Identity and Investment in Multilingual Classrooms

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For: *Foreign Languages in Multilingual Classrooms (in press)*

Abstract

This chapter examines the trajectory of Bonny Norton's research on identity and language learning, highlighting her construct of investment, developed as a sociological complement to the psychological construct of motivation (Norton, 2013). An important focus of the chapter is the expanded 2015 model of identity and investment (Darvin & Norton, 2015), which responds to the changing communicative landscape of an increasingly digital world, and locates investment at the intersection of identity, capital, and ideology. Norton exemplifies her theories with data drawn from her collaborative research on language learning in Uganda and Iran. She concludes that the challenge for language teachers internationally is to promote learner investment in the language and literacy practices of classrooms by increasing the range of identities available to language learners.

1. Introduction

In the 1990s, when I developed my early theories of identity and investment, large-scale migrations were transforming the economic and cultural landscapes of many urban centers in well-resourced countries. As people of different language backgrounds crossed borders to fill the labour needs of these countries, their urban centers became more multilingual and multicultural. Learning English in countries like the United Kingdom, USA, and Canada, for example, was critical in enabling migrants to integrate into their new communities and find meaningful employment. Given this situation, theories would need to address how language learning expanded both symbolic and material resources for speakers, and how language learners were able to access and participate in contexts usually dominated by native speakers.

However, theories of identity at the time did not adequately explain the experience of such migrants, and consequently did not do justice to the findings of my research, which was conducted in Canadian classrooms and communities (Norton, 2013). In the 1980s, applied linguistics scholars interested in second language identity tended to draw distinctions between social identity and cultural identity. While "social identity" was seen to reference the relationship between the individual language learner and the larger social world, as mediated through institutions such as families, schools, workplaces, social services, and law courts (e.g., Gumperz, 1982), "cultural identity" referenced the relationship between an individual and members of a particular ethnic group (such as Mexican and Japanese) who share a common history, a common language, and similar

ways of understanding the world (e.g., Valdes, 1986). While issues of social identity did not adequately address issues of power, theories of cultural identity tended to essentialize and reify identities (Atkinson, 1999).

Therefore, a fresh approach was required, incorporating postcolonial and poststructuralist ideas. In my work, and that of many other language scholars, a broad range of theorists has been influential in shaping more recent research on second language identity, most notable of whom are Bakhtin (1984), Bourdieu (1984), Weedon (1987) and Lave and Wenger (1991). In section 2, I provide further insight into these theorists, as they help to explain my own theories of identity, investment, and language learning, as discussed in section 3. For a comprehensive account of the wide range of contemporary research on language and identity, see Preece (2016).

2. Theoretical influences on contemporary identity research

The following theorists, while working within diverse disciplinary frameworks, are centrally concerned with both institutional and community practices that impact on learning. Such scholars are interested in the relationship between social structures and human agency, and between language practices and social power. Of primary interest to these theorists is the question is whether identity can be understood as both originator and product of social interaction and institutional structures.

Mikhail Bakhtin (1984) takes the position that language needs to be investigated not as a set of idealized forms independent of their speakers or their speaking, but rather as situated utterances in which speakers, in dialogue with others, struggle to create meanings. For Bakhtin, the notion of the individual speaker is a fiction as he sees all speakers constructing their utterances jointly on the basis of their interaction with listeners both in historical and contemporary, actual and assumed communities. In this view, the appropriation of the words of others is a complex and conflictual process in which words are not neutral but express particular predispositions and value systems.

Pierre Bourdieu (1984) focuses on the often unequal relationships between interlocutors and the importance of power in structuring speech. He suggests that the value ascribed to speech cannot be understood apart from the person who speaks and that the person who speaks cannot be understood apart from larger networks of social relationships. In this view, when a person speaks, the speaker wishes not only to be understood, but also to be believed, obeyed, and respected. However, the speaker's ability to command the attention of the listener is unequally distributed because of the symbolic power relations between them. To redress the inequities between what Bourdieu calls "legitimate" and "illegitimate" speakers, he argues that an expanded definition of competence should include the "right to speech" or "the power to impose reception" (1977, p. 648).

The work of Christine Weedon, like that of Bakhtin and Bourdieu, is centrally concerned with the conditions under which people speak, within both institutional and

community contexts. Like other poststructuralist theorists who inform her work, Weedon foregrounds the central role of language in her analysis of the relationship between the individual and the social, arguing that language not only defines institutional practices, but serves to construct our sense of ourselves and our "subjectivity" (Weedon, 1987, p. 21). Weedon notes that the terms "subject" and "subjectivity" signify a different conception of the individual than that associated with humanist conceptions of the individual dominant in Western philosophy. While humanist conceptions of the individual presuppose that every person has an essential, unique, fixed, and coherent "core," poststructuralism depicts the individual (i.e., the subject) as diverse, contradictory, dynamic, and changing over historical time and social space.

A shift from seeing learners as individual language producers to seeing them as members of social and historically constituted communities is of much interest to anthropologists Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger. Lave and Wenger (1991) argue that what they call "situated learning" is an integral and inseparable part of social practice, as newcomers are mentored into the performance of community practices. Their notion, "legitimate peripheral participation," represents their view that communities are composed of participants who differentially engage with the practices of their community and that conditions vary with regard to features of the social context they act in, such as the ease of access to expertise, opportunities for practice, or consequences for error in practice. From this perspective, then, educational research might focus not so much on assessing individual "uptake" of particular knowledge or skills, but on the social structures in particular communities and on the variety of positionings available for learners to occupy in those communities.

Rather than seeing language learning as a gradual individual process of internalizing a neutral set of rules, structures, and vocabulary of a standard language, the work of Bakhtin, Bourdieu, Weedon, and Lave and Wenger offers applied linguists ways to think differently about language learning. Such theory suggests that second language learners need to struggle to appropriate the voices of others; they need to learn to command the attention of their listeners; they need to negotiate language as a system and as a social practice; and they need to understand the practices of the communities with which they interact. Drawing on such theory, becoming a "good" language learner or teacher is seen to be a much more complicated process than earlier research had suggested (De Costa & Norton, 2017).

To illustrate this point, I turn to a vignette drawn from recent research in an African context to exemplify the constructs of identity, investment, and imagined communities that I have developed in my own work over the past two decades. These ideas have been examined with much insight by Claire Kramsch (2013), and have generated a range of special issues in China (Arkoudis & Davison, 2008), Europe (Bemporad, 2016) and North America (Norton, 1997; Kanno & Norton, 2003; De Costa & Norton, 2017).

I will turn thereafter to a discussion of an expanded model of investment that I have developed with Ron Darvin, which responds to changes in the communicative landscape in an increasingly digital era, and locates investment at the intersection of identity, capital, and ideology (Darvin & Norton, 2015). I draw on the model to enrich my analysis of collaborative research I have undertaken with a range of language learners in Uganda and Iran. Before concluding, I discuss the implications of these ideas for classroom practice, highlighting the possibilities of digital storytelling for expanding the range of identities available to language learners, and promoting learner investment in the language practices of classrooms.

3. Identity, investment, and imagined communities: a vignette

I recently received an email from a former Ugandan graduate student, Doris Abiria, who had spent a year with her husband and two young boys at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada, in 2010/2011. After returning to Uganda, Abiria wrote as follows (Early & Norton, 2012, p. 195):

> The boys are getting better. In school the teachers complain they have gone with a style they are calling Western. The teachers say the boys have an accent that they do not hear while the boys say the teachers speak English up side down… Paul talks to the teacher in class any time he wishes when children are expected first to listen to the teacher and talk when the teacher asks them. Now we keep checking on them frequently in school and supporting them more at home. We hope that by next year they will be okay.

The experience of Paul and his brother is not atypical in our mobile world, in which global travel and international exchanges are increasingly common. However, as people move across regional and national borders, the language and literacy practices that are valued in one place are not necessarily valued in another place (Blommaert, 2010). For example, an accent that is comprehensible in Canada may be less comprehensible in Uganda, and there are important differences between Canadian English and Ugandan English. At the same time, it is not only linguistic features that distinguish Paul's English from that of his peers; it is also the language practices of the classroom – who speaks, when, and how – that distinguish Paul's English from that of his peer group. While Paul was identified as a successful student in Canada, if he is to be accorded the identity of a successful student in Uganda, he needs to adjust to the variety of English considered legitimate in his Ugandan school, and he needs to adopt the language practices expected of young learners in this context.

Drawing on the work of Weedon (1987), I have argued in my research that identity is multiple, a site of struggle, and changing across time and space. It is clear from Abiria's email that Paul had a number of identities, including that of Ugandan student

and Canadian student, and that these identities represented a site of struggle for him as he transitioned from one country to the other and from a Canadian to a Ugandan institution. The definition of identity I have developed is relevant to the challenges Paul faces in his Ugandan classroom: "the way a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is structured across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future" (Norton, 2013, p. 4). In navigating a new relationship to the Ugandan world, Paul is confronted with teachers' and parents' attempts to make him redefine his identity from that of "Western" student to that of "African" student. This relationship is being structured by the practices of his Ugandan classroom and community, which are being scaffolded by both teachers and parents. Paul needs to understand that his possibilities for the future are dependent, at least to some extent, on the ways in which he understands and accommodates to the practices valued in his Ugandan classroom.

I have argued that in order to claim more powerful identities from which to speak, language learners can challenge unequal power relations by reframing their relationship to others. This reframing depends, to some extent, on what I have called the learner's *investment* in the language practices of a given classroom or community. It is partly to explain a situation like Paul's that I have developed the sociological construct of "investment" as a complement to the psychological construct of "motivation." In my early research with immigrant women in Canada (Norton Peirce, 1995; Norton, 2013), I observed that existing theories of motivation in the field of second language acquisition (SLA) were not consistent with the findings from my research. Most theories at the time assumed motivation was a character trait of the individual language learner and that learners who failed to learn the target language were not sufficiently committed to the learning process. Such theories did not do justice to the identities and experiences of the language learners in my research. For this reason, I made the case that the construct of "investment" might help to complement constructs of motivation in the field of SLA.

My construct of investment, informed by Bourdieu's (1991) theories of capital, language, and symbolic power, signals the socially and historically constructed relationship of learners to the target language and their sometimes ambivalent desire to learn and practice it. I have noted, "if learners 'invest' in the target language, they do so with the understanding that they will acquire a wider range of symbolic resources (language, education, friendship) and material resources (capital goods, real estate, money) which will increase the value of their cultural capital and social power" (Norton, 2013, p. 6). Unlike constructs of motivation, which frequently conceive of the language learner as having a unitary, fixed, and ahistorical "personality," the construct of investment conceives of the language learner as having a complex identity, changing across time and space, and reproduced in social interaction. According to Bourdieu (1991), what language and what speaker is considered "legitimate" must be understood

with respect to a given "field" or social context that is often characterized by unequal struggles for meaning, access, and power.

Paul was a highly motivated student, but he was not, initially at least, invested in the language practices of his Ugandan classroom. For example, he did not wish to seek permission to contribute to class discussion, nor he did not want to have to listen to the teacher before he could speak. His parents realized, however, that if Paul was to expand his possibilities for the future, he would need to invest in the language practices of the classroom, or he would run the risk of being considered a disruptive and unmotivated learner. Clearly, it may also have been possible for the teacher to adjust classroom practices in response to Paul's investments. I have argued that in addition to asking, "Is the learner motivated to learn?" a teacher could ask, "What is the learner's investment in the language practices of my classroom?" In Paul's classroom, however, as in many classrooms internationally, there was little room for the negotiation of power. Without supportive parents, Paul may have become disengaged from classroom practices, or more troubling, dropped out of school entirely.

Of central interest here is Paul's imagined identity and imagined community – or perhaps more accurately, the community Paul's parents hoped he would join in the future. In Norton (2001), I drew on my research with two adult immigrant language learners in Canada to argue that while the learners were initially actively engaged in classroom practices, the realm of their desired community extended beyond the four walls of the classroom. This imagined community was not accessible to their respective teachers, who, unwittingly, alienated the two language learners, who then dropped out of the language class. While Benedict Anderson (1983) talks of the imagined community with respect to the nation, I am interested in a wider range of communities that might be desirable to the language learner – whether a sporting community, a network of professionals, a choir, or a group of comic book readers (Kanno & Norton, 2003). An imagined community assumes an imagined identity, and helps to explain a learner's investment in the target language. Paul's parents hoped he would be part of an imagined community of successful Ugandans in the future, and sought to help him navigate the language practices of his new classroom in order to achieve a desirable identity in both the present time and his imagined future.

My research on identity and language learning, and that of an increasing number of scholars internationally (see Norton & Toohey, 2011, for a review) is best understood in the context of a shift in the field from a predominantly psycholinguistic approach to SLA to include a greater focus on sociological and anthropological dimensions of language learning (Block, 2007; Douglas Fir Group, 2016). Such research is interested not only in linguistic input and output in SLA, but in the relationship between the language learner and the larger social world. It has examined the diverse social, historical, and cultural contexts in which language learning takes place and how learners negotiate

and sometimes resist the diverse positions those contexts offer them. What is assumed in this research is that "language" is not only a linguistic system of word, sentences, and sounds, but also a social practice that engages the identities of learners in diverse and often contradictory ways. In this view, important questions are not only, "Can the language learner speak?" but also, "Who has the right to speak?" and "Can the language learner command the attention of listeners?"

4. An expanded model of investment (Darvin & Norton, 2015)

As technological innovations continue to transform the 21st century, the question of whose voice is heard is becoming increasingly complex, with important implications for theories of language and identity (Darvin, 2016). The spaces of socialization and information exchange continue to multiply, in both face-to-face and virtual worlds, locally and globally. As learners move across transnational borders, they are able to learn and use English in exciting new ways. How they negotiate these spaces has become increasingly relevant to language education research, even as the power operating in these spaces becomes less visible. It has therefore become necessary to examine how investment in this shifting communication landscape positions learners. In this new communicative order, how do English language learners claim the right to speak?

To help address these questions, I have worked with Ron Darvin to develop an expanded model of investment that responds to the demands of a more mobile and digital world, in which language learners move in and out of online and offline contexts (Darvin & Norton, 2015). This model (see Figure 1) recognizes how the skills, knowledge, and resources learners possess are valued differently in these multiple spaces. As learners are able to interact with others from diverse parts of the world that share specific interests, language learners are exposed to a range of belief systems and worldviews. To draw attention to how these ideologies operate on micro and macro levels, this model examines both communicative events and communicative practices. Institutional processes and patterns of control shape what become regular practices, but it is in specific instances or events that learners are able to question, challenge, and reposition themselves to claim the right to speak. Our model thus locates investment at the intersection of identity, capital, and ideology, in order to provide a window on the ways in which structures of power work, while finding opportunities for language learners to exercise agency (Huang & Benson, 2013; Miller, 2014).

Figure 1. Darvin and Norton's 2015 Model of Investment

In our model, Darvin and I refer to *ideologies* as "dominant ways of thinking that organize and stabilize societies while simultaneously determining modes of inclusion and exclusion" (Darvin & Norton, 2015, p. 72). Neoliberal ideology, for instance, upholds the supremacy of market forces and the pursuit of profit (Duchêne & Heller, 2012). Ideological assumptions guide the choices people make until these assumptions become "common sense," and repeated actions become "practice." Hence, ideology is constructed and maintained through the imposition of power, through hegemonic consent, and the repetition of practices. In the same way, language ideologies that privilege English, for instance, are reproduced through language policies constructed by governments, the acquiescence to such policies, and the use of English in different discourses with limited forms of resistance.

As learners navigate across online and offline spaces, ideologies collude and compete, shaping learner identities and positioning them in different ways, which complements the view of identity as multiple, changing, interactive, and a site of struggle. Further, the model recognizes that the value of a learner's economic, cultural, or social capital shifts as it travels across time and space. Its value is subject to but not completely constrained by the ideologies of different groups or fields. As Bourdieu (1991) notes, it is when different forms of capital are perceived and recognized as legitimate that they become symbolic capital. It follows that the extent to which teachers are able to recognize the value of the linguistic or cultural capital learners bring to the classroom—their prior knowledge, home literacies, and mother tongues—will impact the extent to which learners will invest in the language and literacy practices of their classrooms. This leads me then to a wider discussion of English language learners internationally, and their diverse investments in English language learning.

5. Language learners across global sites

Drawing on my recent collaborative research on identity and language learning in Uganda and Iran, I will illustrate the ways in which the 2015 model of investment can help to inform debates on language learning internationally. Of central interest in the model is the interplay of identity, capital, and ideology, and the conditions under which

language learners invest in language and literacy practices of their classrooms. The model extends the question from my earlier theory, "To what extent are learners invested in the language and literacy practices of their classrooms and communities?" to include the following questions:

1. What are learners' *imagined identities*? How do these impact their investment in different language and literacy practices?
2. What do learners perceive as *benefits* of investment, and how can the *capital* they possess serve as *affordances for learning?*
3. What *systemic patterns of control* (policies, codes, institutions) make it difficult for learners to invest and acquire certain capital? How have prevailing *ideologies* structured learners' investments?

Adolescent English language learners in Uganda

Turning now to my long trajectory of research in the African country of Uganda, one particularly interesting research participant was Henrietta, an 18 year-old female student who participated in a study on the use of digital resources for HIV/AIDS education and enhanced English language learning (Norton, Jones & Ahimbisibwe, 2011). Henrietta lived in a rural Ugandan village that had limited electricity and no running water, with a per capita income of less than $1 a day. In the study, we brought Henrietta and her peers to an Internet café in a neighbouring town to research HIV/AIDS. By working on this task, Henrietta and other students were able to develop the skills of navigating the web to find the information they needed, while at the same time improving their English skills. During data collection, Henrietta noted that her "main interest in learning more about computers is to know how they use Internet, to communicate to people in the outside countries". She stated her belief that knowledge gained through the Internet would enhance self-knowledge, as she would learn more about herself "through sharing view with Canadian people". Her fervent desire to "join the group of knowledgeable people in the world" indexes a powerful *imagined identity* that helped structure her investment in the language and literacy practices of the digital literacy course.

Ron Darvin and I have noted, however, that Henrietta's opportunities to develop her literacy and to continually engage in transnational conversations in English may be highly restricted (Darvin & Norton, 2015). Not only is Henrietta's own economic capital limited, but the technological infrastructure of her local community is poorly resourced. In this case, both her own social location and the economic position of rural Uganda constrain access to the technology necessary for Henrietta to master literacies relevant to the knowledge economy. It is for situations such as this that our model of investment incorporates what we have called *systemic patterns of control*. While Henrietta may be driven by a strong desire to learn more about computers and to connect more regularly

with other people, her social location makes it very difficult for her to enter these new spaces of socialization. Even though her desire to engage in transnational conversations can be seen as a way to increase her social capital, the perceived benefit may not be sustainable.

Because discourses of globalization construct Henrietta's own conceptions of what is valuable or not, she positions herself as inadequate, as one who is not sufficiently "knowledgeable". Such data is illustrative of the relationship between *identity* and *ideologies* that privilege the global over the local, and in which the global North is seen as more knowledgeable than the global South. As Henrietta seeks to gain access to *affordances* of learning like devices and books, *systemic patterns of control* will also hinder this access. These include the limited allocation of technology budgets to local schools, and connectivity challenges in rural Uganda. Ideologies that privilege urban vs. rural, middle vs. lower class, or male vs. female will also further limit opportunities for Henrietta to achieve her imagined identity.

In terms of linguistic capital, although she speaks English, a common language of the Internet, Henrietta's access to valued forms of English is also restricted. Interestingly, what she finds particularly appealing about the Internet is that it gives her the opportunity to "understand more about English language". As she notes, "I got communication. I have learnt the English language because the English in Internet has been very create and it has arranged properly". How others will position her as a teenage girl from rural Uganda will shape the dynamics of their interaction, and the value of her linguistic capital may be uneven, as exemplified by Blommaert's data from his young Tanzanian friend, Victoria (Blommaert, 2003).

Adolescent and adult English language learners in Iran

In a very different part of the world, Mehri Mohammadian and I recently conducted research on the appeal of English Language Institutes (ELIs) for Iranian adolescents and adults (Mohammadian & Norton, in press), which provides further insight into identity and language learning internationally. ELIs in Iran are fee paying institutions of varying sizes, which seek to provide a more communicative language curriculum than that available in Iranian schools. School-aged language learners attend English classes at ELIs after school hours, usually from 6-8 p.m, and enjoy the flexibility of the ELI curricula. Our 2012 pilot study focussed on interviews with administrators at five ELIs in Shiraz, Iran, most of whom would agree with the following comment from one of the administrators:

> The students directly, after finishing school, come here and they are so tired, but they come with interest because they like it! Because the system is totally different from the public schools. Here, we have more flexible techniques and ways of teaching.

We also found that the number of female students at ELIs is far greater than that of male students, suggesting that female students are particularly invested in the opportunities that ELIs provide. This finding is also consistent with research around the globe that suggests the learning of English may be associated with the desire for greater gender equity (Kobayashi, 2002). In the context of Iran, young women have limited mobility, and going to cinemas, restaurants or coffee shops with friends is generally not an option approved by parents. For such families, English classes are a particularly desirable form of outdoor recreation and a place where young women can experience a different world.

We also learnt that Iranian students have diverse investments in learning English, including being able to find information from different sources on the Internet; continuing education abroad; getting scholarships; finding better jobs; traveling to foreign countries; or living abroad. Their participation in English classes at ELIs is not mandatory, but they are eager to learn English and "they come with interest", as noted above. As for the adult language learners, we also found a range of investments in language learning. One administrator explained,

> People like to learn English because it's an international language and it means a password for them to gain status. If they want to be somebody, to go abroad, to have new opportunities, they have got to learn the English language.

Such comments provide further evidence of the relationship between investment, identity, and capital, and support the argument that the imagined identity of a learner, whether a child, youth, adolescent, or adult, is particularly salient to investment in English.

6. Identity, investment, and multilingual classroom practice

As presented above, the model of investment invites reflection on three sets of questions with regard to language learning in multilingual classrooms. The first question is as follows: *What are language learners' imagined identities, and how do these impact their investment in the language and literacy practices of their classrooms?* We learn from these studies that in contexts like Uganda and Iran, which are relatively isolated countries, students are invested in English as a lingua franca that connects them to a wider world. The imagined identity of English language learners, younger and older, is that of a global multilingual citizenry, scaffolded by English, in which people are knowledgeable about other nations, and seek collaboration across borders. The arguments presented suggest that English does not belong to native speakers of the language, but to all those who use it, whether native or non-native speaker.

Second is the question: *What are the benefits of investment, and how does the capital learners possess serve as affordances for learning?* For all the learners in the

studies discussed, the benefit of learning a second language was that it enhanced the learners' social, cultural, and economic capital, providing for a more promising future. It was not always the case, however, that the capital students already possessed served as affordances for learning. For example, it was rare to find examples in the data that provided support for the mother tongues of the language learners in the two research studies. The linguistic capital of the learners remained largely invisible, whether learners were in Uganda or Iran.

This is related to the third question: *How do systemic patterns of control and prevailing ideologies impact a learner's investment in language learning*? While most learners took the ideological position that the learning of English was highly beneficial, it is of concern that learners raised few questions about the impact of the global spread of English (Pennycook, 2007), and made little reference to the advantages of multilingualism (May, 2014). For example, if English is considered the preeminent language of science and technology, what implications does this have for the construction and distribution of knowledge on a global scale? Clearly there are important implications for the identities of students worldwide, many of whom, like Henrietta, might devalue the knowledge they have if it is not validated by Anglophone networks. What is not adequately addressed in the data are the invisible mechanisms of power exercised by such systemic patterns of control as immigration policies, university admissions programs, and language testing agencies. The challenge for language teachers is to harness the capital that students already have, and use it as resources for learning. Further, teachers need to help learners identify and navigate systemic patterns of control and make visible ideological practices that limit and constrain human possibility. This challenge leads me to the implications of identity and investment research for classroom pedagogy.

There are many exciting ways in which language teachers can help learners expand the range of identities available to language learners and encourage learner investment in the language and literacy practices of their classrooms (Cummins & Early, 2011; Norton & Toohey, 2004). By way of illustration, Darvin and I have been exploring the possibilities offered by digital storytelling, which serves as a pedagogical extension of our model of investment (Darvin & Norton, 2014). Digital stories are brief personal narratives told through images, sounds and words, and which use new media technology. They incorporate students' past and present lives in the learning process, and their hopes for the future. Children, youth, and adults can identify and reflect on pivotal moments that have shaped their life trajectories and reframe them through the creative and collaborative use of multiple media and modes. Because of connectivity and the transportability of the digital, student stories can be shared not only with local communities but also with transnational audiences (Hafner, 2014;Toohey, Dagenais, & Schultze, 2012).

There are a number of resources online that discuss the elements of digital storytelling and its learning applications. Founded by Joe Lambert, one of the pioneers of

digital storytelling, the *Center for Digital Storytelling*[1] provides examples of migrant stories and features the *Digital Storytelling Cookbook*, which discusses story elements and approaches to scripting and digitizing story elements. There is also an innovative project at University of California, Berkeley, called *Digital Underground Storytelling for Youth*[2], or DUSTY, an after-school program where volunteers from the community help students of diverse backgrounds to create multimedia presentations (Hull and Katz, 2006). A Canadian initiative called *Scribjab*[3] is a website and iPad application for young learners to read and create digital stories using multiple languages, and was developed by Kelleen Toohey and Diane Dagenais at Simon Fraser University. The *African Storybook*[4] is another exciting project with much potential for transforming classrooms and schools in Africa. Developed by the South African organization, Saide, it is providing open-access digital stories, in African languages, English, French, and Portuguese for young learners in sub-Saharan Africa (Norton & Welch, 2015). An extension of this project has been developed by Liam Doherty at the University of British Columbia, called the Global African Storybook Project[5], which is translating freely available digital stories from the African Storybook Project into multiple languages worldwide, including Mandarin, Hindi, Japanese, and Nepali.

8. Conclusion

The trajectory of my collaborative research suggests that language learner investment is important for language learning internationally. Further, it is productive to investigate investment with respect to the constructs of identity, capital, and ideology, as this may help make visible the ways in which power relations enable or constrain language learning. The range of research discussed supports the view that investment is enhanced when the pedagogical practices of the teacher increase the range of identities available to language learners, whether face-to-face, digital, or online. To affirm learners' complex identities, classroom practices need to draw from and legitimize learners' cultural capital – their prior knowledge and experience - while seeking to better understand and affirm learners' imagined identities. I have suggested that digital storytelling is one particular method that might increase learner investment in the language practices of classrooms. Through the act of constructing a story through different multimodal elements and languages, learners are given an opportunity to exercise their agency and claim their right to speak and be heard. Such findings also have important implications for language teacher identity (De Costa & Norton, 2017).

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[1] http://storycenter.org

[2] http://www.oaklanddusty.org

[3] http://www.scribjab.com

[4] http://www.africanstorybook.org/

[5] http://global-asp.github.io/

Drawing on research discussed in this chapter, language teacher education programs are encouraged to provide teachers with greater opportunities to explore language as both a linguistic system and a social practice. Such programs should encourage teachers to harness the social, cultural, and linguistic capital that language learners already possess, and to better understand their hopes for the future in our increasingly mobile and multilingual world.

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