mainye, 2019; Kumi & Kamruzzaman, 2021) Whether through presumed expertise seen as inherent in whiteness (Pailey, 2020), funding schemes which perpetuate dependence (Grieve and Mitchell, 2020; Ishengoma, 2017; Menashy,

2019), or monitoring and evaluation structures that continue to privilege the epistemologies of the Global North (Samoff and Bidemi 2004; Thörn, 2016), formerly colonized nations often exist in “partnerships” as equal partners in name only. Such patterns speak to ongoing coloniality in many international collaborations which can manifest on the ground, for example, between individuals coded as “native-speaking” and “non-native speaking” English teachers in which power and privilege reside with individuals aligned with whiteness and Global North interests (Trent, 2012).

By contrast, I sought to structure my own dissertation research from a consciously decolonizing stance that would seek and uphold alternate ways of knowing and being (e.g., Santos, 2018), striving for more equitable relationships between researcher and researched that could challenge longstanding assumptions of authority of Global North perspectives on identity, English language teaching, and collaboration. While I could not expect unreasonable levels of participation from my colleagues considering the demands of their own lives (Horner, 2002), I had invited them as *co-collaborators* guided by principles of participatory design research (Bang and Vossoughi, 2016; Leavy, 2017). I saw myself as also co-collaborator, relating to my colleagues on a horizontal basis as co-constructors of our collaborative project goals and outcomes. However, as time went by, I realized this perhaps naïve, idealized vision of collaboration on an equal plane was not to be, that hierarchical power as a function of ongoing coloniality still structured our relationships whether I intended it to or not (e.g. Vakil et al., 2016), and at times my own words and actions such as readily agreeing to labor (“I can do that, yeah.”) undergirded my role as leader.

My identity as *Principal Investigator* was sealed at the end of Group Meeting 4. As the meeting was coming to a close, a few colleagues expressed a lack of clarity on how my dissertation research was integrated with our research project on large class sizes. I took the opportunity to explain that my dissertation research was about collaboration, and our collaborative research project was serving as the scene of my study as well as a measure of reciprocal benefit to the department. Rahim then moved to

close the meeting by thanking me for the explanation and explicitly linking me with my title as *PI*, stating:

Thank you very much, **PI, Renee**, for briefing us on your research agenda and then deliberating on the activities that we'll need to engage. Our roles, now, I think each one of us now, have a view of what they need to do. They will have to play those roles but of course, **your guidance will also be very, very pertinent** in terms of the kinds of things that you will need to find out.

(Rahim, GM041422)

In this way, he reiterated the idea of “guidance” that Robinson had mentioned beforehand insofar as guidance from me would be “very, very pertinent” in steering our research project as part and parcel of my individual dissertation research. It strikes me that perhaps the confluence of these two projects, and my role in spearheading the idea of a collaborative project in the first place as part of my dissertation, perhaps pre-positioned me as a leader of sorts, pushing an already established “agenda” that my colleagues saw themselves as merely joining up with.

What is clear is that my role as *Principal Investigator* was constantly negotiated throughout the course of our collaboration. As both I and my colleagues moved to make sense of this role for me, my own positionings as *benevolent giver*, *well-resourced*, and *foreigner who knows* served to justify and shape me as “PI” through discursive co-construction.

Benevolent Giver: “You wanted to do everything”

Looking back, my own positioning as a “benevolent giver,” primarily of labor in service of the department and occasionally of material resources such as money, served to make sense of my eventual role as PI of our shared project. This position was initiated by me from the inception of the project; I wanted my dissertation to benefit colleagues through a shared project, and crucially, I wanted them to know that I wanted them to benefit. Further, I was willing and able to give my labor and in service of our project and department needs as well as offer my own material resources in shows of generosity and

goodwill towards the extended SUA community. In turn, my positioning as “benevolent giver” seemed to lay the groundwork and alignment with my colleagues’ perception of a PI as the person who completes more tasks for the project such as visioning or “guidance,” organizing fellow researchers, and creating research instruments (e.g., Rahim GM041422; Tabasamu INT111522; Zawadi INT103122). My willingness to complete tasks as we worked together in a sense pre-positioned me for the role of PI. As Tabasamu pointed out in an interview, for example, when I chose to forge ahead and read for our literature review and then notify my colleagues that I had done this by sending them my reading notes, I signaled my suitability for the PI role. As he rationalized, “[...] you see a lot. And sometimes you have read maybe more than everyone [...] You have read a lot. So, there is something that you have, you should be the one to direct” (Tabasamu INT051222). In his mind, because I was already doing the work of a leader of a research project, it made sense that I should “direct” and be referred to as the PI. In this way, my willingness and actions to do labor for the project and my positioning in the PI role seems like a self-perpetuating cycle; as Zawadi stated, “[...] you should play more role as a PI. That’s why we call you a PI” (INT103122) which I interpreted as “you do more work, that’s why you’re PI/” Though I did not want the role of leader or a hierarchical structure to our work, our co-construction of myself as a “benevolent giver” of labor and resources may have positioned me otherwise.

From the beginning of our present collaboration, throughout initial group meetings and interviews, I frequently made it a point to express that I wanted the project to be directly or reciprocally beneficial to my colleagues. The idea of reciprocity was an important tenant for me to build into my project as a commitment to decolonizing Global North-South collaborative relationships in which Global North-aligned individuals and interests often receive more value than local, Global South “partners” (e.g., Ishengoma, 2017). However, listening to myself say this so many times in recordings of first and second round interviews makes me cringe a bit upon re-listening. For instance, as I told Kajani in our

second interview on Zoom (INT102521) before I was able to travel in person as we discussed the potential benefits of a shared research project on large classes,

Also, I want to make sure that whatever we do **will be directly beneficial to the members of the department** because at least for my own research, it's important that there is some level of reciprocity. **Like you're all being a part of my PhD research which I get benefit from, but I also want to make sure that the department and department members also derive some benefit from that.** So, I'm curious how that benefit appears, you know? (Renee, in Kajani INT102521)

It strikes me that when I emphasize my ideal of reciprocity, I'm performing the identity of a "benevolent giver" as someone who is willing and able to give of myself to my colleagues, and graciously extending them an opportunity to benefit makes me happy to do so. Looking back at other data, I notice I was often eager to serve the department, and I consciously, perhaps compulsively, looked for opportunities to contribute to this community. I was quick to insert myself, or claim tasks for myself, in our shared work. For example, in the second round of interviews, I repeatedly presented the literature review for our research project as something "I" could do, assuming and proclaiming I would do this work by myself. It seems this tendency developed early on, and I can see it explicitly in a conversation while I was talking with Robinson (INT101321), also via Zoom, in the first interview I conducted in the second round which sought to discuss and shape the shared research project with colleagues. I asked what methods he thought we should use for this project, and he said "**we** need to review previous studies" on the topic. I replied by claiming the task for me alone:

Yeah, a literature review is something that **I would be able to do from here, from the US. I may have access to certain sources that may not be available in Tanzania**, certain books, or certain things like that. **My university has a really good library**, but yes, I agree that there should be maybe a background on what other studies have been done in this area [...] (Renee, in Robinson INT101321)

In many ways, my positioning of myself as willing and able to complete the task Robinson mentioned makes sense in the context of discourses I've been embedded in and conscious of; I'm aware of the inequity of resources between myself and my colleagues, and I want to mobilize the resources at my disposal for the benefit of my colleagues, which will be further discussed in the next section. Also, at this time in October 2021, it was not clear if I would be able to travel to Tanzania in person due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and so I was also attentive to ways that we could complete a shared project in a hybrid fashion across distance, perhaps by completing separate tasks in our own locations. I also wanted to avoid expecting too much labor of my co-collaborators who have job and life responsibilities of their own (Horner, 2002) and are often expected to carry out "donkey work" at the behest of Global North "partners" (Kumi and Kamruzzaman, 2021). However, in retrospect, I see that my immediate impulse to take on this labor may foreclose opportunities for a more collaborative process. More concerningly, I can also see the connections between my documented tendencies to claim tasks for myself and a white supremacy-rooted culture of individualism or "a belief that you are responsible for and are qualified to solve problems on your own" (Okun, 2021). A more careful balancing between my own desires to not be complacent about inequities and a more thoughtful division of labor may be needed, and this may be a tension that white -identified collaborators need to be conscious of and responsible for in order to invite increased collaboration. At the same time, I can also see these tendencies of mine as a function of gender; I can see how as a woman, functioning in an all-male group, I may have been more likely to take on tasks or be expected to perform "cognitive labor" defined as "anticipating needs, identifying options for filling them, making decisions, and monitoring progress" often implicitly expected of women in households (Damingler, 2019) but extending into the workplace as well. Overall, these intersecting dimensions of race and gender in considerations around co-laboring point to the importance of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991) in identity-focused study as well as the complexities of doing so critically with an eye towards equity. My own awareness of the intersectionality

of my race and gender often precluded me from addressing gender more fully in this work, with my thoughts outlined more later in this chapter. Furthermore, my desires to enact decolonizing ways in research made it challenging for me to speculate or presume to know my colleagues motivations behind their words and actions as an all-knowing, white, colonial observer from the Global North (Said, 1978; Spivak, 1988) as if I was somehow more qualified than my colleagues in interpreting them, a struggle with my own positionality as researcher which is ongoing.

For their part, my colleagues both reinforced and resisted my positionings as a benevolent giver of labor towards our shared project. For example, colleagues came to expect certain types of labor of me, such as taking notes during group meetings and drafting emails to coordinate research activities (e.g., GM010622), which seem to fall into the category of gendered “cognitive labor” mentioned above. However, as illuminated in the previous chapter, colleagues also generally verbally encouraged an orientation towards interdependence which emphasized collaboration and sharing tasks at times. Picking up the task of literature review as an extended example, in the last interview of the second round, Mkude (INT110121) mentioned the idea of this a shared task, which at that time, I had not considered. I had asked if he thought three months was enough time to complete a shared research project, and he replied that it was, “provided that each one of us would have something to do before that time,” describing,

... before you come here in Tanzania, **we** can begin background activities like literature review, reviewing literature, and if **we** are four or three, **we** can each - **we can task each other to go and review literature**. Then after a certain set time, **we** agree to, I don't know, **we can share through Google Drive and then discuss together**. So, it's to **harmonize the three literature review that each one has brought**. (Mkude, INT110121)

Mkude cast the literature review and creation of tools for data collection as tasks which “we” could do collectively to “harmonize” the ideas of multiple colleagues into one document. In the interview, I

accepted this, and a similar sharing of the task of literature review as proposed by colleagues in a later group meeting (GM010622) as something “we” would all do, all contributing. My response in that meeting was to still claim a task for myself: I offered to create a shared Google document and folder for us to aid in the process (GM010622), which I later did and shared with the group via email. Despite agreeing to a collective approach, I still felt the need to contribute directly, publicly, by taking the lead and creating the structure for our work.

My own seeming need to be recognized as “benevolent giver” of labor was in ongoing tension with my colleagues’ continued drawing on a discourse of interdependence to negotiate their own roles for themselves as participant researchers, suggesting that we all contribute to our shared work. As detailed in the previous chapter, however, the offers that my colleagues made to share tasks such as our literature review did not seem to materialize, or at least not on the timeline we had agreed upon or that I was expecting. When I eased my own expectations of “doing all the work” and attempted to relax into my colleagues’ ontology of a more flexible approach to time and labor, I was all the more surprised when nothing was added to our shared document, and furthermore, when labor was then asked of me directly, or got “dumped” on me as I perceived it (PRJ041422) and as the “PI” role took shape (GM041422). I wonder about the extent to which I was more comfortable when I could control my contributions of labor rather than when I was expected or asked to do work on behalf of my colleagues. Perhaps the key was my agency in being able to demonstrate my own benevolence to complete tasks at my will, which continued happening despite my own ongoing concerns and shared conversations in interviews about a possible imbalance of labor between my colleagues and me.

In spite of feeling overwhelmed by working on our shared project as well as my own dissertation research as mentioned throughout my journal at this time, I continued to position myself as willing to take on more as a “benevolent giver” of labor. Towards the end of my first in-person visit, I more or less volunteered to write the abstracts for three presentations at two international conferences we were

later accepted at in order to present our shared research on large class sizes. As demonstrated in a group meeting shortly before I left, I positioned myself as not only willing but able to write a proposal on our behalf, saying, “I mean, that one [writing an abstract for TESOL as opposed to another conference] doesn’t stress me out too much. I’m not too worried about that one **because I’m more familiar with writing abstracts at this point, so it’s something that I can do more easily.**” (Renee, GM052322). I positioned myself as not only willing but also able to do tasks such as writing abstracts based on my knowledge and previous experience of doing so, and furthermore “not too stressed” about taking up this labor because of it. This moment demonstrates the considerable overlap between my positionings as “benevolent giver” willing to do labor but also “well-resourced” with linguistic capabilities and “foreigner who knows” about research and academic skills, which will be taken up later in this chapter.

My colleagues overall seemed to reinforce this idea of me as a benevolent giver of labor to benefit “us,” which fed into my eventual anointment as PI of the project. Rahim affirmed as much during our final interview (INT113022A), when I asked his thoughts about our division of labor throughout the project as a function of me being a “nice white lady,” concretized in the archetype of Lady Bountiful which will be discussed below. I asked Rahim if he perceived an imbalance in our work, to which he replied, “Yeah, because that takes you back to **being nice** (laughing). I guess if you wanted, I mean if you can, okay, look, can this be one, two, three. I think nobody would have said no.” Intrigued, I sought confirmation of his perceived connection between my benevolence and labor:

Renee: **So, because I am nice, I do more work?**

Rahim: **Yeah, yeah, yeah, you wanted to do everything (laughing).** But I wouldn't say that that was like, a preplanned, you know, schedule of activities that when you come, you must do one, two, three, uh-uh it wasn't. **It's just like the way you let it- and the way you thought that you could, you could- why not take it up and manage it?** I remember the time that **we asked you also to inquire on our behalf** regarding these proposals that we sent to these people to

send us these invitation letters and stuff like that. So, this is like, **this is your your, you know, that forthright approach of yours rather than planning.** It wasn't even in our plan, yeah, that you should do everything like... eh. (INT113022A)

He connected my "being nice" to "wanting to do everything," a manifestation of the "benevolent giver" of labor positioning that I had elucidated independently. It's possible that, in my presence, he was trying to frame his comments in kind or flattering terms as a function of "being nice" rather than other possibly more critical reasons why I "wanted to do everything." Resonant with my own thoughts about positioning myself as willing and able, he reflected that I "thought [I] could" do a lot of the work on our shared project, so in his words, "why not take it up and manage it?" He then referenced another task I completed (at the request of my colleagues, he notes) to contact the organizers of two U.S.-based conferences at which we had been accepted to present our large class sizes research and ask for letters of invitation for my colleagues to use in obtaining visas. I did this, and we received the letters by email shortly thereafter. What's interesting here is that he connects my *willingness* to do work with my colleagues' *asking* me to do work, as if because I have positioned myself as willing, this then invites the expectations or requests of others to do other work in the future, setting the scene for the imbalance that I was perceiving. It's likewise interesting that his comments could be interpreted as suggesting that if I find myself doing more work, it's the result of my own "forthright approach;" if I weren't so "nice," my colleagues wouldn't ask me, or as he stated earlier in this exchange "if [I] wanted" I could have assigned tasks to others more authoritatively and "nobody would have said no." In reflecting, however, I wonder if that is true. If I had instructed colleagues to complete duties for our project, would they have done them? Would they have magically found more time for our project, or respected my authority to tell them what to do?

I am reminded of how identity is a co-construction, that we cannot be *who we think we are* without the ever-present shadow of *who others think we are*. It seems our conversation sparked Rahim

to reflect on these co-constructed dynamics as well later in this same interview. He reasserted that “not everybody participated in the same way that they ought to be participating,” then wondered aloud, “I’m just imagining if it was a different person doing the same thing. Would the participation be the same? I’m just thinking.” (Rahim, INT113022A) His poignant questionings are thoughts I ponder as well, more aware than ever of how our senses of self are highly interrelated. For me, this point highlights the intertwined nature of Self and Other vis a vis positioning that was readily apparent throughout our co-laboring together. In this context, the interconnection between my benevolent willingness to take on labor and my colleagues’ expectations that I do so meant that I later had to re-negotiate the nature of my role of PI.

Additionally, as highlighted in the conversation with Robinson above, my benevolence also occasionally extended to giving material resources, such as articles I had library access to or money that I contribute to social functions. However, I was generally reluctant to offer materially to my colleagues because of my own complicated feelings around connections of material generosity to local conceptions of whiteness as tied to wealth and opportunity. While I often tried to resist being seen as wealthy because I do not see myself in that way in my home context, I could not help but see the glaring material disparities between the financial resources available to me versus my colleagues and the vast majority of people I interacted with in Morogoro. At times, I felt the need to redress those disparities or at least acknowledge them with action by contributing in small ways with money to my immediate communities such as for weddings or the births of colleagues’ children (e.g., PRJ050522) as other colleagues do so regularly.

However, it proved impossible to separate these acts of genuine material generosity on my part from the local, racialized expectations of financial benevolence by virtue of my whiteness. To illustrate, after a night out with Amani, Zawadi, and Tabasamu, I tried to inconspicuously pass money into Tabasamu's palm as we shook hands before I exited his car (PRJ101522). Because Tabasamu drove us in

his car, and I had heard many other Tanzanians express concern about rising gas prices as a consequence of Russia's ongoing invasion of Ukraine, I thought it polite and considerate to slip him 10,000 Tanzanian shilling-note (about 5 US dollars) for mafuta/gas in an unobtrusive way. Zawadi spied this apparently-not-so-secret exchange from the backseat and shouted exuberantly "mzunguuuu!" (*white foreigner*) as he and Amani laughed loudly in our ears. Tabasamu resisted lightly before accepting the bill deferentially, and I exited the car laughing to myself but feeling slightly uncomfortable. Later, I reflected in my journal (PRJ101522) that I was concerned I had fulfilled a well-worn stereotype of mzungus as rich and ostentatious, which hadn't previously occurred to me as a possible interpretation of my action and was not my intention. I had wanted to acknowledge Tabasamu's generosity in driving us around for the night and contribute back in a material way, as I knew I could. Ultimately, I resolved that I would rather be generous than stingy, and I knew such gestures could go a long way in terms of demonstrating good will and contribution to community. Being able to give generously, then, was my interrelated positioning as "well-resourced" with plenty to offer my colleagues and our collaboration, as the next section details.

Well-resourced: "Our mfuko (*pocket*) is here"

As in the examples above such as when talking with Robinson about methodology and my access to library materials (INT101321), I have also positioned myself as "well-resourced" and in possession of materials such as funding; professional resources such as publishing opportunities and time and energy for our shared project; and linguistic resources such as "native speaker English" which further underscored my overall role as PI of our project. I offered these resources likewise benevolently, positioning myself as willing and able to offer my colleagues what I thought they needed and corresponding with our co-constructed positioning of them as "in need," detailed in the previous chapter. As an example, when Mkude (INT110121) reiterated the idea of writing a book chapter as a desirable outcome of this research during our second interview on Zoom, I affirmed that other

colleagues had also mentioned this idea in their second-round interviews as well. I then took on the role of someone who could facilitate access to calls for book chapters by virtue of my own social and professional networks:

Yeah, **I will have to maybe do some research within my own networks** to see if there is a collection that we can be included in. I have never published a book chapter, but my understanding is that typically there is first the call for proposals, and then we respond. So, **I will have to keep my eyes open but also perhaps ask around if there are any current proposals** which can fit this topic. (Renee in Mkude INT110121)

I immediately assumed that I would “have to” find these opportunities for the group within my own resources, disregarding the possibility that my colleagues could also have social networks where calls for proposals would circulate. In this way, my self-positioning as “well-resourced” had the shadow effect of positioning my colleagues as “in need,” a need which I positioned myself as able and obligated to fill and which colleagues themselves both took up and resisted at different times throughout our collaboration. In this case, Mkude seemed to accept this positioning saying, “It’s alright,” before I then changed the subject to ask about the institutional expectations for him to publish. The interlocking nature of these two positionings again reinforces the interconnected nature of identities as formed in discourse as well as the ways in which my colleagues and I made sense of my eventual role as PI of our collaboration. Having and providing resources to the group lent me a type of power or authority in some senses that served to undergird my position as de facto leader or provider in our collaboration.

In alignment with my corresponding positioning as a “benevolent giver,” I also emphasized my resource of funding and thus, ability to share those resources for the benefit of the group. However, whereas I may have preferred to position myself as *connected to* financial resources by virtue of my own efforts, people in the Tanzanian context positioned me as *having* these resources as part of who I am. As an example, I wanted to organize a party at the end of my second visit to Tanzania as a way of thanking

my colleagues and department staff for their support of my research. I mentioned this idea throughout my final interviews with colleagues and made sure to mention that I had included a line in my budget for my fellowship to account for a party, emphasizing that this was not necessarily *my* money but money that I had benevolently planned ahead for (e.g., Kajani INT111622). Later, as I talked with the administrative assistant of the department and Minani to plan for this event, I noticed that I was being referred to as “mfuko wetu (*our pocket*),” which I took as a reference to the fact that I was footing the bill for the event and later confirmed with Minani (PRJ112822). This naming took me aback slightly, especially in the context which seemed to imply that my resources were endless, or simply a factor of who I am rather than the resources I had sought, planned, and applied for. As I later reflected in my journal,

I thought I was going to give [department staff member] my budget, but [they] seemed to be saying “any cost is ok because **our pocket is here**” (in Swahili). I am happy but also nervous – how much does a banquet for 15 people cost in TZ? What am I in for? Is there a way to ask for a ballpark figure? (PRJ112822)

I was concerned with the idea that “any cost is ok,” which seemed to imply that I had unlimited resources available whereas I had budgeted for a particular amount, and I left the meeting unclear on the actual amount of money I would be responsible for. I later confirmed the meaning of “our mfuko (*pocket*) is here” with Minani, who affirmed both my interpretation of the Swahili term as well as my positioning as such, a funder with resources to give (PRJ112822). He himself later suggested that I could “sponsor” him to study for a graduate degree in the U.S. because I had the money to do so (FN113022). Unsure if he was joking, I laughed and explained that no, as a PhD student myself, I did not have the funds to pay for my own tuition but rather worked for my university in exchange for tuition reimbursement and a stipend. In this way, it seemed that while I preferred to position myself as

*connected to* resources, my colleagues and others in our shared context preferred to position me as *having* said resources, and this came with a societal expectation to share.

Throughout my time in Tanzania, I frequently felt the tension between the real and imagined dimensions of being positioned as well-resourced; it is true that I have more economic means at my disposal than many Tanzanians will see in their lifetimes, and the financial disparities between us are tangible and undeniable. At the same time, my economic means have very different demands on them, so while I may have more money available to me, my cost of living is infinitely more in an affluent West coast U.S. city on a graduate student stipend, and the capitalistic structure of my society necessitates (and allows) that I save money in the event of a medical emergency or period of unemployment, for example, rather than rely on a social safety net as many of my colleagues might in Tanzania. In the end, my offer to pay for a party to thank the department was received very well as an act of “kindness” and admirable willingness to provide for the community of the department (e.g., Robinson INT110922; PRJ121522) as well as fraught proof of my possession of resources that funded it.

While some colleagues accepted the material and financial resources I benevolently offered, such as Tabasamu and the gas money in the previous section, at times, colleagues resisted my likewise imagined positioning of them as “in need” when I offered to share the material resources available to me, thereby complicating my role and self-imagined responsibilities incumbent in being well-resourced. For instance, as described in the previous chapter, Kajani pre-empted my offer kugawa (*give for free*) my digital voice recorder to the department for their own research uses, proclaiming that what I had paid for it was “not expensive” and that department had funds and could use them (PRJ052522). Similarly and even earlier in our process, when I mentioned to Makamba (INT112021) as he sat in a local café during our second interview via Zoom that I was thinking of compensating him and other colleagues for their internet usage to participate in this research and was unsure of how to ethically distribute money to participants. He acknowledged my idea but was direct about not *needing* reimbursement, saying “It’s

a good idea, but with such frequency, if the frequency would be like this, on my side, **I don't see the necessity** of paying back or paying us some money or paying me some money [...] **You don't have to think about that actually**" (Makamba, INT112021). He went on to reiterate that I did not have to "compensate" him because we did not have interviews frequently and left space for not knowing the needs of others or how they would respond to my offer but ultimately asserted that I did not "have to think about that" because he did not have that need I was imagining for him. This topic of compensation for internet use originated earlier in our conversation when I remarked on the seeming stability of the internet connection during our interview, to which he replied that he had purchased the "most expensive package" of internet which provided a better quality of connection. I had in effect implied that local internet connections were usually poor, and he countered by declaring his capability to secure better internet through having the money to pay for a higher bandwidth. I attempted *again* to position colleagues as in need of compensation, asserting I could provide for such costs, and again he refuted the need by saying that the infrequency of our interviews made that unnecessary. In the end, I responded with a final attempt to assert my own resources and benevolent, remarkably *insistent* generosity with them:

Okay, good to know. Yeah, I was also thinking that when I am there, it's a **lot easier to contribute, like paying for lunch, or chai, or other ways of giving back those resources**. Yeah, going to Black and White perhaps. (laughs) (Renee in Makamba INT112021)

I referenced "Black and White," a conspicuously named local establishment that is a café by day, dance club by night, and I did so consciously to refer to past conversations with Makamba where we had talked about our mutual enjoyment of nightlife. He then laughed in response, allowing the moment of connection I was seeking, before I directed the conversation "back to business" to discuss the practicalities of this research.

However, in this same conversation, I immediately returned to attempting to position colleagues as “in need,” this time by expressing concerns that colleagues were “busy” and did not have the time or capacity for this project whereas I had the resources of time and energy to spare (Makamba INT112021). Positioning myself as well-resourced in this way was a frequent co-constructed positioning of colleagues that served to bolster and justify my own role as P, as detailed in the previous chapter when colleagues justified our perceived imbalance of labor with the reality of their daily professional and social responsibilities. On my side, I reinforced their positioning of “busy” often, as in the second round of interviews when I repeatedly asked about what “capacity” the department had for taking on a research project. At that time, these concerns of mine were met with variations of yes, we are busy, but doing research is “part of our job” (Rahim, INT102721). I accepted this response at face value at the time, but even then, before being able to travel to Tanzania in person, I harbored uncertainty about how much labor my colleagues have space for, anticipating that I would do a bulk of the work as a result. However, these concerns vacillated with seeing myself as in a unique position with time and energy to available to serve the good of the department as “another pair of hands” who could “take work off of someone else’s plate.” (PRJ020421). By implicitly positioning myself as well-resourced with time and energy to spare while my colleagues were too “busy” also served to justify my colleagues’ perception of the role as PI as someone who takes on more labor for the benefit of the project (e.g., Tabasamu INT111522; Zawadi INT103122). It is worth mentioning, however, that my own resources of “extra” time and energy available for our project were somewhat true and also imagined, another fraught manifestation of co-constructed positioning; throughout our collaboration, I was also holding a great deal of responsibility as a PhD student and PI of my own dissertation research, research assistant and part-time instructor at my own university, and eventually, also de facto PI of our joint research project. I frequently vented to my journal about feeling overwhelmed, fatigued, and stressed about my own perceived *lack* of time and energy available for the increased workload that our shared project was

presenting. In the process of co-laboring, then, it seems colleagues and I were constantly negotiating and re-negotiating our imaginings of self and Other, our expectations of labor, and what equity would look and feel like for both parties.

While colleagues overall reinforced my positioning as well-resourced, their interview responses and actions interestingly suggested that participating in our shared project could also result in resources for themselves, such as funding for their own work in the future - a sort of aspirational benefit or investment in our collaboration as a means of future resources. While I pushed the ideal of our project as beneficial to colleagues at the time of speaking, as Rahim shared in our first group meeting, our work could become more beneficial in the future if the department could use it to “attract” relationships with “donors,” explaining “we usually tend to have [...] not just one stone, you throw, several stones and you know whichever stone which catches the bird that's, you know, and that's it.” (Rahim, GM060821)

Working with me, then, represented an opportunity to “throw several stones” and develop an increased repertoire of work with which to attract the attention of, assumedly, foreign donors such as aid agencies and other funders. Makamba echoed this sentiment in his second interview, after insisting that colleagues benefitting from our collaboration and potential publications to get “points” for promotion was not the only thing that mattered but also “whether internally or externally people are going to read our work,” stating, **“You never know. Maybe you can have someone who wanted to sponsor through the article.** So, that’s very important, apart from being rigid looking for points, but also can look for **the other side of the article.** That will be beneficial in that way.” (Makamba INT102121). In this way and others, colleagues demonstrated that our work, and I, by extension, served as a connection to potential future material resources or a means to their own ends.

This also extended to my undeniable and frequently mentioned possession of the linguistic resource of “native speaker English” by virtue of being perceived as a “native speaker” in the course of working with my colleagues. My colleagues commonly positioned me as a source of “correct” or desired

forms of English as a resource which they themselves did not have but, upon acquiring this linguistic resource, could use to accomplish their own goals. For example, in his first interview via Zoom when I asked if collaboration was a good topic to study, Robinson asserted that collaboration with “native speakers” as co-teachers was beneficial to address “pronunciation problems” stating “we collaborate in teaching non-native speakers, we **need one from your... native speaker to be part of the learning and teaching process.**” (INT032821) In effect, he implied that the teaching of English was not complete without the addition of a “native speaker” in order to provide the most effective learning experience for students, a theme that echoed in other conversations as well (e.g., Mkude INT042522). While some colleagues were conscious and critical of issues of “language superiority” arising from native speaker norms (e.g., Kajani INT042722), it seemed that my resource of “native speaker English” was seen as a benefit to colleagues who needed the approval or legitimacy that such a resource could offer them in order to progress towards their professional goals. As such, this positioning most commonly occurred in relation to my colleagues’ professional writing as when colleagues such as Mkude who asked me to “assist,” “**as a native speaker of the language**” looking for “language errors/mistakes or proofreading” in a final draft of his dissertation (PRJ081021) or Makamba who asked for asked for my “help” to “**remove all Kiswa-English**” from a research proposal for his own dissertation (PRJ030221). While these same colleagues discussed concepts such as “linguistic capital” and “imperialism” with me at different times in critical ways (e.g., Mkude in FN040622; Makamba INT042822), in this case they were seeking my perceived linguistic resources agentively as a means to their own ends. As time went by, I also received other similar requests such as from an acquaintance of another colleague and a student of Makamba’s to edit their articles for publication whose academic journals required sending their manuscripts to a “native speaker” for “language editing” (e.g., PRJ030121). In this way, it seemed that the value of my linguistic resource was spreading beyond my immediate network, and I was passed

around as a resource of my colleagues that might help others as well as my colleagues' resulting social standing in terms of contributing resources to their communities.

I attempted to resist the positioning of well-resourced with "native speaker English" in various ways, such as by providing writing feedback that eschewed simple grammatical correction and instead offered dialogical, constructive comments that engaged the content such as "I'm not sure of the meaning of this word. Are you emphasizing that [paraphrase of my understanding]? In that case, I would suggest [alternative words]." (PRJ081021) I also personalized my feedback as a way of dissociating from the larger identity of "native speaker" that I find problematic, for example, by commenting, "I wouldn't use [phrase from colleagues' writing]. I usually use [my own phrasing] (PRJ081021)," or even eschewing feedback altogether as when Mkude corrected typos in his first interview typed into WhatsApp and I typed back blithely, "Don't worry too much about typos. Your responses are clear to me." (Renee in Mkude INT032021). In these ways, I attempted to shift my constructed identity from all-knowing, language-purifying and accuracy-seeking "native speaker" to more of a supportive, curious reader/listener (e.g. PRJ081021) or further, self-righteous advocate, as when writing a critical letter to the editor of a journal that had requested a colleague's student have their article proofread by a "native speaker," and I respectfully informed them why I found their ideology problematic (PRJ112322). At the same time, in my journal, I also noted the emotional labor and fatiguing effects of these resistance efforts, such as providing in-depth dialogic feedback on writing versus "just correcting" (PRJ081021). The irony was that *this* is the type of feedback my colleagues actually requested: proofreading, removing Swahili-inflected debris, cutting away bits and pieces of their language to reveal a shape that (my) Western eyes could see. This is what they were telling me they needed, and yet I assumed I knew what was best for them, that it was up to me and my belabored comments to empower my colleagues as socially conscious professional writers, asserting my own knowledge and benevolence in allegedly empowering the Other.

Once I was in Tanzania and able to have in-person conversations with colleagues about the trend I was noticing of being positioned as well-resourced in terms of “native speaker English,” I sometimes brought up my discomfort around being seen as a “native speaker” and reinforcing the inherent linguistic and racial hierarchies; I mentioned these concerns as a further attempt to resist or at least open conversation to hear their perspectives. I even suggested to Mkude that perhaps the linguistic and racialized authority of “native speaker” status also underscored my supposed authority as PI, shown in the opening quotes of this chapter (Mkude INT044522). Colleagues’ responses generally restated the value of exposure to “native-like” language for Tanzanians, especially for students (e.g. Mkude INT042522; Chupaki PRJ052422) or invoked an ongoing discourse of interdependence, as exemplified in Kajani’s affirmation in an interview that “in the department [...] we believe that someone knows something” and it is common practice to “confirm” writing choices with other colleagues, even suggesting it was a “the tendency of the Africans, maybe in Tanzanians particularly” who don’t want to “sound rude” or “hurt anybody” in their communication (Kajani INT042722). As such, I felt like my concerns were generally reasoned away by emphasizing the benefits that my linguistic resources bring to others. At times, these gently reassuring responses lulled me into comfortable Ubuntu-like justification that I was contributing to community, and at others, inflamed my ever-present guilt, frustration, and uneasiness that I was furthering coloniality.

#### Foreigner Who Knows: “You know our culture”

“Knowing” which resources might be beneficial to my colleagues is also rooted in another common, co-constructed positioning for me as a “foreigner who knows” about my colleagues’ local context in many aspects including the country of Tanzania, the university, their department, and other features of their lives. This is somewhat distinct from the position of “expert,” which I intentionally avoided in an attempt to circumvent perceptions of my “Western whiteness” as unquestioned expertise (Pailey, 2020) despite being positioned this way at times, as by Chupaki explicitly in the opening story of

this chapter. Rather, my positioning as a “foreigner who knows” was more tied to knowledge of details of my colleagues’ contexts and my own eagerness to display this knowledge while also functioning as a conscious and conspicuous outsider. This positioning further helped to make sense of my role as PI in that my understanding of my co-collaborators’ contexts allowed me to contribute more and more effectively to bridge some of the differences arising from my own foreignness and lend further legitimacy to my role as a leader and hard worker in our collaboration.

This positioning as “foreigner who knows” about the local context arose early and subtly, as when I was conducting first and second round interviews via Zoom and WhatsApp and heard background noises in interviews such as other voices speaking, chickens clucking, bajaj horns beeping and frequently commented by asking participants where they were located then responding with excitement that I *knew* the place, despite our obvious distance. For instance, in talking with Mkude in our second interview (INT110121), I reacted to hearing voices in the background, and I asked, “Are you at Mazimbu campus?” He said that he was at the “language center, I don’t know if you remember it.” I replied with the correct acronym of the center, confirming that yes, I *did* remember, and then I took the opportunity to continue displaying my knowledge: “Yeah, yeah, no problem. Hamna shida kweli. (*No problem, really*). Yeah, I was just hearing some voices, and it was making me think of teatime in the staff room.” He then told me teatime was not for another 15 minutes, which I followed by saying, “I see. Yes, and then there's going to be a meeting with the whole department. Is that right?” Another participant had told me about this meeting in another interview, and I felt the need to show that I *knew* what was happening in their lives. In another example, in our first interview via Zoom, Kajani (INT031621) and I had an extended conversation about a woman who used to sell food on campus and what she is up to now, and she is someone that I frequently asked about in conversation with others. In other interviews and while working in person, I have checked in on colleagues’ parents and their own PhD studies and children, asked empathetically about the goings on in the department, expressed concerns about

burgeoning their workloads - “I *know* that everyone is very busy and has many duties,” as I told Rahim over Zoom in our second interview (INT102721). Throughout our collaboration, I positioned myself as someone who knows or understands many other elements related to my colleagues’ contexts including but not limited to local languages such as Swahili (e.g. Chupaki INT050922) and Lugulu (e.g. Mkude INT042522), the importance of flexibility when working with technology in Tanzania (e.g. GM010622), large class sizes as a challenge in universities across Africa (e.g. Kajani INT042722), the tensions between maintaining professional life and a communal social life (e.g. Rahim INT060222), and many more intricacies of which I displayed my understanding.

Part of my goal in displaying understanding of colleagues’ contexts was to bring a sense of humanity to my research and acknowledge that my colleagues lead full lives, and I do genuinely care about their larger lives, which I see as part of an Ubuntu-inspired research ethic offering a way to decolonize research relationships (Chilisa, 2020). Establishing common ground rooted in shared language and perspective was also an important tool of connection, and me reinforcing my understanding of the local context made sense in terms of re-establishing our working relationship at that time, across distance and plumbing our shared memories to re-build connection. On the other hand, what strikes me again is the *insistence* with which I did performed *knowing* about their lives, and the frequency. Who does this knowledge and my performance of it serve? Could it downplay my (white) foreignness as a conspicuous outsider?

For their part, colleagues reinforced my positioning as knowledgeable about their local context by, for example, engaging with me in Swahili during interviews and group meetings, which became much more prevalent as our collaboration and my time in person in Tanzania progressed. Colleagues also made reference to me knowing their “culture,” as when Kajani connected this knowledge to the role and added labor that I took on as PI. It was our last interview (INT111622), taking place in his office as other colleagues and staff buzzed in and out with requests for him in his leadership role of the

department. I asked him what he thought of the idea that I had done more of the work on our collaborative work. He sighed then laughed said,

Wow, this is an obvious question. **It's obvious that you did a lot of work.** Yeah, you did a lot of work, and maybe I commend you for that. Why did you do such a lot of work? (laughing) [...] you did that because **you know our culture.** (laughing) Yes, for us... for us, time is there... although not always. I don't know if this is... **we've time, but not always** [...] So, **you tried to balance**, that although we have time, you worked on that, the not-always time so (laughing) to catch up with the time. [...] What I'm trying to say is **that you learned that if I rely much on them, I might miss my bus. So, you are trying to catch up to your bus.** (laughing)

He insinuated that because I was aware of the more flexible conceptions of time in Tanzania as compared to my own context as well as the local tendency to “put society before the activities,” as he later phrased it (Kajani INT111622), I went ahead and completed work when other colleagues could not be expected to due to social obligations and other factors to keep the project moving forward. Importantly, he also stated in this interview that “putting people before activities” such as when people would drop their other obligations such as those in a workplace to attend a funeral or contribute money to someone's wedding was not bad but rather a matter of different “priorities” between “cultures.” In this way, he posited that it was effective of me to know those differences and act accordingly (in my case, taking on the work of others) to accomplish my goals or “catch my bus.” He added that surmising cultural differences between us could be a matter of asking, “How do we perceive time, and how do we prioritize issues?” and that this knowledge would be helpful in navigating potential clashes, as it seems I had done amicably.

In another interesting example of citing my knowledge, Rahim linked my understanding of the local context with my potential to continue to benefit the department when I “go back [...] that side.” (INT060222) It was in our third interview, shortly before I returned to the U.S. after my first trip to

Tanzania, that he mentioned I should “remember if there’s anything that the department can benefit from that side of the, or that part of the world, then of course, just let [colleagues] know.” He continued by positioning me as someone who could market the department well for future professional opportunities precisely because of my intimate knowledge of it: “**You know** what you will tell them anyway. [...] **You know what to tell them** as far as we’re concerned here. We have expertise **as you've seen.**” In this way, he positioned me as someone who knows the local context and by virtue of that knowledge is now positioned or perhaps obliged to share it with others in order to form advantageous connections to benefit the group. In our final interview, Kajani (INT111622) made a similar appeal that I should “cascade this knowledge” or “decolonization ideas” that I had acquired from experience in the department in my home country and “have a seminar with your colleagues and let them learn all these experiences.” He reminded me that if the knowledge gained from my dissertation is “shelved, and [I] don’t have more projects to transform the community, then it’s an effort that will be a waste.” It was a poignant moment in which I was reminded of the responsibility that comes with knowledge and understanding of a community, its strengths and its hardships – the responsibility to continue to act in its best interests and be an advocate as a price of admission to that community in the first place. It is a responsibility that I now carry, as part of my own sense of identity-in-community, to contribute back to it as I can.

As Rahim’s and Kajani’s comments above illustrate, colleagues were also consistent in reminding me that that while I may know or understand elements of the local context, I myself am not *of* that context. I am a *foreigner*, an outsider, still a “researcher from another university” (Rahim GM041422) and decidedly not “African” and thus part of a group that does “not know Africa” (Zawadi INT050622). In our final interview, Kajani went to far as to remind me that I am a “colonizer,” someone with privilege who may be “conscious” of local culture and “critical” of coloniality and thus apt to act differently than other *mzungus* (*white foreigners*) but still *mzungu* at my core (INT111622). While my colleagues

generally refrained from using the word “mzungu” to refer to me in my presence, with exceptions notable and often occurring in more informal and presumably humorous contexts such as in Tabasamu’s car (PRJ101522), I was often positioned as someone from the outside, another country (often, specifically America) with different culture and ways. Rahim (INT060222) positioned me as such when I asked him about my recently explicitly named title as Principal Investigator of our study in an interview, which I said surprised me. His reply cast my question as perhaps a simple misunderstanding due to my lack of familiarity or a different procedure in my own, different context:

Rahim: Yes, **we here at SUA**, we have roles when it comes to a research or project. Like this one you are doing, we are doing this collaborative stuff, **PI is principal investigator. You know that?**

Renee: Yes, yes.

Rahim: So, **this is normally a terminology that they use**. Although of course, if you go like to the level of the study, your bigger study, it may not, maybe, I don’t know. I don’t know. **They call you a... associate researcher? Something like that.**

His response cast the role of PI as a normalized part of research procedure for “we here at SUA,” which may not be the same for me, from not here, not SUA, and he checked my understanding of the term PI as I could also possibly be confused just due to different vocabulary. In this way, positioning me as foreigner served to challenge or complicate my linked positioning of knowing about the local context.

While my foreignness in Tanzania was conspicuously marked by my whiteness, race was still rarely mentioned by colleagues or explicitly used to position me in my presence, though it *felt* like it was always there, just unspoken. Even while Kajani talked emphatically in his last interview about how it may be more “decolonizing” to forgo “labels” that divide people and highlight social differences such as in situations “when you’ve a color different from the community you are in,” he conceded later in the interview, in a more conspiratorial tone, “To me, you know, I see you as one (laughing) absolutely yes.”

(INT111622), implying that he could only be colorblind to a point, and that my race was markedly visible. At the same time, in this same interview he also stated that my knowledge or consciousness around colonially-derived collaboration dynamics as important factor in not taking up typical “colonizer” behavior; for example, he lauded my resistance to taking charge, inserting my ideas, or “dictating” our work in my role as PI because to do so would have been typical “colonizer” moves which I could subvert because of my knowledge of how *not* to act (Kajani INT111622).

Colleagues likewise explained that being “knowledgeable” was one of the qualities of a PI, perhaps even using my knowledge as a logical way to combat my suspicions that race was also a part of why I had been given the role of PI. As Tabasamu stated,

So, when you come as a member, you join that group, **you will not be maybe sometimes fully participate fully** as that. That’s some of the things that we say, **‘The PI will do this because he or she is knowledgeable to the things we are talking about than me.’** If you find that, you will find it in a person who is **not of the other race, being a same race**. But the issue is maybe you find maybe him as **principal investigator**. (Tabasamu INT111522)

Similar to Kajani in the previous extract, Tabasamu skirts the same line of being both aware of my race which positions me as outsider, and also denying that race was a factor and instead pointing to how “knowledgeable” I am to justify my role as PI. I interpreted Tabasamu’s comments in this interview, our fourth and final one, as an extension of our previous, similar conversation in his interview three in which I suggested that the authority I was being given as PI was perhaps connected to my race but limited by my gender. Here he seemed to be echoing and further fortifying his earlier position that I was a natural “fit” for PI because I had already done the reading and knew the background of the issues we were studying (INT051222). As I discussed the idea of race and how I was uncomfortable in the role of PI as a white Westerner, he and many colleagues assured me, was not a matter of concern. Comments in this vein will be shared in more detail in a later section. However, I could not help but feel the chill of

something more, not convinced that it was entirely coincidental or logical that I was positioned as a type of leader or laborer, as Tabasamu also highlighted above, within our shared project by virtue of my supposed knowledge of the local context and culture which I could also more deeply infiltrate and use for my own benefit.

Lady Bountiful: "I want to change, but I am not sure how I can do it"

Taken in concert, these positionings of "benevolent giver," "well-resourced," and "foreigner who knows" draw uncomfortable yet striking allusions to Lady Bountiful, a white female figure who graciously participates in the civilizing work of colonization and benefits herself in the process. While modern conceptualizations of this role may refer to her as a "nice white lady," the name Lady Bountiful originates from an English comedy by George Farquhar (1707), *The Beaux' Stratagem*, in which the character Lady Bountiful is a wealthy widow known for her philanthropy and (perhaps dubious) herbal remedies which she dispenses benevolently to the surrounding villagers. Honor Ford Smith (1997), among other postcolonial feminist scholars, has utilized this imagery to describe the image of an ideal woman who was "financially comfortable, which is to say, middle class and white" who attained public visibility and influence through acts of charity and social service among the black and brown populations of the British colonies. Education scholars such as Erica Meiners (2002) and Helen Harper (2000) have drawn on Ford-Smith's work to describe the same archetype prevalent in North American schooling: a virtuous, generous, selfless, maternal yet often childless woman who takes up the burden of teaching the racialized downtrodden.

While not a real person per se, Lady Bountiful functions as an allegory or "representation of the white lady missionary or white lady teacher that emerged during the time of British imperialism" (Harper and Cavanagh, 1994, p. 28). Meiners (2002) points out that historically, these "women were the ideal bodies to reproduce patriarchal values and colonial epistemologies but not to challenge these frameworks" (p. 87). Socialized in her own patriarchal society, docile yet adventurous and privileged

enough to travel on her own (Harper, 2000), Lady Bountiful is the perfect vehicle for passing on the moral values of colonial nations. She has her own resources to travel, and she is someone who comes to know the people and local contexts she serves, allowing her to set out moralistically to “fix” things as only she knows how (Harper and Cavanagh, 1994; Harper, 2000). Inspired by Ford-Smith, Harper and Cavanagh (1994) explain,

[...] this image carries with it the imperative “to know” and the incredible arrogance of that imperative. Lady Bountiful, to be bountiful, must know and feel what is wrong and be able to fix it. She needs to be at the centre but at the same time her needs – her own “self” – remain absent. Her ability to act as the civilizing force, to be the white teacher-mother in the service of the Empire, is dependent upon her need to be at the center, knowing and helping her charges. If Lady Bountiful doesn’t know, can’t feel, can’t be in control, then she will feel guilt as well as the fear that she is unmotherly or unladylike or unchristian. (p. 28)

The figure of Lady Bountiful, then, reveals a potent combination at the intersection of whiteness and heterosexual femininity which continues to exert power via the colonial matrix. Her gender affords her access to “see and record areas of life that male colonial administrators and explorers were unaware of or unable to experience,” and her whiteness allows her to act as both insider and outsider to the communities she serves (Harper, 2000, p. 132); she is “allowed greater eccentricity and freedom,” but also must ignore or suppress her whiteness, lest she be seen as too much of an outsider, making it difficult to “investigate and experience ‘the other,’” her “‘selflessness’... necessary in order to know and experience the colonized” (Harper, 2000, p. 133). The constructed obligation of “selflessness” echoes the patriarchy she is party to while also serving the racist interests of the overall imperial project.

While not as present in relevant literature as I may have expected given the glaring connections with my own positionings, the allegory of a Lady Bountiful has been useful to uncover the colonizing potential of nice white ladies in contemporary spaces where she benevolently studies and serves the

less fortunate such as libraries (Schlesselman-Tarango, 2016) and schools. As a teacher educator, Meiners (2002) grasps at the “very slipperiness of this figure, as a ghost in my classrooms” (p. 132) who has an enduring yet unnamed, seemingly invisible presence in the imaginations of teacher candidates who feel a “natural” affinity for her decidedly female ability to care for others and yearn for her whiteness in the form of financial stability and social elevation, all while remaining largely unaware of her racialization. Those who are aware of and inhabit her characteristic whiteness find a real struggle in the position of “sponge or mediating agent between the subaltern and the colonial state,” (Harper, 2000, p. 139), conscious yet feeling guilty, fueling even more moralistic “fixing” and handwringing. Lady Bountiful is after all attuned to both her own privileges and wider social ills, so she continues to give of herself freely while also deriving a heady sense of self that is socially sanctioned and thus, hard to resist, even among those who are conscious of her complicity. Harper (2000) concedes that these images are “seductive” in that “it is difficult to resist the desire to be central in someone’s life, and to be given the illusion of transcending one’s social and historical location and one’s own privilege to ‘know’ and ‘help’ others” (p. 139). The Oxford dictionary goes so far as to define a “Lady Bountiful” as one who benefits from helping others: “a woman who engages in ostentatious acts of charity, more to impress others than out of a sense of concern for those in need.” These contemporary reflections on the allegory highlight that the historical idealizations are beginning to show some cracks as well as potential connections to nice white ladies of all kinds and particularly saliently in the realm of English language teaching.

The dynamics of coloniality that structure the power and influence of Lady Bountiful are alive and well in TESOL, and foregrounding connections between her as an archetype and ongoing oppressive ideologies in the field has decolonizing potential. We can see, for example, connections between her benevolent, missionary-like whiteness and native speaker saviorism, or “the long-standing assumption that the White community can ‘save’ peoples of color by teaching them English” (Jenks and Lee, 2020, p.

186). Such mandates may be taken for granted in the field and undoubtedly fuel the idealization of so-called native speakers and in effect, advance white supremacy given the inextricable links between “nativeness” and whiteness (Flores and Rosa, 2015; Motha, 2014). While many post-colonial nations welcomed the intervention of Lady Bountiful-type figures in the form of native-speaker experts to lift up the uneducated masses of the post-independence Global South with English as “development” (Phillipson, 1992), the colonial ideology behind nativeness implies separating languages into pure, isolated forms and does not reflect the reality of language use in many postcolonial contexts including Tanzania, where codeswitching and meshing are common (Blommaert, 2019) rendering the concept of native speaker as suspect (Canagarajah, 1999; Cook, 1999). However, today, Lady Bountiful-types – that is to say those who are “middle class and white” (Ford-Smith, 1997) possessing an adventurous spirit and the resources to travel from their Inner Circle, colonizing nations that have shaped their outlooks on the world – are often afforded easy employment in the global English language teaching (ELT) job market via hiring practices that reward unqualified and underexperienced job candidates for their proximity to whiteness (Ruecker and Ives, 2015). Such hiring practices discriminate against trained and knowledgeable local or international candidates from so-called Outer Circle countries, overlooking and undervaluing the professional skills, multilingual awareness, pedagogical innovations, and community knowledge of local instructors (Canagarajah 1999, 2012) and further feed the capitalist imperatives that drive the ELT industry in terms of publishing, teaching, and teacher training (Prendergast, 2008; Widin, 2010). Particular to postcolonial contexts, Phillipson (1992) and Canagarajah (2012) also highlight ongoing imperialism in the enduring “need” for foreign experts from the Global North to train or otherwise fix the imagined problems of English teachers in the Global South – a “need” which Lady Bountifuls in ELT continue to benefit from, materially and psychologically. Linked with racialized ideals of “native speaker English,” whiteness becomes a type of property (Harris, 1993, as cited in Ruecker, 2011),

a resource to be shared to benefit others while benefitting from and upholding the value of whiteness itself.

I am aware that I benefit from these positionings in various ways in terms of discursive effects which structure my relationship with my colleagues in my favor while also reinforcing coloniality. For example, positioning myself as “well-resourced” with time and energy and my colleagues as thus “in need” and too “busy” justifies the need for me to be there in the first place, available to do things and provide resources and labor that they “need.” Stephanie Vandrick (2002) makes connections between this self-serving generosity and the Lady Bountiful figure as a type of “noblesse oblige” which allowed her and her missionary family to feel both “generous and superior” among the Indians on the Canadian church mission where she lived (p. 416). The legacy of this mentality reverberates through her memories of later English teaching: “‘Thank you, teacher,’ my students often said, smiling at and sometimes even bowing to me. They seemed so grateful, so appreciative. How kind I felt, how wise, how generous” (Vandrick, 2002, p. 418). Reading lines like these, I see myself so clearly: a kind, wise, generous English teacher smiling right back at my grateful, racialized students of the past and colleagues of the present. Seeing the clarity of the connections between this image and myself is both horrifying and yet validating, as if to prove that the colonial ghost I thought was hiding in the closet all this time is indeed there and even has a name.

Further, this hierarchical, racialized dynamic presided over by Lady Bountiful reifies coloniality in the set roles which continue to exist in ideals of “partnership” whereby Westerners devise projects from afar for the supposed benefit of distant, African populations who are then tasked with the labor of collecting data that is extracted for analysis and theorization outside, with little local control or agency (e.g., Omanga and Mainye, 2019). Looking back at my journal from the beginning stages of our project, I realize that this same pattern had been the basis of my assumptions for how our shared project would work; I would benevolently and individualistically interpret the literature and issue instructions from

afar, and my colleagues would collect data for me to analyze and turn back into literature (PRJ092221). I can also see this pattern as an extension of Lady Bountiful into academia: knowledgeable white woman who generously gives her resources to control a research narrative which then feeds knowledge back to the colonial academy. Even when this pattern was interrupted by my colleagues who suggested they may not need my resources, or that we could share the task of crafting a literature review, I persisted, indicating the strength of this image's hold on my own sense of self.

The archetype of Lady Bountiful also points to the intersectional insidiousness and messiness of race and gender when working in collaboration across difference. Many scholars point to the larger-scale problems with white heterosexual femininity in terms of complicity and maintenance of patriarchal, colonial power structures. In her work "White Tears/Brown Scars," for example, Ruby Hamad (2020) sketches the ways in which maternal colonialism, or white women's complicity with the imperial project through assumed care and civilizing work such as in schools for Indigenous children, echoes today in white women's ongoing complicity in racial harm and particularly against women of color. Likewise, in her study of white-identified Australian English teachers in Indonesia and East Timor, Roslyn Appleby (2010) points out how the mere presence of white femininity in colonized spaces justifies white "masculinist" efforts to control physical spaces via discourses of fear and "security" (p. 120). These efforts draw on and re-invigorate racist myths of white women as "desired objects of colonized men" to re-draw racial boundaries between colonizer and colonized (Appleby, 2010, p. 120). By nature, the Lady herself does not challenge the racism she has benefited from the or patriarchy she has been steeped in (Meiners, 2002; Schlesselman-Tarango, 2016) leaving her both complicit and compromised. It is with ongoing frustration that I find it difficult to challenge or even articulate patriarchy in my collaboration with my colleagues for fear of the racist effects it may have. In examining the power and the danger of acting within the Lady Bountiful archetype, it becomes impossible to separate race from gender, whiteness from femininity. Likewise, it is my own awareness of this

intersectionality that stymies my efforts to even conceptualize possible gendered disempowerment in my collaboration with my colleagues. How can I call out patriarchy in relationship with my Tanzanian colleagues when my own whiteness is intertwined and also in service to it? How can I engage in generative conversations around my gendered roles in spaces structured by coloniality without harmfully asserting the power of my racialized ones?

As the stories I have shared thus far illustrate, I'm often not sure what I would say to explain to my colleagues why I am uncomfortable performing the roles they seem to expect of me, such as that of a knowledgeable and authoritative PI. The decolonizing ideals I have read, written, and discussed in graduate courses seem so abstract when I am faced with opportunities to articulate them myself. In the moment, as illustrated in my interaction with Chupaki who suggested I was "running away from helping" at the beginning of this chapter, these positionings of seeming obligation born of constructed superiority usually make me cringe. My belly and chest tighten with discomfort, and the question *how to respond?* thrums at my temples. At the same time, however, the roles of "benevolent giver" or "well-resourced" with "native speaker English" feel normal, comfortable, like a well-worn shirt that feels natural on my (white) skin. With my newfound awareness of the Lady Bountiful role, acting and being positioned in ways that resonate with this colonial archetype comes with this dual sensation of familiarity and horror, and the horror of familiarity, and I feel an urge to react. *Resist!* I think. *But how?* I would like to more fully or directly interrupt the ideologies that underpin, for example, the valuation of "native speaker English" as a resource, but perhaps my inner Lady Bountiful responds to being wanted, *needed*, even. Lady Bountiful, after all, does not challenge the power structures she tacitly maintains.

There is further coloniality and complexity in the fact that in the roles of Lady Bountiful and myself as PI, race is almost never acknowledged, though links between race and my underpinning positionings are there, shaping the edges of our imaginings of one another but lurking in the shadows. In one rare exception, Mkude openly discussed race in his first interview via WhatsApp (INT032021). When

I asked how his identity affects his work as an instructor of English, he explained how his race causes students to doubt his abilities as an English teacher:

My identity as an African sometime affects teaching English in the sense that **some people because of our colour don't believe that we can be good teachers of English language.** So irrespective of how good one would be **still they will be doubting.**

**Our students would tend to believe somebody like you(white) when you teach them than us, even if one (you're not an expert) is not an expert.**

It is at the end of a semester when you would here them saying **I didn't know that you are such a good teacher of English. When i began a course i wanted to run away and join Renee's class or [another foreign teacher's] class.**

**Tunapata shida saana na rangi yetu nyeusi.** (*We have a problem with our black race /color.*)

👉 here=hear (Mkude INT032021)

In this notably candid moment, Mkude openly acknowledged the racial difference between us and the inequities these differences have created for him in terms of his classroom practice, in that his English and teaching abilities are questioned due to his racial background while a white racial identity affords one the position of “expert.” Such conversations with my colleagues directly engaging race were incredibly rare throughout my two years of data collection and our previous seven years of working together, albeit infrequently. However, as illustrated in the allegory of Lady Bountiful and my role as PI, race is never far below the surface in our interactions, and these roles enforce specific racialized relations and resulting hierarchies that are subject to negotiation. These roles are co-constructed, arising from my own self-positioning as well as the positioning of others, and my own negotiation of these roles is complex; I am both conscious and unconscious of my performance of them, and I reify, resist, and/or attempt to re-position based on the resources available in the moment but am rarely

satisfied with the outcome. I may attempt to respond, but my own uncertainty as to how to re-negotiate in accordance with my personal values remains. As I responded to Mkude in the abovementioned WhatsApp interaction,

I see. Pole sana (*so sorry*). I have also seen and experienced this issue. I want to promote equality in English teaching, and I know that it is difficult because of assumptions like these that students make. **I want to change these perceptions, but as a white person, I am not sure how I can do it.** (Renee in Mkude INT032021)

My words here belie my feelings in moments like these: guilt, sadness, frustration, uncertainty, the sense of “**I want to change [...] but [...] I am not sure how I can do it.**” I feel responsible to change “perceptions” of whiteness as expertise or purveyors of a desired English, yet I am unsure of how best to do this. Recognizing the connections between how I function in our collaboration and the figure of Lady Bountiful have provoked an internal struggle in me which could get in our collective way.

Similarly, my awareness of Lady Bountiful’s potent power at the intersection of whiteness and femininity has fed my ongoing reluctance to fully engage with gender more fully in this analysis. Gender has had a huge impact on how we relate to each other, and I am still processing this aspect. As other “Western” women such as the Swahili language learners in Christina Higgins’ (2011) study have noted, patriarchy is woven deeply into our experience of Tanzanian society, and I have felt it around gendered labor expectations such as taking notes and project managing our joint work as well as casual social interactions which have left me feeling uncomfortable. However, though I did try to discuss these issues with colleagues at times, the idea of discussing more deeply felt likewise uncomfortable, so I did not give them a chance to respond. As a result, I have not explored gender in this dissertation as much as I would have imagined. Also among my reasons is my awareness of the deep complexities of discussing gender in this context because of its intersections with race (Crenshaw, 1991) such that colonial narratives incumbent upon relations between Black men and white women can reinforce colonial power

and violence (e.g., Appleby, 2010; Hamad, 2020). I have not yet found a way to conceptualize and articulate the experiences I have had in ways that do not support the colonial narratives I seek to deconstruct. I'm still exploring these tensions and will continue to do so, with likeminded colleagues. Additionally, and perhaps most importantly, my responsibility to my colleagues is keeping me from sharing more around these experiences. I'm aware that I am accountable for how I portray participants (Madison, 2005) and that in contexts such as Tanzania, suggesting negative-seeming relations could be very damaging socially to our relationship of trust that has been built over time. As Kajani mentioned in an interview, my reporting is based on a built relationship of trust, saying "There's nothing that I expect you are going to speak bad about us [...] And if it is bad, that has been agreed upon that has been communicated (laugh)" (Kajani INT111622). I'm also aware that my truth may not be my colleagues' truth, and my interpretations may not be resonant with those of the people I am representing and co-constructing the knowledge from this dissertation with. Thus, I feel torn between wanting to share more to deconstruct coloniality in the form of patriarchy and honoring my relationships, even if those relationships compel me to stay tacit, in true Lady Bountiful fashion. Part of why the Lady Bountiful allegory is so powerful is that it speaks to the tensions of occupying both whiteness and femininity, and ultimately, I want to be able to hold it all, but it's complicated and often a struggle lived in collaboration.

## Part 2: Tensions and Implications

In this section, I describe the effects of my awareness of the Lady Bountiful figure and the ongoing coloniality bolstered by me and my colleagues' discursive alignment with this archetype in making sense of my role as PI. I illustrate the tensions I felt and how these may have negatively affected the work we were able to do in our collaboration. In addition, I explain how, inspired by my colleagues, was able to negotiate the PI role through a discourse of interdependence which can resist coloniality in the form of white supremacy and individualism by cultivating my own sense of *identity-in-community*. I consider the potential drawbacks of leaning too heavily on the idea of interdependence, however, including valid

concerns about theoretical appropriation and subsuming of racialized, gendered power dynamics. In the end, I advocate for collaboration and identity in community as possible tools in charting a way forward towards more equitable co-laborative relationships.

Challenges in Collaboration: “The problem might be you yourself for being too conscious”

I can see how my personal struggles related to my words and actions in the role of PI in light of the colonial specter of Lady Bountiful caused challenges in our collaboration on multiple levels. For instance, my hesitance to assertively take the mantle as leader or PI of our project may have impacted our overall productivity and organization as a collective. If I had been comfortable directly assigning tasks to colleagues in a more authoritative manner as PI, perhaps I would not have felt an imbalance of labor. Similarly, if I were more open to contributing to directly stated needs of my colleagues, such as editing their professional writing with resource of my “native speaker English,” perhaps colleagues would have been more engaged in our work together rather than being cajoled into a long process of deliberation and eventual increased workloads in the form of our joint research project. Likewise, if I as PI had focused more on the project at hand, our research on large class sizes, rather than my own dissertation and seeming obsession with lofty, abstract concepts such as “decolonization,” my colleagues would have benefitted more directly with a final, polished product like the book chapter they had asked for instead of the potentially inaccessible Google folder of data and preliminary analysis with which I left them.

At times, colleagues entertained my hesitance to be thought of as PI and responded directly, attempting to assure me that there was no “problem” with me being in this role, as Mkude did in the interview featured at the opening of this chapter (INT042522). After I similarly wrung my hands aloud to Tabasamu in his third interview, surprised that I should be “the one” to assign tasks to colleagues as supposed PI, he later noted more indirectly, “So, I see that you are not very much interested on task oriented” (INT051222). Tabasamu’s shaded critique of my hesitance reminds me of a story in which a

white researcher was discussing his own reluctance to take ownership of a leadership position in multiracial collaborative project in education, and a Black colleague said that he should have taken on the role more fully because collaborators needed “soldiers, not missionaries” (Vakil et al., 2016, p. 203). To be a “soldier,” he explained, the white colleague should have made his antiracist goals for the project clear to those he sought to lead in order to gain respect and buy-in, adding that it was “incumbent on people with access to that kind of power to use it,” and that being explicit about an antiracist agenda would motivate all of the collaborators and particularly those of color (Vakil et al., 2016, p. 203). The authors of the article integrate this tale with their notion of “politicized trust,” a dynamic relationship which actively acknowledges power dynamics in cross-racial collaborative research endeavors and calls for ongoing attention and maintenance to build solidarity (Vakil et al. 2016, p. 199).

The phrase “soldier, not missionary” has stuck with me. I wonder if boasting an antiracist agenda to my Tanzanian colleagues would be essentializing on my part, assuming they would or should have the same sociopolitical goals as me, and if being more explicit about my aim to “decolonize collaborations” would resonate with my colleagues or come across as condescending or just irrelevant. As detailed in the previous chapter, invoking the term “decolonizing” in my research garnered varied reactions from curiosity to ambivalence to dissuasion. To take the advice from Vakil et al. (2016), I might have added more explicitly “I want to show the white, Western world that there’s more complexity in teaching English here than they may see or believe” or “I want to be able to criticize white, Western outsiders like myself who come here and assume they’re going to save the situation, or refuse to engage with local realities, or don’t listen or try to connect authentically.” Even after all of our discussions, I still wonder if my colleagues perceive these things as problems, or problems as pressing as I perceive them.

Another set of words come to mind, this time from Kenyan-American writer Mukoma Wa Ngũgĩ (2021) who critiqued the fervent rhetoric around dismantling white privilege in the African Studies Association as the “self-flagellation,” quipping, “When you are done, please call us.” As he describes,

The white ally keeps pointing and tearing at their skin. It's a spectator sport now, only to reveal whiteness centering itself. It is a comedy of errors – white Africanists still trying to resolve white privilege and racism in the study of a continent that has been moving on.

His description of the “pointing and tearing” at the skin of guilt-wracked white Africanist scholars feels very visceral to me, both in its description as well as its critique. Rhetorical scholar Wendy Ryden (2012) similarly warned about the “narcissistic reproduction of whiteness” (p. 37) than can occur when white writers “confess” unearned privilege, in effect re-centering whiteness in such a way that “[serves] to enhance the ethical authority of the white subject” via “planned authenticity” thereby “reclaiming what [anti-racist whites] ostensibly hope to dismantle” (p. 16). Such critiques make me wonder: is my struggle around leadership anything more than just unhelpful white guilt, whiteness self-flagellating, hand-wringing, and re-centering itself?

When I shared concerns about my own power in the role of PI as a possible extension of coloniality with colleagues, their reactions could seem to resonate with Mukoma Wa Ngũgĩ's (2021) sentiment of “a continent that has been moving on.” In my exchange with Mkude at the opening of this chapter exemplifies the general trend of colleagues reacting to my concerns with nonchalance, assuring me that they “don't see that to be a problem” and I “shouldn't worry” (Mkude INT042522). As mentioned in the previous chapter, many colleagues attributed my positioning as PI as simply a matter of “fit,” that because I had read the most literature (Tabasamu INT051222) and was a “neutral” party (Rahim INT060222) with the capacity to bring people together (Robinson INT042922), it made sense that I was best positioned to fulfill the expected duties of a PI. When I mentioned whiteness or “native speaker” status as possible factors in my de facto appointment as leader, I was gently ensured that being positioned as PI was not because of “race” or “gender” (Tabasamu INT051222) but rather, other natural, logical factors such my being “knowledgeable” (Tabasamu INT111522) or filling the inevitable need for a leader (e.g., Rahim, Robinson, Mkude GM041422).

Later, after I had conducted more analysis and was able to ask directly about the applicability of the Lady Bountiful archetype during the last round of interviews, many responses suggested that I am more concerned about the implications of such a colonial role than my colleagues, or that possibly, focusing on this role may be a form of "self-flagellating" and in itself reifying coloniality. For example, Tabasamu (INT111522) insinuated that my insistent focus on decoloniality and race may follow the typical pattern of colonizers focusing on their research priorities and not the ones that really matter to the people whom they are working. In talking about coloniality in "other" collaborations, he stated,

... most of the things which are done **sometimes they are not very much related to the real problem that you want maybe to solve**. You see you have [...] a very, very burning issue that needed to be researched, but **we will find people are busy researching something which is quite not even interesting**. (Tabasamu, INT111522)

He explained that this was because of "the funder" or maybe the "researchers" who were from the "other side" (implying foreign or outsider) having their own priorities which took precedence in joint projects. As an example, he lamented the seeming volume of research being done on COVID-19, perceived by many Tanzanians non-existent or overblown, while issues such as frequent power cuts and the capacity of the Tanzanian electrical grid were left unaddressed. He later conceded that this perceived pattern of research driven by funder (e.g., Global North) priorities *could* be evidence of neocolonialism in *some* research collaborations, but not ours, stating,

that's where maybe I can think that **neocolonialism can work in that way, but in our place**, we are trying to say that maybe there is something that is starting, tried to hint there about maybe **leaving each and every way to our counterpart**. Maybe sometimes it can have a certain picture which is not related to neo-... **maybe that issue was related to our ways**. (Tabasamu, INT111522)

It was interesting to me that he seemed to place blame on Tanzanians or similarly-positioned researchers who “leave each and every to [their] counterpart,” such as a researcher from the Global North, rather than asserting their own interests more or taking control to orient towards a more locally relevant agenda. In this moment, as we sat in the still, darkened air of my office during yet another power cut, I wondered if he was reflecting on this as a possible dynamic in our work and reconsidering how many decisions had been “left to me” at the possible expense of co-researchers’ autonomy. For myself, I felt a visceral pang of guilt as he spoke; our large class sizes research had laid fallow during my second in-person trip to Tanzania, as I focused on writing my dissertation, studying Kiswahili, and conducting member checks on analysis of my own data fixated on “decolonizing,” despite being told repeatedly that these were not pressing concerns of daily importance for my colleagues.

Makamba (INT110622) went further to suggest that my heightened consciousness around issues of power and particularly racial power may have introduced challenges into our collaborative relationship in that it put strain on our social relationships because we were more careful with one another:

Makamba: **There is nothing about racism** [in colleagues positioning Renee as PI], only saying that only **because Renee is white, because Renee is American, she should do that. No, no, no. It’s not like that.** Not at all. To be honest, you are the one who is telling me about that now. I didn’t have that kind of thinking actually. That’s why I am telling you, **sometimes maybe the problem might be you yourself for being too conscious.** You take a lot of precautions and maybe because of the nature of your study as well because you are studying the same thing.

Renee: Yeah, yeah, yeah. And then if I take too many precautions, what is the effect of that?

Makamba: Now, sometimes you **tend to have things which are not there.** You see? **You are going to have a lot of assumptions in your mind, okay, and that’s why now you wanted to prove, you wanted to confirm, you see?** (laughs) You have got a lot of assumptions.

Renee: Yeah, I want to share, yeah. I want to share my assumptions to have them be checked.

Makamba: The way I understand now, I didn't think about this, but **I'm afraid we all are going to lose some data because we tend to avoid each other** because as a researcher you with your study, you want avoid same things, you avoid to do something else. We again, the same thing. We don't want maybe to confront Renee. **So, everyone is conscious, everyone is conscious, and then as you said that we are going to lose some... So, should we take this as a challenge?**

In this forthright exchange, Makamba ventured that perhaps the "problem" might be me being "too conscious" of issues of power differentials such that I "take a lot of precautions" based on my "assumptions" of discomfort which may be self-affirming. He suggested that my perceived hesitance may cause us to "[lose] some data," referring back to an earlier point in the same interview when I had mentioned our shared avoidance of talking about race and coloniality as "a problem because it does not give us an opportunity to discuss." In this way, he pointed out that my own perceived discomfort around these conversations may also be foreclosing opportunities for dialogue.

Relatedly, Robinson stated that perhaps the reason that colleagues do not talk about issues of race and power more openly with me is because of my tendency to interact with colleagues horizontally; in his words, **"Because you present yourself in such a way that we are all equal, so we don't see the racial differences"** (Robinson INT110922). To illustrate this point, he referred to the ear of roasted corn which he had offered me at the beginning of our interview, which upon my acceptance, he snapped off a section of and gave to me to eat. He explained,

... I take this mhindi (*corn*), you also eat mhindi (*corn*). I feel very, very proud. (laughing) [...] If you were to say 'no, I don't want...' Do you see? [...] **The way you present yourself to us, eating what we eat, using what we use here ... using our walking, the same path we walk.** Do you see? **There are things that make all of us look the same.**

He elaborated that because I “present things in such a way that you value each and everybody” the effect is that colleagues “do not think of our differences.” He further explained,

You present to us just like you are just like us. And maybe **you go down sometimes, eh?** Yeah, this is **a very good thing**. Not because [...] you want data. (laughing) It is because that is the way you are. Because this is not our first time to meet.

His remarks show that our interviews from which I “want data” are also embedded in a relationship of trust, a relationship that has been developed over years, as it is “not or first time to meet.” His praise of my humility or “going down” seems to echo a Lady Bountiful tendency to not challenge racio-patriarchy but rather silently and even actively support it. He sees this as a “very good thing” in terms of our relationship, however. In the same interview, he contended that if we were to talk explicitly about social differences such as race, the effect would be that we were reminded of them and colleagues feel “inferior, stating “when we talk of race now, you are just reminding the participant to think, oh, again, we are different (laughing)” and later adding, “[...] if we are talking about race, and we are talking about our countries, yeah, it is quite obvious to see that we are inferior” (Robinson INT110922).

In explaining that talking of inequities may upset those who are positioned as “inferior,” he drew on his own experience of trying to avoid tribalism in Tanzania. He explained that because he is of a more dominant tribal group, he avoids talking about tribes or using his tribal language in public because he knows it will upset others from tribes with less social power, and if he speaks about his own tribe he may be perceived as “just advocating for tribalism.” Echoing Rahim (INT041321), he saw this effect as a legacy of Julius K. Nyerere, the “the founder of this country [who] insisted a lot about ignoring the issue of race, ignoring the issue of tribes.” Interestingly, he connected the national rhetoric of colorblindness to the persistence of inequities, saying, “There is kind of inferiority because of not talking about this [...] Because we struggle much to make sure that we don't talk about tribalism... yet there is tribalism. That's why we just see struggle much. We don't talk.” He used a similar logic to affirm my analysis that a lack of

explicit discussion around race signaled the presence of racial dynamics: “If we don't talk about race, that means there is racial differences. If we don't talk about our economic differences, there is such kind of aspect.” Throughout the interview, he reaffirmed that inequities *do* indeed exist between my colleagues and I but highlighted that individuals may have different perceptions and ways of negotiating them saying, “There is difference, and this difference, each and every one of your colleagues has a different way of presenting this, a different idea about how do we differ (laughing)” (Robinson INT110922). His comments underscore the importance of individual negotiation of our roles in collaboration and considering the discourses through which we do so.

Likewise, when I worried aloud to Kajani that in the Lady Bountiful role I didn't do enough to “challenge” hierarchies of race and gender, he agreed but offered that “there are several ways of challenging” (Kajani, INT111622). He affirmed that yes, I do not directly “challenge” dynamics that I may be ideologically opposed to when I see them at work in the department, and he noted that that is part of why things go “smoothly” when I work with them, so he did not see this as an issue. Rather, he suggested that I can “challenge” in other ways such as by “revealing;” he observed that with my research I am “revealing by a practical experience that ‘this is what I did, and it worked. So, if you want things to go as intended, and if the desire is to transform, this is how it should be.’” He saw this less direct, evidence-based approach as more effective than straight out “boycotting” or “striking against” elements of our collaboration that I might not agree with, which he saw as a more reactionary and less desirable form of resistance because it would directly harm group harmony and the relationships therein. In this way, he lent validity to the “several ways of challenging” and a possibly more subtle, thoughtful approach which may be more effective in contexts where social relationships are of high priority. His noticing of my careful negotiation of the PI role while also respecting the interdependence of our group dynamic underscores the ways in which I was attendant to both my power and alternative ways of being through relationship with the Other.

PI in a Discourse of Interdependence: “Resist driving the bus and instead, hand out steering wheels”

While it is clear that my personal struggle with my role as PI and the allusions to the colonial figure of Lady Bountiful caused challenges in our collaborative process, it is also clear that I was moved to renegotiate the role of PI through a discourse of interdependence as a way to resist the coloniality inherent in our relationship. By “discourse of interdependence,” I refer to words and actions which emphasize the importance of relationships, expansive notions of time, and a sense of interconnectedness between my colleagues and I which open possibilities for formation of identity-in-community, or seeing oneself as part of a larger social whole. Importantly, my awareness of and enactment of a discourse of interdependence was made possible *through* the course of collaboration; it was only after repeated exposure to ideas of Ubuntu (e.g. Makalela, 2015; Sarr, 2020) and analysis of how colleagues were similarly negotiating their own professional identities as detailed in the previous chapter, that I came to understand and be affected by alternate ways of being that could in turn counter some of the elements of coloniality that troubled me along the way. In actively and collaboratively renegotiating the role of PI, I drew on a discourse of interdependence by aiming for Ubuntu research ethic which centers consensus and relationality and simultaneously served to resist coloniality in our collaboration.

My flexible and relational approach to research developed organically alongside the research itself and through increased interaction with my colleagues. My dissertation research began as purposefully logistically flexible to account for the complexities of trying to engage in international collaboration during a global pandemic as well as the dynamic quality of life in Morogoro, Tanzania that I was familiar with from my previous time there. Coming into our collaboration aware of inequities in knowledge production as a legacy of colonialism (e.g., Santos, 2014), I also tried to maintain intellectually flexibility to balance my own preconceived ideas, such as the very prominence of coloniality in our working relationship, with being attendant to colleagues’ expressed needs and

perspectives. As Santos (2012, 2014) and other decolonial scholars have emphasized, an important aspect of redressing “absences” that result from colonial imbalances in knowledge production is orienting towards “emergences,” or ways of being derived from Global South contexts that can inform resistance going forward.

From the beginning of our work together in our first group meeting on Zoom (GM060821), as we discussed what type of collaborative project would be most beneficial for my colleagues, I saw a consensus process emerging in our dynamic which seemed to resist the colonial ideals of prioritizing time over people and concentrating decision-making power in the hands of a white researcher from the Global North, aka. me (e.g., Ishengoma, 2017). The more I noticed the emphasis on consensus in other discussions, the more I tried to nurture it to resist my filling the role of PI as an authoritative leader. In our first group meeting, I noted how our organizing process seemed rather cohesive; we collectively established a structure for our meeting, and every individual had input or consideration, but we understood that the meeting structure was flexible we would see what developed and work with it. As I expressed at the beginning of the meeting, we could discuss the project ideas garnered from the survey one by one, all at once, or “take a different format as we see fit” (GM060821). The expectation that evolved throughout the meeting seemed to be that we would offer our individual views and slowly work towards a collective decision on a topic for our project. Later, I was struck by the similarities of this sentiment and Bagele Chilisa’s (2020) description of the process of consensus building in an Ubuntu-informed research ethic. She explains,

... there may be a hierarchy of importance among speakers, but every person gets an equal chance to speak up until some kind of agreement, consensus, or group cohesion is reached. The role of people in consensus building is etched in the *language* that guides the discussion.  
(emphasis added, Chilisa, 2020, p. 234)

Similar to how Chilisa highlights the role of language in consensus-building discussions, I noted the frequent use of referencing language throughout the meeting with which my colleagues referred back to another colleague or their idea before the speaker contributed their point. For me, noticing this ongoing practice underscored a sense of relationality that would form the bedrock of my later analysis of our collaboration. For example, Makamba began his speaking turn with **“First of all thank you, [Rahim], for your suggestion, but I want to add something there,”** and then added his idea (GM060821). Later, Kajani took the floor by saying, **“Maybe if I chip in, on the by, or take, of [Rahim's] proposal,** so can we have an idea or bigger title that's called maybe...” and then pitched a project title of his own suggestion. A few minutes later, Rahim referred back to these contributions and responded, “As for me, and I think I'm not very far from **what the previous speakers have just said,** and maybe I may have, you know, an additional dimension that I know these things need money, need resources, but perhaps uh, for me, **I find what [Kajani] has said quite ok and what [Makamba] said quite ok...”** In some ways, this referencing language may be standard fare for conversations of this type, where collaborative project ideas are being pitched and evaluated; however, the frequency is a noticeable feature of the meeting for me as well as a sense that this type of explicit building on the ideas of the Other is often missing from meetings in my own Global North context. The way that each speaker first references the Other before stating their views seems to echo Chilisa's point that consensus informed by Ubuntu is achieved via “respect for self *and* other” (emphasis added, p. 234). She stresses that this is not the same as simple accommodation, stating

Agreement and consensus, should, however, not be confused with outmoded and suspect cravings for an oppressive universal sameness... True Ubuntu takes plurality seriously. While it constitutes personhood through other persons, it appreciates the fact that the other persons are so called precisely because we can ultimately never quite stand in their shoes or completely

see through their eyes. When an Ubuntuist reads solidarity and consensus, s/he therefore also reads alterity, autonomy, and cooperation. (Chilisa, 2020, p. 234, referencing Luow, 2001)

In this way, cooperation in this meeting seemed to be achieved through respect for everyone's unique contributions which were offered in the context of the contributions of the other, a lens of relationship through which our work is accomplished. Consensus, in effect, represents consideration and building on all of the distinct views that are gathered through a process of reciprocal listening – and as my colleagues later reminded me, this is a process which takes time. At the end of this first group meeting, there were no clear winners for the topic of our project. Everyone had had a chance to respond to the options through a combination of in-person group meeting and asynchronous survey responses that I had summarized and shared via email, but there was no uniform agreement on any one of the ideas. At first, I found this lack of clarity a bit deflating because I wanted to have our project idea settled so we could forge ahead in crafting it, but Rahim sagely reminded me that consensus building is an ongoing process, and time may not be as important as working through my relationships with the Other for insight. He offered this advice to me at the end of the meeting:

[...] you can **reach them individually**, you know, telling them what we discussed [...] it has to be mmm, what - **a continuous process that is**, you know - you can begin as from now **talking to individuals cementing on what was discussed, those who were here and those who were not here**, and then perhaps, because are, like the **chair of the, of this meeting**, and then, at the end of the day, **maybe come up with what you feel is everybody's opinions in terms of priorities or levels of importance** and what the department can do, and you know in the end, maybe, we, **you come up with that synthesis, and perhaps that will help us to reach a decision or make a decision, because you'll just be like coordinating all these, all these things - it may not be easy** (laugh) after every time have a meeting, but at least you can reach anybody any time individually, yeah- and **it has to be a process, not a one off thing**, that we find a forum another

day or another meeting, **we may not make, you know, eh, the progress may not be that, that fast**, and we need to move forward as fast as we can. (Rahim GM060821)

Rahim here encouraged me as “chair of this meeting,” seemingly pre-positioning me for my eventual role as PI, to follow up “individually” to group members in order to “cement” our discussion and then make the decision based on my “synthesis” which would in turn “help us to reach a decision.” I took his advice to heart, and as a result of this conversation and affected by what I had experienced with my colleagues, I decided to let go of the timeline I had for myself at this point and instead take the time to talk to everyone individually in another round of interviews to propose and discuss project ideas. This decision was then an ethical, methodological choice based on sense of interdependence that was arising in our collaboration, that we could continue to discuss as Rahim suggested as “a process, not a one-off thing” to come to a decision as a group through a relational building of consensus (Chilisa, 2020). In this way, seeking consensus could also serve as a counterbalance to idea of me as a leader or key decision maker at this point in our process, and my positioning of me as “chair” as jointly re-negotiated as someone who would return to the drawing board and, through relationship, come to a conclusion for the good of the group based on what I had heard. It’s interesting that here, Rahim acknowledges that this role of “chair” requires labor, noting “it may not be easy” to contact everyone and “come up with that synthesis.” For me, his comments highlight that co-laboring through a discourse of interdependence requires significant effort and willingness to work across difference which is an important caveat to imaginings of interdependence as a sort of utopian or strictly harmonious, egalitarian process. His acknowledgement of the labor involved again makes me wonder about the influence of my gender in being cast in the role of “chair” with the emotional or perhaps cognitive labor “anticipating needs, identifying options for filling them, making decisions, and monitoring progress” often implicitly expected of women (Daming, 2019) and likewise expected of me as “chair.”

I later set out to balance our collaborative labor, however, through enacting a discourse of interdependence in our fourth group meeting to resist the expectation that I as PI should individually create our research instruments, as described the beginning of this chapter (GM041422). In that meeting, I had been steadily resisting the PI role that was first named then; generally in conversations and group meeting with colleagues, I held back from jumping in to give input in order to value space and time for others to speak their minds, curiosity rather than judgment by asking questions to get more information before making decisions, and listening and reacting rather than acting first and expecting others to follow (PRJ041522). As a result, I did not speak out immediately in the meeting to directly resist the implicit assignment of that task to me. Instead, after the meeting, I sought to re-negotiate the terms of my role as PI, from someone who individually crafts research instruments to someone who seeks feedback and consensus among group members in order to invite active collaboration. After expressing my bewilderment and frustration at being asked directly to do these tasks, I discussed with my advisor Su and solidified my values of consensus. I then took her suggestion to **“resist driving the bus and instead, handing out steering wheels”** (PRJ041522). Instead of drafting these documents myself, I reached out to core participants who were present at the meeting via WhatsApp, a less formal and more accessible communication channel than email, to ask about what they would like to see on our research tools. Makamba responded with many suggestions and in fact, in the meeting, had suggested that Mkude volunteer to assist me in the first place (GM041422), and in time, others followed by offering as little or as much as they could contribute by way of ideas which I then used to construct our focus group questions and field observation guide. Whereas the completion of task had been expected of me as an individual PI, I instead moved to build consensus around our research instruments which enacted a different way of being in the PI role that seemed more resonant with my values and decolonizing intentions in this project to question and counter my Global North authority. Additionally, as my advisor Su later pointed out, it may be that these and other values associated with decolonizing

are intertwined with what is often also associated with feminized labor: listening, attending to relationship and the affective, and enacting change through consistent monitoring and adaptation.

I came back to the practice of building consensus many times throughout our collaboration, for example, in asking colleagues individually through interviews and informal conversations about how to construct a table with basic biodata about each participant in my write-up, as is customary in social science research, while also respecting the intimate knowledge that participants have of their colleagues which meant such a table may reveal them to each other. While different colleagues had different opinions on the matter based on their own positionalities within the group, I listened to them all and ultimately decided to present participants in three groups to refrain from potentially exposing participants to each other with individual information (PRJ110222).

In this way, recasting the purpose of my PI role through the prism of interdependence allowed me to see it in a different light which I believe can be ultimately decolonizing. Because I was uncomfortable with the “traditional” or normalized role of a PI that I felt pressured to be - someone who made decisions individually, demanded labor from others authoritatively, and was all-knowing in matters of our research – I could instead reinterpret our dynamic through the lens of an Ubuntu research ethic (Chilisa, 2020) guided by principles of harmony, reciprocity, and social responsibility to community and enacted through practices such as consensus building. As Chilisa states, such an approach to research can “disrupt and decolonize dominant deficit thinking by promoting compassion, care, togetherness, empathy, and respectful ways of doing research that allow[s] researchers to see themselves in the researched,” (2020, p. 241, citing Swanson). Allowing researchers to “see themselves in the researched” points to the resulting sense of identity-in-community that I have felt as a result of our collaborative work together; when I am frustrated or confused about my role within our collaboration, it is grounding to instead see myself as community member of contributing back to a group which also sustains me, rather than feeling pressure to be an all-knowing individual who

begrudgingly takes on the labor of a group. This sense of identity-in-community has helped me to resist white supremacy ideals of individualism Okun (2021) as well as counter the expectations of whiteness as expertise (Pailey, 2020) and encourage Others to do the same. Furthermore, Chilisa (2020) describes an “Ubuntu worldview” as a distinctly “African contribution to any researcher’s reflexivity and critical journey into the lives of others” (p. 241). As I have experienced it, orienting towards interdependence has changed the way I do research, and recognizing this as an ontological contribution from the Global South is an important step in embracing “emergences” that can orient efforts to decolonize collaboration (Santos, 2012, 2014).

Re-negotiating my role as PI through a discourse of interdependence offers similar possibilities for countering other Lady Bountiful-like positionings of mine in our collaboration. For example, my co-constructed positionings as a “benevolent giver” who is “well-resourced” could be re-framed as contributing to community well-being through valuing resource sharing and reciprocity. If I have a resource that my colleagues desire and could benefit from, such as “native speaker English,” then I could share this resource with them and their extended communities in recognition of all of the ways that they have contributed to my own well-being and professional advancement. I initially reasoned helping Mkude with editing his dissertation in this way; I felt a sense of responsibility to him as a participant in my research in that he had given me his time and energy, so I wanted to give that time and energy back in a way that was meaningful to him (PRJ081021). In many ways, this reciprocity-based approach could be a paraphrase of Rahim’s earlier comment of “why not?” (Rahim INT113022A) If I thought could contribute to my community, or was being explicitly asked to contribute in ways that are available to me, then why not? In other ways, I feel that I am giving from a place of generosity informed by a sense of identity-in-community that seems to be mutually meaningful. Most often, when I chose to contribute resources back to the community, or as Minani said, by providing “meat and juice” at our party “not because anyone forced [you] to do it but because [you] wanted to” (PRJ121522), these actions were

seen and appreciated by my colleagues as “loving kindness” (Minani PRJ121522). As I told Robinson in an interview, I saw these acts as “returning the kindness that was given to me” (INT110922), taking up the identity-in-community that had so often been offered to me by my colleagues.

In this way, identity-in-community, as bolstered by a discourse of interdependence, seems to offer the alluring option of stepping outside of the identities I bring with me as heavy baggage into our collaboration. I can set down some of the guilt, uncertainty, and unease and just relax into the welcoming, affirming arms of community, without having to worry about my role in interrupting identity positionings that serve to further entrench colonial ideals and hierarchies. After all, how much control over our identities do we really have in reality? Identity-in-community seems to offer another conception of self that might help us leave all the pesky colonizing negativity behind and see ourselves and our relationships differently in ways that prioritize the relational, moving us closer together rather than further apart. I believe in the power of community, and I believe in “loving kindness,” and I want these to be values more widely shared in collaborations across difference of all kinds.

And yet, I am still haunted by the ghost of Lady Bountiful. Her spectral whiteness looks back at me from the mirror held up by the Other, and her sickeningly sweet benevolence hangs in the air like the scent of an overripe banana. The blind optimism that could have sated me in the past now seems mushy and rotten, leaving a sour taste in my mouth and keeps me moving forward, searching.

Unsettled Curiosity: “I have no choice but to help out and be nice”

As much as I appreciate being lulled into a discourse of interdependence that can assuage some of my internal struggle in the shadow of Lady Bountiful, part of why she is such a powerful archetype is her ability to remind me of the ongoing coloniality present in intentions and relationships that seem well-meaning and overwhelmingly positive. While there is clearly much decolonizing potential in being able to see ourselves as part of a larger social whole to foster relationality, reciprocity, and other values inspired by a sense of identity-in-community, I must acknowledge here the potential issues in taking up

identity-in-community uncritically, namely: leaving power differentials related to race and gender unaddressed and theoretical appropriation of Ubuntu-inspired ideas by (white) researchers from Global North.

Similar to the discussion of ongoing coloniality in my colleagues' embrace of a discourse of interdependence to negotiate their roles in the previous chapter, I also see the ways in which negotiating my role as PI through this similar discourse skims over power differentials particular to race and gender. Making sense of my role as PI purely through the lens of interdependence leaves race unacknowledged and runs the risk of colorblindness which can be harmful in the sense that it can normalize racialized hierarchies in collaboration, such as whiteness as expertise (Pailey, 2020) and relegation of racialized Others to the "donkey work" (Kumi and Kamruzzaman, 2021). As the added lens of the Lady Bountiful allegory shows, whiteness in particular is unaddressed in narratives of benevolence, kindness, and pernicious generosity; often, it is the privileges of race and class which preposition white women to travel and make themselves available for the covertly civilizing work of acculturating racialized Others in formerly colonized nations (e.g., Harper and Cavanagh, 1994). Combined with the racialization and economic attractiveness of "native speakers" from colonizing nations in the English teaching industry (e.g., Ruecker and Ives, 2015), Lady Bountiful-types also perpetuate hierarchies of race through language. Furthermore, there is a risk of dismissing the Lady's benevolence as a factor of simple kindness or even "natural" feminine qualities, and the role of gender in care work is suspiciously overlooked. There is a way in which reinforcing a sense of responsibility born of a sense of interdependence naturalizes Lady Bountiful "selflessness" (Harper, 2000, p. 133) or diminishing herself as a gendered being in order to tacitly support patriarchy as part of the colonial matrix of power. Blended with the native speaker saviorism (Jenks and Lee, 2020) or noblesse oblige (Vandrick, 2002) of those fortunate enough to have the resource of native speaker English, a sense of interdependence can transform into obligation, thereby foreclosing opportunities to resist. As I

commented in my journal, pondering the pressure that I felt to oblige the many (male) requests for editing, in those moments I often feel as though **“I have no choice but to help out and be nice”** (PRJ030122). At this intersection, whiteness and femininity remain invisible, slippery, and in service of ongoing coloniality.

Furthermore, considering my own positionality as a white researcher from the Global North, I wonder about the extent to which my taking on Ubuntu-inspired epistemologies, or what I have been calling *identity-in-community*, is theoretical appropriation for my own gain (see also Lynch and Motha, 2023). Simply deploying Africanist concepts of Ubuntu is after all, not a decolonizing panacea, and using them in research may raise valid concerns about intellectually colonial mechanisms by which I again position myself as a “foreigner who knows” the local Tanzanian context and potentially essentialize my colleagues as “African” or in monolithic agreement with romanticized, community-based ideals instead of the rich and complex individuals they are. I am aware that for me to use a term like Ubuntu can stir a sort of exoticism which benefits me, despite the fact that the term did not originate from my participants themselves and is not a Swahili word but which may nonetheless lend me a sort of academic credibility reminiscent of Lady Bountiful, embodying “the imperative to know and the incredible arrogance of that imperative” (Harper and Cavanagh, 1994, p. 28). What does it mean for me as a white, Global North researcher to take up theories or ideas and put them onto Global South colleagues? Is it essentializing or othering to project ideals such as Ubuntu-like interdependence onto participants when they may not share the same terms or values, or even share my same political goals? My continued grappling with the implications of incorporating ideas such as Ubuntu-inspired identity-in-community in spaces structured by coloniality is ongoing.

However, as I reflect on my own uptake of these alternative ways of being in relationship and in research, I know that what I am motivated by is not merely appropriating these ideas, but rather, incorporating them into how I go about my work as a researcher and collaborator. I do not aim to put

these conceptualizations on and take them off as I see fit; rather, as I engage with them, they have affected me and informed my practices. As my own negotiation of the PI role through a discourse of interdependence shows, my own emergent sense of identity-in-community offers decolonizing potential for researchers and collaborators like me to counter colonial ideas of individualism and white supremacy, and the resulting possibilities for self-reflexive action and deeper connection with the Other are the ultimate goal of my research.

The figure of Lady Bountiful is as helpful for self-reflection as the notion of identity-in-community is for imagining a way forward. As Meiners (2002) notes, this co-laborative work requires “a little self-deconstruction and the capacity to invent” (p. 90), signaling the need for both critical self-reflection and forging of new collaborative relationships, “in consultation with” communities the Lady seeks to serve (Harper, 2000, p. 140). This imperative not only legitimates collaboration as a vehicle of change but also raises important questions about the role of the Other in deconstructing colonial dynamics and how, or if, the Lady may resist. There seems to be a real need to “rearticulate” the white, female teacher identity in the forging of new relationships with the Other (Harper, 2000, p. 140). Cultivating a sense of identity-in-community may mean trusting that the Other is connected with you, even if the connection is not immediately visible, and our inherent interdependence is a reason to trust people because we know we need each other. When this trust is based on the Other’s humanity - given, not earned – we can all acknowledge that we are “intimately and integrally” connected to the well-being of others as a form of resistance to systems that may have us imagine otherwise (Chun, 2016, p. 568).

Conclusion: “That shouldn’t change what you believe in, because that is inside you.”

On my last day on campus before departing Morogoro in June, in our third interview together, Rahim shared a beautiful metaphor with me about how keeping to one’s ethics while in a position of power is like being a Muslim who is fasting while looking at food (INT060222). He seemed to cast fasting as similar to being in a leadership position in which being tempted with power in front of you is the true

test of one's character. However, he emphasized agency in deciding what to do with power; if you know who you are inside and what you value, you can still act according to your values. As he stated,

**it does not really mean if a label is used or a name is used then of course, practically, or in practice, things change from the way that you wanted them to be.** I don't think so. **And this is one of the things that you need to kind of balance.** For instance, if you are a Muslim and you're fasting, the moment that your faith is, what should I say, strictly tested is when the food is put in front of you. Yes, yeah. **So, but you cannot say that I'm fasting, that I don't want to look at the food. That's not the point.** (laughing) The point is looking at the food, food being around you does not really mean it's breaking your fast. Your fast is still there. You see? [...] **But that shouldn't change what you believe in because that is inside you.** Those are externalities, what we call them. Externalities or external influences. Internally what you believe in...

He seemed to suggest that identity labels are just that, labels – and in my case, with the label of PI, I retain agency over how to act within the roles I am cast into. He also implied that someone cast into roles or social positionings of power, such as myself, cannot deny their power, saying, “You cannot say that I'm fasting, that I don't want to look at the food. That's not the point.” In the end, I was so moved by the beauty of his idea that “externalities,” or ways of being in the world that may not align with one's values, “shouldn't change what you believe in, because that is inside you.” As he spoke, I felt a shift inside of me, a cracking open. I was immediately struck by how in flux our identities are, and how my own ideas about collaboration were changing, right in that moment, and this sense of constant shifting has stayed with me throughout our work together. I was also heartened by his abiding belief in agency, that just because a person occupies a position of power, it does not mean that they do not have choice in how to use it or what changes to contribute that power towards. While I am more aware than ever of how our agency itself is constrained and shaped by discourses around us at any given moment, I appreciate his optimism as a type of grounding hope, a potential way forward.

## Chapter 6: Conclusion

This concluding chapter attempts to tie together some common threads of this dissertation and suggest ways forward in future study and international collaborations in English language teaching. I summarize the main ideas from my analysis before briefly discussing some overarching themes which add to and complicate current conceptualizations of identity and collaboration in the field. I then share some theoretical and practical implications of this research in the form of broad advice for collaborating within the context of North-South relationships; I emphasize the importance of cultivating a sense of identity-in-community particularly for Global North collaborators, centering flexibility, community, and relationships in research design and practice, inviting conversation around power dynamics between collaborators, and engaging the emotionality of decolonizing work. I end by offering questions for future exploring and grappling with the complexities of what it means to decolonize collaboration, looking to interdependence to fuel and sustain the ongoing push for global social justice through working across difference.

### Introduction: “This research cannot totally abolish... it just minimizes”

I’m sitting in “my” office, the room deemed mine by my colleagues at their departmental office building in Mazimbu, Morogoro. It’s November and eerily dark, quiet, and windy; the power is out again, so almost no one has come to the office today (PRJ110922). My open door has slammed shut a few times with the strong gusts that sweep through the hallway and rattle the damask curtains in the otherwise sparse space. Robinson has shown up, however, to attend our last interview, and I am surprised and grateful – even more so when he offers me a piece of the ear of roasted corn he bought on his way in, cheerily taking it back when I couldn’t eat it all. I realize I’m going to miss tender moments like these, the relational textures of interacting up close and in person instead of far away as I will be soon, again.

As we weave our way through my “member check” questions, I articulate my main ideas of analysis so far including the ways in which our collaboration both reifies and resists “neocolonialism,” the term that I have come to use with my colleagues to indicate coloniality. As we discuss, he takes notes, scribbling on a piece of paper situated on the broad desk between us. Discussing my conclusions, he asserts, “By your presence, and dealing with us, and researching, we are now also satisfied that we can [interact with foreigners], but still, there is in some instances-” He writes “neocolonialism” on the paper between us. I am surprised at his display of criticality, given his and the general deflection of the role of coloniality in our relationship on the part of my colleagues, but I affirm his sentiment from my own standing. “Yeah. Certainly.” He continues.

“So, I'm just trying to say **this research cannot totally abolish.**”

“Yes, it cannot totally abolish.”

“**This mentality will remain**, but for some issues to some extent, it has reduced or minimized some wrong thinking that we had about this collaboration. So, this is what I’m saying. Maybe I got you wrong when you said it is going to, what you said, to do away with this mentality?” He checks in with me about my wording.

I clarify, “Resist neocolonial mentality,” and he carries on.

“Yeah, resist neocolonial mentality. **It just minimizes.** It minimizes because we have identified some issues that **now we are different from before.** We do not do the same as before. **We have changed somehow, but yet there will be...**” He taps his pen on the paper where “neocolonialism” is written and hanging in the air, unsaid but felt.

“Yes, **neocolonialism is still there,**” I concur.

## Summary: Looking Back

### Overall

Overall, my analysis suggests that the coloniality that continues to operate within our collaborative relationship is both reified and resisted in various ways. I found that my colleagues and I co-constructed the identities available to us in the course of working together. For my colleagues, the role of *Participant-Researcher* was discursively co-constructed through related positionings of them as *in need* of credit for promotion as well as visibility as a department, *connected to resources* such as classrooms with an emphasis on social resources such as relationships that could contribute to our project, and *experts* in their local context and research methods. These positionings contest typical coloniality derived working dynamics in which Southern partners may lack agency or perceived expertise; however, at the same time, colleagues resisted discourses of coloniality and race in English language teaching which may allow those inequities to flourish. In my role as appointed *Principal Investigator* of our project, my co-constructed positionings of *benevolent giver* of labor and material resources, *well-resourced* with material resources as well as time and energy for our project, and *foreigner who knows* about the local context served to make sense of my functioning as a sort of leader despite my own misgivings. This role and my positionings reified coloniality by adhering to the colonial archetype of Lady Bountiful at the intersection of whiteness and femininity, but I was able to re-negotiate my role as Principal Investigator through a discourse of interdependence emphasizing consensus and relationality to resist coloniality in the course of our collaboration.

While we both experienced tensions in our roles, related to the strain of being both participant *and* researcher as well as my self-awareness of fitting the colonial archetype of a Lady Bountiful, a discourse of interdependence allowed us both to re-negotiate our roles and cultivate reciprocity, relationality, and equity as opposed to equality in our working relationship. This discourse and our identities within it shaped our practices towards a sense of *identity-in-community*, or seeing oneself as part of a larger social whole interconnected with the well-being of others and our relationship. The shift

that this sense of identity manifested, largely in my own research and collaborative practices, gestures towards the decolonizing potential of *identity-in-community* to re-frame collaborative relationships in English language teaching and in particular, between North-South partners. This conceptualization of identity is decolonizing in the sense that it resists individualist, capitalistic notions of identity dominated by epistemologies of the Global North and instead looks to Global South ways of being as alternatives. However, closer attention to power, as exerted through racialized and gendered relations for example, is warranted in order to both acknowledge and move beyond the ways in which these relationships continue to be structured by ongoing coloniality.

### Overarching Themes

Of the many overarching themes in this analysis, I would like to highlight three here that contribute to current conversations on decoloniality and collaboration in English language teaching through the lens of identity: (1) how we can be conscious and critical of colonizing discourses and still deploy them; (2) how we benefit from agentive and perhaps subversive deployments of identities which are nonetheless complicated by colonial complicity; and (3) how a discourse of interdependence offers an alternate, potentially decolonizing means to negotiate our individual and shared senses of self.

My analysis suggests that for both my colleagues and me, we can be conscious *and* critical of neocolonial discourses in English language teaching *and still* deploy them. In the case of my colleagues, this can be seen in conversant familiarity with terminology such as “linguistic imperialism” (Phillipson, 1992; e.g., Chupaki INT050922) and critiques of native speakerism (e.g., Kajani INT042722, Robinson INT042922) while still positioning “native” speakers as expert (e.g., Chupaki PRJ052422) and “needed” (Robinson INT032821) in the teaching and learning of English. In my case, this can be seen in my awareness of my positioning of *benevolent giver* as part of the colonial Lady Bountiful archetype while still insistently offering resources to my colleagues (e.g., Renee in Makamba INT112021) and as well as labor beyond my own capacities (e.g., Renee GM052322). This shared phenomenon suggests that critical

consciousness alone is not enough to actively confront ongoing coloniality in collaborations; as demonstrated in my discussions with my colleagues, mere consciousness can lead to seeing problematic colonial dynamics as “out there” or present in *other* collaborations but not in our own (e.g., Tabasamu, INT111522), or at least not discussed openly between us. It then makes sense that if we do not take on these issues as our own, it is easier to avoid tougher, personally impactful topics such as racialized and gendered inequities within English language teaching, the avoidance of which was another common theme.

This theme highlights the need for increased *critical* reflexivity where individuals consider ways in which they are complicit in the problems they perceive, perhaps cultivated through practices of autoethnography (Hughes and Pennington, 2017, p. 19). In addition, dialogic practices which emphasize research and theorizing as social processes (e.g., Vakil et al., 2016; also see Chapter 10 of Vavrus and Bartlett, 2013) are vital to building crystalized understanding (Richardson and St. Pierre, 2005) around the challenges of working across difference. However, it is also important to note that what counts as a “challenge” or “problem” may not be a matter of shared perception between collaborators, and current discourses of coloniality which position the Other as “still colonized” may provoke valid defensiveness or a sense of forced “inferiority” on the part of those who do not want to be positioned that way, as commonly illustrated by my colleagues’ and institutional responses to my work in Tanzania (e.g. Robinson INT110922; Rahim FN033022). In this way, insisting on my own conceptualizations of (de)coloniality devoid of opportunities for dialogue would be another form of ventriloquizing the Global South, as Spivak (1988) noted long ago, while this pattern of Global North researchers privileging our own understandings of the issues remains. These complexities spark important questions at the intersections of identity and decolonializing work in English language teaching. Are there alternate ways of seeing the Other in the context of ongoing coloniality than can help us *all* move forward, ways that

may be less binary, less prey to North-South knowledge politics and more nimble, able to recognize our agentive negotiations to make use of identities and discourses when and how they benefit us?

Interrelatedly, my analysis suggests that we *do* benefit from agentive uses of the currently available identities of self and Other, though this is ethically complicated by their complicity in ongoing coloniality. This recognition of benefit is in line with other identity-focused studies that illustrate deploying identity agentively as a resource for personal gain (e.g., Canagarajah, 2012; Song, 2016) though sometimes to reinforce problematic hierarchies between local and foreign colleagues, such as between “native” and “non-native” speakers of English (Trent, 2012). Intriguingly, my analysis suggests a somewhat subversive use of my identities by my colleagues that may otherwise be deemed harmful; for example, my colleagues use my racialized identities to benefit themselves such as through the use of my “native” English to further their own professional writing (e.g., Mkude PRJ081021; Makamba PRJ03022) and advertising my “foreignness” to garner institutional visibility for the department (e.g., Kajani INT42722). These episodes suggest conscious, agentive uses of problematic discourses in English language teaching for their own gain which are subversive yet troubling. These identity deployments represent ways in which white “native” speakers like me can leverage our privileges to benefit the Other, but they nonetheless feed the same oppressive systems rather than challenging or transforming them. While I know I can lend a sense of assurance and legitimacy to colleagues’ professional writing which will help them achieve their own goals, I also don’t want to reinforce racialized, colonially-derived ideologies inherent in the native speaker concept (e.g. Flores and Rosa, 2015) or perpetuate “whiteness as property” (Harris, 1993, as cited in Ruecker, 2011) to be coveted and benevolently lent out but never fully relinquished. Furthermore, conceptualizing identities as resources in this way also contributes to capitalistic notions of identity which place the responsibility on individuals to wield identities strategically in order to gain rewards in presumed competition with others (Chun, 2016). An added layer of complexity is that my awareness and resulting struggles in this vein may hamper our collaboration in

practice, preventing me from taking a more decisive and proactive role in our work together which could hinder our “success,” however defined.

A discourse of interdependence may provide an alternate way of defining “success” in collaboration, however, perhaps via well-being of community and strength of our relationships which may ultimately carve a path towards decolonizing our senses of self. This possibility is drawn from another common theme that my colleagues and I both utilized a discourse of interdependence to emphasize relationality and mutual benefit in our collaborative work and make sense of our roles within it. While this discourse can notably and problematically overlook the racialized and gendered power dynamics that I suggest are simultaneously at play in our collaboration, I also experienced the transformative effects of how focusing on interdependence could re-frame my ideals of collaboration as well as the marked difference this philosophy represents from my own context. I think back to how, while chatting informally in the tearoom one day, Amani remarked to me that “African Americans” blame slavery for all of their problems whereas “we” (Africans or Tanzanians) think “that’s in the past” so it can’t be changed, preferring to focus instead on the present and the future (FN112922). Later, when meeting with my advisor Su on Zoom, she reflected back that focusing on the future instead of legacies of harm is “one way” of managing the struggle for global equity. Her idea echoed Santos’ (2018) notion of epistemologies of the South, recognizing the experiences of oppression as a source of strength and knowledge. Amani’s comments on slavery as well as my colleagues’ general reluctance to discuss race and colonization with me may be interpreted differently in the U.S. context, but perhaps it is not that they are erasing the influence of coloniality but rather, choosing to move on (e.g., Mukoma Wa Ngũgĩ, 2021). As rare yet recurring comments indicated (e.g., Mkude INT032021; Kajani INT111622; Robinson INT110922), colleagues may not be denying the existence of race and colonization but instead choosing to center relationality, harmony, and moving forward via mutual benefit. Doing so may effectively shift the gaze of decolonizing work from a focus on the past, or as Mamdani has suggested,

rethinking our present in the context of a past (Makuvaza and Shinza, 2017), to instead focus on our interdependent future and what that asks of us all as co-laborers working individually and together to realize that vision.

### Implications: Looking forward

The abovementioned points of departure thus offer important insights into how scholars and educators can decolonize collaborations in English language teaching with special attention to North-South positionalities. By “decolonizing,” I refer to taking stock of “absences” in the uneven terrain of globalized knowledge production and looking towards “emergences” as alternative ways of being in collaboration with the Other (Santos, 2012). While this form of decolonization remains incommensurate with the ongoing efforts to repatriate Indigenous lands (Tuck and Yang, 2012), I see these decolonizations plural in a solidarity which is fraught and necessarily unsettled. As Tuck and Yang (2012) remind us, “Solidarity is an uneasy, reserved, and unsettled matter that neither reconciles present grievances nor forecloses future conflict,” (p. 3) and I wish to propose the same sentiment for collaboration. As this research has confirmed, collaboration is not easy or automatic, but I would not advocate for a version which tries to preclude and avoid all forms of conflict, challenge, and disagreement. I take heart from Tsing’s notion of *friction*, as when two sticks rub together to spark flames of “new arrangements of culture and power” (Tsing, as cited in Vavrus and Bartlett, 2013, p. 3) that I think are key to moving us all forward. I believe that the challenges we have encountered have been likewise generative towards alternate ways of thinking about identity and co-laboring in a research setting. With this in mind, and based on my own specific and localized experience, I would offer the following pieces of broad advice to those in similar collaborations.

### Suggestions for International Collaborations

1. *Develop and cultivate a sense of identity-in-community as a collaborator from the Global North.*

As discussed in Chapter 2, common intellectual understandings of *who we are in the world* often reproduce individualist and capitalistic logics rooted in knowledges and epistemologies associated with

the Global North such as visibility, ownership, and identity as a resource (e.g., Morgan and Clarke, 2011; Skeggs, 2008). As a collaborator from the Global North, I see how this sense of self and Other is reinforced by structures and ideologies dominant in my own society in the United States, from the emphasis on competition and neoliberal responsabilization (Chun, 2016) to the values of white supremacy which valorize urgency and individual perfection over humanity and communal well-being (Okun, 2021). These values mean that we from similar Global North contexts are purposefully steered away from the collective values of community and taught that we must be self-sufficient and independent rather than *interdependent* with those around us, locally and globally. Working with my colleagues has cast these ideals into sharp relief, and combined with readings and conversations around conceptions of Ubuntu (e.g., Makalela, 2015; Sarr, 2020), collaboration has cracked me open to allow a different sense of self to seep in. This contrasting sense of *identity-in-community* has always been felt in my previous experiences teaching and learning across the African continent, but it was not until studying collaboration more intently and working *through* collaboration that I could name and operationalize these values in my own professional relationships, a developmental process which is ongoing. This means that co-laboring or “laboring together” (Vavrus and Bartlett, 2013) demands a self-reflective type of labor from those from the Global North, a deconstructing and reconstructing of the self who can both see and value the ways in which we need each other and justice for all if we are to ever call ourselves human. As with collaboration, this identity work is not easy and will benefit from like-minded individuals in the Global North forging new relationships with the Other and coming together to form communities that learn from and foster these different ways of being. As my own experience has highlighted, collaboration makes this identity work possible and provides fields of practice, sustained by constant humility, humor, and willingness to *critically* self-reflect (Hughes and Pennington, 2017) and do things differently.

## 2. *Prioritize flexibility, community, and relationships.*

In the vein of doing things differently, our collaborative research benefitted from a design which emphasized flexibility, community, and relationships. As detailed throughout these chapters, I was inspired by what Chilisa (2020) calls an Ubuntu research ethic and gradually came to adopt its interrelated tenets manifested in actions such as taking time to build consensus around key decisions and incorporating reciprocity into my dissertation research design. However, while starting from the base of participatory design research (Bang and Vossoughi, 2016; Leavy, 2017), which also aligns with these goals and explicitly incorporates participant agency to counter colonially derived patterns of research, our process also highlights the need to remain flexible with expectations of participants who have their own goals, interests, and lives apart from the intimate demands of critical research methodologies (Horner, 2002).

Likewise, my colleagues both implicitly and explicitly reminded me of the need to stay flexible with my own, culturally rooted perceptions of “time” and “priorities,” as Rahim put it in our final interview (INT113022A), underscoring cross-cultural differences that may arise in international collaboration and demand reflexivity in return. He in turn told me a story from a colleague which illustrates the types of “complications” that can occur from “not knowing each other,” and the fact that in Global South locations such as Tanzania, social relationships may be prioritized above work deadlines, and the story goes something like this: his Tanzanian colleague was due to present on their “progress” on a project to some “Western sponsors.” However, the day before they were due to present, they received news that another colleague had passed away, and so they dutifully informed their Western counterparts of the news. The next day, as the Tanzanian colleague was on their way to the funeral in Dar es Salaam, they received a call from the counterparts asking why they were not present at the agreed meeting location. The Tanzanian replied, “I told you yesterday that my colleague is dead.” The counterparts said, “Yes, your colleague is dead, but you’re not dead.” Rahim laughed heartily at this

punchline and went on to explain that it was his colleague's cultural assumption that if they informed them about the death of a colleague, the counterparts would automatically know that they wouldn't attend the meeting without explicitly telling them, but alas, as Rahim put it, this priority of attending funerals over work obligations "doesn't exist in these people's culture." (Rahim INT113022A)

Rahim's story echoes Kajani's comments in another interview that bridging cultural differences between us could be a matter of asking, "How do we perceive time, and how do we prioritize issues?" As he re-iterated, in Tanzania, "we put society before the activities" and "society has taken a major role," but he assertively added, "this is what brings development for us" (Kajani INT111622). He sees a focus on the maintenance of social bonds as vital, as a source of "development" which keeps people moving forward. His comments highlight that it is not inefficient or "underdeveloped" to prioritize people and relationships over work; it's a radically different system that those of us who have different values could learn a lot from and flex with. For my colleagues, identity-in-community is a source of strength (Madzima, 2014) in daily professional life, for example, in operation of the department and coping with current realities such as large class sizes as well as professional growth and manifesting new opportunities. Furthermore, the social relationships that co-laborators such as my colleagues carefully maintain benefit foreign partners such as myself in tangible ways that are often overlooked and underappreciated yet integral to North-South collaborations (Kumi and Kamruzzaman, 2021; Sundberg, 2019). Through working together and flexibly negotiating the "friction" of our differing expectations around labor and participation, we also make room for uncertainty, the air that fans the flames of new arrangements of culture and power (Tsing, as cited in Vavrus and Bartlett, 2013). Uncertainty has been my constant companion in this work, an unsettling yet crucial tool towards deconstructing and reconstructing collaboration centered around relationality and community.

*3. Invite conversations around power vis a vis identity despite challenges.*

Our collaborative experience suggests that colonial power dynamics as a function of variously positioned identities are still at play as we work across difference, even though we may wish and claim otherwise. As such, conversations around how we make sense of and operate in our collaboration, given who we are, still need to be initiated in order to spark ongoing reflection on the part of both myself and my colleagues. Our experience also suggests that these conversations need trust and history or a shared, felt investment in our relationship that develops over time – eight years and counting, in our case. Thus, anyone hoping to dismantle coloniality in North-South collaborations should be prepared for the long haul and not get discouraged when co-laborators avoid or dismiss discussions around perceived inequities. Our experience also suggests, as underscored by Robinson's comments at the opening of this chapter, that we can "change somehow" to act "different from before," and that gently prodding conversations such as those I have engaged with colleagues can open space for different perspectives. Inviting conversation elicits a different way of engaging in collaboration and offers other possibilities for ways of being that open us to be changed by The Other and distribute power more equitably. After this project, I am motivated to keep having conversations with colleagues which may feel uneasy in the moment but push against hierarchies I seek to dismantle. As Robinson also signaled in his interview (INT110922), "The way you present, you present things in such a way that you value each and everybody. That's why we do not think of our differences. Although, we are different. (laughing)." Masquerading equality between us will not fool anyone; co-laborators are still aware of social differences, though we are uncomfortable talking about them openly with each other. Ruecker (2011) concurs that "Discussions of difference tend to foster a sense of unease and stir emotions, which is precisely why they must occur," with defensive or derisive reactions handled "patiently yet unyieldingly" (p. 416). My experience in doing this pole pole/*slowly slowly* has motivated me to continue in this vein.

However, the work of pushing against boundaries is challenging. I have felt the emotional and relational strain of driving what may be seen as my own, Western-influenced decolonizing agenda, and

while I value my colleagues' perspectives and feedback on the extent to which that does or does not align with their own perceptions and priorities, I know that leaving racial, gendered, linguistic, and other hierarchies intact via "compromise and accommodation" only means that they will continue (Trent, 2016, p. 316). Leaving racial and gender hierarchies unchallenged also falls within the purview of a Lady Bountiful (Meiners, 2002; Schlesselman-Tarango, 2016), and perhaps it would be a better use of the power of my own white femininity to infiltrate and bend the ear of white patriarchy, plumbing that relationality as a source of strength and change. Ultimately, I know that the path of resistance is the path I want to be on, and I hope it runs parallel to the interests of my colleagues such that we continue intersecting and meet down the road in a more equitable future.

#### *4. Acknowledge and engage the emotionality of decolonizing work*

My analysis also highlights the inherent sensitivities of trying to excavate, navigate, and confront systems of power in identity and collaboration. This common thread supports the need to acknowledge the emotionality of decolonizing work which aims to deconstruct and reconstruct identities and take timid steps towards new, unfamiliar yet unfurling ways of being. It is emotionally difficult to change personal perceptions of self and Other, and treating this process as purely intellectual, cognitive, or discursive belies the real emotional labor and courage needed to make oneself vulnerable and build trust in Others with one's own vulnerability. The utility of vulnerability, opening oneself and one's experiences to critique and uncertainty, has been preached by critical social researchers as a way to interrogate one's own positionality and privilege (e.g., Behar, 1996; Hughes and Pennington, 2017; Spry, 2001). As my analysis has illustrated, vulnerability can be a tool towards self-reflection and social change, but casting oneself as vulnerable can also reify narratives of coloniality such as in case of white women in supposed danger justifying white, patriarchal, colonial violence (Appleby, 2010; Hamad, 2020). As such, researchers in privileged positions must use this tool of vulnerability carefully, consciously, and accountably, perhaps balanced with member checks and data across multiple sources

(Canagarajah, 2012b, p. 119) or other ways to enact responsibility for a researcher's representation of the Other (Madison, 2005).

In a similar vein, this research has benefitted from a sense of emotional intimacy with participants, which is likewise complicated and incurs emotional labor to make sense of variously positioned and layered relations. While a certain intimacy between researcher and participant is often prized and valorized in critical ethnographic work (Horner, 2002), my complex experiences around making sense of the gendered nature of my relationships with colleagues illustrates that not all researchers can be intimate with the same stakes. This insight asks the field to reconsider expectations of researchers in critical work which centers relationality and takes the resulting "messiness" for granted without discussing how we navigate the varied emotional labor given researcher and participant identities (c.f. Vakil et al., 2016). The lucidity of these insights also reasserts the value of methods such as personal journaling and creative writing which embrace emotion as a way of knowing (e.g., Mulvihill and Swaminathan, 2017b) and integral element in deconstructing power from the inside out (e.g., Ryden, 2012).

#### Future Research

In many ways, these insights also ask more questions than they answer, and point to generative directions for future research, a few of which I share here:

- How can we as researchers, educators, and collaborators continue to resist taken-for-granted notions of identity while also grappling with our own epistemological entanglements?
  - Ubuntu-inspired identity-in-community is one such intellectual intervention, but this notion comes with potential pitfalls of theoretical appropriation and essentializing of peoples of the Global South by which it is inspired. In addition, identity-in-community may not sufficiently account for identity hierarchies, such as those of race and gender, which continue to shape our senses of self and Other.

- Further, embracing a discourse of interdependence may be seen as agentive, as when choosing to focus on developing a positive relationship with the Other rather than, as some may perceive, dwelling on notions of harm.
- How do we negotiate and make use of these alternate forms of identity when and how they benefit us?
- How do we as collaborators negotiate the expectations of our institutions in the course of working across difference?
  - For example, how do we negotiate identity-in-community as a way of being with opposing neoliberal discourses and pressures in the university, relations with funders, and other arenas outside of our immediate collaborative space?
- How can collaborators from the Global North such as myself utilize vulnerability as a tool of knowledge production in ways that are generative yet responsible (e.g., interrogate whiteness and do not perpetuate racial harm)?
  - Certain scholars point towards a reformulation of whiteness and white female teacher identity (e.g., Meiners, 2002) as possibly generative.
  - For similarly positioned collaborators, what does that reformulated identity look like?
  - How can we simultaneously leverage our privileges and dismantle them?
- On an institutional level, what practices and policies would help cultivate and sustain notions of interdependence and identity-in-community to further the work of decolonizing collaborations in hopes of increased equity between collaborators?

### Epilogue: “Another death”

As I was composing this final chapter and weaving together my concluding thoughts, I received news of another death. A woman I knew in Tanzania, who took care of the house where I stayed in Morogoro, had passed away after being diagnosed with cancer shortly after my first trip back in 2022. I felt sad,

analyzed my sadness and questioned my right to feel that way, and am now back to feeling sad. She was a kind and luminous woman who contributed to this research by cleaning my clothes and space so I did not have to, entertaining my attempts to practice and understand Kiswahili, drawing me out of my head and onto the porch to talk and enjoy the night air - embodying the generosity of spirit I have been captivated by ever since I first encountered it on the African continent. I cannot but help wonder if her circumstances were different, if she had been born elsewhere or with different resources at her disposal, her future may have been different too.

I find it somewhat appropriate that this dissertation is bookended by death: my grandma, the woman who I will not name because I did not get a chance to ask her, not to mention the countless others in the global pandemic and imperialist wars which continue to rage as I continue to write. After all, death is one of the uniquely human experiences that affects us all, that we all share. Through death, I feel connected to community, pulled in the direction of Morogoro and other places that have felt like home, though I know the sense of community itself does not rest there. We carry it with us wherever we go, plant it like a seed in new soil, nurture it, and watch it grow – as we do too, alongside.

I came across another ethnography, entombed in a large, dusty book in the university library, in which fellow researcher Henry Glassie (1982) reflected on his own learning journey through what he called “existential ethnography” (xvii). He reflected,

The reason to study people, to order experience into ethnography, is not to produce more entries for the central file or more trinkets for milord’s cabinet of curiosities. It is to stimulate thought, to assure us that there are things we do not know, things we must know, things capable of unsettling the world we inhabit. (p. 13)

I hope I have unsettled you. I am still unsettled myself. Upon “finishing” this research, the same unsettled curiosity about the field of English language teaching that drove me dig more deeply into how

we work together across difference is still alive and well. I conclude feeling more reassured than ever that we need each other and justice for all to co-construct our own humanity and keep moving forward.

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## Appendix A: Invitation Email

Subject: Invitation to Participate in a Study on Collaboration in English Teaching

Dear (Name),

Heri ya mwaka mpya! I hope this finds you well in the new year.

My name is Renee Lynch, and I am a PhD Candidate at the University of Washington, Seattle, U.S.A. I am contacting you because of your continued work in the Department of Language Studies at SUA, as per the department website.

I previously worked with the Department of Language Studies in 2015 on the Communication Skills course curriculum and materials. I would like to work with the department again on a project to benefit the department while researching the process for my PhD studies. Dr. Hashim Mohamed is serving as a member of the committee for my dissertation, and the project is called “Decolonizing Collaboration in English Language Teaching: Teacher Identity and Tanzania.” I would like to know more about how we work together across difference and how we as English teachers make sense of what we do, given who we are. The overall objective is to cultivate more equitable relationships between foreign and local collaborators in English language teaching. I plan to undertake ethnographic research of our collaborative process, and this will include individual interviews, participant observation of our process, and analysis of key documents and my personal research journal.

I invite you to participate as a collaborator on the project to benefit the department; we will decide together what the project should be based on current needs. If you choose to participate, I estimate that it will take 3-6 hours per quarter (3 months) of your time: 1 hour for 1 individual interview per quarter (3 total), 1.5 hours for group meetings (approximately 3 total), and up to 3.5 hours for outside collaborative work such as document editing, email communication, etc. For now, interviews and meetings will happen via internet until I am able to travel to Tanzania in person, hopefully in June 2021.

I am attaching to this email full details on the study, including risks, benefits, and your rights within the study. I would be happy to answer any questions that you might have, and you can contact me at [lynchren@uw.edu](mailto:lynchren@uw.edu) or WhatsApp at [phone number].

Once you have read through the details, please respond to this email with your answer to the following question: **Do you give consent to participate in this research project?** We will also discuss this in our first interview, and we can schedule the time for that interview shortly.

Thank you for considering it! I hope we can work together. Best of luck in your continued efforts at SUA.

Sincerely,

Renee Lynch

## Appendix B: Informed Consent

### Invitation to Participate in a Study on Collaboration in English Language Teaching

Please direct any questions to Renee Lynch (at [lynchren@uw.edu](mailto:lynchren@uw.edu), [phone number])

#### 1. Research Purpose

This research is the basis of my dissertation in the Department of English at the University of Washington, Seattle, USA. The purpose of this research is to gain insight into collaboration in English language teaching, or how we work together. I would like to study collaboration through the lens of teacher identity, or how English teachers see themselves and how this affects the work that they do. I'm also interested in studying how identity, or who we are, affects the process of collaboration between foreign and local teachers in Tanzania. To study this, I want to work together with members of the Department of Language Studies at SUA on a project that the department needs and then study the process of how we work together. We will decide the details of the project a later date.

You are invited to participate in this study because you work in the Department of Language Studies at Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA). You are invited to participate in an ethnographic study which will analyze my observations of our work together, key documents and artifacts, my research journal of reflections, and interviews which will ask you about your perceptions and experiences related to collaboration and teaching English language. I will also be a participant in this study; I will work with you on the project of the department's choosing and also observe the process as data so that I can reflect on my own actions, words, and thoughts related to our work together. Analysis of all the data collected in this study will be shared with my dissertation committee as well as other professionals interested in international collaboration and/or English language teaching. My overall goal is to provide insights that can lead to more equitable relationships in international collaborations in similar contexts.

#### 2. Procedures

If you choose to be in this study, we will schedule an initial survey and interview at a time that is convenient for you. You will be giving me your permission to include what you say during the interview and our other interactions in my study, including in any resulting scholarly publications or conference proceedings. Please do not give permission if you do not feel completely comfortable with this decision. Please also do not give your consent if you are under 18, as this study is not authorized to interview minors. In our first interview, I will ask if you would like to be recognized by name in my research, or if you would prefer to remain anonymous. If you would like to remain anonymous, I will ask you to choose a pseudonym that I can use to refer to you in my analysis. I will ask again at the end of the study if you would like to remain anonymous or be recognized by name, and you may change your original decision. You may choose to not answer a question or to withdraw your consent to participate in the study at any time.

For participant observation, I will be both participating in a project of the department's choosing and observing the process as data. As a result, I will be observing our interactions online and in person, in meetings, informal interactions, and any other events that constitute our working together on the shared project. In addition, I will be using personal journals throughout this process as well as from my past time at SUA in 2015 and 2018 in order to provide additional details and background on our work together. My journal entries may include mentions of our current or past interactions, and I will make an effort to ask you about these details in an interview in order to get your perspective.

I estimate this will require 3-6 hours of your time per quarter. This is for interviews, meetings, and other work such as emailing, reviewing documents, and so on. This will be approximately 3-6 hours per quarter by internet until I can travel to Tanzania, and then additional hours in person. When I follow up in person, I would like to show my appreciation by providing refreshments such as food and drinks during our follow up meetings.

For interviews, I would like to interview you at least three times between January 2021 and September of 2021, though the timeline may shift. Interviews will last approximately 30-60 minutes and will take place in the medium of your choosing. Interview questions will first focus on general information about your background and career. The interviews will then ask you to reflect on any previous experience in international collaboration as well as our collaborative work. The interviews are semi-structured, and you are invited to ask questions of me as well. I imagine the interviews as an

open conversation. The interviews will be recorded, and these recordings will be transcribed for further analysis. All audio recordings and transcriptions will be kept in a secure location. If you choose to participate anonymously, all of the information that you provide will remain confidential, and I will remove all names from transcripts. This includes all names of individuals, names of institutions, the names of places, and any other additional information closely associated with you.

Throughout the study, I may confer with you about my interpretations of your words or actions. I will do this in an effort to reach common understanding and represent you as responsibly as I can.

### **3. Uses of the Information**

The information you provide during this study will be used for research purposes. I will use it for analysis in order to write my doctoral dissertation and possibly other pieces of writing such as academic articles or a book, and I may use this information in presentations at professional conferences. Resulting publications may be publicly available and may contain quotations from your interviews or interactions that we have.

I will make every effort to use your words responsibly. To me, that means interpreting their meaning as accurately as I can and conferring with you to reach a common understanding. I want to represent your words and opinions respectfully.

You may choose to be named or remain anonymous at any point in this research process, and you may change your decision later in the research process. If you choose to participate in this study anonymously, I will make every effort to ensure that you cannot be identified from your words. At the time of written informed consent, I will assign a pseudonym and will link it to transcripts and notes associated with your participation. Your pseudonym will be kept in a separate digital file that contains your name and pseudonym. Recordings, transcripts, and any information you provide will be stored digitally, in a password-protected format to which only I have access. Please note that information sent by email is not completely secure.

Government or university staff sometimes review studies such as this one to make sure they are being done safely and legally. If a review of this study takes place, the records of your participation may be examined. The reviewers will protect your privacy. The study records will not be used to put you at legal risk of harm. I will keep records of this research for the length of time required by my institution.

You may ask me at any time to refrain from using a particular quote or other piece of data; please contact me at [lynchren@uw.edu](mailto:lynchren@uw.edu) or [phone number] to let me know.

### **4. Rights and Risks of participation**

If you participate in this research, I will ask questions on topics that you may find sensitive or personal, such as what you think of your job, who you think you are as a person, your experiences as a language learner, and your professional relationships with current and past colleagues. We may also discuss topics related to identity (for example, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, etc.) that may cause you emotional discomfort. I will approach these topics with respectful curiosity, and my goal is to understand your views and experiences. I do not intend to cause you personal or professional harm.

As a participant in this study, you have the right to refuse to answer any question, at any time. You may also request that I do not include certain words of yours or certain information about you in my study. You also have the right to withdraw your participation in this research at any time.

**In closing...** I invite you to participate in this research as a co-collaborator. As a result, I will always welcome your feedback and opinions on research procedures, including this process of informed consent. Please consider this research an open and ongoing conversation. I truly appreciate your willingness to join me – thank you!

Please direct any questions to Renee Lynch (at [lynchren@uw.edu](mailto:lynchren@uw.edu), [phone number]).

**If you consent to be part of this research, please sign and date below.**

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name (printed) \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C: Initial Survey

Dear [name],

Thank you for your interest in this research! I am sincerely looking forward to working with you. I also appreciate your patience and willingness to support this project when there are many other things demanding your attention.

To start off, please answer a few questions that will help us going forward. If you prefer to answer via WhatsApp, you can contact me at [\[phone number\]](#)

### Interviews

I would like to interview you at least three times. For now, it will need to be electronic until I can travel to Tanzania.

- 1. How would you prefer to be interviewed: Skype, Zoom, Email, WhatsApp texting, WhatsApp voice memos, or other - which do you prefer, and why? You can choose one or many.**
- 2. What days and times would you like to be interviewed?**

### Department Needs

I would like to collaborate on a project that addresses current needs of the Department of Language Studies.

- 3. What are some current needs of the department with regards to English teaching?**
- 4. What are some challenges that you currently face in your English teaching?**
- 5. Do you have any ideas for projects that we could work on together to address those needs?**

Asante sana,

Renee Lynch

## Appendix D: Interview 1 Script

### Interview 1

**Time:** ~60 minutes

**Mode:** Online - decided by participant (Skype, Zoom, Email, WhatsApp texting, WhatsApp voice memos, or other)

#### Discuss background:

**1. “Is it ok to record this conversation?”**

“Thank you for agreeing to talk with me. As you may know, I am researching international collaboration in English Language teaching. I’m interested in how we as English teachers see ourselves and how this affects the work that we do. “

**2. “Your words may be used in my dissertation or other publications about this research. Is it ok to use your words in my research?”**

**3. “Would you prefer to be mentioned in my research by name or remain anonymous? You can change your decision at any time.”**

- If anonymous, what name should I use to refer to you?

“Thank you. I will now ask you some questions about your career and current work.”

#### Interview Questions:

4. What is your current position at Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA)? What are your duties in the department (for example, job responsibilities and other titles within the department or university?)
5. How long have you worked at SUA?
6. Tell me about your professional path to this position.
  - What motivated you to pursue this career?
  - Why did you choose to become an English teacher?
7. Which other languages do you speak?
  - Which languages do you use in daily life, and for what purposes?
8. How did you learn English?
  - How was your experience of learning English?
  - How has your language learning experience influenced how you teach?

9. Do you have any metaphors for teaching? For example, "Teaching is like \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_," such as "Teaching is like planting a garden because a teacher plants seeds in students' minds and then waters them so that they grow over time."
  - In your own metaphor, what represents the different parts of teaching? For example, the teacher is \_\_\_\_\_, the students are \_\_\_\_\_, the classroom is \_\_\_\_\_.
10. What are your strengths as a teacher?
  - What are some of your weaknesses, or areas in which you would like to improve?
11. What do you enjoy about your work at SUA?
  - What are some of the challenges?
12. How would you describe your relationship with your colleagues in the Department of Language Studies at SUA?
  - How does this compare to your relationship with other colleagues from SUA? Or other institutions where you have worked?
13. How does *who you are* affect your work as a \_\_\_\_\_ (e.g. lecturer) of English?
  - In the US, I might use the term "identity" instead of "who you are." When I say "identity," what does that mean to you?
14. Do you think collaboration in English language teaching and how we see ourselves is an important topic to study? Why or why not?
15. Will participating in this study benefit you in any way? If so, how?
16. What is your experience of working with foreigners?
  - When have you worked with foreigners in the past? What did you work on? How was the experience?
  - What was complicated about the experience?
  - Do you use the word *mzungu* (White foreigner)? Why or why not?
  - How would you translate the word *mzungu*?
17. Do you have any questions for me?

Thank you! I appreciate your time and effort.

## Appendix E: Interview 2 Script

### Interview 2

**Time:** ~60 minutes

**Mode:** Online – Zoom proposed but asked if other format is preferred\*

\*Approach this interview as more of a **conversation**: more informal, more like a meeting than an interview. After background, let the conversation flow naturally, and ask questions as they come up (less structure).

#### Discuss background:

**18. “Is it ok to record this conversation?”**

19. **“The purpose of this interview** is to follow up on the last interview and also to ask for your views on a possible project to benefit the department of language studies. **Thank you** again for agreeing to be part of this project.

20. **“My proposed idea for a project is** to conduct a research project on how instructors are coping with large class sizes. We could collect the data and then co-author a journal article about it.

- I think this is a good idea based on the survey and interviews where instructors frequently mentioned large classes as a challenge in their teaching.
- In the group meeting, the attendants highlighted that this is an issue in the university at large and across the continent of Africa. They suggested that we could share insights into strategies for large classes with the university at large but also other universities and that this would be beneficial.
- My research will then study how we carry out this project – how we work together and our experience of working together to make this happen.
- I would love to hear your views on if you think this project is a good idea and how it could work.

#### Project Questions – general:

- Is this a good idea? Why?
- Do you think this idea will work?

#### Project Questions

- **Publishing:** Are there requirements/pressure for lecturers to publish? In academic journals? What types of journals? Journals of prestige, or journals from the west?
  - Will publishing an article as a co-author benefit you? How?
- **Capacity:** Is it feasible for colleagues conducting doing research as well? (i.e. other DLS colleagues)?
- **Participants:** 6 in my project only? All DLS instructors? Other SUA instructors?

- Those involved in project as co-authors (6) + me?
- **Methods and Data:** Interviews? Survey? Observations?
  - Are we focusing on teaching SC only, or all subjects?
- **Large classes:** This issue is frequently mentioned among participants as a challenge in teaching.
  - Is this challenge specific to SUA, or is it at all universities in Tanzania? And is it specific to universities or all levels of education in Tanzania?
    - Is this a recent issue, or have classes always been large?
  - Why are classes so large? What are the causes of this issue?
  - What challenges does this present for you as an instructor? How does it affect your teaching?
  - What are some ways that you cope with these challenges? What are your strategies for teaching as effectively as you can under the circumstances?
  - Do you discuss this issue with colleagues?
  - What is your ideal class size?

### [Rahim]: Interview 2

- **Publishing:** Are there requirements/pressure for lecturers to publish? In academic journals? What types of journals?
  - Asking bc considering writing an article as a joint project – on strategies for large classes, possibly using technology (Communication skills specifically? Or all disciplines)
    - Based on research
    - [Kajani] – report for university
    - [Unnamed colleague] – issue for university at large and other African universities
  - Would involve doing research as well – feasible?
    - Participants: 6 in my project? All DLS instructors? Other SUA instructors?
    - Methods: Interviews? Survey? Observations?
  - Those involved in project as co-authors (6)
- **Large classes:** This issue is frequently mentioned among participants as a challenge in teaching. Is this challenge specific to SUA, or is it at all universities in Tanzania? And is it specific to universities or all levels of education in Tanzania?
  - What do you think causes classes to be so large? Why are classes so large?

### [Makamba]: Interview 2

- In answering why you chose to become an English teacher, you said, “As a critical citizen, I want to help/teach those who struggle learning the language.”
  - Can you say more about being a “critical citizen?” What does that mean to you? How does helping people who struggle with English part of being a “critical citizen?”
- In terms of your strengths as a teacher, you mentioned, “Oral presentation” (and Creativity, Fairness)
  - Can you say more about what “oral presentation” means?

- In terms of your weaknesses as a teacher, you said, “Lack of motivation to write (articles, books etc.)
  - Can you say more about this?
- In terms of challenges of working with foreigners, you mentioned “cultural differences.” Can you expand on that? What are some of the differences you have experienced, and how do you cope with them?

**[Kajani]: Interview 2**

**[Mkude]: Interview 2**

**[Tabasamu]: Interview 2**

- You mentioned learning a lot from foreigners. What do you learn from them?
- Last time, we talked about how identity does or does not affect how someone teaches. It seems like you thought that culture can affect how someone teaches, but not things like a teacher’s race, gender, marital status, etc.
  - Is that an accurate summary of your thoughts? Is this still what you think?
  - Can you say more about the difference between culture and identity?

**[Robinson]: Interview 2**

## Appendix F: Interview 3 Script

### Interview 3

**Time:** ~60 minutes

**Mode:** In person!

\*Approach this interview as more of a **conversation**: more informal, more like a conversation than an interview. Also, speak back a little bit/push back a bit. Offer my own opinion and experience more than in the past.

#### Discuss background:

1. “Is it ok to record this conversation?”
2. “The purpose of this interview is to ask how the collaboration is going so far, in your view, and to follow up on some questions from my presentation.”

#### General:

- Checking in: Is there a name you would like to be called in my write up? Choose a Tanzanian pseudonym – a name you might find in Tanzania?

#### Collaboration:

- How is our collaboration going so far, in your view? (Inaendeleaje?)
  - a. Do you have any advice or suggestions that would improve our collaboration?
- What do you see as the contributions of each party to our research project on large classes?

#### Follow up:

(see below)

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#### [Rahim] Interview 3

- I understand from Dr. [Kajani] that you are in the process of seeking a promotion. How is that going?
  - a. Does your position on my dissertation committee contribute to your promotion?
  - b. Is there anything I can do to assist in that process?
- In our last group meeting, you said that as PI, I should create the field guides for focus group and observations. Why did you suggest this?
  - a. I was surprised to have the role of PI. I was imagining a more egalitarian, horizontal relationship.
- I deferred to you as the chairperson of our meeting. How do you see that?
- Sometimes I struggle with taking the role of leader in our project. How do you see this?
- One of the themes I am noticing is the department need for visibility. What is my role in that?
- Any questions for me?

**[Makamba] Interview 3**

- Sometimes I struggle with taking the role of leader in our project. How do you see this?
- On WhatsApp when we were chatting about Marxist/Afrocenterist views, you mentioned that Rodney's book will "help you unlearn what you have already learned" so that I can "be in a good position of understanding the two different social worlds." What do you think I need to unlearn?
- During my presentation, some colleagues asked about the role of colonialism and if it is necessary in my research and why can't I just cut it out. Do you think colonialism can be cut out? Why?
- If you chose a different word than "colonialism" what would it be, and why?
- I mentioned that there is a link between colonialism and identity, or how we think of ourselves and others. Do you agree that this link is there? Why or why not?
  - What do you think the link is between colonialism and identity?
- Any questions for me?

**[Kajani] Interview 3**

- How have things changed for you since you became head of department?
  - How has this affected your relationship with your colleagues?
- One of the themes I am noticing is the department need for *visibility*. What is my role in that?
- During my presentation, some colleagues asked about the role of colonialism and if it is necessary in my research and why can't I just cut it out. Do you think colonialism can be cut out? Why?
- If you chose a different word than "colonialism" what would it be, and why?
- I mentioned that there is a link between colonialism and identity, or how we think of ourselves and others. Do you agree that this link is there? Why or why not?
  - What do you think the link is between colonialism and identity?
- Any questions for me?

**[Robinson] Interview 3**

- Sometimes I struggle with taking the role of leader in our project. How do you see this?
- During my presentation, you brought up the idea of the native speaker fallacy. I was glad to hear this, because it's something I think about a lot. Do you think the idea of native speaker is a "fallacy?"
  - How do you think the native speaker fallacy affects the collaboration between me and the department?
- During my presentation, you asked about the role of colonialism and if it is necessary in my research and why can't I just cut it out. Do you think colonialism can be cut out? Why?
- If you chose a different word than "colonialism" what would it be, and why?

- I mentioned that there is a link between colonialism and identity, or how we think of ourselves and others. Do you agree that this link is there? Why or why not?
  - What do you think the link is between colonialism and identity?
- Any questions for me?

### **[Tabasamu] Interview 3**

- Sometimes I struggle with taking the role of leader in our project. How do you see this?
- How do you handle large class sizes?
  - What strategies do you use?
- Any questions for me?

### **[Mkude] Interview 3**

- Checking in: Is there a name you would like to be called in my write up?
  - You chose **[Mkude]** -is that still ok?
- Thank you again for letting me observe your class. How was that experience for you?
  - Is there anything you want to say about the class I observed – any input or reactions – anything you want me to know?
- Sometimes I struggle with taking the role of leader in our project. How do you see this?
- *After* my presentation, you asked about the role of colonialism and if it is necessary in my research and why can't I just cut it out. Do you think colonialism can be cut out? Why?
- If you chose a different word than "colonialism" what would it be, and why?
- I mentioned that there is a link between colonialism and identity, or how we think of ourselves and others. Do you agree that this link is there? Why or why not?
  - What do you think the link is between colonialism and identity?
- Any questions for me?

### **[Chupaki] Interview 1**

- Follow up from observation: How was it for you to have me observe your class?
  - Anything you'd like to comment or share about that day?
- How do you handle large class sizes?
  - What strategies do you use?
- Are you co-teaching with [colleague name]? What is that relationship like?
  - When you cover his class, how does that work – do you communicate beforehand about what to teach, how to teach it, etc.?
- You told me you wanted to get a PhD in language teaching from outside – not TZ. Why outside?
- During my presentation, some colleagues asked about the role of colonialism and if it is necessary in my research and why can't I just cut it out. Do you think colonialism can be cut out? Why?
  - Do you think colonialism has a role in English language teaching?
- If you chose a different word than "colonialism" what would it be, and why?

### Background Questions

- What is your current position at Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA)?
    - What are your duties in the department (for example, job responsibilities and other titles within the department or university?)
  - How long have you worked at SUA?
  - Tell me about your professional path to this position.
    - What motivated you to pursue this career?
    - Why did you choose to become an English teacher?
2. Do you teach large classes at SUA?
- How many students in your class?
  - How do you handle large class sizes? (Strategies)
- Any questions for me?

### [Zawadi] Interview 1 and 2

- During my presentation, some colleagues asked about the role of colonialism and if it is necessary in my research and why can't I just cut it out. Do you think colonialism can be cut out? Why?
- If you chose a different word than "colonialism" what would it be, and why?
- I mentioned that there is a link between colonialism and identity, or how we think of ourselves and others. Do you agree that this link is there? Why or why not?
  - What do you think the link is between colonialism and identity?

### Background Questions

- What is your current position at Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA)?
    - What are your duties in the department (for example, job responsibilities and other titles within the department or university?)
  - How long have you worked at SUA?
  - Tell me about your professional path to this position.
    - What motivated you to pursue this career?
    - Why did you choose to become an English teacher?
3. Do you teach large classes at SUA?
- How many students in your class?
  - How do you handle large class sizes? (Strategies)
- Any questions for me?

## Appendix G: Interview 4 Script

### Interview 4

**Time:** ~60 minutes

**Mode:** In person!

\*Listen more in this interview. Share openly, but also hold space for **feedback**.

#### Discuss background:

1. “Is it ok to record this conversation?”
2. “**The purpose of this interview** is to share some of my analysis with you and hear your feedback on my ideas. Also, if there is anything else you would like to discuss about our collaboration, you are welcome. (Also follow up questions?)”

#### General:

3. Checking in about confidentiality: You chose to be anonymous/ use the Tanzanian pseudonym \_\_\_\_\_. Is that still ok with you? (or, you chose to be named. Is that still ok?)

#### Analysis:

4. Were you at my presentation? If so, how was it? How did you feel while listening? How was the experience?
  - b) If not, I can provide some **background** about what I have been doing and a summary of my dissertation project: I have been writing my analysis based on the ethnographic data that I have collected which includes interviews, group meetings, field notes, my research journal, and key documents. I have been doing qualitative analysis, looking for common themes across sources and thinking about how those interact with other themes. I pay special attention to language and words that we use (Critical discourse analysis) and how power works in our relationships. I am also interested in *identity*, or what roles we play in our collaboration, and what this says about collaborations in general between foreign and local collaborators. Overall, I would like to decolonize these collaborations, because I think that colonial mentalities (or neocolonialism) still affects us today in how we work together.
    - a. Does this make sense? Do you have any questions at this point? (
5. It seemed like the main role that colleagues were fulfilling was **participant-researcher**, participants in both my dissertation and our large class sizes project, but also researchers in our large class sizes project. However, it seems like fulfilling both roles, of participant *and* researcher, created some **tension** for colleagues that maybe created some challenges.
  - a. Does this seem accurate to you? Do you think there were challenges in being both participant *and* researcher?
6. It seemed some of the main ways colleagues make sense of (or justify) the *participant-researcher* role was to position themselves as 1) **in need** (of credit for promotion, visibility for department), 2) **connected to resources** (social connections, physical resources), and 3) **expert** (in Tanzanian context, their own teaching, and research knowledge and skills).

- a. Do those roles make sense to you? Do you think they are accurate for how colleagues act within our collaboration?
7. I think these roles **resist** neocolonialism in the following ways: 1) colleagues are actively shaping our research agenda to meet their own needs, 2) colleagues have resources to share and are experts, not “helpless Africans,” and 3) colleagues emphasize *interdependence* instead of individualism.
- a. Do those ideas make sense to you? Do you think they resist colonial mentalities or neocolonialism?
8. However, I think our relationship **reinforces** neocolonialism in some ways: 1) not talking about colonialism or seeing it in our relationship (we can see it in other broader contexts such as neocolonialism in the global economy, but not our own relationship) and 2) reluctance to talk about race. I see that as neocolonial because colonial mentality often hides race and colonialism so that it seems normal, or bad to talk about – keeps inequity in place.
- a. Does this seem true to you? Why or why not? Do you have any thoughts or responses to share?
- b. I myself have also been reluctant to talk about the role of gender. Do you think gender affects how we work together?
9. In addition, when I look at the roles that I play in our collaboration, I see that the main role for me is **PI (Principal Investigator)**. I make sense of this role (or justify) the *PI* role by positioning myself as 1) *benevolent giver/worker*, 2) *connected to resources*, and 3) *one who knows about Tanzania*.
- a. Do those roles make sense to you? Do you think they are accurate for how I act within our collaboration?
10. I think that these roles for me also reinforce neocolonialism in some ways. I have read articles about the idea of a “Lady Bountiful,” a white woman from the West who is nice, often a teacher or a missionary, who helps people but also does colonizing work, such as changing mindsets to colonial values and keeping race and gender hierarchies in place – not challenging them.
- a. Do you think this is accurate to describe how I function in our collaboration? Do you agree with these ideas? Why or why not?
11. It seemed like colleagues perceived an **imbalance** in our collaboration, that perhaps I did more work in our project. For example, I read a lot for literature review, drafted the research tools, collected a lot of the data, did preliminary analysis, and so on.
- a. Did you perceive an imbalance in our project? What do you think about that?
12. In general, I think colleagues drew on a **discourse of interdependence** to make sense of their role(s) in our collaboration. For example, when they perceive an imbalance, they emphasize importance of social relationships, the value of collaboration, reciprocity between us, and a more expansive view of “collaboration” that is longer term and not about having equal work exactly but rather balance and who is best fitted to do certain work.
- a. I think this idea of interdependence can challenge typical colonially-rooted working dynamics. Do you agree?

13. Overall, one implication I am seeing is that a different concept identity, based on this idea of interdependence that I see colleagues emphasizing. In the US and in most scholarship, I have read, theories about identity tend to be individualistic, capitalistic, or about factors such as race and gender rather than people as a whole or how they function in a group. However, I see colleagues here operating with more of a sense of **identity-in-community** and thinking more about the well-being of the community, importance of relationships over productivity, and thinking longer term about our relationships.
  - a. Does that idea of identity-in-community resonate with you/sound accurate to you?
  - b. Does it seem appropriate to describe how *the Department* functions?
  - c. Does it seem appropriate to describe how *our collaboration* functions?
  
14. I think this idea could be helpful towards cultivating **more equitable relationships** and decolonizing collaborations in English language teaching – if people (particularly foreigners from the West such as myself) saw themselves as a part of a community and shifted their goals accordingly, we could have better relationships with one another.
  - a. Do you agree? Why or why not?
  
15. I may want to share some **writing** with you so that you can see what I wrote – dissertation chapters and an article based on this data.
  - a. Would it be ok to share this writing with you?
  - b. Would you like me to see my writing about this topic? Why or why not?
  
16. Lastly, I am considering including a table in my thesis (tasnifu) with participant pseudonyms and some basic information, like education level, position in department, how many years at SUA, etc. However, I am concerned that this will reveal participants to other department members because they will know this information about each other.
  - a. Is that a concern for you (being possibly revealed to other department members)? Should I include this table, in your opinion?
  
17. Do you have any **questions** for me?