

Identity and Language Learning

Extending the Conversation

Second edition

Bonny Norton

Afterword: Claire Kramsch

MULTILINGUAL MATTERS

Bristol • Buffalo • Toronto

*For Anthony, Julia and Michael,
who fill my life with love, joy and meaning.*

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Language is the place where actual and possible forms of social organization and their likely social and political consequences are defined and contested. Yet it is also the place where our sense of ourselves, our subjectivity, is constructed.

Weedon, 1997, p. 21

Just as, at the level of relations between groups, a language is worth what those who speak it are worth, so too, at the level of interactions between individuals, speech always owes a major part of its value to the value of the person who utters it.

Bourdieu, 1977, p. 652



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Preface

About three years ago, a student in one of my classes at the University of British Columbia (UBC) asked me why my 2000 book, *Identity and Language Learning*, was not available as an e-book. Once again, my students had caught me off-guard in the realm of technology. We embarked on a class discussion on the merits of e-books for them, and my students informed me that e-books are much more affordable than printed texts, a very important consideration for them; and they are also more accessible, portable, storable, and searchable. Convinced, I entered into an agreement with Multilingual Matters to publish a second edition of my 2000 book in both electronic and print format. The second edition includes a new comprehensive Introduction, updating the literature on identity and language learning, as well as an insightful Afterword by Claire Kramsch, which locates the book within its wider historical and disciplinary context. I am very grateful to Claire for her outstanding scholarship and her generosity of spirit. Warm thanks also to Tommi Grover, Anna Roderick and the remarkable team at Multilingual Matters for helping to sustain and extend the global conversation on identity and language learning.

In my post-2000 research journey, I have been privileged to publish collaboratively with a number of colleagues who share an interest in identity and language learning, and whose influence is pervasive in the Introduction to the second edition. The process of co-editing books and journal special issues with Kelleen Toohey, Christina Higgins, Yasuko Kanno, and Aneta Pavlenko has been inspiring. I have also greatly enjoyed co-publishing with Margaret Early, Maureen Kendrick, Carolyn McKinney, Lyndsay Moffatt, Diane Dagenais, Gao Yihong, Margaret Hawkins, Brian Morgan, and Sue Starfield. Doctoral students have injected my research with energy and insight, and I thank, in particular, Juliet Tembe, Harriet Mutonyi, Shelley Jones, Sam Andema, Ena Lee, Sal Muthayan, Lauryn Oates, and Espen Stranger-Johannessen. At the University of British Columbia, I have benefited greatly from regular interaction with a remarkable group of colleagues, including Patricia Duff, Lee Gunderson, Ryuko Kubota, Ling Shi, and Steven Talmy. After working closely with all of these exciting scholars, over many years, the distinction between 'colleague' and 'friend' becomes difficult to draw.

As seasoned scholars know, the peer review process in academia demands great commitment from members of our community, and I wish to acknowledge the unfailing support I have received over the years, not only from Claire Kramsch, but also from Nancy Hornberger, Constant Leung, Alastair Pennycook, Sandra Silberstein, Mastin Prinsloo, Jim Cummins, and Allan Luke. I would like to acknowledge insightful comments on the Introduction by Peter De Costa, and I am grateful to my student Ron Darvin for his help with copy-editing and cover design. Warmest thanks also to the hundreds of emerging and established scholars, in every region of the world, who have challenged and enlightened me – online, in print, and face-to-face at conferences, workshops, and seminars. You know who you are.

Generous funding from the Social Sciences and Research Council of Canada has been pivotal in every aspect of my research and publication program. I am very grateful for the opportunities this funding has provided.

The unconditional love of Anthony, Julia, and Michael sustains me every day.

Bonny Norton
University of British Columbia
Vancouver, Canada
April, 2013.

Introduction

Revisiting *Identity and Language Learning*

Claire Kramersch notes in the Afterword of this book that the publication of *Identity and Language Learning* in 2000 captured an important shift in the spirit of the times. There is now a wealth of research that explores identity in language education, and the multiple volumes that have appeared are testament to the fact that issues of identity have become central to the field.¹ 'Identity' features in most encyclopedias and handbooks of applied linguistics, second language acquisition (SLA) and language teaching.² There is also an award-winning journal, the *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education*, which focuses on issues of identity in the field of language education. Of particular interest is the number of graduate student theses and dissertations that have been written on the topic of identity, investment and imagined communities, suggesting that emerging researchers will continue this trajectory of research in the future.³ Translations of my work now appear in Chinese, Portuguese, German and French.⁴ Indeed, as Zuengler and Miller note (2006, p. 43), identity is now established as a research area 'in its own right'.

As indicated in the Preface to this second edition, my purpose is not to rewrite the 2000 book, which has its own logic and coherence, but rather to reframe it with reference to ideas proposed in the book that have proved to be particularly productive in the field. In this regard, not only have post-structuralist theories of language and identity been highly influential, as scholars such as Block (2007a), Ricento (2005) and Swain and Deters (2007) note, but also the construct of investment I developed in 1995 (Norton Peirce, 1995) has been taken up in diverse and interesting ways, as have subsequent ideas about imagined communities and imagined identities. There is also a growing body of research by a wide range of identity theorists that seeks to investigate the ways in which particular relations of race, gender, class and sexual orientation may impact the process of language learning and teaching. In addition, there has been discussion on research methods associated with investigations on identity, as well as implications of identity research for

classroom teaching. As indicated in the Preface, this Introduction draws on exciting collaborative research with diverse scholars over more than a decade.⁵ It will focus on expanding areas of research and practice, making connections to research findings and ideas proposed in the first edition of this book.

Relevance of Identity Research to Language Learning

I begin this Introduction with a backward glance at scholars such as Sue Gass (Gass, 1998), who have noted that identity theorists need to establish the theoretical relevance of identity research insofar as it affects the acquisition of a second language. Here I respond to this important and legitimate observation. The central arguments I make in this regard are summarized below and then developed more fully in subsequent sections.

- (i) Work on identity offers the field of language learning a comprehensive theory that integrates the individual language learner and the larger social world. Identity theorists question the view that learners can be defined in binary terms as motivated or unmotivated, introverted or extroverted, inhibited or uninhibited, without considering that such affective factors are frequently socially constructed in inequitable relations of power, changing across time and space, and possibly coexisting in contradictory ways within a single individual. A fully developed theory of identity highlights the multiple positions from which language learners can speak, and how sometimes marginalized learners can appropriate more desirable identities with respect to the target language community.
- (ii) SLA theorists need to address how relations of power in the social world affect learners' access to the target language community; learners who may be marginalized in one site may be highly valued in another. Identity theorists are therefore concerned about the ways in which opportunities to practice speaking, reading and writing, acknowledged as central to the SLA process (cf. Spolsky, 1989), are socially structured in both formal and informal sites of language learning. This has important implications for the conditions under which learners speak, read or write the target language, and hence opportunities for language learning.
- (iii) Identity, practices and resources are mutually constitutive. This suggests that identity is influenced by practices common to institutions such as homes, schools and workplaces, as well as available resources, whether they are symbolic or material. Examination of the practices and resources of particular settings, and of learners' differential access to those practices and resources, offers a means to theorize how identities

are produced and negotiated. At the same time, structural conditions and social contexts do not entirely determine language learning or use. Through human agency, language learners who struggle to speak from one identity position may be able to reframe their relationship with others and claim alternative, more powerful identities from which to speak, read or write, thereby enhancing language acquisition.

- (iv) The sociological construct of *investment*, which I developed to complement the psychological construct of motivation in SLA, is a construct that signals the complex relationship between language learner identity and language learning commitment. I argue that a learner may be a highly motivated language learner, but may nevertheless have little investment in the language practices of a given classroom or community. The classroom, for example, may be racist, sexist, elitist or homophobic. Alternatively, the language practices of the classroom may not be consistent with learner expectations of good teaching, with equally dire results for language learning. In sum, a learner can be highly motivated to learn a language, but not necessarily invested in a given set of language practices. However, a learner who is invested in a given set of language practices would most likely be a motivated language learner. Investment has become an important explanatory construct in language learning and teaching (Cummins, 2006).
- (v) Recent research on *imagined communities* and *imagined identities* is theoretically generative for SLA theory. The term ‘imagined community’, originally coined by Benedict Anderson (1991), was explored in my 2001 chapter (Norton, 2001), and further developed in Kanno and Norton (2003), Pavlenko and Norton (2007) and Norton and Gao (2008). In these publications, we argue that in many language classrooms, the target language community may be, to some extent, a reconstruction of past communities and historically constituted relationships, but also a community of the imagination, a desired community that offers possibilities for an enhanced range of identity options in the future. These ideas, inspired also by Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wenger (1998), have proved generative in diverse research sites. I have argued that an imagined community assumes an imagined identity, and a learner’s investment in the target language can be understood within this context.

Poststructuralist Theories of Identity

In the first edition of my book, I drew extensively on poststructuralist theories of identity associated with the work of feminist scholars such as Christine Weedon (1987/1997). Like other poststructuralist theorists who inform her work, Weedon has foregrounded the central role of language in her analysis of the relationship between the individual and the social, arguing

that language not only defines institutional practices but also serves to construct our sense of ourselves – our *subjectivity*: ‘Language is the place where actual and possible forms of social organisation and their likely social and political consequences are defined and contested. Yet it is also the place where our sense of ourselves, our subjectivity, is *constructed*’ (1997, p. 21).

The use of the term subjectivity, derived from the term *subject*, is compelling because it serves as a reminder that a person’s identity must always be understood in relational terms: one is often subject *of* a set of relationships (i.e. in a position of power) or subject *to* a set of relationships (i.e. in a position of reduced power). Weedon noted that the terms ‘subject’ and ‘subjectivity’ signify a different conception of the individual than that associated with humanist conceptions of the individual dominant in Western philosophy. While humanist conceptions of the individual presuppose that every person has an essential, unique, fixed and coherent core, poststructuralism depicts the individual (i.e. the subject) as diverse, contradictory, dynamic and changing over historical time and social space. Drawing on the Foucauldian notions of discourse and historical specificity, subjectivity in poststructuralism is understood as discursively constructed and as always socially and historically embedded. Further, as Weedon notes, identity is constituted in and through language. By extension, every time language learners speak, read or write the target language, they are not only exchanging information with members of the target language community, they are also organizing and reorganizing a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world. As such, they are engaged in identity construction and negotiation.

As I argued in the first edition, poststructuralist theory has led me to define identity as the way 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. It is the importance of the future that is central to the lives of many language learners, and is integral to an understanding of both identity and investment.

Poststructuralist approaches to theorizing identity have also been fruitfully put to work by cultural theorist Stuart Hall (1992a, 1992b, 1997) and post-colonial theorist Homi Bhabha (1994) to de-essentialize and deconstruct identity categories such as race and gender. In theorizing cultural identity, Hall focuses on identity as in-process, and stresses the importance of representation following from the discursive construction of identity. In his notion of *new ethnicities*, Hall provides an alternative theorizing of race that recognizes experiences of race without homogenizing them. Hall emphasizes a multi-faceted rootedness which is not limited to ethnic minorities and which can be applied to other forms of difference.

Poststructuralist theories of positioning are also of interest to identity researchers. As a theoretical construct, positioning is most often associated with the work of Davies and Harré (1990), who sought to challenge the

adequacy of the concept of 'role' in developing a social psychology of selfhood. They and other poststructuralist theorists have reminded us of the contingent, shifting and context-dependent nature of identities, and emphasized that identities are not merely given by social structures or ascribed by others, but are also negotiated by agents who wish to position themselves. The recognition of positioning in social structures, but also individual agency, has been important in many studies of language learning. Menard-Warwick (2007), for example, described a vocational English as a second language (ESL) class in which she was able to identify particular episodes of positioning on the part of both the teacher and her Latina students that had effects on how learners were able to claim 'voice' in the classroom. The importance of investigating student positionings is also underscored in De Costa (2011), who examined the ways in which a Chinese immigrant student in a Singapore secondary school was positioned by her classmates and teachers, and how she in turn positioned herself during her interactions with them. Coupling the construct of positioning with the notion of language ideology, he demonstrated how his focal student's positionings and language ideologies ultimately impacted her English language learning outcomes.

As Brian Morgan and I have noted (Morgan, 2007; Norton & Morgan, 2013), poststructuralist theories of identity are liberating not only in destabilizing essentialist notions of identity but in challenging dominant theories of knowledge and text, while providing powerful conceptual tools that help to expose the partiality of claims to truth. At the same time, however, poststructuralist theories of identity raise a number of unsettling issues. One key challenge concerns the notion of *agency* with respect to a student or teacher's capacity to question dominant meanings and resist essentialized identities. To what extent is agency a quality that pre-exists discourse? Menard-Warwick (2006) makes the case that Bakhtin's theories of language (Bakhtin, 1981, 1984) have the potential to resolve some of the contradictions between continuity and change that characterize debates on identity in the fields of SLA and literacy. A second challenge concerns the theorizing of identity as multiple: there are occasions when students or teachers may wish to assert their identities as homogenous and unitary, foregrounding a particular aspect of their experience such as gender, race, class, sexual orientation or religious affiliation. We see this in the current strength of nationalisms and religious fundamentalism in different parts of the globe. The terms *identity politics* or the *politics of difference* reference this particular coalescence of identity and power relations.

Identity and Investment

In my research with immigrant women in Canada, as discussed in the first edition of *Identity and Language Learning*, I observed that existing theories

of motivation in the field of SLA were not consistent with the findings from my research. Most theories at the time assumed motivation was a character trait of the individual language learner and that learners who failed to learn the target language were not sufficiently committed to the learning process. Further, theories of motivation did not pay sufficient attention to unequal relations of power between language learners and target language speakers. My research found that high levels of motivation did not necessarily translate into good language learning, and that unequal relations of power between language learners and target language speakers was a common theme in the data. For this reason, I developed the construct of ‘investment’ to complement constructs of motivation in the field of language learning and teaching.

The construct of investment offers a way to understand learners’ variable desires to engage in social interaction and community practices. Inspired by the work of Bourdieu (1977, 1984, 1991), it signals the socially and historically constructed relationship of learners to the target language and their often ambivalent desire to learn and practice it. If learners ‘invest’ in the target language, they do so with the understanding that they will acquire a wider range of symbolic resources (language, education, friendship) and material resources (capital goods, real estate, money), which will in turn increase the value of their cultural capital and social power. Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) use the term ‘cultural capital’ to reference the knowledge, credentials and modes of thought that characterize different classes and groups in relation to specific sets of social forms. They argue that cultural capital is situated, in that it has differential exchange value in different social fields. As the value of their cultural capital increases, so learners’ sense of themselves and their desires for the future are reassessed. Hence, as I argued in earlier work, there is an integral relationship between investment and identity. Further, while motivation can be seen as a primarily psychological construct (Dörnyei, 2001; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009), investment must be seen within a sociological framework, and seeks to make a meaningful connection between a learner’s desire and commitment to learn a language, and their complex and changing identity.

The construct of investment provides for a particular set of questions associated with a learner’s commitment to learning the target language. In addition to asking, for example, ‘To what extent is the learner motivated to learn the target language?’, the teacher or researcher asks, ‘What is the learner’s investment in the language practices of this classroom or community?’ A learner may be a highly motivated language learner but may nevertheless have little investment in the language practices of a given classroom or community, which may, for example, be racist, sexist, elitist or homophobic. Thus, despite being highly motivated, a learner could be excluded from the language practices of a classroom, and in time positioned as a ‘poor’ or unmotivated language learner (see Norton & Toohey, 2001). Alternatively, the

learner's expectations of good language teaching may not be consistent with the language practices promoted by the teacher in the classroom. The learner may therefore resist participating in the language practices of the classroom, with equally dire results (Talmy, 2008).

By way of illustration, it is instructive to consider a classroom-based study conducted by Duff (2002) in a multilingual secondary school in Canada. Drawing on macro-level and micro-level contexts of communication in one content-level course, Duff found that the teacher's attempts to foster respect for cultural diversity in the classroom had mixed results. In essence, the English language learners in the class were afraid of being criticized or laughed at because of their limited command of English. As Duff (p. 312) notes, 'Silence protected them from humiliation'. This silence, however, was perceived by the native English speakers as representing 'a lack of initiative, agency, or desire to improve one's English or to offer interesting material for the sake of the class' (2002, p. 312). It is clear from the classroom data, however, that the English language learners in the class were not 'unmotivated'; rather, it could be argued that they were not 'invested' in the language practices of their classroom, where there were unequal power relations between the English language learners and native English speakers. Their investments were co-constructed in their interactions with their native speaker peers, and their identities a site of struggle.

The construct of investment has sparked considerable interest in the field of applied linguistics and language education,⁶ including a special issue on the topic in the *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication* (Arkoudis & Davison, 2008). McKay and Wong (1996), for example, have drawn on this construct to explain the English language development of four Mandarin-speaking students in Grades 7 and 8 in a California school, noting that the needs, desires and negotiations of students were integral to their investment in the target language. Skilton-Sylvester (2002), drawing on her research with four Cambodian women in adult ESL classes in the USA, has argued that traditional views of adult motivation and participation do not adequately address the complex lives of adult learners, and that an understanding of a woman's domestic and professional identities is necessary to explain her investment in particular adult ESL programs. Haneda (2005) has drawn on the construct of investment to understand the engagement of two university students in an advanced Japanese literacy course, concluding that their multimembership in differing communities may have shaped the way they invested in writing in Japanese. Potowski (2007) uses the construct of investment to explain students' use of Spanish in a dual Spanish/English immersion program in the USA, noting that even if a language program is well run, a learner's investment in the target language must be consistent with the goals of the program if language learning is to meet expectations. In his work with immigrant students in a Singapore school, De Costa (2010a) used the notion of investment to investigate how a learner from China embraced standard

English to inhabit an identity associated with being an academically able student. Cummins (2006) has drawn on the construct of investment to develop the notion of the identity text, arguing that the construct of investment has emerged as a ‘significant explanatory construct’ (p. 59) in the second language learning literature.

Imagined Communities and Imagined Identities

An extension of interest in identity and investment concerns the imagined communities that language learners aspire to when they learn a language (Kanno & Norton, 2003; Norton, 2001; Pavlenko & Norton, 2007). Imagined communities refer to groups of people, not immediately tangible and accessible, with whom we connect through the power of the imagination. In our daily lives we interact with many communities whose existence can be felt concretely and directly. These include our neighborhood communities, our workplaces, our educational institutions and our religious groups. However, these are not the only communities with which we are affiliated. As Wenger (1998) suggests, direct involvement in community practices and concrete relationships – what he calls *engagement* – is not the only way in which we belong to a community; for Wenger, imagination is another important source of community. Imagined ties extend both spatially and temporally. Benedict Anderson (1991), who first coined the term *imagined communities*, argues that what we think of as nations are imagined communities, ‘because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion’ (p. 6). Thus, in imagining ourselves bonded with our fellow citizens across time and space, we can feel a sense of community with people we have not yet met, but perhaps hope to meet one day.

A focus on imagined communities in language learning enables us to explore how learners’ affiliation with such communities might affect their learning trajectories. Such communities include future relationships that exist only in the learner’s imagination as well as affiliations – such as nationhood or even transnational communities – that extend beyond local sets of relationships (Warriner, 2007). These imagined communities are no less real than the ones in which learners have daily engagement and might even have a stronger impact on their current actions and investment.

The genesis of my thinking on imagined identities and imagined communities can be found in the stories of resistance shared with me by the language learners discussed in the first edition of this book. In that edition (p. 143), I describe how Mai, a young adult immigrant woman from Vietnam, grew increasingly unhappy with her English language class, and eventually withdrew from the course:

I was hoping that the course would help me the same as we learnt [in the six-month ESL course], but some night we only spend time on one man. He came from Europe. He talked about his country: what's happening and what was happening. *And all the time we didn't learn at all.* And tomorrow the other Indian man speak something for there. Maybe all week I didn't write any more on my book.

Although Mai was a highly motivated language learner, she had little investment in the language practices of her classroom. While it could be argued that the teacher was attempting to incorporate the lived histories of the students into the classroom by inviting them to make public presentations about their native countries, what she appeared to do was to validate only one aspect of student identity – an essentialist, ethnic identity (European, Indian) – paying little attention to other sites of identity formation, such as gender, age and class. Further, the teacher appeared to focus primarily on the students' historical past, rather than addressing the pressing demands of the present and the future, which, for Mai, included an investment in literacy practices.

Insight into Mai's hopes for the future, her imagined community and her imagined identity can be found in the following data taken from her diary on May 15, 1991:

After work today when I was walking by myself on New Street then I met Karl who was go to the same school with me last course . . . I just told him about my job and the course I am taking. He said to me, 'The good thing for you is to go to school then in the future you would have a job to work in the office.' I hope so. But sometime I'm scared to dream about that.

Mai worked in a clothes factory, and spent much time behind a sewing machine, dressed in regulation clothes and doing highly repetitive tasks. In the corner of the factory was a closed-in area, which served as 'the office'. Here the employees wore fashionable clothes, worked at desks, and had easy access to phones and computers. Mai's hope for the future was that she would become a member of this community: her imagined identity was that of the office worker who dressed smartly and was not lost in the anonymity of the factory floor. Mai knew she would need to speak and write English to be able to join this community. However, when her English class focused on the past lives of students, across diverse geographic communities, Mai struggled to make a connection between the language practices of the classroom and her imagined identity.

Such issues have been taken up more extensively in publications such as Pavlenko and Norton (2007), and have been developed by scholars in the international community⁷ as well as a co-edited special issue of the *Journal of*

Language, Identity, and Education on 'Imagined communities and educational possibilities' (Kanno & Norton, 2003). In the latter publication, a number of scholars have explored the imagined communities of learners in diverse regions of the world, following up this initial research in more recent publications. In the Japanese context, for example, Kanno (2008) examined the relationship between school education and inequality of access to bilingualism in five different Japanese schools promoting bilingual education. She found that while additive bilingualism was promoted for upper-middle-class students, subtractive bilingualism was far more common in schools serving immigrant and refugee children. Kanno argued that in the schools she researched, different visions of children's imagined communities called for different forms of bilingual education, exacerbating existing inequities between students with unequal access to resources.

In Canada, Dagenais *et al.* (2008) investigated the linguistic landscape in the vicinity of two elementary schools in Vancouver and Montreal, illustrating the ways in which the children imagined the language of their neighborhoods, and constructed their identities in relation to them. Dagenais *et al.* described the innovative ways in which researchers and students drew on multimodal resources such as digital photography to document the linguistic landscape of these neighborhoods, and the way children in both cities were encouraged to exchange letters, posters, photographs and videos. Dagenais *et al.* argued that documenting the imagined communities of neighborhoods as seen by children can provide much information on the children's understanding of their community, which has important implications for identity and language learning.

In another region of the world, Kendrick and Jones (2008) drew on the notion of imagined communities to analyze the drawings and photographs produced by primary and secondary schoolgirls in the Ugandan context. Their research, drawing on multimodal methodologies, sought to investigate the girls' perceptions of participation in local literacy practices, and to promote dialogue on literacy, women and development. What they found was that the girls' visual images provided insight into their imagined communities, which were associated with command of English and access to education. As they conclude (2008, p. 397):

Providing opportunities for girls to explore and consider their worlds through alternative modes of communication and representation has immense potential as a pedagogical approach to cultivate dialogue about the nature of gender inequities, and serve as a catalyst for the positing of imagined communities where those inequities might not exist.

Blackledge (2003) has linked the notion of imagined communities with racialization to investigate racial discourses embodied in educational documents. He found that a monocultural and monolingual community, imagined

by educational decision-makers as normative and natural, stigmatized the cultural practices of Asian minorities who made regular visits to their heritage countries. He argued that this normative imagined community valued homogeneity over diversity, and ‘positioned particular cultural practices as aberrant, “Other”, and damaging to the educational prospects of minority children’ (p. 332). In essence, he made the case that the normalizing discourses of the dominant group racialized the cultural practices of Asian groups by proposing a set of apparently common-sense arguments to undermine them.

Identity Categories and Language Learning

While much research on identity and language learning explores the multiple and intersecting dimensions of learners’ identities, there is a growing body of research that seeks to investigate the ways in which relations such as race, gender, class and sexual orientation may impact the language learning process. Innovative research that addresses these issues does not regard such identity categories as ‘variables’ but rather as sets of relationships that are socially and historically constructed within particular relations of power. Interest in identity categories and language learning is gaining momentum. Special issues of the *TESOL Quarterly* on ‘Gender and language education’ (Davis & Skilton-Sylvester, 2004) and ‘Race and TESOL’ (Kubota & Lin, 2006) include insightful debates on gender, race and language learning, while recent monographs by Heller (2007), May (2008) and Rampton (2006) ensure that issues of language, ethnicity and class remain on the radar in the field. It is interesting to explore in greater detail the research that addresses language learning with respect to race, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation.

Many scholars see important connections between identity, race and ethnicity (see Amin, 1997; Curtis & Romney, 2006; Lin *et al.*, 2004; Luke, 2009), and there has been increasing interest in the relationship between race and language learning. Ibrahim’s (1999) research with a group of French-speaking continental African students in a Franco-Ontarian High School in Canada explores the impact on language learning of ‘becoming black’. He argues that the students’ linguistic styles, and in particular their use of Black Stylized English, was a direct outcome of being imagined and constructed as black by hegemonic discourses and groups.

From a slightly different perspective, Taylor’s (2004) research in an anti-discrimination camp in Toronto argues for the need to understand language learning through the lens of what she calls ‘racialized gender’. The stories of Hue, a Vietnamese girl, and Khatra, a Somali girl, are particularly powerful in this regard, as Hue learns the multiple ways in which she is racialized in her school, and Khatra learns how her body signifies certain ethnic, racial

and national identities. The experiences of Hue and Khatra support the view held by Kubota (2004) that a color-blind conception of multiculturalism does not do justice to the challenges faced by language learners of diverse races and ethnicities.

The 2006 special issue of *TESOL Quarterly* (edited by Kubota & Lin) offered several articles investigating the relationship between race and language learning, and all authors made the case that TESOL practitioners need to critically examine how our ideas about race and racial identities influence what we teach, how we teach and how we see our students. As Kubota and Lin (2006) observed, '[Although] the field of teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) brings people from various racialized backgrounds together . . . the field of TESOL has not sufficiently addressed the issue of race and related concepts' (p. 471). Motha (2006) supported Kubota and Lin's assertion that race is central in language teaching, and examined how four American teachers attempted to create anti-racist pedagogies, showing what complexities such a commitment involved. For example, the Korean American teacher (the only teacher of color among the research subjects) described her belief that her legitimacy as a professional was judged inadequate by colleagues, and that this contributed to her feelings of inequality within her professional context. Shuck (2006) explicitly examined how public discourse in the United States links language with race as a way of positioning groups. In interviews with white undergraduates who speak English as a first language at a southwestern USA university, Shuck found that non-native speakers with non-European origins were seen by the students as incomprehensible, intellectually lesser, and responsible for their 'non-integration' in American society. In particular, she found the onus was always on the non-native speaker, not the white student, to create comprehensibility.

With regard to intersections of gender and language learning, the work of scholars such as Cameron (2006), Gordon (2004), Higgins (2010), Pavlenko *et al.* (2001) and Sunderland (2004) is particularly insightful. Their conception of gender, which extends beyond female–male divides, is understood to be a system of social relationships and discursive practices that may lead to systemic inequality among particular groups of learners, including women, minorities, elderly and disabled. Pavlenko, for example, like Taylor (2004), argues for the need to understand the intersections between gender and other forms of oppression, noting that both girls and boys who are silenced in the language classroom are more likely those from the working class. A number of these issues are taken up in Norton and Pavlenko (2004), who document research from diverse regions of the world that addresses the relationship between gender and language learning with respect to the dominance of the English language internationally.

After decades of silence, the work of scholars such as King (2008), Moffatt and Norton (2008) and Nelson (2009) explores the extent to which

sexual orientation might be an important identity category in the language classroom. Of central interest is the way in which a teacher can create a supportive environment for learners who might be gay, lesbian or transgendered. Nelson contrasts a pedagogy of inquiry, which asks how linguistic and cultural practices naturalize certain sexual identities, most notably heterosexuality, with a pedagogy of inclusion which aims to introduce images as well as experiences of gays and lesbians into curriculum materials. Nelson's approach can fruitfully be applied to other issues of marginalization, helping learners to question normative practices in the target culture into which they have entered.

Methods and Analysis of Research

Within reference to the identity approach to language learning, the key methodological question to be answered is: What kind of research enables scholars to investigate the relationship between language learners as social beings and the frequently inequitable worlds in which learning takes place (Norton & McKinney, 2011)? Since the identity approach to language learning characterizes learner identity as multiple and changing, a quantitative research paradigm relying on static and measurable variables will generally not be appropriate. The focus on issues of power also necessitates that qualitative research designs are framed by critical research. For these reasons, methods that scholars use in identity approaches to language learning tend to be qualitative rather than quantitative, and often draw on critical ethnography, feminist poststructuralist theory, sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology.

Most recently, there is increasing interest in the identity of the researcher with respect to research participants, given that much identity research takes the position that claims to 'objectivity' (whether qualitative or quantitative) are often suspect. In this view, researchers have to understand their own experience and knowledge as well as those of the participants in their studies. This does not suggest that identity research is lacking in rigor; on the contrary, all research studies are understood to be 'situated', and the researcher integral to the progress of a research project. In her research in India, Ramanathan (2005, p. 15) notes, for example, 'Questions and issues of what are "present" and "absent" clearly underlie what are "visible" and "invisible" in literacy events and practices and are determined, to a large extent, by the researcher's lens.' In our research in Uganda, Margaret Early and I (Norton & Early, 2011) explore researcher identity with respect to teacher education in a poorly resourced rural community. We found that we regularly sought to reduce power differentials between ourselves and our participants by adopting a range of identities such as 'international guest', 'collaborative team member', 'teacher' and

‘teacher educator’. Crucially, this need to exercise and report on researcher reflexivity is consistent with similar calls for a more transparent approach to working with language learners (see Kramsch & Whiteside, 2007; Tremmel & De Costa, 2011) and language teachers (Crookes, 2009; Kumaravadivelu, 2012).

Identity researchers frequently seek to better understand how power operates within society, constraining or enabling human action. They often draw on Fairclough (2001) and Foucault (1980) to understand not only the relationship between knowledge and power but also the subtle ways in which power operates in society. Foucault notes, for example, that power is often invisible in that it frequently naturalizes events and practices in ways that come to be seen as ‘normal’ to members of a community. As Pennycook (2007, p. 39) notes:

Foucault brings a constant scepticism towards cherished concepts and modes of thought. Taken-for-granted categories such as man, woman, class, race, ethnicity, nation, identity, awareness, emancipation, language or power must be understood as contingent, shifting and produced in the particular, rather than having some prior ontological status.

In an identity approach to language learning, there has been a strong methodological focus on narratives, whether collected through fieldwork (Barkhuizen, 2008; Block, 2006; Early & Norton, in press; Goldstein, 1996; McKay & Wong, 1996; Miller, 2003) or from existing autobiographical and biographical accounts (Kramsch, 2009; Pavlenko, 2001a, 2001b). This methodological focus has many potential synergies with a critical research paradigm in that it foregrounds an individual’s sense-making of their experience as well as the complexity of individual/social relationships. As Block (2007a) has pointed out, the focus on narrative in SLA research follows its recent popularity in social science research, and is part of a wider ‘social turn’ (Block, 2003) in SLA research. Pavlenko (2001b) makes a strong case for the particular contribution that narrative can make:

L2 learning stories . . . are unique and rich sources of information about the relationship between language and identity in second language learning and socialization. It is possible that only personal narratives provide a glimpse into areas so private, personal and intimate that they are rarely – if ever – breached in the study of SLA, and at the same time are at the heart and soul of the second language socialization process. (p. 167)

In fieldwork-based research on identity and language learning, researchers often combine a range of methods of data collection such as ethnographic

observation, interviews (including life history interviews), diary studies and written responses (narrative or other) to researcher questions. Autoethnographies (e.g. Canagarajah, 2012) also have much potential for exploring identity development. Extended time frames provide particular depth. For example, Toohey's (2000, 2001) longitudinal study of six young learners from minority language backgrounds in a Canadian school tracked their development over a three-year period. Toohey combined several ethnographic data collection methods: regular classroom observation captured in field notes and audio recordings and supported by monthly video recordings; interviews and ongoing informal discussions with the children's teachers; and home visits where parents were interviewed. It was the combination of such methods that provided the rich data necessary to understand the learners and their classroom language learning as socially, historically and politically constructed, and the classroom as a site of identity negotiation.

Indeed, while using a combination of data collection tools as illustrated in Toohey (2000, 2001) is not uncommon, much identity work has also focused on a smaller variety of data sets. While some researchers focus on interaction data (e.g. Bucholtz & Hall, 2005), others have adopted a corpus approach to investigate how identities are represented in written discourse (e.g. De Costa, 2007; Hyland, 2012); others still have used critical discourse analytic tools to explore the ways in which identities are depicted in the media (e.g. Omoniyi, 2011). Omoniyi (2011), for example, analyzed two newspapers to examine how minority identity was depicted in the British media. Hence, in addition to taking into consideration the types of data sets for exploring identity, identity researchers have developed new ways to facilitate this investigative process. Gee (2012), for instance, has designed a set of theoretical tools of inquiry – situated meanings, social languages, figured worlds and Discourses – in order to, as he puts it, 'move us from the ground of specific uses of language in specific contexts . . . up to the world of identities' (p. 43). Working with narratives, Block (2010) has suggested three distinct ways of dealing with narratives: thematic analysis (i.e. focus on the content of what is said), structural analysis (i.e. focus on how narratives are produced) and dialogic/performative analysis (i.e. focus on the 'who' the utterance is directed to and the purpose of the utterance). This third analytic approach underscores the need to take into account the positionings adopted by the interlocutor, thereby allowing for a more rigorous analysis of narratives.

Qualitative research on language and identity is not without its challenges, however, and the following two studies are illustrative of some of its difficulties. Drawing on their research on task-based language learning in urban settings in the United Kingdom, Leung *et al.* (2004) examine the inelegance of qualitative research, arguing that the 'epistemic turbulence' in qualitative research in second language acquisition centers on the

question of what constitutes or represents reality. The methodology adopted in their study was to collect naturally occurring data with the use of video and audio recordings, which were supplemented by field notes. They describe the data as ‘messy’ in that it was difficult to represent and account for data that did not fit neatly into the theoretical construct of task-based language use. Leung *et al.* make the case that researchers need a conceptual framework that acknowledges rather than obscures the messiness of data. In other words, and as noted earlier, identity researchers need to adopt a transparent approach when sharing the findings of their work.

In a very different context, Toohey and Waterstone (2004) describe a research collaboration between teachers and researchers in Vancouver, Canada, with the mutual goal of investigating what practices in classrooms would make a difference to the learning opportunities of minority-language children. While teachers were comfortable discussing and critiquing their educational practices, they expressed ambivalence about translating their practice into publishable academic papers, noting that they felt little ownership over the academic language characteristic of many published journals. To address precisely this type of challenge, Sharkey and Johnson (2003), as well as Denos *et al.* (2009), have initiated a productive and engaging dialogue between researchers and teachers, with the express aim of demystifying research and theory that address themes of identity, power and educational change.

Identity and Language Teaching

I now turn to the relevance of theories of identity and language learning for classroom teaching, a subject that I began to address in the first edition of *Identity and Language Learning*. McKinney and Norton (2008) have argued that responding to diversity in the language classroom requires an imaginative assessment of what is possible as well as a critical assessment of what is desirable. Clearly, the assessment of what is ‘possible’ requires ongoing interaction between teachers, administrators and policy-makers, with reference to larger material conditions that can serve to constrain or enable the range of identity positions available to students (see Gunderson, 2007; Luke, 2004a). If we agree that diverse identity positions offer learners a range of positions from which to speak, listen, read or write, the challenge for language educators is to explore which identity positions offer the greatest opportunity for social engagement and interaction. Conversely, if there are identity positions that silence students, then teachers need to investigate and address these marginalizing practices. I will develop this topic of identity and language teaching with reference to global perspectives, digital innovations and classroom resistance.

Global perspectives

A number of recent research projects, drawn from diverse regions of the world, are illustrative of the ways in which particular pedagogical practices in language classrooms can either constrain or enable students in their re-imagining of possibilities for both the present and the future. As Lee's (2008) research in a Canadian post-secondary institution suggests, while many language teachers strive to enhance the range of possible futures available to their students, there is often a disjuncture between the pedagogy as it is conceptualized by the teacher and the practices adopted in the classroom. Despite the best intentions, classroom practices can recreate subordinate student identities, thereby limiting students' access not only to language learning opportunities but also to other more powerful identities.

Lee's findings are consistent with those of Ramanathan (2005), who, in a different part of the world, found that teachers' language practices can reinforce existing inequities among diverse learners of English. In the Indian context, Ramanathan (2005) investigated how students who had been socialized into either Gujarati or English-medium schools through grades K–12 adjusted to English in English-medium tertiary level institutions. What she found was that students who received English-medium instruction through high school were better prepared to succeed in English-medium colleges than those schooled in the vernacular. The English curriculum for the students educated in the English medium tended to focus on the creative analysis of English literature, while the English curriculum for the vernacular students, who were mostly lower-caste Dalit students, made extensive use of grammar and translation. What Ramanathan's research suggests is that pedagogical language practices that are ritualized and allow for little meaning-making on the part of students may limit the learner's language learning progress and access to more powerful identities.

Projects with more promising outcomes took place in Mexico, China, South Africa, Uganda and the United Kingdom. In these classrooms, and in many other transformative classrooms that have been discussed in the literature (see for example the multiple projects discussed in Norton & Toohey, 2004), the language teachers' conceptions of 'language' and thus 'language teaching' are broad in scope. The teachers conceive of language not only as a linguistic system but also as a social practice in which experiences are organized and identities negotiated. There is recognition that if learners are not invested in the language practices of the classroom, learning outcomes are limited and educational inequities perpetuated. Further, such teachers take great care to offer learners multiple identity positions from which to engage in the language practices of the classroom, the school and the community. In diverse regions of the world, innovative language teachers are seeking to provide learners with a range of opportunities to take ownership over meaning-making, and to re-imagine an expanded set of identities for the future.

In Mexico, Clemente and Higgins (2008) drew on their longitudinal study of pre-service English teachers in Oaxaca to raise questions about the dominant role that English plays in the globalized political economy, and to illustrate the ways in which the non-native English teachers in their study sought to appropriate and 'perform' English without sacrificing local identities. Defining their research site as a 'contact zone', they describe the way the student teachers confronted the demands of English through various forms of language play in both English and Spanish, making the case that the student teacher groups were safe havens in which participants could play with both languages. Such performances allowed them to explore various identity positions, as a counter-discourse to dominant discourses on the native English teacher. As one student teacher said (2008, p. 123):

I have a Mexican accent. English is mine from the very moment I put it into practice and I am able to establish communication. But when I say that the English language is mine, I do not mean to say that I want to take the culture that comes with it.

In China, drawing on Norton's (2000) notion of imagined communities, Xu (2012) examined how the imagined identities of four ESOL K–12 teachers were transformed during their early years of teaching. Coining the term *practiced identities*, she illustrated how the practiced identities of three of her case participants differed substantially from their initial imagined identities, a consequence of a reality check once they started teaching. Only the fourth case teacher, through perseverance and agency, was able to extend the imagined learning facilitator identity that she had conceived at the start of her career.

In South Africa, Stein (2008) explored the way in which English language classrooms in under-resourced township schools became transformative sites in which textual, cultural and linguistic forms were re-appropriated and 're-sourced', with a view to validating those practices that had been marginalized and undervalued by the apartheid system. This transformation took place as teachers provided opportunities for English language learners to make use of multimodal resources, including linguistic, bodily and sensory modes, in order to engage in meaning-making. Stein's learners embraced the opportunities they were given to produce multimodal counter-texts that subverted the canon, and to draw on topics sometimes considered taboo.

In a similar spirit, recent research in Uganda investigated the extent to which multimodal pedagogies that include drawing, photography and drama can be incorporated more systematically into the English curriculum (Kendrick *et al.*, 2006; Kendrick & Jones, 2008). Drawing on research in two regions of the country, Kendrick and her colleagues argue that multimodal pedagogies offer teachers innovative ways of validating students' literacies, experiences and cultures, and are highly effective in supporting English

language learning in the classroom. In the photography project, for example, the students' perception of English as being a somewhat restrictive and artificial medium of instruction diminished as English began to be used for communication, expression and ownership of meaning.

In the United Kingdom, Wallace (2003) has worked with adult language learners on critical reading courses that address the socially embedded nature of the reading process, exploring text-focused activities that address how meaning and power are encoded in texts. In doing so, she makes use of a range of popular texts, including newspaper articles, magazine articles and advertisements. Wallace contrasts her approach with dominant English Foreign Language methodologies such as communicative language teaching and task-based learning, arguing that such approaches can be 'domesticating' for learners, teaching them only how to fit in with dominant cultures rather than to question and reshape powerful discourses.

Digital technology, identity and language learning

The affordances of digital technology have been investigated by a number of scholars interested in language and identity.⁸ Lam (2000, 2006), for example, found that immigrant youth in the United States were fashioning identities for themselves in computer-mediated transnational networks as multilingual, multicompetent actors. In so doing, they were able to provide for themselves new language learning opportunities that seemed denied to them in their school in which they were stigmatized as immigrants and incompetent language users. In another part of the world, White (2007) examined two distance language teaching programs in Australia, both of which were responding to the need for a wider range of foreign languages in schools. She concluded that as innovations in distance learning and teaching expand, it is imperative that the field find ways of addressing the philosophical, pedagogical and professional issues that arise, and that issues of identity, for both teachers and learners, are significant factors in each of these domains.

Lewis and Fabos (2005) examined the functions of Instant Messaging (IM) among seven youths to see how their social identities shaped and were shaped by this form of digital literacy. They found that the youths engaged in IM to enhance their social relationships and statuses across contexts, sometimes assuming alternative identities online. They noted that IM permitted these youths to engage in literacy practices in ways they were not able to do in school and that schools must take into account these new forms of literacy. The research of Kramsch and Thorne (2002) indicated, however, that not all internet communication leads to positive identity outcomes. In their study of the synchronous and asynchronous communication between American learners of French in the USA and French learners of English in France, they found that students had little understanding of the larger

cultural framework within which each party was operating, leading to problematic digital exchanges.

In Canada, Jim Cummins and Margaret Early have been working on a digital project that seeks to provide a range of identity options for learners in multilingual schools in Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal. Working with more than 50 teachers, four schoolboards, a teacher's union and non-government literacy organizations, this Multi Literacy Project (www.multiliteracies.ca) seeks to understand the literacy practices of students in and outside of school, to explore innovative classrooms in which teachers engage in multiliterate practices, and to investigate how educational systems influence the multiliteracy practices of schools. The project website provides a workspace for students, teachers and researchers to assemble and organize annotated galleries, construct demonstration classroom projects, and create case studies on what Cummins (2006) and Cummins and Early (2011) have called the 'identity texts' produced by these students.

In Uganda, Norton and Williams (2012) draw on their research on the digital portable library, eGranary, undertaken in a rural village in 2008, to investigate the uptake of eGranary by secondary students in the community. Drawing on Blommaert's (2010) construct of scale, they illustrate how both space and time were implicated in the diverse practices associated with eGranary, and their indexical meanings in the wider community. In addition, with reference to Norton's (2000) work on identity and investment, they illustrate how students' identities shifted over time from trainee to tutor, and how the use of eGranary enhanced what was socially imaginable to the library scholars. The construct of investment thus served as a useful complement to Blommaert's construct of scale.

Most of the studies that investigate how digital technologies affect identity and language learning have been commendatory, with the following comment by Lam (2006) representative of current thinking: 'Networked electronic communications have given rise to new social spaces, linguistic and semiotic practices, and ways of fashioning the self beyond the national context for immigrant youths in the United States' (p. 171). However, she also cautioned that these technologies may not provide the analytical tools necessary to empower youths to critique and change existing social structures. It may be that mentoring is a crucial element in supporting learner use of multimodality for critical purposes (Hull, 2007). However, to ensure analytical rigor, identity researchers will also need to adopt more sophisticated analytical tools (see Baldry & Thibault, 2006; Blommaert, 2010; Hornberger, 2003; Martinec & van Leeuwen, 2009) in order to better understand how identities are mediated along multimodal lines. Further, as scholars such as Andema (2009), Snyder and Prinsloo (2007) and Warschauer (2003) note, much of the digital research on language learning has focused on research in wealthier regions of the world, and there is a great need for research in poorly resourced communities to impact global debates on new technologies, identity and language learning.

Identity and resistance

The relationship between identity, language learning and classroom resistance has become a compelling and fruitful area of research in language education. While larger structural constraints and classroom practices might position learners in undesirable ways, learners, with human agency, can resist these positions in innovative and unexpected ways, as the following three examples illustrate. In exploring what he calls the subversive identities of language learners, Canagarajah (2004a) addresses the intriguing question of how language learners can maintain membership of their vernacular communities and cultures while still learning a second language or dialect. He draws on his research with two very different groups, one in the USA and the other in Sri Lanka, to argue that language learners are sometimes ambivalent about the learning of a second language or dialect, and that they may resort to clandestine literacy practices to create ‘pedagogical safe houses’ in the language classroom. In both contexts, the clandestine literacy activities of the students are seen to be forms of resistance to unfavorable identities imposed on the learners. At the same time, however, these safe houses serve as sites of identity construction, allowing students to negotiate the often contradictory tensions they encounter as members of diverse communities.

A second example of resistance is found in the work of McKinney and van Pletzen (2004). Working with relatively privileged students at a historically white and Afrikaans university in South Africa, McKinney and van Pletzen introduced critical reading into their first year English studies course using two curriculum units on South African literature. In exploring representations of the apartheid past, McKinney and van Pletzen encountered significant resistance from students to the ways in which they felt uncomfortably positioned by the curriculum materials on offer. McKinney and van Pletzen attempted to create discursive spaces in which both they and the students could explore the many private and political processes through which identities are constructed. In doing so, they re-conceptualized students’ resistance more productively as a meaning-making activity which offers powerful teaching moments.

The third example of identity and resistance is drawn from Talmy (2008), who investigated the multiple ways in which English language learners in a Hawai’i high school resisted being positioned as an ‘ESL student’ in their dedicated-ESL classes. While the school-sanctioned ESL student was expected to bring required materials to class, read assigned fiction, do book work, meet assigned dates, follow instructions and work for the full class session, resistant ESL students engaged in a wide variety of oppositional activities, including leaving materials ‘at home’, talking with friends and playing cards. From a pedagogical point of view, two of Talmy’s observations are particularly significant. The first observation is that the

ESL teachers began to change their practices in response to the resistance of their students, necessitating a shift in teacher identity; the second is that the students' actions paradoxically turned the ESL program into precisely what the students disliked most, 'an easy, academically inconsequential program that did little to meet their L2 learning or educational needs' (2008, p. 639).

Emerging Themes and Future Directions

It is clear from the discussion above that 'identity' has indeed become a research area in its own right, and is stimulating many researchers and much debate in the field of language learning and teaching. Increasingly, the field is being informed in diverse ways by work in anthropology, sociology, post-colonial and cultural studies, and education. The researcher who investigates identity and language education in the future will need to be comfortable with this interdisciplinarity (Gao, 2007), and as scholars such as Luke (2004b) and Morgan and Ramanathan (2005) have remarked, need to understand that learners live in globalized and cosmopolitan sociocultural worlds. Current language education scholars have seen a static view of language as system and learning as internalization of system as an inadequate representation of dynamic and complex processes. What has remained of interest is the notion of complex and embodied language learners living in socially stratified worlds that constrain as well as enable the exercise of human agency. The goal for future research on identity and language learning is to contribute to efforts to promote language learning and teaching in ways that can enhance human agency in more equitable worlds.

In this spirit, researchers such as Jenkins (2007) and De Costa (2012) have started to examine how non-native language learners develop and enact identities from an English as a lingua franca (ELF) perspective, an innovative extension of earlier debates on who owns English in the international community (Norton, 1997; Pennycook, 1998; Phillipson, 2009). Closely related to this interest in non-native speaker identities has been a growing volume of research on the identities of heritage language learners (see Abdi, 2011; Blackledge & Creese, 2008; Duff, 2012; He, 2006). This emergent interest can be attributed in part to a larger agenda to reject the essentialization of identity categories. As identity research has illustrated, static categorizations need to be interrogated in the face of globalization (Alim *et al.*, 2008; Higgins, 2011; Lo Bianco *et al.*, 2009), as well as growing multilingualism in schools and society (see Blackledge & Creese, 2010; Kramersch, 2009; Shin, 2012; Weber & Horner, 2012).

In this regard, an understanding of language learning processes focused on identity would be greatly enriched by research conducted in postcolonial sites where multilingualism is the norm and language acquisition processes

can be quite different from immigrant language learning experiences in the Western countries or study abroad contexts.⁹ In an article that challenges monolingualist assumptions underlying much of SLA theory, Canagarajah (2007, p. 935) argues that ‘insights from non-Western communities should inform the current efforts for alternate theory building in our field’. In such multilingual contexts it is unlikely that the term SLA itself is appropriate. As Block (2003, p. 5) has noted, the term ‘second’ doesn’t capture the ‘experiences of multilinguals who have had contact with three or more languages in their lifetimes’. Indeed, as Kramsch and Whiteside (2008, p. 664) argue, the growth of multilingualism has led to what they have called the development of ‘symbolic competence’:

Social actors in multilingual settings seem to activate more than a communicative competence that would enable them to communicate accurately, effectively, and appropriately with one another. They seem to display a particularly acute ability to play with various linguistic codes and with the various spatial and temporal resonances of these codes. We call this competence ‘symbolic competence’.

By way of example, South African multilingual contexts have much to contribute to our thinking on processes of identification and language learning (e.g. Makubalo, 2007; McKinney, 2007; Nongogo, 2007). McKinney’s (2007) study of the language practices of black South African students attending previously white high schools shows the complex self and other positioning of black youth in relation to different ‘brands’ of English as well as to the use of local African languages. In a country with eleven official languages, but where English is the language of power, one learner referred to the prestige variety of English as ‘Louis Vuitton English’, illustrating the idea of English as a commodity (McKinney, 2007, p. 14). Despite the accusations aimed at these black students who are acquiring a prestige variety of English as ‘becoming white’, or the use of derogatory labels such as ‘coconuts’, such students resisted this positioning and showed their awareness of the different kinds of cultural capital carried by varieties of English and local languages. They were clearly appropriating English for their own uses rather than identifying with white first language speakers of English in their language acquisition processes.

In a similar spirit, Morgan and Ramanathan (2005) argue persuasively that the field of language education needs to consider ways in which English language teaching can be decolonized, proposing that there is a need to decentralize the authority that Western interests have in the language teaching industry. To this end, there is a need to restore agency and professionalism in periphery communities (Canagarajah, 2002, 2007; Higgins, 2009; Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Tembe & Norton, 2008), and give due recognition to local vernacular modes of learning and teaching (Canagarajah, 2004b). There

has been some progress on this front. Special issues of a number of journals are significant, including: special issues of the *TESOL Quarterly* on Language in Development (Markee, 2002) and Language Policies and TESOL (Ramanathan & Morgan, 2007); and two recent issues of the *AILA Review* of the International Association of Applied Linguistics (AILA) on 'Africa and Applied Linguistics' (Makoni & Meinhof, 2003) and 'World Applied Linguistics' (Gass & Makoni, 2004).

Another way to promote more equitable language learning and teaching is to explore the relatively under-researched identity of class. Much identity work has drawn on Bourdieu's (1991) constructs of *capital* and *habitus* (see Albright & Luke, 2007; De Costa, 2010c; Heller, 2008; Lam & Warriner, 2012; Lin, 2007; Norton, 2000); however, an explicit discussion of class in identity research is less common. This has prompted Block's (2012) exhortation for language researchers to make connection between class and SLA. Further, an explicit discussion of class has become vitally relevant in light of prevailing neoliberal discourses of consumerism, entrepreneurship and economic competitiveness – all of which have directly impacted how languages are learned and taught both inside and outside the classroom (see Block *et al.*, 2012; Heller, 2011; Kramsch, 2006; Morgan & Clarke, 2011).

With regard to other future directions in the field of identity and language learning, one area that is receiving increasing attention is that of the language teacher and the language teacher educator.¹⁰ By invoking Lave's (1996) notions of learning-in-practice and identities-in-practice, Kanno and Stuart (2011), for example, traced how two beginning teachers in the USA, enrolled in a practicum course, ultimately developed professional identities. Kanno and Stuart conclude that an enhanced understanding of teacher identity development needs to be included in the knowledge base of second language teacher education. From a teacher educator perspective, Pennycook (2004), in Sydney, Australia, reflects on his experience of observing a teacher in a TESOL practicum. In a compelling narrative, he reminds us that a great deal of language teaching does not take place in well-funded institutes of education, but in community programs, places of worship and immigrant centers, where funds are limited and time is at a premium. Of central interest is a consideration of the way in which teacher educators can intervene in the process of practicum observation to bring about educational and social change. To this end, Pennycook argues that 'critical moments' in the practicum can be used to raise larger questions of power and authority in the wider society, and provide an opportunity for critical discussion and reflection.

Researchers of language and identity have also become interested not only in the conditions under which language learners speak but in the extent to which identities and investments structure their engagement with *texts*, whether these be written, oral or multimodal. There is growing recognition that when a learner engages in textual practices, both the comprehension

and the construction of the text are mediated by the learner's investment in the activity and the learner's identity. Many scholars¹¹ have engaged in research on the relationship between literacy and learner identity, and this interest is likely to continue in the future.

With regard to other future directions on identity and language learning, there is scope for expanding the methodological tools used. Wagner (2004) and Block (2007a) have recently commented on the potential of the analysis of naturally occurring interaction to enrich research in the area of identity in SLA, particularly in exploring the negotiation of participation. As a methodological tool, Conversation Analysis (CA) enables researchers to explore discourse identities (Zimmerman, 1998) and social identities, thereby enhancing our understanding of how identities are ascribed through an analysis of the sequential development of talk. While there are several identity-focused analyses of second language classroom talk (e.g. Duff, 2002; Pomerantz, 2008; Talmy, 2008; Toohey, 2000), analyses of talk outside the classroom are less common. On a broader level, future identity work needs to conceptualize talk as discursive practice, in light of the practice turn in applied linguistics (see De Costa, 2010b; Pennycook, 2010, 2012; Young, 2009). Related to this turn has been an exploration of identity in conjunction with ideology (e.g. De Costa, 2010a, 2011, 2012), style (e.g. Stroud & Wee, 2012) and stance (e.g. Jaffe, 2009). This interest in ideology, style and stance will likely be developed further and applied to a variety of learning and teaching contexts to advance an already vibrant identity research agenda.

Finally, identity research will be enhanced by the conduct of more longitudinal work. While earlier work involving immigrant learners such as reported in Norton (2000) and Toohey (2000) took into account identity development over space and time, future work will benefit from a more nuanced spatio-temporal understanding of how learner identities evolve through a scalar lens. Lemke (2008), for example, has called for the notion of identity to be more scale differentiated, arguing that identities on all scales shape and are shaped by desires and fears rooted in human embodiedness. Echoing a similar sentiment, Wortham (2008) proposes greater attention to the level of practice, which entails studying when and where identities are made locally. This, he suggests, should be done by examining critical points in activities engaged across space and time scales. This scalar approach to examining identity has been used by sociolinguists who work in domains outside of the classroom (e.g. Blommaert, 2010; Budach, 2009; Dong & Blommaert, 2009). However, this scalar perspective will likely find larger purchase in future education-related identity work.

The wide range of research on identity and language learning and the emerging areas of research in this regard suggest that interest in identity and language learning will remain vibrant in the future. The first edition of *Identity and Language Learning* anticipated only some of the research that has been undertaken since 2000. However, the constructs of investment, imagined

communities and imagined identities have proved resilient over the years. It is timely then to revisit these ideas in Chapters 1 to 7 that follow. The compelling Afterword by Claire Kramsch provides a complementary perspective to issues of identity in the field, and locates my work within an historical context. I look forward to engaging in further debate and collaborative research on the topic of identity and language learning with both established and emerging scholars in the coming years.

Structure of the Book

In Chapter 1, I argue that, since practice in the target language is centrally important in the learning of a second language, SLA theorists and second language teachers need to understand how opportunities to practice speaking are socially structured in both formal and informal sites of language learning. Furthermore, it is important for theorists and teachers to understand how language learners respond to and create opportunities to speak the target language, and how their actions intersect with their investment in the target language and their changing identities. Research which addresses these issues will be of benefit to language teachers who wish to meet the needs of learners like Saliha (see page 41). If learners do not make progress in learning, teachers cannot assume that learners do not wish to learn the second language or that they are unmotivated or inflexible; perhaps the learners are struggling because they cannot speak under conditions of marginalization.

In Chapter 2, I address the complex relationship between the methodology and the theory of my study. I argue that any approach to methodology presupposes a set of assumptions that guides the questions that are asked in a research project and how these questions are addressed. Furthermore, I suggest that *how* data is collected will inevitably influence *what* data is collected and what conclusions are drawn on the basis of data analysis. I describe the theory that informed my approach to methodology, and then describe the methodology that I used in the light of this theory, focusing on the diary study as particularly important in the data collection process.

In Chapter 3, I locate my study in the context of other studies of immigrant language learners in both Canada and the international community. I then introduce the five participants in the study: Eva from Poland, Mai from Vietnam, Katarina from Poland, Martina from the former Czechoslovakia and Felicia from Peru.¹² I comment on their exposure to English and their practice of English, and describe the conditions under which they feel most comfortable speaking English. I draw attention to the contradictory position in which these women find themselves in relation to anglophone Canadians: They need access to anglophone social networks in order to practice English in the wider community, but knowledge of English is an *a priori* condition of entry into these social networks.

In Chapter 4, I describe the language learning experiences of the two younger women in the study, Eva and Mai. I argue that each woman's investment in English must be understood with reference to her reasons for coming to Canada, her plans for the future and her changing identity. I describe Eva as a multicultural citizen in that, over time, she gained access to the anglophone social networks at work and described herself as having the same possibilities as Canadians. With respect to Mai, I demonstrate that she took on the position of language broker in the home to enable her to resist the patriarchal structures in her extended family. I also examine how and why Mai's workplace offered opportunities for Mai to practice English, and how changes in the language practices in the workplace represented a threat to her investment in English, her opportunities to practice English and her identity as a language broker in the home.

In Chapter 5, I describe the language learning experiences of the three older women in the study, Katarina, Martina and Felicia, indicating how their investment in English intersects with their identities as mothers. Katarina's ambivalent relationship to English is described in depth: On the one hand, she feared that English would undermine her relationship to her only child; on the other hand, it would give her access to the fellow professionals with whom she would most like to interact. Martina, on the other hand, as the primary caregiver in the home, needed to speak English in order to relieve her children of the responsibility of defending the family's interests in the larger social world. Despite her sense that her immigrant status afforded her little social value, she was not silenced by marginalization. Felicia's investment in her identity as a wealthy Peruvian is intriguing, and her resistance to being positioned as an immigrant in Canada is addressed.

In Chapter 6, I address the implications of my findings for second language acquisition theory. With reference to data from my study, I critique current SLA theory on natural language learning, the acculturation model of SLA and the affective filter hypothesis respectively. I argue that SLA theorists need to address the inequitable relations of power which structure opportunities for language learners to practice the target outside the classroom. I demonstrate that the acculturation model of SLA does not give sufficient recognition to situations of additive and subtractive bilingualism, and I suggest that a learner's affective filter needs to be theorized as a social construction which intersects in significant ways with a language learner's identity. I suggest that a poststructuralist conception of identity and Bourdieu's (1977) notion of *legitimate discourse* are theoretically useful in helping to explain the findings from my study, and are a valuable contribution to SLA theory. In the final section of the chapter, drawing on Lave and Wenger's (1991) conceptions of situated learning, I incorporate these ideas into an expanded notion of language learning as a social practice.

In Chapter 7, I consider the implications of my study for classroom practice. I examine the expectations the participants had of formal language

classes and analyze these expectations in view of findings from the study on natural language learning and identity. I suggest that my study has a number of implications for classroom practice, defending my arguments with reference to two stories of classroom resistance described by Katarina and Felicia. However, with reference to Mai's story of a particularly problematic classroom experience, I raise questions about how student experience should be incorporated into the language curriculum. I then take the position that the diary study itself was a pedagogical practice that had the potential to expand and transform language learning possibilities both inside and outside the classroom. Finally, noting the limitations of the diary study, I suggest that classroom-based social research might help to bridge the gap between formal and natural sites of language learning for immigrant language learners, giving them the more powerful identity of ethnographer in relation to the larger world of target language speakers.

Notes

- (1) See for example volumes by Atkinson, 2011; Block, 2003, 2007b; Caldas-Coulthard & Iedema, 2008; Clark, 2009; Cummins, 2001; Day, 2002; Heller, 2007; Higgins, 2009; Kanno, 2003, 2008; Kramersch, 2009; Kubota & Lin, 2009; Lin, 2007; Mantero, 2007; Menard-Warwick, 2009; Miller, 2003; Nelson, 2009; Norton, 1997; 2000; Norton & Toohey, 2004; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004; Potowski, 2007; Toohey, 2000; Tsui & Tollefson, 2007.
- (2) See for example Block, 2010; Morgan & Clarke, 2011; Norton, 2006, 2010; Norton & McKinney, 2011; Norton & Toohey, 2002; Ricento, 2005.
- (3) Anya, 2011; Cornwell, 2005; Cortez, 2008; Kim, 2008; Pomerantz, 2001; Ross, 2011; Shin, 2009; Song, 2010; Tomita, 2011; Torres-Olave, 2006; Villarreal Ballesteros, 2010; Zacharias, 2010.
- (4) See Dagenais *et al.*, 2008; Mastrella-De-Andrade & Norton, 2011; Norton (2013); Xu, 2001.
- (5) Kanno & Norton, 2003; Norton & Early, 2011; Norton & Gao, 2008; Norton & McKinney, 2011; Norton & Morgan, 2013; Norton & Pavlenko, 2004; Norton & Toohey, 2011.
- (6) See for example Bearse & de Jong, 2008; Chang, 2011; Cummins, 2006; De Costa, 2010a; Haneda, 2005; McKay & Wong, 1996; Pittaway, 2004; Potowski, 2007; Skilton-Sylvester, 2002.
- (7) See for example Carroll, Motha & Price, 2008; Chang, 2011; Dagenais, 2003; Early & Norton, in press; Gao, 2012; Gordon, 2004; Murphey, Jin & Li-Chin, 2005; Norton & Kamal, 2003; Pavlenko, 2003; Silberstein, 2003; Xu, 2012.
- (8) Kramersch & Thorne, 2002; Lam 2000, 2006; Lam & Rosario-Ramos, 2009; Lewis & Fabos, 2005; Mutonyi & Norton, 2007; Prinsloo & Rowsell, 2012; Snyder & Prinsloo, 2007; Thorne & Black, 2007; Warschauer, 2003; White, 2007.
- (9) See for example Block & Cameron, 2002; García, Skutnabb-Kangas & Torres-Guzmán, 2006; Lin & Martin, 2005; Morgan & Ramanathan, 2005; Pennycook, 2007; Rassool, 2007.
- (10) See Clarke, 2008; Hawkins, 2004, 2011; Hawkins & Norton, 2009; Kanno & Stuart, 2011; Morgan, 2004; Norton & Early, 2011; Pennycook, 2004; Varghese *et al.*, 2005.
- (11) See for example Barton, 2007; Blommaert, 2008; Hornberger, 2003; Janks, 2010; Kramersch & Lam, 1999; Kress *et al.*, 2004; Lam & Warriner, 2012; Martin-Jones &

Jones, 2000; Moje & Luke, 2009; Prinsloo & Baynham, 2008; Street & Hornberger, 2008.

(12) All the names of people and places used in the study have been changed.

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