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Identity in second language learning: Access to the target language group

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Abstract

In recent years the role of identity in SLA has emerged in the literature as the linguistic community develops an understanding of the significance of identity in language learning (McKay & Wong, 1996). Norton (2000) refers to identity as "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" (p. 5). An understanding of identity in language learning and the relationship of the language learner to the learning environment helps to illuminate what previous theories about the role of affective variables failed to explain, namely, why some learners succeed and others fail with seemingly similar abilities and motivation levels and under similar circumstances. Previous research on learner differences attempted to identify characteristics in learners which explained why some individuals are 'good language learners' and others are not (Norton Peirce, 1995). Those studies focused on factors such as anxiety levels, extroversion vs. introversion, age, aptitude, and motivation. Motivated individuals were found more likely to seek opportunities to practice in the target language than individuals who were not motivated (Gardner & MacIntyre, as cited in Norton Peirce, 1995). However, theories about motivation carry an implication that learners who avoid interaction fail to create such opportunities for themselves (Norton, 2000). Moreover, motivation theories have not explained why an individual can be motivated and seek out interaction with target language speakers in some circumstances, but be reticent, unmotivated, and uninvolved under other circumstances (Norton Peirce, 1995). Research on identity is beginning to shed light on this seeming dichotomy in second language learning. Drawing on recent literature, this paper seeks to show that second language learners do not always have agency to create language learning opportunities in circumstances in which they might find themselves, and to further show that power differential between interlocutors in language learning contexts can affect the ability of Identity in SLA Page 3 language learners to interact with target language speakers, ultimately affecting their ability to become proficient in the target language. The question raised for second language acquisition is, "Can learners access interaction through development of a social identity which empowers them to take social risks?" The implication of that question for second language teaching is, "What can be done to effectively foster a social identity in students that facilitates their learning of the target language?"

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Identity in Second Language Learning: Access to the Target Language Group

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In recent years the role of identity in SLA has emerged in the literature as the linguistic community develops an understanding of the significance of identity in language learning (McKay & Wong, 1996). Norton (2000) refers to identity as "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" (p. 5). An understanding of identity in language learning and the relationship of the language learner to the learning environment helps to illuminate what previous theories about the role of affective variables failed to explain, namely, why some learners succeed and others fail with seemingly similar abilities and motivation levels and under similar circumstances. Previous research on learner differences attempted to identify characteristics in learners which explained why some individuals are 'good language learners' and others are not (Norton Peirce, 1995). Those studies focused on factors such as anxiety levels, extroversion vs. introversion, age, aptitude, and motivation. Motivated individuals were found more likely to seek opportunities to practice in the target language than individuals who were not motivated (Gardner & MacIntyre, as cited in Norton Peirce, 1995). However, theories about motivation carry an implication that learners who avoid interaction *fail* to create such opportunities for themselves (Norton, 2000). Moreover, motivation theories have not explained why an individual can be motivated and seek out interaction with target language speakers in some circumstances, but be reticent, unmotivated, and uninvolved under other circumstances (Norton Peirce, 1995). Research on identity is beginning to shed light on this seeming dichotomy in second language learning. Drawing on recent literature, this paper seeks to show that second language learners do not always have agency to create language learning opportunities in circumstances in which they might find themselves, and to further show that power differential between interlocutors in language learning contexts can affect the ability of

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The Import of Identity in SLA

Researchers in SLA have not always been concerned with *identity* per se. Research has progressed in two major conceptual areas (Firth & Wagner, 1997). The first approach emanating from linguistic research has focused on language itself as the object of study, for example how it is structured and innate capabilities of humans to decipher and use it. That approach tends to ignore social aspects of language production and use which other scholars believe to be important (Bourdieu, 1982/1991; Firth & Wagner). The focus on linguistic analysis thereby stimulated scholars who took issue with this perceived lack to advance their own theories along another vein. Scholars from related fields of sociolinguistics (Bourdieu, 1985, 1989, 1982/1991), anthropology (Schumann, 1978) and psychology (Tajfel, 1974), who were interested in social identity, influenced that change. However, the other approach taken by researchers in the field of SLA until recent years has largely focused on individuals, in the sense that attention was paid to factors that make language learning possible, the cognitive processes that are engaged, emotions and traits of individuals that affect learning, and teaching techniques and curriculums that assist individual learners in acquiring language (Firth & Wagner, 1997). The identity of "learner" as found in the SLA literature is a description which infers an insufficiency in the language proficiency of individuals whose skills in a second or additional language have not developed to

the point of being native-like in a target language. The terms "interlanguage" and "non-native" speaker, which frequently appear in the literature, also infer the deficiency of the learner. In other words, individuals are deemed deficient when assigned the label of learner because the focus of the second approach to language study has not been to investigate the ability of human beings to communicate and interact through language, but rather to measure success of language learning and teaching by a learner's degree of proficiency in a target language.

It is not surprising that research has developed along two incongruent paths when one considers the impact of Noam Chomsky, probably the most influential researcher in the field of linguistics (Firth & Wagner, 1997). His Universal Grammar theory exemplifies the homogeneous approach of linguist analysis which treats language production as an entity unto itself, as if all language users are operating on the same societal level and using language as if separate from the social context in which it is produced. His theory, first published as *Syntactic Structures* in 1957, is primarily a language property theory rather than a learning theory (Mitchell & Myles, 2004). Chomsky is concerned with human beings' innate abilities for language, and how language structures are represented in the mind. He categorizes these into language parameters, principles, and parameter-setting (Cook, 1997). He makes a distinction between a linguistic conception of "I-Language", or internal language as it exists in the mind, and language as it is seen in actual use in society, which he terms "E-language" for external language. Chomsky disagrees with researchers who expound a social interactionist view equivalent to E-language "by claiming that language is knowledge" (Cook, p. 250). He continues to the present to refine his theories but remains unconcerned with social factors related to SLA or with practical applications for first or second language learning or teaching. His ideas continue to have considerable influence on the SLA community, however, because they serve as stimulus for other important research on how first and second languages are learned.

Another scholar whose writings were influential within the linguistic community in the 1960s is Ferdinand de Saussure (although he lived from 1857 to 1913, his writings were translated into English in the 1960s) (Chapman, 2000). He makes a distinction similar to Chomsky's between a mental representation of language, which he calls *langue*, the French word for "language," and *parole*, or language as it occurs in actual use. Saussure believes that communication occurs when different members of a language community recognize the same *signs*, or mental representations of ideas or objects (which are "signified"), and are able to produce and decipher the signs through *sound concepts* (or signifiers) that represent the signs in the mind (Chapman, p.146). He is interested in how humans use signs in general and in how they are structured in language. He calls this study of human use of signs "semiology." His preoccupation with linguistic structure, however, led to the labeling of his approach as "structuralist."

Along the other side of the theoretical divide, researchers in the 70s and 80s from related disciplines such as sociology, psychology, and anthropology began to show an awareness of social context as a factor in language production and use. Several notable examples who had a strong influence on later SLA research are Tajfel (1974), Schumann (1978), and Bourdieu (1985).

Social psychologist Henri Tajfel (1974) had a conceptualization of *social identity*, which he defines as "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the emotional significance attached to that membership" (p. 69). He theorizes that each individual desires to maintain a positive self-image, and in comparison of self with others will choose to align with groups which satisfy this need (and leave those which do not). Each individual is a member of multiple groups, all of which affect that person's self-definition through social comparison.

About this same time, anthropologist John Schumann (1978) proposed that affective and social factors be considered as one variable for second language learning, and together act as *the* major causal variable. He explains that the closer a language learner is socially and psychologically to a target language group, the more successful the learner will be in acquiring the target language. He calls this "acculturation." His Acculturation Model developed from this construct is especially applicable to immigrant situations or long-term stay in a TL community. Schumann believes that dominance patterns between the members of the target language community and the SL learning community affect the level of acculturation that is likely to occur, depending on which of the communities has cultural, economic, and political dominance. Therefore the opportunity, or lack thereof, for language learners to interact with the target language community for practice is dependent on their amount of social distance from it. And as Spolsky (1989) asserts, "Opportunity to practice will lead to better spoken English" (p. 2).

Similar to Tajfel, difference is an important construct of Pierre Bourdieu's theories (Bourdieu, 1985, 1989, 1982/1991; Thompson, 1991). Bourdieu, a sociolinguist whose ideas formed a framework for the identity theories of SLA researchers of the 1990s to present (see e.g., Norton (Peirce), 1995, 2000; Miller, 2003), openly disagrees with Saussure's semiotic view and with Chomsky's homogeneous view of language (Bourdieu, 1982/1991; Thompson, 1991). He argues that their structuralist approaches are too limited, specifically because they disregard the social and historical environment surrounding language production and use as well as the role of language in producing and reproducing the social institutions which order society (Bourdieu, 1987/1990, 1982/1991, 1998/2001; Thompson, 1991). Bourdieu and his associates of the 1970s and 1980s (Bourdieu, 1987/1990, 1982/1991; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1970/1990; Bourdieu, Passeron, & De Saint Martin, 1965/1994) emphasize the role of language as an aspect of the social realm rather than the role of social factors as an aspect of language learning. Bourdieu's

model of difference takes into account the varying social strata of society in which individuals have influence on one another, and because that influence is not distributed equally to all individuals it leads to a power differential between them, benefiting some more than others (Bourdieu, 1985, 1989, 1987/1990, 1982/1991, 1998/2001; Bourdieu, Passeron, & De Saint Martin, 1965/1994; Thompson, 1991). Further explanation of how the views of Bourdieu and his associates impact SLA issues will appear in following sections of this paper.

While researchers in SLA did not consider the role of social interaction at the level that Bourdieu argued for in the early 1970s, they did begin to pay more attention to the social aspects of language acquisition. Some theories, albeit through the focus of the individual, began to take into account the effect of the environment. One such theory is Stephen Krashen's (1977), whose primary concern in the 1970s was with language input. He theorized in his Monitor Model that all that is needed for an individual to acquire language is the availability of input from the environment that is comprehensible to the learner.[1] His theory is limited in that he fails to explain just what does, exactly, make input comprehensible (Mitchell & Myles, 2004). His Affective Filter hypothesis, which attempts to address the effect of the learner's emotions and attitudes on the reception of input, fails to adequately account for the fact that learners with sufficient input sometimes fail to acquire, or uptake, the information (White, 1987). His hypotheses have been criticized in the field of SLA because testing them with empirical studies has proved unsuccessful (Mitchell & Myles, 2004). Krashen does, however, reinforce the idea that affective variables can influence language acquisition. His contributions regarding input have led other researchers to consider which factors might contribute to or hinder uptake. Besides affective variables, some researchers began to pay more attention to the effects of social interaction.

One of the early proponents of interaction was Hymes. Firth and Wagner (1997) note that "Hymes was instrumental in launching a more social and contextual view of language….This

view is predicated on the conviction that language-as a social and cultural phenomenon-is acquired and learned through social interaction" (p. 287). Hymes (1972) argued that second language learners are not competent in a target language unless they understand the pragmatic effect of language use in context, an element of what he termed "communicative competence." This argument carries the implication that a speaker or writer knows what is appropriate use in various social situations.

The Interaction hypothesis proposed by Long in the early 1980s was initially intended as an expansion of the ideas Krashen expounded in his Input hypothesis (Mitchell & Myles, 2004). Long (1983) investigated 32 conversational pairs, 16 native speaker/native speakers and 16 native speaker/non-native speakers, and noticed a difference in the type of negotiation that would transpire when participants attempted to resolve difficulties in communication. There was little apparent difference in the complexity of the grammar used by the two groups of pairs, but considerably more native speaker/non-native speaker pairs used conversational repair tactics. These included clarification requests, repetitions, and checks for comprehension. The native speakers were not attempting to teach grammar in any conscious way; rather collaboration to fine-tune the second language input brought it to a level that would be understandable to the non-native speaker. The scaffolding provided to the non-native speakers by the native speakers in this study illustrates the beneficial effect that social interaction can have on language learning.

Scaffolding is a term that has come to represent a mediation process initially envisioned by Vygotsky, a Russian child developmentalist who died in 1934 but whose writings began to appear in English in 1962 (Mitchell & Myles, 2004). His ideas about the mediated nature of learning gained favor with psychologists and child developmentalists of the 1980s, and recently by influential SLL theorists, notably James Lantolf (Mitchell & Myles). Vygotsky (1978) viewed scaffolding as a kind of collaboration between a "novice" and an "expert," in which the more

knowledgeable person mediates the learning of the less knowledgeable person, typically through language (Vygotsky, 1978), and through successive problem-solving steps (Mitchell & Myles, 2004). Vygotsky (as cited in Lantolf, 2000) believes that humans mediate their relationship with the physical world through use of signs, or symbolic tools, such as music, numbers, art, arithmetic systems, and especially through language (reminiscent of Saussure, above). But in Vygotsky's view, language mediates one's relationship to others (Lantolf, 2000). This is a social orientation that is missing in Saussure's semiological view (Bourdieu 1982/1991). Vygotsky (1978) also believed that there is a "Zone of Proximal Development" in which, if scaffolding is received, an individual can achieve learning which would be beyond that person's current skill or knowledge level independently.

Following Vygotsky (as cited in Lantolf, 2000) and Long (1983), Swain (1995) observed that classroom instruction and an environment rich in target language input was not enough for attaining fluency in French in her studies of English-speaking students in Canadian French immersion programs. Students who produced spoken and written output in French attained higher levels of spoken and written proficiency than students who were reluctant to speak or write in French. Swain (1993, 1995) hypothesizes that producing language output in interaction with others facilitates acquisition. She argues that interaction not only allows for opportunity to practice speaking and writing skills (Swain, 1995) but that it also allows cognitive processes to occur, which helps the learner acquire syntax (Swain, 1993; Swain & Lapkin, 1998). Swain (1995) theorized that, in producing language, the speaker or writer becomes aware of constructions that she or he is unable to produce easily. Interaction allows the student to obtain scaffolding from their interlocutors when a perceived gap in their own knowledge is recognized, and then test expressions that might work (Swain, 1995). Their interlocutor can then provide valuable feedback on the effectiveness of the tested expressions (Long, 1983; Swain, 1993,

1995).

Scholars of the period from 1970 to 1995 such as Dörnyei (1990), Gardner (1985), Gardner and MacIntyre (as cited in Norton Peirce, 1995), Oxford and Shearin (as cited in MacIntyre, 2002), and Skehan (1989) took a slightly different approach to language learning investigations related to identity. Multiple studies were performed on the role that affective factors such as aptitude, anxiety, age, and motivation play in language learning (MacIntyre, 2002). Differing levels of proficiency were seen to be achieved by second language learners as a result of affective variables (see e.g., Clément, Dörnyei, & Noels, 1994). While the intention of these studies was to research factors that helped or hindered the individual in the attainment of second language proficiency rather than to focus on social factors per se, the social context was sometimes inadvertently acknowledged as part of the learning environment. For example, identification with another language or culture correlated to integrative motivation in Clément, Dörnyei, and Noels. In another example, Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope's (1986) study of English speaking secondary students, speaking in a foreign language in language class was seen to raise levels of anxiety in some students because they were afraid of making errors which would make them appear foolish in front of their peers. The researchers argue that language learning as a classroom subject is a social context with anxiety-producing variables unique to the foreign language classroom. Their focus, however, is on the effect of the setting and the nature of language learning for inducing the anxiety reactions. An important variable was overlooked, that of social positioning in the relationships between the students themselves and of the students with the teacher, and the influence of that social context in producing emotions in the students which affected their ability to learn.

In recent years, more emphasis has been placed on the role of social context in language learning in the field of SLA. Recognizing the imbalance between the two dominating conceptual

approaches in SLA, Firth and Wagner (1997) envisioned a "reconceptualization" which calls for "(a) a significantly enhanced awareness of the contextual and interactional dimensions of language use, (b) an increased emic (i.e. participant-relevant) sensitivity toward fundamental concepts, and (c) the broadening of the traditional SLA data base" (p. 286). Norton (2000) has effected this reconceptualization in recognizing the role that identity plays in SLA. She concurs that insufficient attention has been paid in the field of SLA to the social context of language learning and states:

> ....SLA theorists have struggled to conceptualize the relationship between the
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> language learner and the social world because they have not developed a
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> comprehensive theory of identity that integrates the language learner and the
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> language learning context. Furthermore, they have not questioned how relations
>
> of power in the social world impact on social interaction between second
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> language learners and target language speakers. (p. 4)

Power and Identity

Norton (2000) follows Bourdieu in regarding "power" as "the socially constructed relations among individuals, institutions and communities through which symbolic and material resources in a society are produced, distributed and validated" (p. 7). Because individuals are typically members of multiple groups, according to McNamara (1997) there are four processes that are involved in the integration of an individual's social identity with the social world: "(a) social categorization, (b) the formation of an awareness of social identity, (c) social comparison, and (d) a search for psychological distinctiveness" (p. 562). These processes are similar to ideas expounded by Pierre Bourdieu.

As evidenced above, the prolific writings of Bourdieu have had a significant influence on

the SLA community in bringing to awareness the effect of social context on language production and use. Like Norton, Bourdieu is concerned with power differential in social relationships, a central idea for the discussion of identity. Bourdieu (1982/1991, 1989) observes that language interactions reflect the balance of power between interlocutors that exist in the social realm. He consistently portrays the individual as a social being, one who is constantly assessing and reassessing her or his role in the social hierarchy. He speaks of the "symbolic struggles of everyday life" (Bourdieu, 1982/1991, p. 106), and points out that language is an inextricable part of carrying out everyday living.

Bourdieu (1982/1991) believes each person carries within a "habitus," or "a set of predispositions" that has developed in that person from early experiences, from enculturation from parents and education, and from beliefs that she or he has formed. The social class into which an individual is born will have a large influence on the formation of the habitus. For example, the types of foods that are eaten, the type of clothing worn, the educational background of the parents, the linguistic features of the language variety learned, and so on will all play a role in forming predispositions or "tastes" that influence choices that will be made throughout that person's life, and also the beliefs that person holds about her or his societal role. Bourdieu explains that the habitus becomes incorporated into each person's physical body, manifested through such means as posture and comportment. He calls this the "bodily hexis." Language is also incorporated into the bodily hexis, in the manner of using the articulators to produce a particular accent or speaking style. The linguistic features inculturated into an individual form is what Bourdieu (1982/1991) terms the "linguistic habitus" (p. 81). Depending largely upon the prestige of the language variety endowed on the individual, the person will be endowed with more or less prestige in social contexts.

The habitus is an important concept in Bourdieu's writing because it forms the basis for

his ideas concerning the value that is placed on differences in societal relations, or more precisely, on distinction (Bourdieu, 1982/1991). The habitus enables people to make sense of their world and how they fit into it. Drawing on Goffman (as cited in Bourdieu, 1982/1991, p. 235), Bourdieu describes this awareness as "a sense of one's place". He emphasizes that "habitus thus implies…also a "sense of the place of others" (1989, p. 19), or "a sense of one's own social worth" (1982/1991, p. 82). It is this sense, then, not the habitus, which he most closely equates with "identity" as it is termed in recent SLA literature.

Bourdieu (e.g., 1985, 1982/1991) draws an analogy between his societal views and the economic view of capital (and other terminology) used in the field of economics. The value of one educational degree, for example, may be more or less valued than another, as might one manner of speaking be deemed more desirable than another. The value may be symbolic, or may translate in actual terms to real monetary value. Bourdieu (e.g., 1985) calls this value "capital." He explains that the possessor of money, stocks, and material goods, for example, is the possessor of economic capital in the traditional sense (Bourdieu, 1982/1991). He differentiates this from symbolic capital, which he correlates with the amount of prestige that distinguishes a person. Cultural capital, a form of symbolic capital, correlates with the amount of education, work skills, abilities, talents, and so forth that a person has (Thompson, 1991). A person's position in the social strata endows them with a corresponding amount of symbolic capital in the social sphere (Bourdieu, 1982/1991). The linguistic field is a subset of the totality of fields in which a person may be distinguished as having more or less capital (Thompson, 1991). This linguistic capital also marks a person as to their position in the social strata, because of the distinguishing linguistic features associated with various positions in the social classes (Bourdieu, 1982/1991; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1970/1990). Thus, a person speaking with an accent incorporated into their bodily hexis that is identifiable with a prestigious variety of

English might result in giving that person an advantage in a job interview over someone who speaks with an accent that is less highly valued on that social market or field (Bourdieu, 1982/1991). The job position that is obtained would distinguish the person with symbolic capital appropriate to the type of job, for example an engineering position would, in U.S. American culture, endow the engineer with more symbolic capital than a cleaning job would, because that position is less highly valued (Bourdieu, 1982/1991). The actual money earned in that job would be actual (capital) profit translated from the symbolic value of the various types of symbolic capital by which that person is distinguished (Bourdieu, 1982/1991).

Through language one can infer social status by the detection of vocabulary, accent, and intonation patterns associated with various societal groups (Bourdieu, 1982/1991). Depending on who is speaking and in what manner, we pay greater or less attention to what is said. We are familiar with the power of words to coerce, convince, or express politeness or emotion, and we strategize the best way to present ourselves and our point of view by the manner of our own speaking (Thompson, 1991).

Bourdieu develops his arguments about power relationships based on sociological research rather than philosophizing on general observations about society (Thompson, 1991). His early ethnographic studies of Kabyle society gave him the opportunity to observe power relations in a pre-writing culture in which the production and reproduction of the institutions of society were codified via societal customs and hierarchy rather than through institutions as we think of them today (e.g. museums, schools), the symbolic power of those relationships exerting as great or greater force on the members of Kabyle society as written law exerts on modern society (Bourdieu, 1982/1991). In Bourdieu's terms institution may be defined as "any relatively durable set of social relations which *endows* individuals with power, status and resources of various kinds" (Thompson, 1991, p. 8). Bourdieu sees language as one of the means through which the

formation and maintenance of institutions is accomplished. In his view, institutions also

represent a form of symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1982/1991, 1998/2001; Bourdieu & Passeron,

1970/1990). To illustrate this, Bourdieu (1982/1991) gives an example of gift giving as

instituted in Kabyle society. If a gift were given by an individual more endowed with material

possessions to someone who could never return a gift of equal value, the giver of the gift has

indebted the recipient with a social obligation which gives symbolic power to the giver over the

recipient. The recipient has been complicit in incurring the social debt by accepting the gift. This

occurs partly because both individuals believe in and accept the conditions of the institution of

gift-giving in their society, or "the rules of the game." Similarly, in modern society, individuals

are equally complicit in producing and reproducing the conditions of their institutions (Bourdieu,

1998/2001; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1970/1990). The possessor of a prestigious educational degree

will not desire to devalue the degree by denigrating the institution which gives it its value.

Bourdieu developed a long set of complicated corollaries related to the production and

reproduction of the institutions of society that are beyond the scope of this paper (see Bourdieu

& Passeron, 1970/1990).

Bourdieu is less critical of the ideas of Austin than he is those of Saussure or Chomsky

because Austin recognized the value of the institution in delegating authority to certain

individuals (Thompson 1991). Austin's speech act theories took into account the locutionary

force of linguistic utterances (Bourdieu, 1982/1991). Bourdieu (1982/1991) notes that Austin

understood that an appropriate person has to be designated to speak at ritualistic occasions in

order for the utterance to have its intended effect. The designated person must be endowed with

authority appropriate to the occasion (Bourdieu, 1982/1991). Thus a taxi driver could not utter

the words, "I now pronounce you husband and wife" and effect a legal marriage union, whereas

a minister, captain, or justice of the peace could. Bourdieu (1982/1991) calls this concept the

"authority to speak." Norton (2000) translates this concept into "the right to speak," or "the power to impose reception (p. 8). Miller (2003) takes this conceptualization one step further by proposing this as giving voice, or "audibility," especially to those individuals, such as immigrants, who are usually lacking in sufficient linguistic capital to impose reception on members of a target language community to which they are newcomers.

An important point to understand in Bourdieu's economic analogy is that the capital associated with one specific market or field can be transformed into another type of capital associated with another market (Bourdieu, 1982/1991; Thompson 1991). For example, symbolic capital such as prestige could become economic capital in the form of a monetary award. Individuals desiring to effect a conversion of some type of capital into another must believe in the institutions which govern the associated markets and also accept that they must comply with the rules which govern them. Bourdieu sees this as involving a struggle to change the distribution of capital in the specific markets, with distribution also being related to social positions in the social strata. Conversion of capital requires that an individual make an investment such as work or time to effect it.[2]

Concepts Related to Identity in SLA

Investment. An important tenet of identity is investment, according to Norton Peirce (1995). She sees investment as related to motivation, but her view of investment encompasses more than Gardner's (1985) terms *integrative* or *instrumental motivation*. Integrative motivation refers to the degree to which second language learners wish to become acculturated into the target language community, while instrumental motivation refers to the practical purposes for which a learner wants to acquire the target language, for example to obtain employment in the target language community (Gardner, 1985). The term investment implies an element of risk; despite high motivation to learn the target language, certain social situations may inhibit the

learner from speaking, and to do so requires the learner to take social risks (Norton Peirce, 1995). That inhibition may appear with some interlocutors and not others, and as Bourdieu (1982/1991) pointed out, particularly in situations in which there is power differential between the interlocutors. Norton Peirce's ethnographic study of five immigrant women learning English in Ontario, Canada showed that the women were motivated to learn English in Gardner's sense, but sometimes were silent, and their hesitance to speak deprived them of opportunities to practice their English skills and thus increase their linguistic capital. She accredited this phenomenon to their discomfort with talking to people in whom they had another material or symbolic "investment," such as with their boss at work. This did not occur when the women spoke English with friends. Her study illustrates how the identity of each learner influenced and was influenced by her relationship to the target community and how the amount of social distance influenced the investment each was willing to make in her own language learning. Power relations differentiated by social class, gender, and ethnicity played a role in that investment. The five women related their experiences in natural living and working environments in interviews, diaries, and questionnaires. In addition, Norton Peirce observed the women in home visits. Despite the stimulating and open language of a natural environment as opposed to the simplified, controlled language taught in classroom environments, the abundance of available language input in the natural environment did not necessarily afford the women with opportunities to practice the target language. The supposition in SLA research has been that learners can choose whether or not to interact with members of the target language community, and it is their level of motivation to learn the target language that influences their amount of interaction. Norton Peirce's study showed, however, how identities of the women in her study changed over time as they gained agency to tip the balance of power in their relationships with members of the target language group.

Motivation for learning English was high in the women participating in Norton Peirce's (1995) study. All desired social contact with Canadians and took English classes. Only one reported that she was not comfortable speaking English with people she considered friends or knew well. It was observed that the women would be less likely to speak when the desire to do so was in conflict with a social investment that they had associated with the relationship, that is, there was an unequal power relationship between the two interlocutors, and the target language speaker could provide access to symbolic power that the language learner desired.

Situations in which investment held promise of potential symbolic profit for the English language learners in Norton Peirce's study were those which represented a "site of struggle" for them (Norton, 2000). The case of Martina illustrates this concept.[3] At the time of Norton Peirce's study (1995), Martina was a 39 year old mother of 3 adolescents from Czechoslovakia. She and her husband immigrated to Canada to create opportunities for their children. Martina had been a professional surveyor, but took a low-status job in a fast-food restaurant since she spoke little English.

Martina's lack of English skills made her feel inferior and she was uncomfortable speaking in her work environment. At one point, after she had gained more proficiency, she asked her children what she should say in English if she were to wait on the customers. When an opportunity presented itself, Martina took the initiative to wait on the customers herself, surprising both the staff and the customers. Norton Peirce attributes the investment Martina made in learning the appropriate English words as occurring at a site of struggle in Martina's conflicting identities at the time. Her identity as an immigrant gave her little agency to speak, but in her identity as a mother with primary responsibility for providing for her family, she had more power and chose to assert that identity. She further chose to assert her identity as an adult by refusing to be given orders by a twelve-year-old co-worker.

Martina had accepted an identity of unskilled worker as a condition of being an immigrant when she first arrived in Canada. As her language skills increased, her willingness to accept marginalization from social identities holding power decreased (Norton Peirce, 1995).

In contrast to Martina's experiences, another participant called Katarina had difficulty accepting a role as an unskilled worker after immigration (Norton, 2000). Katarina had been a teacher in Poland for 17 years before moving to Canada. She attended English classes from 9:00 to 12:00 in the morning and took a part-time job as a homemaker for Community Service. Despite the fact that her English rapidly progressed, Katarina felt marginalized by the relinquishment of her professional status as a teacher. Her response to her identity struggle was an attempt to regain her status of "professional." She and her husband had both gained professional status in Poland through education. They therefore employed this same strategy in evaluating alternatives available to her in her current situation. They decided that Katarina should complete computer training which required an investment of 18 months of schooling, payment of tuition dollars, and loss of income from her current job.

Katarina's focus in learning English became acquiring skills necessary to succeed in the computer course instead of focusing on speaking (Norton, 2000). Thus her changing identity from teaching professional to computer professional also changed her investment in learning English.

Agency. Norton's Peirce's study above shows that immigrants who make the investment to learn a target language must find *agency* to take social risks that enable practice of developing target language skills. McKay and Wong (1996) define "agency" as a choice of aligning to or resistance to positions of social relations of power. Martina in Norton Peirce's study found agency by drawing on identities of adult and mother, giving her more power to use her linguistic capabilities in English to negotiate her workplace than her identity as immigrant afforded her.

But sometimes the social sphere of an immigrant offers little in identities that can provide

agency. For example, immigrants speaking in a way that is viewed inappropriate by a supervisor

at work might risk losing their only means of support. Thus there is little agency to create a

language practice opportunity in a venue that can have a negative consequence for that

individual. Immigrants may have few choices because an element of marginalization may serve

to limit desirable options.

Marginalization. There are a number of reasons why an immigrant may be subject to

marginalization in their new English speaking community. Attitudes toward the immigrant's

country of origin or differences in customs, dress, or language by the English speaking

community may subject the immigrant to prejudice or misunderstanding. Their accent or

difficulties in speaking in English may reveal their identity of "immigrant," "non-native

speaker," or "foreigner," reducing their cultural capital on the American cultural market

(Bourdieu, 1982/1991). They may find that they are an in a minority position in the new

community as a second language user, and more subject to stigmatization than a tourist using a

English as a foreign language would be (Risager, 2006). Some languages can be viewed as more

or less desirable than other languages, and the speaker of a less desirable language may be

viewed negatively (Bourdieu, 1982/1991; Nero, 1997). If female and originating from a country

where women hold less powerful positions than men, an individual may be accustomed to

speaking in an indirect and less powerful manner than is typical for much American discourse

(Morgan, 1997). Political considerations, such as friction between the immigrant's country of

origin and new community, as exists between Iran and the United States, can be a source of

discrimination (Hoffman, 1989). Stereotypes held by members of the new community such as

belief in a "model minority" identity (for example, that all people of Asian descent are good

students and better at math than American students are) can also lead to unfair inferences about individuals (McKay &Wong, 1996).

A belief in the new community that English (or any second language) should be taught by a native speaker could lead to the unfair hiring of a native speaker over a highly proficient and better qualified second-language speaker (Tang, 1997). Teachers of English who are nonnative speakers have also reported being viewed as less desirable language models for students (Milambiling, 2000; Tang, 1997). A survey of non-native English speaking language teachers conducted by Tang (1997) revealed that most respondents believed non-native teachers to be inferior in every area of language proficiency. The author explained that the identity of non-native placed a stigma on those teachers, undermining their authority and confidence in the classroom.[4]

Milambiling (2000) observed similar attitudes in native and non-native English speaking students in her work at a Midwestern U.S. graduate-level teacher-education program. Prevailing assumptions were that the non-native speakers had inferior language competencies, which was not the case, and could not be said even of the English competencies of many of the students originating from non-English speaking countries. There was additionally an erroneous countervailing assumption that native English-speaking students have no L2 competencies. Both assumptions contributed to a tendency of the native and non-native groups to remain marginalized. In Cook's (1999) view, the term "non-native" gives the impression of "an imitation L1 user" (p. 203) who has "failed" to attain native-like proficiency, and places emphasis on making a judgment about that person rather than about what that person knows. Cook proposes instead a social identification of "successful multicompetent speaker" (p. 204) for L2 users.

Similar to Tang's (1997) survey, marginalization was a factor in Nero's study of the experiences of Carribean students who immigrated to Canada. Nero (1997) notes that speakers of creolized English battle similar problems to those experienced by ESL students. He interviewed Carribean students entering United States colleges who considered themselves to be native speakers of English but who were viewed as having non-standard or sub-standard proficiency by academic standards. Consequently, the students were frequently placed in remedial writing classes. The students were aware of differences between standard American English and their own variety, but varied in their efforts to learn standardized forms. Nero proposed that student speakers of Creoles be mainstreamed into regular classrooms rather than placed in ESL classes. He argued that Creole speakers find ESL classes de-motivating because of the level of English they already understand, and because placing them in a remedial class stigmatizes them. He still asserted, however, that they should not be considered native English speakers, which might result in a lack of assistance in learning standard academic English forms.

Participation. In contrast to the deleterious effects of marginalization, participation assists in the formation and reformulation of a second language learner's identity, in what Sfard (as cited in Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000) calls "a process of becoming a member of a certain community" (p. 155). Following Sfard, Pavlenko and Lantolf (2000) argue for a language-learning metaphor of *participation* to augment the widely-accepted metaphor of *acquisition* in SLA. They explain that participation places an emphasis on interaction and context rather than on a "container" notion which makes the human mind acquiring a language analogous to a computer. Pavlenko and Lantolf give an example of how participation in shared discourse can shape identity. In the social context of discourse that occurs in a community after a catastrophic event, the stories of the event recounted over and over by people in the community helps them to make sense of the values and behaviors of the people involved, and the story which evolves is

shared by and belongs to that community. Shared discourse is one way a community is made cohesive. The community story then serves as a model against which individuals make sense of their own identities as participants in the shared identity. The new metaphor also allows for the consideration of first-person narratives as valuable and acceptable data in social science research, chronicling the ongoing experience of human beings as they change over time and in different circumstances, instead of focusing on their target language proficiency at cutoff points at which certain levels of attainment are reached and can be measured.

Following the participation metaphor, Pavlenko and Lantolf (2000) present examples of writing from self-reports of bilingual language learners as they attempt, after immigration to English-speaking environments, to become what Pavlenko and Lantolf term "native speakers" of English. (Cook (1999) noted that it is impossible to attain "native" proficiency by definition of the term. Pavlenko and Lantolf purposely use this terminology to infer the difficulty in pursuing this desire). The L2 learners consistently describe stages through which their identities are re-shaped. They poignantly report a sense of loss of their identity from their L1-speaking origins. This often starts with a change to their names, inadvertently occurring on immigration papers or because English speakers pronounce them incorrectly. Eva Hoffman (as cited in Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000) described the feeling the imposed names given to her and her sister as "mak[ing] us strangers to ourselves" (p. 164). After passing through at least five identifiable stages of loss, the English language learners re-constructed their identities through four additional stages of recovery. Pavlenko and Lantolf state that there is a point in this process at which individuals must decide whether to redesign their identity to become full participants in the new culture, or to retain their original identity as much as possible, learning just enough vocabulary and phrases to survive in the new environment. They note 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….This decision may be influenced by various factors, including one's positioning in the native discourse and the power relations between the discourses involved" (p. 171). It has been argued above that agency, investment, marginalization, and participation may all be contributing influences in that decision-making process. Multiple identity may also play a role in that process (McKay & Wong, 1996).

   Multiple identity. Miller (2003) argues that there is a conceptual change in SLA toward a notion of identity that is dynamic, contradictory, temporary, processual, fluid, and constantly shifting. Following Bourdieu (1982/1991), Norton Peirce (1995) similarly views identity "as multiple, a site of struggle, and subject to change" (p. 9). In Norton Peirce's example of Martina in the previous section, Martina found agency by drawing upon her own multiple identities to make decisions about the investment she would make in her language learning.

   The multidimensional aspect of identity is evident when considering personal identities in people surrounded by multiple social discourses in their developmental years. Tokuhama-Espinosa (2003) uses the description "Third Culture Kids (TCK)" for children whose parents have different cultural backgrounds, and who are living in yet a third cultural setting. Alternatively, the children may be studying at an international school while living in a country that is not the native country of their family. They are participants of at least three cultures at once, but may not feel that they are fully part of any one of them. Tokuhama-Espinosa points out that it can be difficult for a TCK to have a sense of "home" in the same way that children growing up in the same culture as their parents do. She reports that TCKs find their sense of home, or their sense of who they are, in recognizing in themselves a multiple identity. They often find a sense of belonging by identifying with the group of individuals that grew up in similar circumstances (Tokuhama-Espinosa, 2003).

A Third Culture Kid herself, Allemann-Ghionda (2003) describes her personal confusion about this lack of connection to a "home." After living in Switzerland, Brazil, Italy, Belgium, Colombia, and Peru during her developmental years, the family moved to Italy, the birthplace of her diplomat father. Although their relatives welcomed them warmly, Allemann-Ghionda felt distanced from the Italian culture. Despite the fact that Italian was spoken at home, and that she had acquired multiple language proficiencies, the Italian school required a certain level of proficiency in Latin, which she did not have and which prevented her from attending the local Italian school. Thus language was a barrier which prevented her from feeling she was really Italian. Every time the family relocated and she and her sibling had to learn a new language, there was a sense of not having the "right to speak" in terms of Bourdieu's notion of linguistic capital as a commodity on a linguistic market (Bourdieu, 1982/1991 p. 75).

McKay and Wong (1996) describe the manner in which multiple discourses and multiple identities affected the school experiences of four Mandarin-speaking Chinese, adolescent English language learners who had recently immigrated to the United States, and who participated in a larger study by McKay, Wong and their associates in the early 1990s (Wong & Zou, as cited in McKay & Wong, 1996). In the study, Chinese and Spanish students were followed over a two-year period in which they completed the 7th and 8th grades of junior high school, but the authors report results only for three males and one female Chinese student. *Discourse* was described by McKay and Wong as referring to a set of values and assumptions that help "shape the investment each student made toward learning English" (p. 5).

The English proficiency of the students was assessed at the beginning and end of the two-year time period, and half way through the study. The researchers chose students with as little beginning English proficiency as possible to participate in the study. Student interviews were conducted in English to assess speaking skills, and in Mandarin to allow them to fully articulate

their experiences. The researchers logged 155 hours of observations made in 31 school visits of 5 hours or more each.

McKay and Wong (1996) argue that the Chinese students were subject to what they term a "model-minority" discourse prominent in California in the early 1990s which arose from a view of Asians as competitors in education and in the global economy. The positive view of the model-minority holds that Asians are industrious and uncomplaining while the negative view holds that Asians are repressed individuals lacking in personal initiative and physical attractiveness. The positive view was held by teachers at the junior high school in the study, which gave an advantage to the Chinese students over the Spanish-speaking students and other minorities attending the school. Evidence cited by McKay and Wong was the visible grouping of students by color in seating arrangements, and by comments made by teachers in interviews with the researchers. However, all students placed in the beginning ESL class at the school were immediately perceived to have low status in that academic environment, which negatively affected the agency of several of the students to meet their needs as language learners, inhibiting development of proficiency in their English skills.

The students varied in the amount of risk they would take in the classroom for learning English. The amount of risk was determined by learners' perceptions of their social position and the identity they had either created or had imposed upon them at the school or at home. Their investment in learning was clearly affected by their identity. Gender identity was a factor as well as ethnicity. For the female student, mediocre academic success was excused by her parents since she was a good musician, and musicianship was an acceptable discourse area for females in her Chinese societal group. Gender also played a role for one of the male students who was a good athlete, an identity valued for males in the United States. However, that student had low investment in his language learning, particulary writing, because he had gained high social status

in his identity as an athlete and had sufficient speaking and listening skills to develop friendships

with both Chinese and non-Chinese peers. In this regard, investment by some of the participants

in Wong and Zou's study (as cited in McKay & Wong, 1996) tended to level off or be reduced as

a result of multiple identities, in contrast to the increase in investment seen by Norton Peirce

(1995) in the immigrant women in her study. McKay and Wong (1996) attribute this to the much

more limited agency of children compared to that of adults in complex social environments such

as American school systems. The students may draw on multiple identities available to them to

empower their sense of agency or augment their sense of personal identity in favor of language

development, drawing on discourses they perceive to be available to do so. In other words,

language may be one of those discourses in which they invest, or their investment in language

may be lower than in another discourse because, as adolescents, they may be more interested in

their personal social identity as a desirable associate than in their identity as an academic

achiever. McKay and Wong additionally note that learners may invest in a particular language

skill without investing in all of them, as seen in the athlete who developed his speaking and

listening skills to develop friendships, but used his writing assignments to express defiant

feelings about his placement in the ESL program when he felt ready to be mainstreamed, but in

so doing he held himself back from the improvement that would have allowed it.

In a different study, Bosher (1997) reports a similarly multidimensional, bicultural

adaptation of the participants who were second-generation Hmong postsecondary students

attending Midwestern US institutions. The students' parents had immigrated to the United States

and maintained Hmong culture in their homes. The students showed a preference for behaviors

patterned on Western culture while exhibiting values of their Hmong heritage, but they did not

identify exclusively with either culture. Bosher considers their ability to use both Hmong and

English languages and their academic success to be an indication of the students' successful

acculturation to living in the United States, but regards them as not assimilated.

Bosher (1997) employed survey instruments to gather quantitative data for her study, and

stated that her study "attempted to operationalize acculturation for use in SLA research" (p. 601).

However, her methodology failed to identify acculturation variables which predicted academic

success, which in her study was measured by grade point average. Results showed that contact

with the American majority culture resulted in higher proficiency in writing and speaking

English. An interesting finding from the study:

> ….is the combination of variables that predicted self-esteem: on the one hand,
>
> American behavior and American social contact and, on the other, Hmong
>
> attitudes and Hmong values, suggesting the importance of making outward social
>
> and behavioral changes toward American culture to fit into the new environment
>
> while remaining Hmong inwardly by continuing to believe in Hmong values and
>
> holding positive attitudes toward maintaining the Hmong culture and
>
> language….the students interviewed for this study had not assimilated into
>
> American culture, nor had they adhered exclusively to Hmong culture. They
>
> generally sought a middle path between the two cultures that combined elements
>
> from both. (p. 599)

Another example of the complexity of multiple identities and multiple discourses of

varying social contexts is presented in a study by Caldas and Caron-Caldas (2002), in which the

language behaviors of the researchers' own three children were observed as they reached

adolescence. The family lived in Louisiana most of the year and spent summers in Quebec. The

family was bilingual at home: the mother spoke French, and the father spoke French and English.

The children showed a preference for speaking French at home until reaching adolescence and

then switched their preference to English for most of the year. After a short adaptation time, each

summer they showed a clear preference for speaking French while in Quebec, but reverted to

their preference for speaking English at home after returning to Louisiana. The authors cite

societal pressure to speak the language of the region they were living in as the reason, especially

to use English while in the U.S., and remark on the difficulty of nurturing a bilingual identity in

children living in a monolingual environment, even though both parents provide a bilingual

model.

Caldas and Caron-Caldas (2002) not only see multiple language proficiencies as an

advantage but also the expansion of thinking and perceptions that come from knowing that ideas

can be expressed in many different ways. The authors promote a cultural understanding which

includes the perception of cultural differences as different and not necessarily as better or worse.

Despite such advantages, it is clear from other studies cited above that the reality many

immigrant language learners face in the complex social arena is not always as positive as the one

depicted by Caldas and Caron-Caldas. For example, McKay and Wong (1996) asserted that the

model-minority discourse prevalent in the middle school in which they carried out their research

marginalized the Chinese speaking students attending classes there. The following section of this

paper will review several additional studies with implications for identity development in

classroom settings, and the development of a classroom environment that is sensitive to the

issues faced by immigrant learners.

Dealing With Identity in the Classroom. Hawkins (2005) is concerned specifically with

identity in the classroom. She views the classroom as a setting in which certain ways of thinking,

of utilizing language, and of social interaction are more privileged than others. Hawkins agrees

with Norton's (2000) view of the unfixed, multidimensional nature of identity. She clarifies her

position:

Identity formation can be described as an ongoing negotiation between the

individual and the social context or environment, with particular attention paid to

operant cultural and power relations. Individuals bring lived histories to activities

and events in situated environments, and it is through communications and

interactions with others in these environments that learners negotiate and co-

construct their views of themselves and the world. The activities and contexts,

however, are imbued with and represent specific values and ideologies (which

privilege certain practices over others), and these shape the dynamics of the

interactions. (p. 61)

Hawkins (2005) sees development of an identity which includes a conception of oneself

as a *learner* as having value in the academic environment. Based on her experience as a teacher,

she asserts that having desirable social status in the class can open the door to interactions with

target language speakers. Interactions with teachers and other students can also close the door to

identity development, which might lead to self-identification as learner. Hawkins directly

equates access to participation with social status and the amount of investment that students may

be willing to make in their own language learning. To illustrate how this happens, she describes

the experiences of two boys who participated in her study of four kindergarten-aged English

language learners attending a metropolitan school.

One of the boys, William, was born in the United States to a privileged Korean family.

The parents in the family had little English proficiency and the family spoke Korean at home.

William was taken to lessons and activities before starting school in which he had opportunity to

interact with English-speaking children and adults. From his interactions, William had acquired

an identity of playmate or friend in relation to his acquaintances. He frequently shunned

participation in academic activities at school that did not allow him to excel. He therefore

distanced himself from learning experience that would enable him to think of himself as a

learner. Classmates would characterize him as someone whom they would choose for social

interaction, but not as someone with whom they could complete an academic task such as a

science project.

William's classmate Anton, on the other hand, developed an identity as learner at home

which contributed to his academic success when he started school. Anton was born into a family

with less social status than that of William's. Anton's sister, a fourth grader, took care of Anton

while their mother was at work, and maintained that role even when their mother was at home.

His sister spoke English with him and taught him what she had learned at school, enabling his

construction of his learner identity. After starting school, Anton's identity facilitated his

language learning. He typically picked socially desirable classmates with whom he could interact

during classroom tasks. He successfully negotiated for language information as he worked on the

content of tasks, with the English-speaking classmate providing words as the task was performed

together, or discussed as both worked on their tasks independently.

The academic achievement scores of both boys at year's end clearly reflected the learning

orientation of both boys' identities (Hawkins, 2005). William failed to make much progress in

his target language development. Despite positive social interaction throughout the year, the 47th

percentile was the level of oral proficiency he reached as compared to Anton's level at 88%.

Hawkins reports that, at the start of the year, both had scored at a similar level.

Contrary to her predictions, Hawkins (2005) observed that social desirability did little to

provide access to language learning opportunities such as scaffolding for William, and lack of

social standing did not inhibit Anton from participating in them. It is possible that the reason for

the lack of investment by William in his own learning is similar to the reason that the athletic

adolescent in McKay and Wong's (1996) study made little investment in improving his English

writing skills. Both boys had already attained a position of social desirability with his classmates that had nothing to do with academics (Hawkins, 2005; McKay & Wong, 1996). In contrast, Anton's investment in the academic arena allowed him to attain social standing with classmates that he did not already possess. Hawkins theorizes that the identity formation of "learner" in the academic context is distinct from the identity of language learner in an informal, social context. The cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1985) of social status making William desirable as a friend and playmate did not endow him with cultural capital significant to the academic sphere. Hawkins believes that the construction of identities in the context described here, and the way they affected the academic performance of each child, suggests that change is needed in the teacher's role.

Hawkins (2005) suggests that the traditional role of lesson design by teachers be replaced by a role of designing an ecology for the classroom which requires participation by all students. She believes activities requiring negotiation of content and collaboration would allow for scaffolding and practice. According to Duff (2002b), provision of social interaction is additionally seen in the literature as a means for creating learning environments which bridge cultural differences, and create an ecology for identity (re)formulation. Duff's 1998 ethnography of communication study in a Canadian high school (as cited in Duff, 2002b) reveals how attaining this goal can be elusive in practice. She relates difficulties that can arise for teachers when attempts are made to gain full participation of students in a heterogeneous group. Duff's study was undertaken in a social studies/history content class into which Asian ESL students were mainstreamed. The teacher attempted to provide turns to ESL students in order to give them an opportunity to speak. They were asked for information or opinions in light of their cultural backgrounds related to the topic under discussion. The students who had not been born in Canada, termed "non-local" by Duff, frequently relinquished their opportunities to speak and at

times resisted by giving short, unclear responses, or remaining silent. The non-local students did not all view themselves as aligned with the culture of their ancestors, nor did they want to give personal information about it. In this case, the school's recommendation that teachers elicit such responses in order to give each student a voice was unsuccessful. Reasons given by marginal participants in the class included a belief that there was a stigma in the school against students who had less than full English proficiency, and others in the class might laugh at them when they spoke. Canadian-born, or "local," students expressed generalizations about the quietness or shyness of Asian-background students. Both groups alluded to the fact that there was little cross-cultural interaction between social groups at the school. Thus the Asian ESL students did not feel they had agency to speak even when the teacher gave them opportunity to speak. The teacher believed this to be the result of attitudes expressed by outspoken social leaders in the local group.

One can conclude from the differing attitudes exhibited by students in Hawkin's (2005), McKay and Wong's (1996), and Duff's (2002) studies that the investments made by students in improving their language skills was influenced by the amount of cultural capital that each one envisioned (largely unconsciously) that it would be possible to acquire via acquisition of additional linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1982/1991). Creating a classroom ecology of participation was seen by Hawkins and Duff to provide access to academic discourses facilitating the attainment of identities conducive to higher achievement in language learning.

Other Implications of Identity for Second Language Teaching

In describing a new role for classroom teaching, Norton Peirce (1995) states "An important implication of my study is that the second language teacher needs to help language learners claim the right to speak outside the classroom" (p. 26). She suggests the implementation of what she terms *classroom-based social research (CSBR)* as one possibility for empowering second language learners. Her conception of CBSR includes the following (p. 27, 28):

1. Systematic investigation of opportunities in the learner's environment to interact with members of the target language community. Logbooks or observation charts might prove useful.

2. Teaching critical reflection of why and how engagement with the target language occurs with attention to social structure and practices.

3. Encouraging journaling or diary work. Besides developing writing skills, recording instances of breakdowns in communications in the target language may provide insights to both teachers and learners about the learners' identities and investment in learning the target language.

4. Encourage data collection about events or occurrences which seem unusual to the learners. Taking a researcher role may empower critical examination of practices not observed in their countries of origin.

5. Data comparison with classmates/fellow researchers. Teachers should utilize students' data as a basis for classroom materials or activities that enhance the agency of learners outside the context of the classroom environment.

In addition, Wildner-Bassett (2005) asserts that computer mediated communication (CMC) has become part of the learning ecology of the school environment and suggests using computer-mediated communication (CMC) to help students express their own identities and cultural backgrounds. She incorporates this approach into her teaching of a German culture class through examination of the gender roles of women and men in German-speaking regions, as might be observed at different points in history. She then assigns short essay-writing tasks which are evaluated in classroom groups. The groups view the writing samples through technologically assisted means, for example on computer screens utilizing the "Track Changes" tool on Microsoft Word. Once comfortable with this group approach, students are asked to write their

own autobiography in such a way that factors contributing to the shaping of their personal

identity are revealed. Wildner-Bassett found that CMC created a safe avenue for a level of

disclosure that might be uncomfortable in face-to-face or paper communications. The resulting

discussions about the quality of the writing sample additionally afford the opportunity for

students to discuss cultural differences evident in the writings. This process results in new

cultural understandings about the students' own identities, and development of an emic view

toward the identities revealed by ESL students in the classroom.

Duff (2002a) supports the idea of providing culture learning exercises in the classroom

that create opportunities for students "to display and coconstruct their identities" (p. 484). She

advocates the value of pop culture for classroom discussions designed for culture learning, but

cautions against casual discussion of topics in the classroom that are heavily laden with pop

culture references which could contribute to alienation of ESL learners. In her experience

teaching ESL classes, Duff observed teacher-student discourse which silenced ESL learners

because those students were not familiar with the cultural icons being discussed. Rather than risk

humiliation, they stopped participating. Instead, Duff recommends surveying classes at the

beginning of a term to identify students' favorite TV shows and characters, music and news radio

stations, movies, and magazines. Next, culture learning is constructed for all of the students by

designing discussions about the most popular topics mentioned. This is done to provide ESL

students an opportunity to learn about the cultural references that they are most likely to

encounter in the local community. Duff also designs discussions based on the radio stations,

shows, and other media representing pop culture that ESL students encounter at home (often in

their first language). Those discussions allow the ESL students to share important aspects of their

identity with the native English speakers. The conscious identification and discussion of pop

culture helps the English-speaking students to develop an emic view of the ESL students'

identities, as well as familiarize the ESL students with language that might otherwise be

bewildering to them.

Mantle-Bromley (1992) similarly advocates provision of classroom exercises that

enhance culture learning. She believes successful exercises will help ESL students become aware

of their own culture and the degree to which their own beliefs, behaviors, and identity are

informed by it, in contrast to attitudes they may hold toward the culture associated with the target

language. One exercise she recommends involves listing on a blackboard differences and

similarities for two schools in the same neighborhood, eliciting examples from the class, the

purpose being to illustrate to students that subcultures exist in any given culture, and

generalizations made about any culture may be inaccurate. Mantle-Bromley's overall goal in

providing multiple-culture exercises is to help the students understand that some of their cultural

identifications might be challenged while learning another language. This creates more realistic

expectations concerning the emotions that may be encountered as identity reformulation occurs

in the learning process, and will help students cope with frustrations along the way (Mantle-

Bromley, 1992).

The teaching of intonation has also been suggested as a catalyst to optimal identity

development (Morgan, 1997). Morgan designed exercises which require learners to examine

their own beliefs, thoughts and feelings about their cultural ideas and how they fit in to their new

cultural environment. One such exercise involved the use of language to express disagreement in

English in a way that felt less dangerous to students, especially females immigrating from

cultures in which women have a subservient gender role. Practice included changing nothing

more than intonation to change words to a different or opposite meaning from its first

pronunciation. Morgan saw this use of language as a means to empower the female students

outside the classroom as well as within its walls. He also saw improvement in learners' abilities

to produce natural-sounding intonation that was closer to that of native speakers. That benefit places the teaching of intonation in congruence with Bourdieu's (1982/1991) belief that teaching the most valued language forms to second language speakers will endow them with maximum linguistic capital for positioning themselves in new social contexts.

Summary and Conclusion

The shift that has occurred in the field of SLA in recent years, away from what Firth and Wagner (1997, p. 286) call "the prioritizing of the individual-as 'nonnative speaker'/'learner' over the participant-as-language-'user' in social interaction," is apparent in the literature reviewed in this paper. The development of this conceptual shift has been informed by contributions from the fields of psychology (e.g., Tajfel, 1974; Vygotsky, 1978), anthropology (e.g., Schumann, 1978) and sociology (e.g., Bourdieu, 1982/1991), as well as linguistics (e.g., Chomsky, as cited in Firth & Wagner, 1997) and second-language research (e.g., Clément, Dörnyei, & Noels, 1994).

This paper has argued for the importance of assisting immigrants in finding agency, which has in turn been found to increase the amount of investment that they are willing to make in their own second language learning (Norton, 2000). Clearly, second language learners become more effective at self-advocacy as they accumulate additional symbolic and linguistic capital (Miller, 2003), and become more aware of their own (constructed and reconstructed) multiple identities, which they can draw upon (Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000). But it is also clear that circumstances do not always allow them to create second language learning opportunities for themselves (e.g., Norton Peirce, 1995), especially in situations in which there is a differential in power relations between the interlocutors in language learning contexts (e.g., Bourdieu, 1982/1991). The somewhat circular circumstances of requiring additional language competence to increase agency, but also agency to increase language competence, does not mean that the

second language learner cannot be assisted with identity development and (re)construction in the early stages of second language learning (Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000). Miller addresses this conundrum succinctly, "This entails moving beyond basic referential levels of language use to more strategic and agentive levels. Practice is critical to the development of speaking as a representational resource, but the necessary conditions of audibility and legitimisation by the hearer must also be met. Legitimisation involves being acknowledged as having the right to speak, and having value assigned to what is spoken" (p. 175).

Miller's (2003) view implies that it is necessary for hearers to be able to recognize immigrants as legitimate speakers of the target language (see e.g., Bourdieu, 1982/1992), or as those whom Cook (1999) terms "successful multicompetent speaker[s]". This requires that the perception of the language learner as deficient in terms of the native-speaker norm (Cook, 1999) be transformed into a recognition of the second language learner as a complicated social being with frequently changing, multiple identities and desires (Norton Peirce, 1995; Tokuhama-Espinosa, 2003), who, in addition, is a competent communicator navigating a complex environment in which social identity is based on distinction and which is therefore a site of struggle (e.g., Bourdieu, 1982/1991; Norton Peirce, 1995). It is in this daily struggle that immigrants make decisions regarding their identities in their new environment, and how they will respond to it (Bourdieu, 1982/1991), including the amount of resources and time they intend to invest in their language learning, if any (Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000). Their perceptions of identity enable them or prohibit them from taking stands of agency in various circumstances (e.g., Miller, 2003; Norton Peirce, 1995; Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000).

Identity and the related concepts of investment, power relations, and agency have played an important role in the transformation of the SLA landscape that currently informs practice in the classroom (e.g., Hawkins, 2005; Morgan, 1997). The recognition of value, and the realization

by majority target language speakers that immigrants possess significant cultural and symbolic

capital which gives them legitimacy as speakers, is a result that has been obtained in some

language classrooms (e.g., see Miller, 2003). Enhancement of students' social identity has been

shown to facilitate second language learning. For example, Hawkins (2005) argued that an

identity of "learner" as well as other desirable social identities may enhance access to interaction

with target language speakers and provide opportunities for scaffolding. Morgan (1997) and

others (e.g., Duff, 2002a) proposed cultural education for immigrant students, target language-

speaking students, and teachers for the development of an emic view toward second language

learners that encourages participation rather than marginalization. Specific exercises such as

Morgan's intonation and meaning practice, which incorporates cultural discussion, have been

designed to increase the agency of the students and the value of the second language learners'

linguistic capital in academic and additional linguistic markets.

It is hoped that the ecology of the classroom will increase opportunities for participation

and culture learning experiences which empower identity formulation and reformulation

processes for second language learners, and that the trend toward listening to their voices will

continue in SLA.

Notes

[1]Krashen (1977) makes a distinction between language that is acquired and language that is learned, a distinction which is not necessary for the purposes of this paper.

[2]A fascinating illustration of the translation of the symbolic power of linguistic capital into actual political power and economic capital in monetary terms can be found in Bourdieu and Haacke (1994/1995), who relate an account of how censorship of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) came about in the United States. Due to efforts by the political conservative right to censure "offensive" art, legislation introduced by Jesse Helms was passed which gave an overseer of the NEA board the power of censure. The effect on artists, because they were afraid of losing grant funding, was censure of their own art and fear of speaking out. The legislation was eventually found to be unconstitutional and was overturned.

[3]Names of participants and places of all studies referenced in Norton Peirce (1995) were changed in the original documentation to protect participants' identities.

[4]Amin (1997) found that race had a similar effect on perceptions of teacher effectiveness.

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