Let's Collaborate: Using Developments in Global English Research to Advance Socioculturally-oriented SLA Identity Work

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In light of the growing importance of identity work in second language acquisition (e.g., Block, 2006a, b) in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) as well as calls for SLA and World Englishes (WE) scholars (e.g., Y. Kachru, 2005) to work together, I examine how identity has been conceptualized in research on the global use of English. While such research finds its roots in the WE paradigm (e.g, B. Kachru, 2005), it has undergone contestation in recent years. Such contestation has emerged as a result of two new conceptualizations of English: English as a lingua franca (e.g., Jenkins, 2007; Seidlhofer, 2006) and a postmodern approach to English (e.g., Canagarajah, 2006; Pennycook, 2007, 2010), which views it in hybrid and fluid terms. This paper explores how identity has been embodied in the literature on the global use of English with a view to analyzing how future SLA research related to identity should take shape in the face of changes brought about by globalization.

INTRODUCTION

In his article "Identity in Applied Linguistics," Block (2006a) points out that since 2000, there has been a slew of publications in English that highlight identity and draw on this protocol. These works include: Norton's (2000) study of immigrant women in Canada; Toohey's (2000) study of the linguistically minority children in Canada; Bayley and Schechter's (2003) edited collection on language socialization and multilingualism; Pavlenko and Blackledge's (2004) collection of papers on negotiated identities in different languages, cultural and political contexts; and Block's (2006b) own discussion of multilingual identities in London. In short, there has not been a paucity of identity work related to Second Language Acquisition (SLA) in the past decade. Interestingly, while most of this recent socioculturally-oriented work views identity as being fluid and bound up with social practices (i.e., identities are negotiated through social practices and should therefore be understood in relational terms) (cf. Norton, 2010), it is important to note that the notion of identity in SLA is not a new development. Zuengler (1989), for instance, traced identity as a theme in sociolinguistic research and argued that SLA research and theory can benefit from knowledge of developments in "non-native varieties of English" (NNV) settings. A similar view is articulated by Sridhar (1994) and Y. Kachru[1] (2005) who have also called for SLA theorists to look toward the rich data available in World Englishes (WE).

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Given the growing importance of identity in SLA and calls for SLA and WE scholars to work together towards theory building and research, I examine how identity has been conceptualized in research related to the global use of English. While such research finds its roots in the WE paradigm advanced principally by Kachru (1982, 1985, 1986, 1991, 1992, 1997, 2005, 2008) and his colleagues, it has undergone contestation in recent years. Such contestation has emerged as a result of two new conceptualizations of English: English as a lingua franca (ELF), and a postmodern approach to English which views it in hybrid and fluid terms. The objectives of this paper are two-fold: first, it explores how developments in the different conceptualizations of identity in the literature on the global use of English have mirrored developments in identity work in SLA; next, it analyzes and critiques how future SLA research related to identity should take shape in the face of changes brought about by changes in research on the global use of English. In short, such an analysis will help us rethink how English and other languages are acquired by bilingual and multilingual language learners, and by so doing, advance the field of SLA.

THE IMPORTANCE OF IDENTITY IN SLA

While identity work in first language (L1) acquisition started with Labov's (1966) work on the influence of social class identity on L1 dialect adoption and use, early identity work in SLA was influenced by the theories of social identity developed by Tajfel (1981) who understood social identity as being derived from an individual's membership in a social group (as cited in Ricento, 2005, p. 896). In light of this, such work was concerned with how the speaker's "interlanguage" (IL) was influenced by social variables such as ethnicity (e.g., Beebe & Zuengler, 1983) and gender (e.g., Gass & Varonis, 1986). What is significant though is that while work in the 1980s was centered on IL use, the concept of IL subsequently came under heavy criticism by sociolinguists (e.g., Block, 2003) for being two dimensional as IL theory reduced identity categorizations to native speaker (NS) and nonnative speaker (NNS) entities. Even psycholinguists, such as Cook (2002) who has argued for a multicompetence model, have questioned the accuracy of using NS models as an ideal for adult language learning.

Additionally, the conceptualization of identity as a group attribute was also critiqued for its unidimensionality and compartmentalized treatment of different social categories. Building on Peirce's (1995) seminal call to examine a learner's social identity in relation to language learning, Hansen and Liu (1997), for instance, argued that "the complexity of social identity should be explored on a dynamic continuum that allows factors such as language, ethnicity, appearance, and personality to interplay in a complex fashion without beginnings and ends" (p. 574). Such a perspective was reinforced by Norton's (2000) contention that "ethnicity, gender, and class are not experienced as a series of discrete background variables, but are all, in complex and interconnected ways, implicated in the construction of identity

and the possibilities of speech" (p. 13). In line with Norton's (2000) observation, Pennycook (2007) has argued for a contingent understanding of identity. He notes: "Foucault brings a constant skepticism 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 …." (p. 39). Overall, this complexification of identity has had a large impact on the shape of SLA research over the last 10 years with recent identity work investigating nationality and citizenship (e.g., Blackledge & Creese, 2010; Clark, 2009; Zuengler, forthcoming), gender (e.g., Menard-Warwick, 2009; Piller & Takahashi, 2005), sexual orientation (e.g. King, 2008; Nelson, 2009), class (e.g., Rampton, 2006), ethnicity (e.g., May, 2008), and race (e.g., Kubota & Lin, 2009). Importantly, these aspects of identity are no longer examined in isolation, but are studied in relation to other social categories. In fact, this shift in conceptualization has been accompanied by a broader contextualization of language learning processes that increasingly take into account how the historical processes of colonialism, postcolonialism, globalization, and nationalism as well as the minority rights movement have affected language acquisition (Martin-Jones & Heller, 1996). Underscoring this turn in SLA research, Duff (2007) observes of the field:

> Most qualitative SLA research conducted in the 1970s to the 1990s, and especially SLA case studies such as mine, reflected a rather narrowly linguistic, positivist, or postpositivist orientation to research. Although qualitative, the analyses were fairly *unidimensional and less holistic* than case studies in the social sciences and education generally are now …. Microcontextual features such as task environment or discourse context were in some studies examined carefully, but larger macrocontextual social, political, and cultural factors were often minimized. (p. 15, *my emphasis*)

Significantly, such a shift in research orientation has prompted the SLA field to rethink how identity should be reconceptualized. This push for a reconceptualization is most memorably articulated by Firth and Wagner (1997) whom attacked mainstream SLA for (a) its Chomskyan/ psycholinguistic bias and neglect of social and contextual factors; (b) its fixation with the notion of the NS as the norm and the NNS as a learner; and (c) its use of NS interaction to provide baseline data and assumptions about NNS interaction as defective. This deficit orientation, they argued, "fails to take account of the multilingual reality of communities … and the reality of more transient, interacting groups throughout the world" (p. 292). As pivotal as their critique has been over the last ten years in jumpstarting a social turn in SLA, it is equally important to note that such calls for a broadening of SLA and a reconceptualization of identity were concurrently occurring in an adjacent paradigm known as World Englishes (WE). It is to this paradigm that I now turn.

WE AND ITS CONCEPTUALIZATION OF IDENTITY

In a recent issue of the journal *World Englishes*, which featured papers presented at the symposium "Perspectives on English as a lingua franca" held in Regensburg, Germany, Seidlhofer and Berns (2009) acknowledged that

> [a]s a result of their [Kachru and his colleagues' work], it is now widely recognized that the varieties in the communities of the Outer Circle constitute different Englishes in their own right that express independent *sociocultural identities*, and whose legitimacy owes no allegiance to the so-called native speaker norms. (p.190, *my emphasis*)

Over the past three decades, the WE paradigm has been strongly advanced by Kachru (1982, 1985, 1986, 1991, 1992, 1997, 2005, 2008). According to Kachru (1997), the concept of WE gradually evolved during the post-colonial period after the 1960s as it was during this period that post-Imperial Englishes were institutionalized in the language policies of the changed political, educational, and ideological contexts of what were earlier the colonies of the U.K. and the U.S. The assumptions underlying the study of WE, Bhatt (2001) asserts, "are philosophically grounded in what has come to be known as 'liberation linguistics, which seeks to radically transform contexts of social injustice in the interest of the speakers of the 'other tongue' – the 'nonnative speakers' of English" (p. 528). In fact, the term "liberation linguistics" emerged following a heated exchange between Quirk (1990) and Kachru (1991) in what has subsequently come to be known as the *English Today* debate.

This watershed debate brought to light the skewed nature of IL theory in casting NNSs of English as being handicapped as well as the denial of their identity as legitimate English speakers. Perhaps more significant about Kachru's response was the realization that the target of these speakers was not Standard English, a view that incidentally matched findings in parallel SLA research (e.g., Beebe, 1985; Dulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982; Goldstein, 1987; as cited in Zuengler, 1989, p. 81). Admittedly, such a tension between WE scholars and scholars like Quirk, who favored a standard "monochrome" form of English (Quirk, 1990), had been simmering long before the debate broke out. Kachru's (1982) groundbreaking collection *The Other Tongue*, for instance, had addressed some of these issues almost a decade earlier. What is important to note, though, is how such a firm conviction to establish the legitimacy of other varieties of English shaped the way in which identity was conceptualized in the WE paradigm.

As scholars working within this paradigm have sought to establish its legitimacy, a considerable amount of descriptive work has been undertaken on the different varieties of English, resulting in the establishment of English language corpuses such as the International Corpus of English (http://www.ucl.ac.uk/english-usage/ice/). This particular corpus includes varieties of English from India, the Philippines and Singapore. Such descriptive research, as Seidlhofer (2006) points out, enables us to notice, acknowledge and celebrate the diversity thus documented. Hence,

one way that identity has been conceptualized in the WE paradigm is through the description of identity-marking processes in multilingual societies. This practice seeks to establish "the functional nativeness of English in the English-using communities" as they engage in "creative processes used to articulate local identities" (Kachru, 1997, p. 68). In keeping with such a profiling practice, Bhatt's (2000) and Sridhar's (1992) work on Indian English, for example, sought to describe the structure of a "nonnative" variety in its own terms, not as descriptions of aborted "interlanguages."

To a large extent, as a result of their exploration of the "functional nativeness" of the different varieties of English and the sociolinguistic realities of their users, the concerted attempt of WE scholars to study the range and depth of language use has been influenced by Halliday's functional approach to language (Kachru & Nelson, 1996). In view of this, individual speaker identity has been studied in relation to the social relationships these speakers engage in, and their ability to make meaning out of different situations. The importance of such meaning making as it pertains to speaker identity is underlined by the fact that interpretability seems to take precedence over intelligibility and comprehensibility from the WE perspective. We see this, for example, in Smith's (1988) assertion: "Interpretability is at the core of communication and is more important than mere intelligibility or comprehensibility" (p. 274).

Apart from the exploration of identity along descriptive and functional lines, a third way that identity has been conceptualized in the WE paradigm is along national terms. In other words, speakers of the different varieties of English have been identified by way of their respective nationalities. This means of identification is most evident in Kachru's (1985) Three Circles model, which framed uses and users of English internationally in terms of an Inner Circle (e.g., the U.S., Britain, and Australia), an Outer Circle (e.g., India, Singapore, and South Africa) and an Expanding Circle (e.g., China, Indonesia, and Korea).

Interestingly, the conceptualization of identity in the WE paradigm (a) through the description of identity-marking processes in multilingual societies, (b) through the study of the social relationships in which WE speakers engage, and (c) along national terms, bear remarkable similarities to developments in identity-related SLA research. First, the description of identity-marking processes in WE studies resembles earlier SLA research (e.g., Huebner, 1979; Schmidt, 1983) which investigated the development of English grammar of immigrants. In his work with a Japanese artist in Hawaii named Wes, Schmidt (1983), for instance, focused on Wes's evolving grammatical system and how his failure to not acquire native-like competence resulted in being framed as a NNS enacting a fossilized form of English. Second, that the social relationships of WE speakers were under scrutiny and paralleled SLA interests at the time (e.g., Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Schumann, 1978) which focused on how social affiliations impacted language acquisition. Through his Acculturation Model, Schumann (1978) examined how social distance affected the English acquisition of his Costa Rican learner, Alberto. Finally, the artificial

demarcation of identity along national lines in WE research invites comparison to the configuration of identity as a social attribute following Tajfel's (1981) influence. In short, one could argue that research in the WE paradigm and SLA in the early years occurred along similar but parallel tracks, prompting perhaps Zuengler's (1989) call for the two fields to work closer together.

Equally important to note, however, is that when it was first conceptualized, the WE model sought to dissolve the essentialization created by the English as a Native Language (ENL), English as a Second Language (ESL), and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) labels. Kachru and Nelson (1996) contend that thinking of a country as an ESL country or of a person as an ESL speaker, for example, only perpetuates the dichotomy of native versus nonnative. As innovative as it was in its time, Kachru's and, by extension, the WE's conceptualization of identity, has in recent times been criticized for undertheorizing identity. In her recent review, Valentine (2009), for instance, observed that "minimal attention [has been] paid to the multiple identities that exist within societies and to the construction of social identities in the postcolonial multilingual communities of English users" (p. 568). In other words, WE has been attacked for being out of touch with contemporary global realities. The reason why identity remains implicit and under-theorized in WE may lie in the systematic and structural approach it takes in describing the different varieties of English. This, in turn, has resulted in identity being assumed as priori rather than theorized. In view of these criticisms leveled against WE, this paradigm has been challenged by alternate conceptualizations of English and identity. One such alternative is manifested through a recent concept known as English as a lingua franca (ELF), and it is to this concept that I move next.

ELF AND ITS CONCEPTUALIZTION OF IDENTITY

While Kachru is often viewed as the principal proponent of the WE paradigm, the ELF concept has been mainly advocated by Jenkins (2000, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c, 2007, 2009a, 2009b) and Seidlhofer (2004, 2005, 2006) through their work in phonology and lexicogrammar respectively. Recently, they have been joined by Canagarajah (2006, 2007; see also Roberts & Canagarajah, 2009) in arguing for English as a lingua franca. However, it is important to note that while all three linguists share similar viewpoints, differences in their interpretation of ELF also exist. Also evident upon reading the literature on ELF is the striking similarity that it appears to share with the WE paradigm, especially with regard to the latter's philosophical assumptions. That the two concepts bear similarities is underlined by Seidlhofer (2006) who warns us against the creation of false dichotomies between WE and ELF. Specifically, she points out that because both concepts are equally worthwhile endeavors, there is no reason why they should not happily coexist and enrich each other. This view is also held by Jenkins (2000, 2009a, 2009b) who sees ELF as a serious research area within World Englishes. In fact, in a recent special issue of *World Englishes*, which was based on the symposium held in Germany

mentioned earlier, scholars in both paradigms came together "to explore their differences and their congruences, and to look for possible synergies" (Seidlhofer & Berns, 2009, p. 191).

To better understand how such possible synergies may be realized, it is pertinent to examine how identity is conceptualized in ELF. To do this, one needs to consider Seidlhofer's (2006) observation that the WE and ELF paradigms emerged from different sociohistorical and sociocultural settings. While much of the work in the WE paradigm has been on the Inner and Outer Circle varieties, ELF research focuses on the Expanding Circle and seeks to carve a third space for itself[2]. This area, according to Jenkins (2009a), has been overlooked as she observes that some WE scholars do not consider Expanding Circle Englishes as legitimate varieties on a par with Outer and Inner Circle varieties. This is because the Expanding Circle varieties are still perceived as norm-dependent, that is, as "interlanguage", or "learner English."

Another difference between the two paradigms is that while WE identifies with a primary culture, ELF identifies with communication across cultures. In fact, ELF research seeks to better understand how ELF speakers negotiate meanings in intercultural situations (Seidlhofer, 2006). In this respect, ELF research objectives seem to echo Kramsch's (1998) call to cultivate intercultural competence so that the "intercultural speaker, operating at the border between several languages or language varieties [can] manoeuvr[e] his/her way through the troubled waters of cross-cultural misunderstandings" (p. 27). Third, ELF provides a contemporary take on English given that increasingly, English is used as a means of communication by people in the Expanding Circle as well as people across all three circles. This in turn allows English to serve as a bridge language across these peoples. Such a shift in language use is underway as a result of changes brought about by globalization. By contrast, WE emerged from a different sociohistorical setting, that is, a largely postcolonial one. While these differences have shaped how identity is conceptualized in ELF, it is also crucial to note Jenkins's (2007) observation that ELF is "a sociocultural context of the English language every bit as much as ENL [English as a Native Language] is" (p. 238). That ELF sees globalization as having impacted language use and learning is significant as this perspective aligns itself with a key shift in the SLA research agenda towards the study of language use in multilingual settings (e.g., Blackledge & Creese, 2010; Clark, 2009; Higgins, 2009; Hornberger, 2003; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004; Ramanathan, 2005; Zuengler, forthcoming).

Of equal significance is how identity is dealt with in ELF as identity is cast in sociopolitical terms, or more precisely, as an assertion of an individual's right to integrate elements of his or her L1 into English. Hence, like WE, a liberationist lineage also informs ELF as it seeks to grant ELF speakers the same sociolinguistic rights as those enjoyed by L1 speakers. However, while the notion of identity is certainly addressed in the WE paradigm, albeit implicitly, its presence is more explicit in ELF. Jenkins (2000, p. 16), for instance, contends that "insisting on learners conforming to target-language pronunciation norms and renouncing those of

their mother-tongue 'may even be seen as forcing them to reject their own identity' (Dalton & Seidlhofer, 1994, p. 7)". This view is reinforced by Seidlhofer (2005) who maintains that ELF is not only a convenient means of communication, but also enables ELF speakers to retain linguistic traits of their distinct identity. Hence, like its WE kin, identity from the ELF perspective takes on a strongly activist stance. Such an activist stance is also well represented in SLA research embedded in a critical perspective (e.g., Blackledge & Creese, 2010; Canagarajah, 1999, 2005; Lin & Martin, 2005; Ramanathan, 2005). Canagarajah (1999), for instance, focuses on enactments of resistance by learners in an English language classroom in Sri Lanka. Overall, these similarities suggest that there is room for collaboration between ELF and SLA scholars in the area of identity work.

Arguably, the ELF and SLA agendas are more closely aligned than the agendas of the ELF and WE paradigms. This is because one conspicuous difference between the ELF and WE perspectives is the pragmatic edge that seems to surround the work of ELF scholars. Both Seidlhofer (2005) and Jenkins (2006a) astutely point out that ELF research needs to square with reality, especially since employers contend that they are obligated to provide the 'native speaker' teachers that learners – and in many cases, the parents – prefer. This sense of being aligned with contemporary material realities also comes across strongly in Jenkins's (2007) disturbing finding following in-depth interviews with 17 female NNS teachers of English. Her study, which sought to examine the role of teacher attitudes and identity with respect to the teaching of ELF pronunciation, revealed that all the participants had ambivalent attitudes toward their own English accent and mixed feelings about teaching ELF accents. A similarly perturbing finding was reported by Li (2009) whose study of the relationship between accent and identity involving Chinese university-educated participants demonstrated that an average 81% of those surveyed preferred to speak English with a NS-based accent. What these research findings suggest is that we should not paint L2 speakers in broad brush strokes as not all speakers may want to assume membership in an international (ELF) community. Such a reality check in turn enables a more nuanced representation of these users. Additionally, this nuanced approach to identity recognizes that a dominant use of Standard English is not always a top-down affair as it acknowledges L2 learner engagement in acts of "symbolic violence" (Bourdieu, 1991). In other words, some L2 learners participate in their own domination by opting to subscribe to a monolingual bias that emanates from the center. Jenkins's findings are significant as they are congruent with the findings of several SLA scholars (e.g., Heller, 2006 ; Lin, 1999) who have illustrated how some L2 learners are complicit in their own subjugation. In her Hong Kong-based study of high school students, Lin (1999), for instance, demonstrated how the students who did not speak "standard" English sanctioned by the school ended up seeing themselves in deficit terms. This in turn reproduced a state of misrecognition among them.

Equally important to note is how identity in ELF research is related to notions of investment as advanced in SLA research (Norton, 2000). In her study of NNS English teachers, Jenkins (2007) invokes Norton's notion of investment as it pertains to learner identity. Citing Norton, Jenkins points out that an important aspect of identity in language learning is "how the person understands possibilities for their future" (Norton, 2000, p. 5). With this crucial insight, Jenkins predicts that ELF pronunciation will only be taken up if teachers themselves ultimately see ELF identity as providing their students with accents that will enhance, rather than damage, their future social and economic prospects internationally. In short, Jenkins suffers from no grand delusions with regard to her project: teachers who are complicit in the process of casting their own language variety as inferior and subordinate need to be convinced that ELF pronunciation works in their students' favor rather than against them. Hence, by taking into account the need to see learner identity as being inextricably linked with learner investment, Jenkins has us rethink how identity should be conceptualized in SLA pedagogy research.

Like their WE counterparts, ELF scholars Jenkins (2007) and Seidlhofer (2004) have engaged in corpus work, the former producing a lingua franca core (LFC) and the latter identifying a series of typical "errors" that ELF users make. It is important to note, though, that "errors" in mainstream SLA and ELT are not necessarily errors in ELF as the former two fields are, as Jenkins (2007) points out, characterized by gate-keeping practices that determine what is "good" English and who constitutes "good" English speakers. The illumination of such gate-keeping practices is especially significant to the development of SLA research as a field, which as Firth and Wagner (1997) observe, needs to move away from a deficit-oriented perspective that constructs NNS as users of an "interlanguage" who fall short of the target language due to their "error" filled language.

Intriguingly, these "errors" form the core data of Seidlhofer's Vienna-Oxford International Corpus English (VOICE) project. In fact, Seidlhofer (2006a) credits work done on the Outer Circle, pointing out that "the codification work on Outer Circle varieties has led the way for ELF research" (p. 43). Like their WE counterparts, ELF scholars have turned to descriptive work for legitimacy purposes. Seidlhofer asserts, "[w]e need to show what it is you want people to accept; otherwise, you will remain stuck in empty preaching and ideologizing, in vague programmatic talk on a meta-level that does not impinge on people's daily lives, and especially not on the lives of students and teachers" (pp. 43-44). A similar view is articulated by Jenkins (2007) who maintains the that "need [for] comprehensive, reliable descriptions of the ways in which proficient ELF users speak among themselves" (p. 238). Given their concern to legitimize ELF use and their productivity in putting forward concrete frameworks like Jenkins's lingua franca core, it seems that these two ELF scholars and their colleagues are positioning their work as viable alternatives to postmodern interpretations of language use and acquisition. After all, Seidlhofer (2004), in singling postmodernism out, laments: "The teaching of English is going through a truly 'postmodern' phase in which old forms and assumptions are being

rejected while no new orthodoxy can be offered in their place" (p. 228). Given such a reaction that a postmodern turn has stirred, it is to this alternate perspective of English that I now turn.

THE POSTMODERN TURN IN CONCEPTUALIZING IDENTITY

While ELF scholars seem to have tapped current developments in language use within and across Kachru's concentric circles, scholars who have adopted a postmodernist perspective also often talk about a world in transition, with large bodies of people on the move within and across national borders (Graddol, 2006). This view is reinforced by Canagarajah (2006a), who frames language use today against a backdrop of postmodern globalization which he sees as being characterized by (a) porous national boundaries; (b) the compression of space and time which allows people to "shuttle" rapidly between communities and communicative contexts; and (c) the hybridization of languages, communities, and cultures.

In light of these changes brought about by globalization, both Canagarajah (2005) and Pennycook (2006a, 2007) have called for a reconceptualization of identity in line with what Appadurai (2001) has termed "globalization from below." Motivated by their concern that the local is getting shortchanged by the social processes and the intellectual discourses of contemporary globalization, they have asked that local languages and practices be given an equal or greater role to play in educational and social development. In keeping with such a paradigm shift, Canagarajah (2005, 2006a, 2006b) has argued for an unpacking of how individual learners negotiate their respective identities as they "shuttle" between speech communities because increasingly, such learners use more than one variety of English and one language. Specifically, he has called for the development of pragmatic strategies in the language classroom in order for learners to tap their local identities and practices (see also Canagarajah, 2007; McKay, 2009; Roberts & Canagarajah, 2009). Crucially, in highlighting the importance of pragmatic strategies, Canagarajah (2007) in his article *The Ecology of Global English* distances himself from the ELF scholars Jenkins and Seidlhofer. Preferring the term lingua franca English (LFE), he makes this distinction:

> Note that there are different orientations to lingua franca English (LFE). Some scholars are on the quest to define LFE according to an identifiable grammatical and phonological system (see Jenkins, 2006; Seidlhofer, 2004). This article is informed by the alternate school that focuses on the pragmatic features that enable LFE communication (see House, 2003; Meierkord, 2004). (p.91)

In choosing to focus on establishing intercultural communication through the teaching of pragmatic strategies and situating his work on a learner population which embodies the *ethnoscapes* (i.e., the movement of peoples across the world) that Appadurai (1996) alludes to, scholars such as Canagarajah foreground a population of highly mobile learners that is also increasingly studied in SLA (e.g., Block, 2006b;

Singh & Doherty, 2004). For instance, while Singh and Doherty (2004) worked with international students at an Australian university, Block (2006b) worked with a host of learners whom he classified as transnationals, flexible citizens, expatriates, and immigrants. Such an overlap in the populations being studied suggest that there is room for greater collaboration between scholars working in the two fields.

In addition to placing identity at the center of language acquisition and use, the postmodern linguists in their analyses of the global use of English have interestingly cast identity in more dynamic (as opposed to static) terms. In particular, identity has been framed as a performance, and therefore those using English are viewed as performing different identities[3]. For example, Harris, Leung and Rampton (2002) and Ibrahim (1999) show how in picking Jamaican English in London and hip hop English from the streets in Canada, a Bengali student in London and Somali students in Canada respectively project and perform favorable identities of themselves that subsequently enable them to relate to the other communities around them. In fact, this notion of identity as a performance is developed further by Pennycook (2006a, 2007) through the concept of "performativity," which he developed from Butler (1990) in order to underline how identities are refashioned through using (Global) English.

A reconceptualization of identity and the English language along performative lines is significant for several reasons. First, it represents a radical departure from the interpretations of language by traditional sociolinguists (e.g., Labov, 1966) who argue that we speak in particular ways because of who we are[4]. By contrast, Pennycook asserts that we are because of the way we speak. By taking on such a stance, English language varieties and identities that accompany them are open to being enacted in multiple ways. Such a development is indeed key as it recognizes the possibility for "language crossing" (Rampton, 1995), that is, ways in which members of certain groups use forms of speech from other groups which they themselves do not straightforwardly belong to. The earlier cited examples concerning the Bengali student's picking up of Jamaican English in London and the Somali students' acquisition of hip hop English in Canada would be good cases in point. The notion of "language crossing" in particular can be a useful construct in SLA research as cultural hybridity is very much a current reality. This concept has been used, for instance, by Stroud and Wee (2007) to investigate how, through code mixing, an English teacher in Singapore was able to facilitate the learning of English among students whose first language was not English.

Next, and as a result of this shift in orientation, English is no longer seen as a "thing" that does or does not do things for people. Rather, it forces us to view language use and learning as multiple investments that people bring to their acts, desires and performances in "English" (Pennycook, 2007, p. 73). In this respect, Pennycook's take on language learning and use resembles Norton's (2000), and forces us to locate English within a more complex ecology of people's needs and identities. What is significant about Pennycook's contribution is that he extends Norton's notion of investment to a globalized flow of people and by doing so,

appropriately addresses the transcultural flows that characterize their lives. This represents a significant contribution to contemporary SLA research which, as discussed earlier, increasingly focuses on highly mobile learner populations.

Equally crucial to note, though, is how the use of language is more than just an act of identity as it also becomes a form of social action. This is underlined by Pennycook (2006b), who sees language use as being a centrally agentive act, an act of reconstruction rather than reproduction. To him, "language use is not so much the repetition of prior grammatical structure as it is a semiotic restructuring as a claim to a particular identity" (p. 70). Pennycook's shift toward a semiotic-oriented perspective has been voiced by other sociolinguists such as Blommaert (2003) who, in arguing for a sociolinguistics of globalization, contends that a global level of analysis requires a "move from languages to language varieties and repertoires" because "it is not abstract language" that is globalized, but rather "specific speech forms, genres, styles, and forms of literacy practice" (p. 608). Such a reconceptualization of language, Blommaert contends, conceives of users as capable of enacting a range of identities through language by invoking a variety of styles from the repertoires available to them. In a similar vein, in a recent special issue of the journal *Pragmatics* which examined contemporary youth language, Bucholtz and Skapoulli (2009) called for an examination of "the ways in which local and translocal semiotic resources are variously taken up by and imposed upon youth for the construction of selves and others in a range of interactional and sociocultural settings" (p. 4). Overall, such a foregrounding of semiotics in postmodern-oriented applied linguistic research is significant to SLA in two key ways. First, it extends the semiotic turn which other SLA scholars such as De Costa (2010a), Kramsch (2009), Thorne and Lantolf (2006), van Lier (2004), and Young (2009) have raised by relating semiotics more closely with identity. Second, by arguing that language is a claim to an identity, Pennycook draws attention to the notion of agency whose representation in SLA literature (e.g., Blackledge & Creese, 2010; Block, 2006a, 2006b; Canagarajah, 2005; De Costa, 2010b; Kramsch, 2009; Zuengler, forthcoming) is rapidly growing.

Finally, it needs to be noted that such a reconceptualization of language and identity is fundamental as it is in keeping with a growing trend in SLA towards a recognition of how power operates locally. This is particularly significant to SLA identity work in light of Norton's (2000) claim that SLA theorists "have not questioned how relations of power in the social world impact on social interaction between second language learners and target language speakers" (p.4). A consideration of power is largely possible because Pennycook's intepretation of performativity draws on the notion of governmentality as developed by Foucault (1991; as cited in Pennycook, 2006b, p. 64). Analyzing how power operates at the micro-level of diverse practices therefore enables us to account for another key concern in classroom-based critical SLA research, that is, the micropolitical processes involved in language learning (e.g., Auerbach, 1995; De Costa, 2010c; Hawkins, 2005; Canagarajah, 2008; Pennycook, 1999). In short, like developments

in ELF research, a postmodern interpretation of language and identity appears to offer valuable insights into language learning as it takes into account the complexity of global conditions. Having analyzed how identity has been conceptualized in the three approaches to the global use of English, it seems timely that we now look at how these conceptualizations align with the sociolinguistic realities of English language learners and users.

A CRITIQUE OF HOW IDENTITY HAS BEEN CONCEPTUALIZED BY THE THREE APPROACHES

Writing in the twentieth anniversary of the journal *World Englishes* in 2006, Widdowson pays this glowing tribute:

> [T]he essential and unique value of *World Englishes* over the past 20 years has been to give legitimate status to uses of English that do not conform to Inner Circle norms, and to represent them not as derived varieties but as independent versions of the language in their own right. (Widdowson, 2006, p. 10)

While Widdowson does not explicitly spell out how the local identity of users of English has been acknowledged as a result of the volume of WE research and other research pertaining to the global use of English that has been produced, he does address how ownership of English has been recast as a result of the WE paradigm. In light of developments in global English over the last three decades, it is useful at this point to summarize and critique how the three approaches addressed in this paper have conceptualized identity.

The WE paradigm broke new ground by rejecting the attitudinally loaded distinction between NS and NNS identities. In its place, it framed identity in terms of language user nationality and sought to legitimize the different varieties of English that were identified according to the different circles to which they belonged. This was done by describing and highlighting the creative identity-marking processes in the different Englishes. Such an attempt to decolonize and democratize the ownership of English, as Bhatt (2001) points out, was designed to "dissolve the dichotomy of US (native speakers) vs THEM (nonnative speakers)" (p. 527). However, by replacing a conceptualization of identity along NS-NNS terms with a nation-centric model, the WE paradigm only substituted one form of essentialism for another as this paradigm failed to acknowledge the subtle sub-varieties and distinctions that exist among the different users of English within the same country. This broad representation of the users of the various Englishes in different countries has also come under heavy attack in recent years as critics argue that such a model fails to capture the sociolinguistic realities of the multilingual societies today. In fact, Bruthiaux (2003) goes so far as to assert that, "The three circles is a 20th century construct that has outlived its usefulness" (p. 161). He is joined by others (e.g., Canagarajah, 2006a, 2006d; Pennycook, 2007, 2010) who argue that the WE paradigm is ill-equipped to deal with the current modes of globalization

which brings with it porous borders. In view of this development, all three applied linguists argue that identity can no longer be viewed along essentialist national lines. Admittedly, this insight bears relevance to contemporary SLA identity work which has started to critique the dangers of essentialism in general (e.g., Spack, 1997; Kubota, 2001). Kubota (2001), for instance, has called for an interrogation of the essentialized "othering" of ESL learners, arguing in particular against the subordinate positioning of ELL vis-à-vis NS in many contexts worldwide.

While criticism in regard to essentialism needs to be duly noted, we should not be too quick to dismiss the contribution that WE, in particular Kachru's (1985) Three Circles model, can potentially provide to future SLA identity work. Following their reconceptualization of Kachru's (1985) Three Circles model along Bourdieusian lines, Park and Wee (2009) convincingly argue for the need to attend to the variety of Englishes that exist at the transnational level. Specifically, they remind us that

> the relative status of Englishes across different circles significantly shapes the ways speakers adopt, adapt, and appropriate English, thereby materializing and reproducing those very distinctions upon which they are based. (p.396)

As discussed earlier, SLA identity work needs to locate English within a complex ecology of people's needs and identities (Pennycook, 2007). In short, (a) given the importance of taking into consideration language learners' needs and identities, and (b) building on Park and Wee's (2009) reconceptualization of Kachru's (1985) Three Circles model, one could argue, that (c) SLA research involving language learners who move across Kachru's circles can profit from this construct. Put simply, Kachru's construct remains relevant if it is used in a strategically essentialist way (cf. Spivak, 1995).

Aware of these changing global realities which entail the fluid movement of language learners across borders, ELF scholars have built on the codification work of their earlier WE counterparts and extended it by laying down the foundation for what a lingua franca English would look like. Jenkins, for instance, has come up with a phonology-based Lingua Franca Core (LFC), while making the case that an ELF accent still enables different speakers of English to retain their identity by keeping semblances of their L1 accent. Similarly, Seidlhofer has shown that even with the commitment of lexicogrammatical "errors" by ELF users, communication is not compromised. These two linguists are joined by others such as House and Canagarajah who, echoing Jenkins (2000), have called for the development of accommodation skills among ELF users. On the surface, the ELF approach appears to afford a win-win arrangement: mutual intelligibility is achieved while ELF users manage to maintain their sociolinguistic rights as their L1 and culture are seen as resources and not as sources of "interference." However, two key problems encountered by ELF scholars need to addressed. First, ELF as a paradigm is still a work in progress as evidenced by Jenkins's (2007, p.238) own concession that "it is not yet possible to teach ELF" yet. Two other stumbling block that needs to be overcome are (a) the gatekeeping activities that instill in NNSs the notion

that their English is of a substandard quality, and (b) the NNSs' complicit acts of misrecognition that threaten to compromise the ELF agenda. Citing Zuengler and Miller (2006) who note that mainstream cognitive SLA and alternative sociolinguistic approaches inhabit "two parallel SLA worlds," Jenkins (2007) appears to be painfully aware that ELF as paradigm is saddled with the uphill task of gaining legitimacy among "native" and "nonnative" users alike.

Identity is also central to a postmodern approach to the global use of English. Such an approach urges us to embrace hybridity and to exchange a view of language as a system for a view of language as a practice. Pennycook's (2007) modified concept of performativity in relation to language, in particular, provides us with a refreshing take on language use and acquisition. However, as convincing as his call to disinvent and to reconstitute English along performative lines may be, this enterprise is offset by the sober reality that its conceptualization is still at an embryonic stage. Disturbingly, this project of disinvention and reconstitution may come under attack by skeptical teacher practitioners in search of more palpable ways to foreground identity in the language classroom in the face of practical classroom demands. By highlighting this predicament, I certainly do not imply that Pennycook's contribution towards reframing identity is without merit. If anything, it is imperative that we embrace hybridity because increasingly, people inhabit multiple identities across different contexts. This view is reinforced by Block (2006a) who argues: "Working as a researcher, I think that hybridity and third places work far better than essentialized notions of identity when it comes to making sense of the cases of individuals who have moved between and among qualitatively different sociocultural contexts" (p. 37). However, such an approach to identity needs to be balanced with the recognition that not everyone (e.g., parents, teachers and policy makers) shares a similar tolerance for ambiguity. As such, we need to realize that such a view of language is likely to come up against some resistance by those who continue to subscribe to a structuralist view of language and identity. For similar reasons, Canagarajah may also have to contend with the inertia of linguistic purists, given his view that effective communication should not be based on uniform grammar or formal competence, but on pragmatics and performance (Canagarajah, 2006c, 2007). Admittedly, Pennycook and Canagarajah are not the only ones who argue for a reconceptualization of language as they are joined by other applied linguists such as Thorne and Lantolf (2006) (see also Lantolf & Thorne, 2006) who, by putting forward their Linguistics of Communicative Activity (LCA) theory, focus on the acquisition of communicative resources through activities, as opposed to the acquisition of rule-governed grammar systems.

Pertinently, several linguists have attempted to explain why such a resistance has emerged. Graddol (2006), for instance, attributes it to a world that is in transition between modernity and postmodernity. The postmodern model of English, he argues, is probably seen as a threat to many who have invested heavily in a modern form which (a) views language in structuralist terms, (b) sees language as a codified and standardized entity designed to help unify national identity, and (c) maintains

the dichotomy between native and nonnative speakers. Additionally, Graddol asserts that resistance emerges from not only native speakers whose identity is now under challenge, but also from many non-native speakers, in particular, members of those existing elites for whom English represents an identity marker. Graddol cites China as an example of a country that is caught in such a dilemma as it is juggling projects of modernity and postmodernity. On the one hand, China still seems to be in pursuit of the old European ideal of the nation state, but on the other, its economic development depends on the processes of globalization and the enhancement of English language proficiency. The issue of English language proficiency is therefore contentious as it is inevitably bound up with language ideologies.

This notion of overlapping paradigms put forward by Graddol is also observed by Canagarajah (2006c). However, instead of explaining the tension in terms of modernity and postmodernity, Canagarajah explores how one historical process (decolonization) got subsumed by another process (globalization) before the former was complete. By situating such tensions within broader contexts, these linguists acknowledge how macro processes like globalization impact micro processes such as language choice and the way exchanges between users of English are shaped. The interaction between micro and macro processes is explored further in the next section.

DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE IDENTITY WORK IN SLA

In this section, I offer perspectives on what I perceive future SLA research on identity will look like.

Analysis of Macro and Micro Processes

One of the key contributions that research on the global use of English has generated is the need to consider macro forces such as national language policies that influence the acquisition and use of language. More often than not, these forces perform a gate-keeping function, as illustrated in Phillipson's (1992) book *Linguistic Imperialism*. This need to take into account the impact of global politics on the Englishes of the world has also been raised by Tupas (2001) who has called for WEs to be located within the globalist capitalist framework. The importance of this endeavor is underlined by Tupas's reminder that "in our desire to celebrate the Englishes of the world…, we [may] forget 'the world'" (p.93). However, to focus only on these macro factors and frame it within a lens of linguistic imperialism produces a rather lopsided view of SLA reality, as observed by Brutt-Griffler (2002). Besides, Canagarajah (1999), through his work with English language learners in Sri Lanka, has also demonstrated that these forces do not operate in a top-down linear fashion, given how learner resistance is manifested in multilingual communities. This has prompted other applied linguists such as Kubota (2001), McKay (2009), and Pakir (1999) to recommend that the teaching of English be made to reflect local identities and incorporate local as well as worldwide norms. In light

of the importance of both macro and micro forces at play in any given linguistic situation, it is crucial that future identity work in SLA examine the interaction between these two forces.

To date, researchers working within a poststructuralist framework have started to analyze the interaction between structure and agency. How structure and agency impact second language acquisition is the focus of the empirical studies in Heller and Martin-Jones's (2001) collection *Voices of authority: Education and linguistic differences*. Similarly, the contributors to Pavlenko and Blackledge's (2004) collection *Negotiation of identities in multilingual contexts* portray groups and individuals in mulitilingual societies who (re)negotiate their identities in response to hegemonic language ideologies which demand homogeneity. This has prompted Block (2006a) to comment that "reconciling structure and agency seem to be the ongoing problem *par excellence* for poststructuralists" (p. 46). In short, future identity work needs to take into account how larger societal factors and more local factors such as classroom based factors simultaneously influence SLA.

Fortunately, several theoretical frameworks already exist to facilitate how macro and micro processes impact identity. One way to do this, according to Block (2006a, 2006b), is to frame identity work in terms of individual participation in "communities of practice" (cf. Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). This is primarily because communities of practice and individual participation relate directly back to the idea that identity is an emergent process that takes place at the crossroads of structure and agency. Significantly, this concept has found relatively wide purchase among SLA scholars (e.g., Toohey, 2000; Young & Miller, 2004). Young and Miller (2004), for instance, applied a communities of practice theory to explain how a learner at a university improved his academic writing over the course of a semester as a result of conferences conducted with his ESL instructor.

If anything, calls for a practice-oriented approach to identity research have grown stronger in recent years. In keeping with the postmodern turn, applied linguists such as Canagajarah (2007), Pennycook (2007, 2010) and Young (2009) have argued for an examination of local practices engaged by language learners. Meaning, as Canagarajah (2007) notes, does not reside in the language but is produced in practices that "represent their interests, values, and identities" (p. 99). That identities are implicated in language learning is also underscored by Young (2009); through an invocation of practice theory, he examines how learners draw on a host of discursive resources to guide and advance their learning. As Young astutely points out, "practice itself is an interpretive schema – a way of organizing experience in the mind, a way that participants make sense of themselves, a way in which they construct and reconstruct identities" (p.44). Relatedly, Pennycook (2010), who views a practice as a set of activities that are repeated over time, has lamented the undertheorization of practice in applied linguistics. As a corrective, he has proposed that researchers investigate "what language users do with English, how they understand its relationship to their own condition, and what new meanings are generated by its use" (p.74). One person, he notes, who has done

is Higgins (2009) whose work examines the ways in which East Africans exploit the heteroglossia of language to perform modern identities. In short, future SLA identity researchers may want to place linguistic practices at the center of their investigation in order to gain insights into how the enactment of different identities impact language learning.

A second way to account for structure and agency is to use the construct of language ideologies, a notion that has been well utilized in linguistic anthropology, but which has scarcely been taken up by SLA researchers. Its power lies in its ability to meld macro and micro realities. Wortham (2001), for instance, who has called for an analysis of "macro-level" beliefs about languages and the "micro-level" construals of utterances within particular events, argues that language ideologies mediate social identity as speakers draw on ideologies that circulate widely in a society, and subsequently position themselves and others in characteristic ways. Consistent positioning over time, he adds, establishes more enduring identities for individuals and groups. More recently, while Wortham (2008) has reiterated the importance of language ideology as a concept, asserting that it allows linguistic anthropologists "to explore relations between the emergent meanings of signs in use, socially circulating ideologies, and broader social structures" (p.91), McGroarty (2010) has underscored the malleability of ideologies in accordance with communicative successes and failures. Not only are these insights significant as they exhort researchers to draw from different spatial and temporal scales, they are also consistent with Norton's (2000) view of identity. Identity to Norton is a term "to reference how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future" (p.5). In fact, the need to account for how identity and language learning evolve over time and space has become increasingly important to SLA researchers. Hornberger (2007), for instance, has called for researchers to "trace how individuals' transnational identities and practices develop, shift, transform and are transformed as they move across space and time" (p. 330), while Kramsch (2009), invoking Blommaert's (2005) notion of "layered simultaneity," has argued for a larger focus on historicity in SLA identity research. However, apart from the notable exception of Bartlett (2007) and Miller (2009), who worked with immigrant ESL learners, the notion of language ideologies as a lens to examine how learner identities are transformed at the micro and macro levels over extended periods of time has been underexplored by SLA researchers. Given how identities and ideologies are inextricably bound together, the adoption of the ideology construct in future identity SLA work will help to account for the language acquisition dynamics of an emerging group of language learners who fluidly cross borders in a highly globalized world.

CONCLUSION

Throughout this paper, I have argued that identity work offers us a useful lens in understanding how people use and acquire a language. Specifically, I have focused on the ways in which the global use of English, starting from the WE paradigm and moving on to the ELF and postmodern paradigms, has provided valuable insights into how identity has been and needs to be conceptualized. This is crucial so that SLA identity work in particular and SLA as a field in general can advance. However, this is not a unidirectional arrangement as developments in SLA have also had an impact on how Global English scholars shape their work on English use and acquisition. It is heartening to note that Global English scholars such as Jenkins (2006b) find socioculturally-oriented SLA approaches compatible with ELF. In short, it is only through a cross-fertilization of ideas across research in Global English and SLA will we be able to move closer towards realizing Sridhar's (1994) vision for "a more functionally oriented and culturally authentic [SLA] theory, one that is true to the ecology of multilingualism and views the multilingual's linguistic repertoire as a unified, complex, coherent, interconnected, interdependent, organic ecosystem, not unlike a tropical rainforest" (p. 803).

NOTES

[1] Unless Y. Kachru is specified, references to Kachru are to Braj Kachru.
[2] In a revised edition of her book, Jenkins (2009b) has modified her stand and argued that while the majority of ELF communication consists of Expanding Circle speakers, ELF researchers do not exclude Inner or Outer Circle speakers from their definition of ELF.
[3] In their chapter entitled "Language and identity," Bucholtz and Hall (2004) argue that the four semiotic processes of identification – performance, practice, indexicality, and performance – provide valuable perspectives to view identity.
[4] In her chapter "Demythologizing sociolinguistics," Cameron (2009) calls for a shift from a quantitative-driven sociolinguistics as espoused by Labov. A "language reflects society" account of language use, she argues, smacks of determinism as it implies that social structures somehow exist before language. A practice-oriented account of sociolinguistics as reflected by more recent work by variationists such as Cheshire (2009) and Eckert (2009), who focus on the social meanings created through language use, seems more in line with the performance-oriented perspective advanced by Pennycook and Canagarajah.

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