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Considerations of Identity in L2 Learning

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INTRODUCTION

My focus in this chapter will be on the sociocultural dimensions and processes of identity formation and transformation as they relate to the varied contexts of second language learning. A great deal of attention has been paid to this topic in recent years in the literatures of second language learning and applied linguistics. In this chapter, I will highlight important theoretical and methodological approaches that have helped to expand and enrich our understanding of commonly used terms in second language acquisition (SLA) theory such as motivation, native speaker, and second language proficiency. My focus will be on the sociocultural rather than psychological dimensions of identity, as this is the area in which the greatest innovation has taken place in applied linguistics research.

Much of the research I will describe concerns the ways in which identity is constituted through and by language, and how these processes occur within broader social discourses with their inscribed power relations. Applied linguists and second language acquisition (SLA) researchers have developed frameworks for exploring how a learner's identity influences, and is influenced by, the various settings in which learning takes place. Within sociocultural approaches (e.g., Bakhtin, 1986; Bourdieu, 1991; Lantolf, 2000; Le Page & Tabouret-Keller, 1985; Ochs, 1988; Schecter & Bayley, 1997; Vygotsky, 1978), identity is not viewed as a fixed, invariant attribute in the "mind" of the individual learner. Rather, identity is theorized as a contingent process involving dialectic relations between learners and the various worlds and experiences they inhabit and which act on them. Since individual identity is not a fixed attribute, it is inaccurate to ascribe totalizing group-based identities and behaviors based on language, ethnicity, religion, or national origin. It is neither descriptively accurate nor pedagogically useful to classify, for example, Japanese students as diffident, introverted, and nonlinear thinkers, as has often been the case in previous positivistic research (see Kubota, 1999, for discussion on this point). Although a particular cultural group may share common beliefs and practices, the representation of these beliefs and practices as ethnic *traits* perpetuates stereotypical thinking about the 'other' that is

often based on cultural constructions imposed by 'outsiders' through various contact processes: conquest, intermarriage, absorption (see, for example, Said, 1993, and Willinsky, 1998, on the legacies of imperialism). These sociocultural constructions of the 'other' may eventually come to be seen as self-evident not only by the 'outside' group but to varying degrees and in various guises by the culture thus described as well. Furthermore, attempts to legitimize the 'other' usually results in the reaffirmation of normative categories in which the 'normal' (for example, heterosexuality or Western ways of thinking) is counterpoised to the 'other' (for example, homosexuality or Oriental ways of thinking).

Glynn Williams (1999) argues that in American sociology, ethnicity became a dichotomized construct of the normative/standard group—a unitary citizenry speaking a common language (us)—and non-normative/nonstandard groups—including those speaking other languages—(them). This naturalizing of a sociological construct (ethnicity) informs the widely held popular view promoted by Western scholarship that 'reasonable' (modern) people should naturally become part of the culture of the state (or the transnational world) and speak 'its' language, whereas 'irrational' (traditional) people will tend to cling to their 'ethnic language and culture.' Yet, the prevalence of cultural hybridity and multilingualism throughout the non-Western (and, increasingly, Western) world suggests that received views are no longer descriptively adequate. In SLA and Applied Linguistics research, attribution of group-based, ethnic characteristics has tended to perpetuate difference in negative terms vis-à-vis Western, and especially Anglo-American, norms and expectations (see Pennycook, 1998, for an extended discussion on this point; and Dwight Atkinson, 1999, for analysis and discussion of the role of culture in second language acquisition research and pedagogy). Therefore, characterizations of, for example Japanese, let alone 'Asian' students, are likely to be more harmful than helpful to language educators. Nor can one's social or cultural identities or affiliations be predicted by the language(s) that person speaks.

IDENTITY AND SLA RESEARCH

Approaches to identity in (SLA) research have changed considerably over the past decades, reflecting shifts in thinking about how and why second and foreign language learning takes place, and especially the nature and effects of interactions between the learner and contexts of learning. It is useful to understand why these changes in approach occurred in order to contextualize current thinking about identity and language learning.

Early work in SLA was influenced by the theories of social identity developed by Tajfel (1981). Tajfel understood social identity as being derived from an individual's membership in a social group (or groups). If an individual's emotional needs were not met by their identification with a particular group, that person could change their group affiliation(s), although that might not always be possible. Drawing on this work, Giles and Johnson (1981, 1987) developed their ethnolinguistic identity theory in which language was posited as a prominent marker of group membership and social identity. If a change in group membership involved linguistic adaptation, one result could be subtractive bilingualism or even language erosion and loss over time. The connections between language and identity have been explored as well by interactional sociolinguists, such as Gumperz (1982) and Heller (1982, 1987, 1995). In this research, both the choice of language (code) and the use of the code in particular ways signal "social relationships based on shared or unshared group memberships" (Heller, 1982, p. 5). Gumperz (1982, p. 66) used the terms "we code" to characterize the minority, in-group language, and "they code" to characterize the majority, out-group language. Gumperz notes that code switching is used to signal various group

memberships and identities. In SLA research, identity was conceptualized as a group attribute. A key concept in several theories is that of *social distance*, a concept that was operationalized in John Schumann's Acculturation Model (1976, 1978). Distance here was used in an abstract (even metaphorical) sense to indicate the degree of similarity between two cultures. Schumann hypothesized that the greater the social distance between two cultures, the more difficulty the learner would have in acquiring the target language, whereas the smaller the social distance, the more likely the learner would be successful in acquiring the target language. Schumann assumed that less social distance entailed greater social solidarity between two cultures. In other words, the degree to which the learner *identifies* with another culture, the more motivated he or she will be to acquire that culture's language.

Although Schumann's model provided language educators with useful metaphors to guide their practice and seemed to comport with many of their intuitions about the whys and wherefores of successful SLA, it has not stood up to empirical scrutiny, in part because it attempts to control for dynamic, interactive processes that are not easily isolated or measured. In fact, even on its own terms, Schumann's hypothesis is not upheld. Analysis of Schumann's original data shows that his primary informant, "Alberto," *was* progressing toward more frequent use of targetlike forms despite his relative isolation and distance from native speakers of English in the United States (Berdan, 1996).

Another model from SLA research of relevance to any discussion of identity was proposed by Gardner and Lambert (1972). These researchers studied foreign language learners in Canada, the United States, and the Philippines to determine the role played by attitude and motivation in language learning. Based on their research, they divided clusters of attitudes into two basic types of motivation: instrumental and integrative. Instrumental motivation reflects targeted, pragmatic purposes for learning a language, such as for career advancement, to study in another country, to pass an important exam, and so on. Integrative motivation comes about when a learner has a desire to integrate themselves within the second language cultural group, to become a part of that society. Lambert found that integrative motivation was associated with high scores on proficiency tests in a foreign language. The conclusion was that a high degree of integrative motivation tended to correlate better with successful L2 acquisition than did instrumental motivation, although there could be exceptions. Other scholars soon reported contrary findings. Lukmani (1972) investigated the English acquisition of Marathi-speaking Indian students and found those with higher instrumental motivation scored high in tests of English proficiency. Au (1988) reviewed 27 studies that employed the integrative-instrumental construct and found that the measurement of motivation and the theory behind these measurements were questionable. Modifications to the theory were proposed, including one by Graham (1984) who argued that integrative assimilation could be broken down into integrative and assimilative motivation. Integrative motivation concerns a language learner's desire to learn the target language to be able to communicate with, or find out about, members of the target language culture, and does not imply direct contact with the target language group. In contrast, assimilative motivation is the desire to become an indistinguishable member of the target speech community, and usually requires prolonged contact with that community (in Brown, 1994, p. 155). The important point to note here is the presupposition that a learner should be comfortable with and positively disposed toward a target culture group in order to successfully acquire the language, and if the learner *identifies* with that culture, he or she will more likely be motivated to acquire the target language. One problem with these approaches is that they presuppose (often unwittingly) an exclusively *assimilationist* model in which the price of acceptance into a host culture is the loss of one's identity, or at the least the adoption of dual identities. Another possibility, to be discussed in the next section,

is that identities in multilingual contexts are transformed, complex, dynamic, and variable.

The bias in much of the SLA research from the 1960s through the 1980s presupposed the conflictual aspects of language contact. Borrowing from the cultural anthropological literature (e.g., Foster, 1962, Hall, 1959), applied linguists tended to characterize L2 learning as a "clash of consciousness" Mark Clarke (1976, p. 380) likened second language learning to schizophrenia in which "social encounters become inherently threatening, and defense mechanisms are employed to reduce the trauma." Acculturation was described by Brown (1994, p. 171, relying on the research of Larson & Smalley, 1972) as proceeding through four stages: euphoria, culture shock, culture stress, assimilation or adaptation to the new culture and acceptance of the "new" person that has developed. Recent qualitative research, including first-person accounts in the form of personal narratives (to be discussed later), provides a far more complex picture of what can happen in second language contact situations.

To summarize earlier work in SLA research, there was little emphasis on the interaction of an individual's multiple memberships based on gender, class, race, linguistic repertoire, or on how these memberships were understood and played out in different learning contexts (although see McNamara, 1997, for a discussion of the continuing relevance of Tajfel's theories in SLA research). Furthermore, the motivation of L2 learners was often measured in relation to optimal models of positive identification leading to assimilation of some type, or to less than optimal models leading to varying degrees of failure to assimilate and, as a result, failure to acquire nativelike fluency in the target language. It is no accident that the use of dichotomous and scalar *etic* variables from psychology and sociology coincided with the positivistic, structural paradigms that guided (and continue to guide) SLA research (see Pennycook, 1989, and Lantolf, 1996, for a discussion of positivism in Applied Linguistics research). As new theories from poststructuralist and critical paradigms became influential in Applied Linguistics research, the characterizations of learners and the contexts in which learning occurs changed dramatically.

RECENT APPROACHES TO IDENTITY IN SLA RESEARCH

Language, Identity, and Investment

In a series of articles (1995, 1997), a special-topic issue of *TESOL Quarterly* (31(3), 1997), and a monograph (2000), Bonny Norton has developed a number of ideas with important consequences for second language acquisition theory. In a richly contextualized qualitative study involving five female immigrant language learners in Canada, Norton (2000, p. 5) shows how learner identity influences motivation and, ultimately, acquisition of a second language. Norton uses the term identity "to reference how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future." At least two aspects of SLA theory are called into question by Norton. First, she claims that SLA theorists "have not developed a comprehensive theory of identity that integrates the language learner and the language learning context... furthermore, they have not questioned how relations of power in the social world impact on social interaction between second language learners and target language speakers" (p. 4). She cites the work of Monica Heller (1987) who demonstrates the central role of language in the negotiation of a person's sense of self at different points in time and in different contexts, and in allowing a person access (or lack thereof) to powerful social networks that give learners the opportunity to speak. Following Foucault (1980), Norton takes the position that "power does not operate only at the macro level of

powerful institutions such as the legal system, the education system and the social welfare system, but also at the micro level of everyday social encounters between people with differential access to symbolic and material resources—encounters that are inevitably produced within language" (Norton, 2000, p. 7).

Another important influence on Norton's work comes from French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, whose work on the relation between identity and symbolic power is invoked to help explain how hierarchies based on social status influence the "right to speech," which Norton translates from the French to mean the "right to speak," as well as the "power to impose reception" (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 75). Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital is particularly relevant for research in language and identity. According to Bourdieu and Passeron (1977), cultural capital refers to the "knowledge and modes of thought that characterize different classes and groups in relation to specific sets of social forms" (cited in Norton, 2000, p. 10). Norton uses the term *investment* to characterize the complex motives and desires that language learners may have vis-à-vis a target language. According to Norton, "if learners invest in a second language, they do so with the understanding that they will acquire a wider range of symbolic and material resources, which will in turn increase the value of their cultural capital" (p. 10). Furthermore, because learners have complex social histories and multiple desires, "they are constantly organizing and reorganizing a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world. Thus an investment in the target language is also an investment in a learner's own identity, an identity which is constantly changing across time and space" (p. 11).

The implications of this approach for SLA research can be summarized. First, the assumption that SLA researchers and educators should operate with is that "speech, speakers, and social relationships are inseparable" (Norton, 1997, p. 410). Therefore, theories and research in SLA that do not take into full account the social aspect of language learning and use cannot be taken seriously. Second, an individual's identity in L2 contexts is mediated by the reactions of others to that individual's social and cultural position, which, in turn, can influence that individual's motivation to learn in ways that are not predictable using standard psychological or sociological categories and variables mentioned earlier in this chapter. Norton's (2000) study of immigrant female language learners in Canada demonstrates the different effects of diverse and complex social interactions on the learners' acquisition and use of English.

Norton's idea of *investment* has been used by other researchers in diverse settings. McKay and Wong (1996) found that the needs and desires of language learners determined their investment in learning the target language. Angelil-Carter (1997) found it useful to break down the concept of investment into specific domains of learning, such as literacies, or other discourses "that are dislodged and reconstructed over time and space" (p. 268). Along these lines, Starfield (2002) shows how in postapartheid South Africa differential ability to use linguistic features of authority within the essay-text genre results in one (White) student's ability to construct a powerful, authoritative textual and discoursal identity for himself, whereas another (Black) student, who relies on the words of recognized authorities in the discipline, is labeled a plagiarizer. The successful student relies on his highly developed 'textual' capital; the unsuccessful student fails to negotiate an authoritative "self as author" (p. 121).

Language, Identity, and Gender

The study of language and gender in linguistics coincided with the growth of the feminist movement in the 1970s. Early work by Lakoff (1975) and Thorne and Henley (1975) stimulated several decades of research on the relations among sex, power, and language. This research has been subsumed under the headings *deficit*, *dominance*, and *difference*. Within the deficit framework, women were characterized as deficient

in their use of language compared to men (e.g., Lakoff, 1975). Thus, Lakoff argued, women used more tag questions (e.g., *You're coming to dinner tomorrow, aren't you?*), hedges, certain 'feminine' adjectives and expressions, and so on compared to men. Lakoff argued that these linguistic structures reflected females' relative insecurity and inferior social position in relation to males. In the dominance model (e.g., Fishman, 1983; West & Zimmerman, 1983; Zimmerman & West, 1975), patterns of male-female interactions in conversation were analyzed. By measuring the amount of talk, nature and frequency of interruptions, number of questions asked, number of turns taken, and ability to introduce and maintain conversational topics, these researchers provided quantitative evidence to support the claim that male-female conversational patterns mirrored broader social power imbalances. Specifically, they found that in mixed gender conversations, men talked and interrupted more than women, occupied more of the conversational 'floor,' and were more successful in controlling the topic of conversation. The third paradigm, the gender differences model, argued that men and women were socialized in different cultures (male and female) in which they learned different rules for appropriate verbal interaction (e.g., Maltz & Borker, 1982; Tannen, 1990). According to Tannen, women are socialized to be concerned about maintaining social relations and solidarity in their conversations, whereas men are socialized to be more focused on the informational aspects of conversation, concerned more about their status than on the feelings of their interlocutors.

Applied linguists interpreted findings in the difference approach as supporting their claims that female learners have superior learning strategies compared to men (e.g., Oxford, 1993). SLA researchers influenced by the two cultures approach found, for example, that men interact to produce more output (Gass & Varonis, 1986) and that female NSs were likely to ask more helpful questions and to negotiate meaning in a more consistent way than male NSs (Pica et al., 1991).

Critical work in the 1990s (e.g., Cameron, 1992; Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1999; Gal, 1991; Trömel-Plötz, 1991) showed the ways in which earlier research tended to essentialize 'women' and 'men' and failed to consider the effects of different interactional contexts in diverse cultural settings. The shortcomings of the deficit, dominance, and difference paradigms in language and gender research stem, in large part, from the conceptualization of gender as a series of personal traits or attributes rather than as a socially constructed set of relations and practices (Pavlenko & Piller, 2001, p. 22). Within critical, and especially postmodern, theory gender is not viewed as a static (or stable) attribute, but rather as "a system of social relations and discursive practices" (p. 23). Therefore, gender itself as a social variable is mediated by other social variables, such as race, social class, educational background and experience, cultural norms, and so on. Understood in this way, gender itself is neither exclusively (or always) enabling or disabling in terms of language acquisition, learning, or use.

Pavlenko and Piller (2001, p. 17) cite several researchers (e.g., Ehrlich, 1997; Woolard, 1997) who have pointed out the growing gap between the study of SLA and bilingualism and the study of language and gender. To remedy this situation, they propose to bring together the disparate literatures of second language acquisition and bilingualism, and the study of language and gender into a new framework they label multilingualism, second language learning, and gender. In doing this, Pavlenko and Piller describe four areas of research that could comprise such a field of inquiry and report important findings within each area. Three of these four areas are of particular importance to L2 educators and will be described here.

The first area is 'Gendered access to linguistic resources in multilingual contexts.' The research Pavlenko and Piller present is concerned with the ways in which gender privileges access to second language skills in different societies. For example, they cite research by Goldstein, (1995), Harvey (1994), Hill (1987), Holmes (1993), Lofton (1996), Losey (1995), Spedding (1994), Stevens (1986), and Swigart (1992) that

shows the ways in which men have access to the symbolic capital of a second language, whereas women are restricted by various gatekeeping practices from gaining access to majority language education and the workplace (p. 24). Pavlenko and Piller also cite research that shows how men are disadvantaged by ideologies of language and gender from achieving success in L2 learning (e.g., Günthner, 1992; Moon, 2000).

The second area of research findings in this proposed new paradigm concerns 'Gendered agency in second language learning and use.' The research grouped under this heading explores the intrinsic relationship between gender and agency in the process of L2 learning and use. According to Pavlenko and Piller (2001, p. 29):

> This view implies that in some cases L2 users may decide to learn the second, or any additional, language only to a certain extent, which allows them to be proficient, but without the consequences of losing the old and adopting the new ways of being in the world. In other contexts, their L2 learning may be accompanied by a full transition to the new linguistic community and L1 loss. And yet in others they may resist the language that positions them unfavorably.

Examples of these three possible outcomes are provided. Of particular interest to ESL/EFL educators are studies that show that women around the world are learning English as a means of liberating themselves from the confines of patriarchy (Kobayashi, 2000; Matsui, 1995; Solé, 1978). Other research shows how women are motivated to learn a second language in order to improve their social and economic status (e.g., Gal, 1978; McDonald, 1994).

The third area described by Pavlenko and Piller is 'Critical and feminist pedagogy.' Of particular interest in this area is gender representation in teaching materials. Borrowing from linguistic research on the various ways in which the English language represents gendered social relations and hierarchies (e.g., Graddol & Swann, 1989), applied linguists and TESL/TEFL specialists have analyzed how these representations are reproduced in ESL textbooks. For example, content analyses of ESL textbooks published in the 1970s and 1980s revealed stereotyped male and female roles and promoted the use of masculine generics such as 'he,' 'man,' or 'mankind' (Hartman & Judd, 1978; Porreca, 1984; Sunderland, 1992). Other more recent studies have found stereotypical portrayals of gender roles in EFL textbooks published in Japan (McGregor, 1998) and Russian textbooks published in the United States (Shardakova & Pavlenko, 2004). Cynthia Nelson (1999) argues that queer theory, as opposed to the straight/gay binary, offers the possibility of problematizing the very notion of sexual identities in ESL/EFL classrooms. Nelson comments that "a queer approach recognizes that sexual identities are not universal but are done in different ways in different cultural contexts, and it calls for a close look at how identities are produced through day-to-day interactions" (pp. 377–378).

Language, Identity, Race, and Ethnicity

Ethnicity, like race, is a sociological construct that both reflects and serves various sociopolitical interests. One's ethnicity may be ascribed, chosen, contested, and/or contingent. As Heller (1987) points out, ethnicity is a product of opposition because persons growing up in a homogeneous society would not define themselves nor be defined as ethnic. Within postmodern scholarship, ethnicity is understood as being produced in specific circumstances of social, economic, and historical relations of power that are reinforced and reproduced in everyday social encounters (Norton, 2000, p. 13). In concurrence with Rockhill (1987), Norton (2000, p. 13) takes the position that "ethnicity, gender, and class are not experienced as a series of discrete

background variables, but are all, in complex and interconnected ways, implicated in the construction of identity and the possibilities of speech."

Recently, this position has been explored in a variety of L2 contexts. A number of studies and special-topic issues of journals (e.g., *Linguistics and Education, 8*(1,2), 1996; *Journal of Sociolinguistics, 3*(4), 1999; *The International Journal of Bilingualism, 5*(2), 2001) have examined the complex relations between choice of code and learner identity in defined contexts. An important finding has been that the language(s) (and language varieties) one speaks are not necessarily markers of a particular ethnic identity. Depending on where, when, and how a second or third language is acquired, a speaker's identification with that language (and the culture with which it is identified) will vary in often unpredictable ways. This is demonstrated in the research of Rampton (1995, 1999a, 1999b); Leung, Harris, and Rampton (1997); Blackledge and Pavlenko (2001); Pavlenko (1998), among others. To capture the complexity of learner identity in ESL contexts, Leung, Harris, and Rampton (1997, p. 418) suggest that the terms 'native speaker' and 'mother tongue' be changed to 'language expertise,' 'language inheritance,' and 'language affiliation.' Instead of asking "Is the learner a native speaker of Punjabi?", the teacher should ask "What is the learner's linguistic repertoire? Is the learner's relationship to these languages based on expertise, inheritance, affiliation, or a combination?" (p. 418). In an ethnographic study of a Sikh community in England, Hall (2002) explores the contrast between Punjabi as a reified political symbol and the ways in which Sikh teenagers actually use Punjabi in different contexts and for different purposes. Hall (2002, p. 114) notes that as these teenagers move through the social worlds that constitute their everyday lives "[they] actively construct linguistic practices that make use of a mixture of linguistic forms and styles in relation to influences, expectations, and interests that are situational and shifting. Sikh teens assess and reassess the value of Punjabi as they participate in different types of social interaction, media consumption, and cultural events." In a critical ethnographic study of Francophone African youths studying ESL in an urban Canadian setting, Ibrahim (1999, p. 349) argues that these youths enter "a *social imaginary*—a discursive space in which they are already imagined, constructed, and thus treated as Blacks by hegemonic discourses and groups... This imaginery... influences what and how these students linguistically and culturally learn... [i.e.,] Black stylized English, which they access in hip-hop culture and rap lyrical and linguistic styles."

Two special issues of *Linguistics and Education* titled "Education in Multilingual Settings: Discourse, Identities, and Power" (Martin-Jones & Heller, 1996) explore "the role of education in the production and reproduction of cultural identity and social inequality in multilingual communities" (p. 4). A common framework to the research presented, borrowed from Bourdieu (1977, 1982), is *legitimate language*. The editors have chosen multilingual settings as particularly revealing sites to explore the role played by schools in the production and reproduction of social identities and unequal relations of power, since the "language practices of educational institutions are bound up in the legitimization of relations of power among ethnolinguistic groups" (p. 128). The editors also correctly point out that these processes must be contextualized within broader historical processes of colonialism, postcolonialism, globalization, and nationalist and minority rights movements (e.g., Grillo, 1989; May, 2001; Phillipson, 1992; Tollefson, 1991). The articles in Volume I focus on the ways in which participants in different educational activities contribute (often unwittingly) to the (re)production of hegemonic relations through their bilingual or monolingual discursive practices in the postcolonial nations of Botswana, Burundi, Hong Kong, and Malta, along with England. The research in Volume II focuses on the ways in which participants in educational settings contest the legitimacy of discursive practices and the prevailing symbolic order in Canada, England, Brazil, and Australia.

The findings of this research suggest that the roles played by dominant groups in multilingual educational settings have direct and indirect consequences on language acquisition processes. For example, if greater value is attached to language *x* than language *y*, this will be conveyed through classroom interactions (how do participants express their attitudes and beliefs about a language, and its speakers, through their discourses), curricular choices (which language is used for instruction, which language has value for particular educational paths), linguistic behavior (which variety of a language is valued or devalued, and how are these perceived evaluations reflected in learners' linguistic repertoires), learners' identities (how do learners see themselves positioned in relation to other languages and cultures), and motivations (is the learner positively or negatively motivated to learn the language, generally, and for what purposes). The research presented in Martin-Jones and Heller (1996) offers an important theoretical and methodological framework for investigating relations between power, identity, and second language learning.

Native Speaker, Non-native Speaker, and Identity

A great deal of SLA and foreign language (FL) research has focused on mismatches between the learner's culture and target language culture to account for the learner's inability to achieve "nativelike" proficiency in a second or foreign language. The use of the term "nativelike" by researchers and practitioners reveals a widely (often implicitly) held view that the native speaker is the norm toward which language learners should strive to emulate. Robert Phillipson (2000, p. 98) notes the terms native/non-native themselves are "offensive and hierarchical in that they take the native as the norm, and define the Other negatively in relation to this norm." Ironically, as Widdowson (1994) points out, although persons socialized in their L1 as native speakers will possess an insider's knowledge of many facets of that language, the reality is that the vast majority of English Language Learners (ELLs) in the world today are instructed by non-native speakers (NNSs). Furthermore, English is now more commonly spoken as a second, rather than first, language by bilinguals and is used more frequently for intercultural communication between non-native speakers than between native speakers (see Crystal, 1997). This trend will accelerate for the foreseeable future (see David Graddol's "The decline of the native speaker," 1999). The implications of these facts for approaches to understanding the goals and processes of language learning in second and foreign language contexts are profound. Not only are traditional criteria for language competence and proficiency rapidly becoming outdated as "global" languages such as English occupy specialized niches and have achieved the status of indigenized varieties in many countries such as India, Singapore, and Nigeria (see Kachru, 1982, 1986), but identification with a "home" culture has decreasing relevance for the vast majority of ESL/EFL speakers.

The legacies of colonialism (see Canagarajah, 1999; Pennycook, 1998; Phillipson, 1992; Ridge, 2000) that too often inform Applied Linguistics research and English Language Teaching (ELT) have begun to be systematically uncovered and critiqued in recent years. One aspect of this legacy has been the problematizing of the subordinate positioning of ELL vis-à-vis NS in many contexts worldwide, a process characterized as 'Othering' by Kubota (2001). Responses (negative and positive) to 'Othering' and to the experiences, in general, of NNS in various settings have been explored in collections (e.g., Braine, 1999; Norton, 1997), in many articles and chapters (e.g., Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 1999; Canagarajah, 2000; Flowerdew, 2000; Kubota, 1999, 2001; Leung, Harris, & Rampton, 1997; Lin, Wang, Akamatsu, & Riazi, 2002; Liu, 1999; Morgan, 2002; Pavlenko, 1998, 2001; Piller, 2002; Rampton, 1990; Spack, 1997), and monographs (e.g., Canagarajah, 1999; Davies, 1991; Medgyes, 1994; Norton, 2000; Pennycook, 1998; Rampton, 1995).

A methodology that is particularly suited to exploring the topic of identity for L2 users is the personal narrative or life history. A number of important studies have used this technique to explore L2 users' introspective accounts of their experiences "crossing" into other cultures and languages. In their exploration of first-person narratives of late/adult bilingual writers, Pavlenko and Lantolf (2000, p. 157) claim that "first-person accounts in the form of personal narratives provide a much richer source of data than do third-person distal observations." Whereas the tradition of hermeneutic research in SLA has focused mainly on the 'here-and-now' or 'in process' descriptions of the second language learning process by learners and researchers, Pavlenko and Lantolf's goal is "to establish 'retroactive' first-person narratives as a legitimate source of data on the learning process by teasing out in a theoretically informed way insights provided by the life stories of people who have struggled through cultural border crossings" (p. 158). Based on their analysis of the autobiographical work of several American and French authors of Eastern European origin, all of whom learned their second language (in which they work) as adults, Pavlenko and Lantolf identify particular sites of reconstruction of identity. Following Pavlenko (1998), they use self-translation as a unifying metaphor that entails a phase of continuous loss followed later by an overlapping second phase of gain and reconstruction. The initial phase of loss is segmented into five stages (pp. 162–163):

1. loss of one's linguistic identity ("careless baptism," according to Hoffman, 1989).
2. loss of all subjectivities.
3. loss of the frame of reference and the link between the signifier and the signified.
4. loss of the inner voice.
5. first language attrition.

The phase of recovery and (re)construction encompasses four critical stages:

1. appropriation of others' voices.
2. emergence of one's own new voice, often in writing first.
3. translation therapy: reconstruction of one's past.
4. continuous growth "into" new positions and subjectivities.

Pavlenko and Lantolf conclude that "it is ultimately through their own intentions and agency that people decide to undergo or not undergo the frequently agonizing process of linguistic, cultural, and personal transformation documented in the preceding narratives" (p. 171). They point out, however, that such a decision may be influenced by many factors, including the person's positioning in the native discourse and the power relations between the discourses involved. This research is relevant to SLA theory in that it suggests that "'failure' to attain 'ultimately' in a second language is an issue that arises from the imposition of the third-person objectivist perspective informed by a particular linguistic ideology based on the NS/NNS dichotomy" (p. 170). One's linguistic competence in a new culture reflects a process of transformation rather than one of replacement, in which the ultimate outcome represents an identity that is not exclusively anchored in one culture/language or another. As Pavlenko and Lantolf put it, "crossing a border is about 'renarratizing' a life" (p. 174).

While Pavlenko and Lantolf explore the autobiographies of late/adult bilingual writers, Lin, Wang, Akamatsu, and Riazi (2002) in a special topic issue of the *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education* ("Celebrating local knowledge on language and education," Canagarajah (Ed.), 2002) explore the life histories of applied linguists whose experiences as English language learners began much earlier. These language educators use the technique of the collective story (see Richardson, 1985) where the personal/biographical and the sociological/political intersect. Their purpose is to

explore and analyze "our encounters and experiences with English in our own life trajectories just as we are constructing them and performing through them new voices, expanded identities, and alternative subject positions" (p. 296). The authors, who studied English from childhood in different parts of Asia—mainland China, colonial Hong Kong, Japan, and Iran—completed their doctoral studies in English language education in Canada in the early 1990s. Having presented their biographies to a mainstream audience at the 2001 TESOL convention, the authors decided to further explore their writings by "reflexively analyzing them, linking them to current discourses of language learning and identity, and local production of disciplinary knowledge in applied linguistics" (p. 300). Although each author's trajectory was unique, they collectively identify a similar storyline that they divide into four stages: English from initially being a more or less irrelevant or external language for instrumental purposes (getting good grades, entering into a good school, getting a good job, climbing the socioeconomic ladder) to becoming an intimate language for self-expansion and enrichment, for exploration of new horizons and new knowledge and understanding of different peoples and the world. In order to destabilize the pervasive hierarchy of racial, cultural, and linguistic relations, the authors argue it is necessary to deconstruct the dichotomized and essentialized categories of Self and Other rooted in colonialist discourse and manifested in classifications such as native, native-like, and non-native English speakers. In a move toward re-imagining and altering these discourses, the authors propose a paradigm shift from doing TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) to doing TEGCOM (Teaching English for Globalized Communication). Rather than assume (as the name and discourses of TESOL do) that it is the "Other-language" speaker who needs "pedagogical treatment," the authors suggest that we should imagine a TEGCOM class in which all learners are monolingual "native English speakers" who need to be instructed in the ways of using English for cross-cultural communication (e.g., cross-cultural pragmatic skills and awareness) in specific contexts (e.g., for conducting business in Japan, China, or Iran).

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

As should be evident at this point, the essentializing of L2 learners as members of a national culture or language group has been widely (and rightly) criticized by critical and postmodern scholars in recent years. As Rosaldo (1993, p. 217) has noted, cultural identities are "always in motion, not frozen for inspection." Yet, as Hansen and Liu (1997, p. 572) point out, despite the fact that many researchers have acknowledged the dynamic nature of social identity, they still use methods—questionnaires, observations, interviews, and so forth—that "do not allow for dynamism, as they are typically one-time occurrences." Although these methods should not be abandoned, additional methods discussed in this chapter (e.g., first-person narratives, collective stories, longitudinal studies, in-depth interviews, and ethnographic research), should be employed in the study of identity in L2 and FL settings. These methods have generated a rich source of data and have deepened and widened our understanding of the complexity of identity, showing the limitations of dichotic oppositional categories such as native/non-native, proficient/limited proficiency, assimilated/alienated, Western/Oriental in the interpretation of human motivations and desires. Spack (1997, p. 773) points out that "when teachers and researchers exercise the power to identify, we actually may be imposing an ethnocentric ideology and inadvertently supporting the essentializing discourse that represents cultural groups as stable or homogeneous entities." She suggests that rather than asking "What should we name students?", we should ask "Should we name students?" She suggests that we follow the lead of critical cultural anthropologists who argue that those who have

been the objects of analysis can now "speak for themselves, represent their own lives" (Friedman, 1994, p. 71).

Issues of naming and labeling apply equally in the case of seemingly neutral terms, such as 'Mother Tongue.' The articles in Ricento and Wiley (2002) show the ways in which this term has been appropriated, rejected, or reappropriated for different ideological and political purposes. However, by analyzing the texts and discourses of different subjectivities, there is the possibility to identify "third places" (Kramsch, 1993) in which new/re-articulations of our identities through linguistic and cultural contact experiences can be explored. An excellent example of such a move is found in the work of the South African scholar Sinfree Makoni. Makoni (cited in Pennycook, 2002, pp. 25–26) argues that "unless African languages are disinvented, some ways of conceptualization of the social world consistent with European missionary imperialism will be sustained into the next century... disinvention argues that African languages in their current ways of conceptualization are European scripts." Pennycook suggests that disinvention, rather than reification, of languages "might lead us to address questions of language in education rather differently, not focusing so much on reified notions of dominant languages and mother tongues as on trying to understand the complex and hybrid mixtures of semiotic tools that are actually used" (p. 26).

There are many exciting possibilities in the study of identity and L2 learning. One area that is receiving attention recently is the transnational character of many immigrant communities and the implications for language pedagogy and learning. Pita and Utakis (2002) examine the economic, political, social, cultural, and linguistic dimensions of the Dominican community in New York City. They argue that in order to function effectively in their lives, members of this community require enriched bilingual bicultural programs, as opposed to just ESL, to promote parallel development so that students can succeed in either country. With reference to the Dominican community in New York, old assumptions that immigrants come to the United States to assimilate and lose their ancestral language and culture do not apply. Educators who deal with this and similar populations need to understand that the identities of their L2 learners are deeply connected to their status as members of distinct, but interrelated, communities, in which bilingualism (as opposed to monolingualism) is the norm.

Finally, ESL and EFL teachers have a responsibility to consider how their pedagogical practices enable or challenge prevailing social hierarchies. McMahill (2001) describes how she was able to stimulate class discussions on women's issues in Japan using the topic of mother/daughter relationships. McMahill describes how these EFL learners can appropriate English as a weapon for self-empowerment for women in Japan and for women of color in the world. Another example of the possibilities of a critical pedagogy is found in Canagarajah (1999). The author provides insights into the ways that teachers and students in a postcolonial setting (Sri Lanka) can negotiate the challenges posed to their identity, community membership, and values, by the vernacular and English. The research approaches and findings presented in this chapter suggest starting points for critical, self-reflexive inquiry about how our practices as teachers might better serve the complex interests, desires, and identities of our second and foreign language students around the world.

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