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Negotiation of L2 Identities in the Age of Transnational Mobility: Enactment, Perception, Status, and Language Development

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Preface

The idea for the current Special Issue was conceived in summer 2019 when the three guest editors were members of the EU-funded COST Action SAREP.1 The objective of the Action was to bring together scholars interested in exploring the benefits and limitations of one of the biggest catalysts of transnational mobility globally – i.e., international student mobility. Although the Action was largely focused on Study Abroad (SA) and language acquisition, collaboration with colleagues from fields such as migration studies, sociology, cultural studies and psychology facilitated the emergence of multiple foci of investigation, and it was soon realised that the traditional parameters of SA research had been too confining. SA could be viewed as a significant subsection of a much larger phenomenon which incorporates crossing borders and negotiating identities in multiple languages as quotidian and exceptional; long-term and short-term; voluntary and forced; and unidirectional and circular. It was an exciting time for research focusing on mobility, and the decision was made for a Special Issue exploring the multiple and variegated forms of transnationalism, including SA, as a space for identity processes via a second or subsequent language…….

Shaping of L1 and L2 Linguistic Identities in a Migrant Family

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Abstract

Diasporas do not have stable and static identities bonded to the past or the homeland. In fact, they are changing communities, open to lateral connections in which their members are in continuous negotiation, especially with the dominant community in their new home, producing, contesting and preventing power conflicts. Since identity is negotiated through discourse, studying the linguistic behaviour of these groups is essential because it helps
us understand the ways in which they use language to index new meanings and identities. Although the investigation of linguistic diaspora communities has increased in recent years, there has not been extensive research on how linguistic identity is constructed within migrant multi/bilingual families. In order to fill this gap in the literature, this paper uses an ethnolinguistic observational methodology along with sociolinguistic interviews to analyse linguistic identity negotiation processes among three generations of women from the same family who have crossed linguistic and cultural borders when they migrated to Asturias, Spain. Findings show a reconciliation of the Galician diasporic identity with other identities that arise in our participants' new social practices in the diaspora. Such identity negotiation is demonstrated through translanguaging strategies, which allow multilingual family members to communicate with each other and serve as performative discourses that enact speakers' complex identities, avoiding feelings of alienation or displacement.

We are Fundamentally Different: Investigating the Language Ideologies and Language Practices of an International STEM Scholar

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Abstract

This case study explores the experience of a Chinese-born postdoctoral STEM scholar, Miles, who has lived in the United States for six consecutive years. Our research illuminates Miles's complex identity-making process by taking a close look at his language practices and language ideologies. Guided by identity theory (Norton 2013; De Costa/Norton 2017), we investigated the ascribed and enacted identities negotiated by this international STEM scholar, and how these identities conform to, or contradict, his language ideologies. Our findings yielded three key insights. First, Miles's social experience resonated with Coleman's (2013) concentric circles model in that the difficulties he encountered in crossing symbolic boundaries ideologically divided 'foreigners' like him from 'Americans', which in turn contributed to the reification of a marginalised 'forever foreigner' identity. Second, on a linguistic level, we learned that Miles believed in a native/non-native binary opposition and subscribed to a racialised view towards his 'foreign' usage of English. Third, at a micro level, we found that Miles's translanguaging practices created transformative spaces in which he imagined a globally influential scientist identity for his future. Critically, he questioned English hegemonic ideologies at his workplace and in academic publishing. In sum, Miles's status as an international student during the first five years in addition to his work in a dominantly Chinesespeaking laboratory significantly hampered his socialisation ability, resulting in a solidification of his 'foreigner' and non-native English speaker identities. Nonetheless, through his translanguaging practices, he also enacted a competent and critical English language user identity.

Language Investment of White Native English-Speaking Wives in Transnational Marriages in Korea

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Abstract

With the ever-increasing demand for English language education around the world comes an increase in the transnational mobility of individuals from English-speaking countries who choose to teach abroad. During their stay, some sojourning teachers have met and married locals becoming long-term residents. English being a language of cultural capital often implies that families want English to be passed on intergenerationally. Thus, family language policies privilege English, yet this choice can often come at the expense of the transnational English-speaking spouses' investment in the local language. In this study, the narratives of two North American women married to South Korean nationals residing in South Korea share their experiences in their Korean language investment. Family language policy and Darvin and Norton's (2015) model of investment were utilised to shed light on the language learning experiences of both women. The study found that language investment is not unidirectional; language ideologies affect language investment, practices, and the shifting identity of transnational spouses, while at the same time impact the language ideologies and practices of the home.

Furthermore, investment as a theoretical construct helped to further explain how identity, capital, and ideologies in South Korea intersected on the individual level and influenced the transnational wives' language investment.

Identity Construction in Interaction: International Students' Dynamic Use and Changing Perceptions of the Japanese First-Person Pronouns Ore, Boku, and Watashi

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Abstract

The expansion of global mobility has increased the number of people conducting their lives in an additional language, a key component of which is presenting themselves to others. This study focuses on processes of jointlyaccomplished identity construction found through discourse analysis (Gee 2014) of the participants' positioning (Davies/Harré 1990) in conversations between two advanced L2-Japanese-speaker undergraduate internationalstudents matriculating at a Japanese university and their L1-Japanesespeaker peers. This is done by examining their actual (audio-video conversation data) and perceived use (interview data) of the first-person pronouns boku and ore, which indirectly index masculinity (ore directly indexes coarseness, while boku directly indexes boyishness), and watashi, which directly indexes a neutral stance. Additionally, it investigates the participants' stated folklinguistic theories (Miller/Ginsberg 1995; Imai/Nojima/Okada 2012) – speaker-created lay theories of language – about the functions and indexical values of these pronouns that contribute to the participants' positioning.

Findings show that L2 Japanese speakers deploy first-person pronouns based on the situation to construct their identity in interaction. Participants stated that their pronoun choice was deliberate and based on their folklinguistic theories; however, they were not always aware of which pronoun they used.

These theories were (re)constructed based on the language socialisation of master narratives found in society, the participants' L2 education, L1 Japanese speaker informants, and the L2 speakers' experiences. The participants' processes of coming to differentiate pronoun-use were varied, non-linear, and on-going.

Keywords

identity construction, positioning theory, folklinguistic theories, Japanese first-person pronouns, L2 Japanese speakers

'Perfect French' and Explaining Where Your Family Is From: Negotiating a New Zealand Identity on Study Abroad

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Abstract
Study abroad (SA) forms part of the wide range of transnational experiences today. Moving across geographic and discursive space allows unique access to how identities connect to ideologies, and how they are negotiated by young people during times of global mobility, connectedness, and widening inequality. A critical framing of a whole person perspective adds valuable depth, pushing beyond individual portrayals of SA university students as language learners. This perspective recognises that students are socially embedded and continue to experience real-world issues on exchange while remaining connected to several communities through technology. This paper focuses on nationality and ethnicity as salient and connected identity categories for Persephone, a New Zealand participant on exchange in Paris.
Drawing on interactional data, social media, and email data, I demonstrate how Persephone's refusal to speak with a French accent and to move towards the French culture is connected to her relationship to her New Zealand Indian identity, and her engagement with power in the SA context. Findings show that traditional notions of immersion are no longer adequate to capture the complexity of the experiences of today's diverse and critically minded global citizens. Recognising the role of societal ideologies in identity negotiations illuminates hidden components of identity construction and questions the expectations placed on exchange students to uniformly and unproblematically take on aspects of the host culture.

Norah in Ireland: The Identity Development of a Saudi Woman during Study Abroad

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Abstract
When learners study languages abroad, they confront new social and cultural contexts that affect identity negotiations, and hence, personal growth. Despite a burgeoning interest in study abroad (SA) research on the role of SA experiences on a second language (L2) identity development, current research has given little attention to the identity development of Saudi students in SA contexts. This article addresses this issue by focusing on the identity development of a Saudi female learner, Norah, during a six-month SA sojourn in Ireland. Data were longitudinally collected using semi-structured interviews every two months over a six-month time-span, and the qualitative analysis was conducted in light of the positioning theory. Overall, the findings showed that the participant deepened her love for her country and religion, she was more enthusiastic about interacting with international students than members of the local community and felt that SA allowed for significant personal development. These conclusions suggest the benefits of SA for students' personal development regardless of native cultural attachment and differences in religious faith.

Tunisian Students' Intercultural Identity Development in Study Abroad

Abstract

This paper investigates Tunisian students' development of intercultural identity in study abroad (SA) programs. The data were collected by means of the Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters (AIE) (Byram et al. 2009) from 12 Tunisian English language students who participated in SA programs in the USA, the UK, and Canada, with a view to exploring the participants' definition of who they are, their description of a specific encounter, their attitudes and reactions during the encounter, and the perceived change after it. The research, which follows a qualitative analysis of the participants' experiences of intercultural encounters, was conducted using Kim's (2008) stress-adaptation-growth dynamic. The findings revealed that the participants' stress was generated from their inability to function in the new community, on the one hand, and from the gap between their familiarity with the home culture and unfamiliarity with the host culture, on the other.

To overcome these difficulties, participants were found to use varied adaptive strategies, including stress management and linguistic and intercultural adjustments. The analysis also demonstrated that there was a meaningful link between the participants' definition of 'self' and the transition towards intercultural identity growth.

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Beyond Binary Thinking through Inclusiveness:
Interdisciplinary Reflections and Perspectives

Guest Editors' Introduction

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There is a long-standing tradition of binary or dichotomous thinking when outlining matters in terms of opposites such as good/bad, true/ false, reason/passion, religion/science, etc. Dichotomies seem to be widely used in present-day language and societies, although their use
has been criticised mainly because they are associated with dominance or privilege (Elbow 1993).
Even if classification is something natural and important to develop cognitive abilities, it can lead to dichotomous thinking. By contrasting two things, one implicitly creates a hierarchy based on the assumption that one of the two elements is more important than the other. This idea was central in structuralism and was later criticised (for example, Foucault and Derrida, in Robbins 2015) because there are many other nuances to be considered in between opposites (hot-cold, soft-hard, day-night, brightness-darkness). By accepting binary thinking, one risks building barriers between groups of people and determine that one group is superior to the other by spreading discrimination and prejudice towards the other group(s). Over time, societies started to classify individuals or groups of people in various forms of opposites (Black/ White, gay/straight, male/female), which are difficult to eradicate.

The Public-Private Dichotomy and Online Hate Speech: Communication Studies and Legal Perspectives

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Abstract

In the context of online communication, hate speech – discriminatory language targeting a person or group based on certain identity factors – has become one of the most urgent threats to democratic principles and freedom of expression. This paper seeks to shed new light on the disruptive force of such communication by discussing the dichotomies in which it thrives: 1. The private-public divide in spheres of action; 2. the distinction between 'desired' (covered by the freedom of expression) and 'unwanted' dissemination of thoughts (hate speech); and 3. the dichotomy of the element of power wielded by public actors (states) and private actors (platforms). The present paper is based on a comprehensive research project on online hate speech (OHS) in Austria, which includes problem-centred interviews, an online survey, as well as analyses of OHS postings, norms, and rules related to it. Within our discussions, we use an interdisciplinary approach, including the perspectives of legal and communication studies. Our research confirms the erosion of the long-standing private-public divide due to the rise of social media, which necessitates new theoretical concepts, strategies for different actors, and norms for future OHS management.

It's Only a Matter of Meaning: From English Learners (ELs) and Emergent Bilinguals (EBs) to Active Bilingual Learners/Users of English (ABLE)

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Abstract

Educational terms, labels, and categories can create binary thinking and societal polarisations that reify normative assumptions, status quo educational procedures, and inequitable educational experiences for culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) youth in the United States (U.S.). We address the inequitable power relations that are created by deficit-based labels for CLD students, which lead to the misperceptions and misrepresentations of their active bilingualism, and propose a new term, "active bilingual learners/users of English (ABLE)", that centralises students' hybrid and holistic voices in their schooling contexts. We utilise a transdisciplinary approach to 1) distinguish ABLE students' active bilingualism from the emergent bilingualism of L1 English-speaking students who study a foreign language, 2) defend the term bilingual as a metonym for bi/ multilingual learners, 3) demonstrate through cognitive linguistics the implicit impact of placing "learners/users" before what it is they are learning/ using in a label, and 4) analyse the potential positive influence of the acronym ABLE on the educational experiences of these students. Deficit-based terms are concrete examples of dichotomy-based conceptualisation strategies that uphold normative ideologies and practices of viewing students in the United States as English-speakers vs. non-English-speakers, successful vs. unsuccessful, real Americans vs. non-citizens, and normal vs. other. In its essence, ABLE is a hybrid term that acknowledges both CLD students' active bilingualism and their real need to develop English. Hybrid dialogues are needed to address the above conceptual dichotomies in education and transcend binary thinking that determines who is ABLE to be bilingual and successful in the U.S.

Gender Revolution in The Princess and the Frog : Prince Charming? No, Thank You!

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Abstract

This article aims to investigate the process of deconstruction and reconstruction of gender roles in the Disney animated film The Princess and the Frog (2009). The evolution of the main female figure in parallel with the resizing of the main male character is set out through a comparative analysis with 'classic Disney' films (see Pallant 2010) revolving around two common narrative elements: the search for true love and the happy ending. Based on these selection criteria, the Disney films Snow White (1937), Cinderella (1950), Sleeping Beauty (1959) and The Little Mermaid (1989) were compared to The Princess and the Frog. Seeking to draw up the evolution of female characters and gender-specific contents over time, the paper intends to offer a comparative analysis on the role that Nature plays in Disney's representation of gender in connection to the social and domestic dimensions. The second part of the article intends to explore the cooperation of verbal and nonverbal resources employed for representing gender and social roles in The Princess and the Frog. A multimodal approach was adopted to discuss in detail to what extent Disney animation has reshaped stories and characters to keep up with a new awareness of gender roles.

An Analysis of the Use of Inclusive Language among Italian Non-Binary Individuals:
A Survey Transcending Binary Thinking

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Abstract

This study investigates the use of gender-inclusive language among Italian non-binary individuals. In English-speaking countries, the epicene pronoun 'they' and neo-pronouns such as 'xe' and 'zim' have been adopted by nonbinary individuals and LGBTQA+ allies alike. In this debate, Romance languages are a very interesting case, since they are inflectional languages characterised by gender markers for all variable parts of speech. In Italy, activists are trying to spread language awareness to dismantle gender discrimination conveyed through language. Projects such as 'Italiano Inclusivo', 'Progetto Genderqueer', and scholars such as Gheno (2019a, 2019b) are involved in the analysis and promotion of inclusive language, while one of the most important research institutions, the Accademia della Crusca (2020), refuses to accept any alternative. It is against this background that this study analyses the state of the use of inclusive language among the Italian non-binary community. Through a survey submitted to several Italian LGBTQA+ online groups, the study investigates non-binary individuals' preferred pronouns, their selection of suffixes when writing or speaking about themselves or other non-binary individuals, how they refer to a group of mixed binary and non-binary people, and further proposals of inclusive forms. Gender-inclusive language is more than a matter of political correctness. Understanding the mechanisms behind its use is important because interpersonal communication contributes to gender stereotyping and misgendering. Even if these results are not blanket truth, they can contribute to the analysis of the connection between language, gender, and society, to overcome social polarisations and promote acknowledgement and respect.

Moscow Agents versus Ukrainian Patriots: The Polarisation of Ukrainian Political Discourse

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Abstract

This paper analises the exposure of alleged 'Moscow agents' by selfproclaimed 'patriots' in Ukrainian public discourse. It provides an overview of the socio-cultural context of accusations of high treason and of collaboration with an aggressor-state. The analysis draws on insights from discourse historical analysis (Wodak 2001) and from investigations of antagonistic discourses (Carpentier 2017; Viola 2019; Baisha 2020). It focuses on discourse processes and scenarios invoked by this public confrontation and demonstrates that the overuse of stigmatising labels ultimately leads to changing attitudes towards these labels since the 'hunt for Kremlin agents' prompts contentious or humorous responses rather than national solidarisation. The paper concludes with an overview of structural similarities and differences between discourses based on 'us' and 'them' division.

A Corpus-Based Analysis of Cosmetic Surgery Discourse: Signs of Age(ism) in the British Press

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Abstract

Cosmetic Surgery discourse has been scantily addressed in the literature despite encompassing elements of identity, age/ageing, gender and social context to name but a few. In this vein, the concepts of old and young as well as reasons for opting for cosmetic surgery may indeed be linked to no longer being permitted to grow old gracefully. The study combined a qualitative and quantitative discourse analysis with corpus linguistics tools to study the representation of the social variables of age and gender in the online British press within the context of cosmetic surgery. The lines of enquiry questioned how gender and age are portrayed in the British media in relation to cosmetic surgery and what a linguistic lexical analysis would reveal in terms of ideological as well as metaphorical content. The corpus under scrutiny was collected using the online platform LexisNexis using the seed words of cosmetic surgery* and plastic surgery* from four British Daily Newspapers: The Guardian, Daily Mirror, The Times and The Daily Mail. A corpus-based discourse analysis was employed to analyse the corpus. Results revealed interesting linguistic patterns in terms of cosmetic surgery representation in the British press and how cosmetic surgery is portrayed in reference to age(ism).

Moving Away from 'Good' vs 'Bad' Contradictions – 'Sanità District' in TripAdvisor Reviews

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Abstract

A dichotomy based on 'negative' vs. 'positive' qualities applied to the famous district in Naples is usually found in media discourse due to both negative stereotypes related to this place and criminal actions and events that usually occurred there. Notwithstanding, the recovery of the huge heritage of this district since 2000 onwards due to a process of redevelopment and enhancement of its historic, artistic and human heritage has increased the positive viewpoints in the media (Catacombe di Napoli 2021). Starting from this assumption, the study is aimed at investigating TripAdvisor reviews about Sanità District from 2012 to 2019. Furthermore, a total of 92 reviews of Catacombs of San Gennaro from 2019 to 2020 have been included in the corpus. The main premise is that it is possible to find new forms of communication which may help to move beyond some traditional conflictual dichotomies (Sunstein 2007). The methodology involves a corpus-based approach along with studies on Evaluation and Appraisal (Hunston/Sinclair 2000; Stubbs 2001; Martin/White 2005; Baker 2006). The final aim is to reveal the emergence of a new evaluative language moving away the stereotyped dichotomy traditionally implicit in opinions by people from all around the world with regard to Sanità District.