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Identity-Focused Second Language Acquisition: A Systematic Review of Classroom Applications

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IDENTITY-FOCUSED SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION: A SYSTEMATIC

LITERATURE REVIEW OF CLASSROOM APPLICATIONS

by

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A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in English as a Second Language.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

During my teacher licensure training there was an often repeated refrain that good teachers "get to know their students." One of my "get to know you" activities at a previous position involved administering a questionnaire with open-ended prompts about language use and perspectives. Though I knew enough about the junior high and high school students at that school to know they had the language proficiency to respond to my prompts, I had no idea what their answers would be or that their answers and the discussions that followed would reinforce my burgeoning interest in the role of identity in language acquisition.

In spite of a superficial homogeneity in my classroom, that is, all the students were of Somali heritage, and all were English language learners (ELLs), there was considerable diversity in their responses to my simple questions. Some used both Somali and English in all family and community relationships, others used Somali with parents and English with siblings and friends. Still others used Hindi, Oromo, or Arabic at home and Somali and English at school. They reported vastly differing feelings attached to the various languages, from pride to embarrassment to neutrality. Some students confessed to feeling embarrassed at not knowing Somali as well as they should. Many felt strongly stigmatized at being labeled English as a second language (ESL) students; they felt they knew English as well, if not better than their official home language(s). They were passionate, emphatic, confused, angry, indifferent, and bilingual. Welcome to ESL class.

I have shared classrooms with learners from all over the world, with children and adults from six years old to seventy-something. Some of them have learned their very first words of English right before my eyes, while others were born here, are completely bilingual and fluent in social English, but struggle with academic language registers. In theory, they are all language learners. However, in practice, well…it's complicated.

Chapter Overview

This introductory chapter begins by tracing a path from my personal identity story to my professional interest in identity and language acquisition. Identity-focused second language acquisition (SLA) is briefly defined, and the guiding question for this research is discussed. Finally, the remaining chapters of the capstone are mapped. Thus, as so many professional interests do, it begins with the personal.

My Identity Story

I have experienced varying degrees of envy for people who were always clear about who they were and what they wanted to do in their lives, people who started on a trajectory and did not waver. That has not been my experience. I have often joked that my undergraduate education was nomadic, moving from music and language, to dance and anthropology, to massage therapy, back to music in the form of songwriting and performing, to teaching music, back to massage therapy and, now, to teaching language.

While it may have appeared that I lacked focus, I have always been aware that these seemingly disparate interests fit together somehow. Over time I have come to realize that the central, unifying thread of my academic wandering has always been identity and the expression or articulation of identity through language, including music and movement, which I consider languages as well. In my own quest for self-

understanding, I have become aware of the fluctuations, conflicts, and multi-faceted nature of my own identity.

I have also noticed that how I conceive of myself changes depending on the role or culture I am currently occupying; different facets of myself rise to the surface depending on if I am engaged in music, giving a massage, or speaking French. I may adjust how I speak or act depending on my role in a conversation or situation and others' expectations of me. Throughout my life I have been circling around the idea of taking all these pieces and weaving them into a whole person, one identity. I think we are all doing this all the time: negotiating our identity, trying to reconcile all the pieces into one manageable life, and finding it difficult when the pieces do not fit neatly together.

From Personal Interest to Professional Pursuit

In my previous position, all my students were Somali Minnesotans. Currently, I am working primarily with students of Hmong, Hispanic and Karen heritage. Each of them has many factors to negotiate into a single person: gender expectations, religious beliefs, family roles, language influences, and, of course, personal preferences and interests. While some students are fairly new arrivals to the U.S., many others were born in the U.S. or have already spent many years here. They report speaking Somali *and* English, Hmong *and* English, Spanish *and* English. Their home cultures may reflect heritage traditions, "mainstream" American perspectives, or both. Many of these students do not think of themselves as one culture, one language, one identity; they are all these things.

I would like to create a teaching space that includes room for the whole learner and that acknowledges the complexities of those wholes in ways that encourage language

acquisition as well as "self-acquisition." Bonny Norton (1997), an influential researcher in identity-focused SLA, states that there is a "significant relationship among identity, language learning, and classroom teaching" (p. 409). As a language teacher, it is easy to believe that Norton's "significant relationship" exists. However, I want to better understand how that relationship can be used to influence language acquisition. How much of a role does identity play in language acquisition? What does a good teacher do with this information? Grappling with these questions is at the heart of my professional interests and of this capstone.

<p style="text-align:center">Modern Trends in Identity-Focused Second Language Acquisition</p>

The study of second language acquisition (SLA) began primarily in the fields of linguistics and cognitive psychology, and language learning was traditionally viewed most significantly as a cognitive process (Firth & Wagner, 1997). More recently, however, there has been a recognition of the limitations of that perspective and, with it, a demand for an approach that is more inclusive of the many social factors influencing language learners (Block, 2007; Firth & Wagner, 1997; Peirce, 1995). Thus, there has been a shift towards a more "…holistic approach to and outlook on language and language acquisition…" (Firth & Wagner, 1997, p. 768), and there are now twenty to thirty years of research on the role of identity in SLA.

Norton, who has also published under Peirce and Norton Peirce, has referred to identity in SLA as "a sociocultural construct in second language research" (2006, p. 22), and to this trend as "an identity approach to SLA" (Norton & McKinney, 2011, p. 73). Firth and Wagner (1997) refer to it as "reconceptualized SLA" (p. 296), while Block (2007) uses the terms "identity-in-SLA" (p. 863) and "second language learning and

identity" (p. 863). Due to the variety of terminology in the field, for the purposes of this paper, the conjoined concept of identity and SLA is referred to as "identity-focused SLA."

At the heart of identity-focused SLA is the belief, grounded in post-structuralism, that the individual language learner must be considered in relation to the language learning context (Peirce, 1995). Individual identities are negotiated, or performed, in the interplay of the relationships between individuals and their social contexts (Block, 2007). Thus, many researchers are now defining identity as a process, not a fixed state (Norton, 2006; Norton & Toohey, 2001; Peirce, 1995; Watkins-Goffman, 2001). As the body of knowledge pertaining to this topic has evolved, many synonyms for identity have emerged in an attempt to capture this more procedural meaning, including *identification, subject position,* and *positioning* (Block, 2007). These concepts are discussed in more depth in the literature review in Chapter Two.

Identity-focused SLA considers learners as they are situated socially, realizing that they often have choices for positioning themselves more or less advantageously (Norton & Toohey, 2011). For example, Norton and Toohey (2011) present the case of Martina, an eastern European immigrant to Canada, who, in spite of professional training in her native country, was able to find only restaurant work after immigrating to Canada. Martina resisted being positioned as professionally unimportant, a "broom," by the other restaurant workers. Instead, she was able to reframe her working relationships more domestically, repositioning herself as a "mother" figure to the other workers, a relationship that gave her more power and social visibility. This positioning afforded Martina greater social access to target language (TL) relationships, which is important

because access to TL communities has been shown to be a significant factor in second language learning (Norton & Toohey, 2011).

Though much emphasis is given in the field of identity-focused SLA to the importance of access to TL speakers outside of the classroom (Peirce, 1995), the classroom must also be considered an influential social context for language learners (Skilton-Sylvester, 2002). Certainly it is one of great importance to teachers. In the search for classroom applications of identity-focused SLA, this capstone will consider both curricular and pedagogical applications with interest.

Research Purpose: Investigating Classroom Applications of Identity-Focused SLA

While much current research has focused on establishing the relevance of identity-focused SLA and describing the learner experience, primarily through learner narratives (Block, 2007; Coffey & Street, 2008), explorations resulting in practical, hands-on tools for adapting these critical findings for use in the classroom have been more limited. In fact, Gass and Selinker (2009) are careful to make a distinction between the study of SLA and the study of language pedagogy, stating unequivocally that SLA and language pedagogy are separate interests. Scattered throughout SLA literature are considerations, suggestions and implications for the classroom; however, it is less frequent that these are a focal point of the research, and suggestions are often left untested. For teachers wishing to support identity negotiation in the classroom by using research-based principles of SLA, there is little cohesive support for taking theory into practice.

The objective of this systematic review was to address the following guiding question: what does research say about identity-focused SLA as applied in the classroom?

By reviewing past and current literature on identity-focused SLA and, in particular, searching for examples of classroom applications, it was hoped that the reader would emerge with an understanding of how identity-focused SLA has been applied in the classroom and how effective those applications have been. It was further hoped that this research would result in actionable recommendations for teachers interested in supporting ELLs by applying identity-focused research with their students. Initially, it was anticipated, though not certain, that enough applied classroom research existed that the systematic review in Chapter Four would not need to rely on the untested implications of identity-focused SLA theorists, but could be grounded in hands-on classroom research.

<div align="center">Research Particulars</div>

The following paragraphs outline some significant details about the upcoming chapters. First, the difference between a traditional literature review and a systematic literature review is discussed, especially the treatment of these two review types within this capstone. Decisions regarding peer-review status are then considered. Finally, some definitions of key terms are provided.

This capstone does not involve action research; instead its research is conducted in the form of a systematic literature review. In a traditional capstone, the literature review serves to ground the action research in relevant theory. In this capstone, the literature review serves the same purpose. However, instead of grounding action research, it grounds a systematic literature review. A systematic literature review differs from the more traditional literature review found in Chapter Two in many capstones in that it involves a focused and methodical search of the literature for answers to a particular question or questions; this focused search *is* the research in a systematic review, taking

the place of the action research. The details of how to conduct a systematic literature review are discussed in greater detail in Chapter Three (Methods). However, since this capstone contains both a more traditional literature review and a systematic literature review, the difference is outlined here to avoid confusion. In summary, Chapter Two looks broadly at identity-focused SLA, while Chapter Four presents the results of the systematic review of classroom applications of identity-focused SLA.

For the purposes of this capstone, the choice was made to conduct the traditional literature review using only peer-reviewed literature. This is the standard for such literature reviews, and there is a considerable body of peer-reviewed work to draw from in the field of identity-focused SLA. However, since some people using applied identity research in the classroom may be teachers or graduate students and not academics seeking peer-reviewed work, the decision was made to cast a wider net for the systematic review. While peer-reviewed work is preferred for the systematic review, it is not the only kind that is considered.

Overview of Capstone

Chapter One has provided an introduction to the topic of identity-focused SLA and positioned it as an issue of relevance in the lives and work of second language learners and their teachers. Chapter Two extends the literature review begun in the introduction to more fully discuss the modern field of identity-focused SLA. This literature review lays the groundwork for the systematic literature review that follows in Chapter Four. The data collection process and criteria for inclusion of studies for the systematic review are outlined in Chapter Three. Chapter Four documents the results, outlining the themes and patterns that emerged during data collection and connecting

them with the literature review. Finally, in the last chapter, findings are synthesized, and implications for classroom practice are made. It is hoped that this review will lead to findings that will be of use to classroom teachers, curriculum developers, and institutions that want to integrate identity-focused SLA theory into their work.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The goal of this capstone is to examine the research on identity-focused second language acquisition (SLA) as it has been applied in the classroom by conducting a systematic literature review focused on classroom applications. As was stated in Chapter One, the focus of SLA research is *not* the study of language teaching, but of language acquisition, though certainly these concepts are deeply related. Nassaji (2012) asserts that though there is an assumption of the field's relevance to teaching on the part of researchers, there is a gap in the research as it pertains to actually *applying* SLA findings to teaching.

In fact, Nassaji (2012) continues, while field evidence shows that most teachers believe SLA research is relevant to L2 pedagogy, few actually pursue this information and use it to inform their teaching. The purpose of this research, therefore, is to examine the gap between research and practice, to discover what *is* known and what classroom researchers *have* done to apply identity and SLA research in the classroom, and use this information to strengthen understanding about the connections between identity-focused SLA research and second language curriculum and pedagogy. Thus, the guiding question for this systematic literature review is: what does research say about identity-focused SLA as applied in the classroom?

The literature review found in this chapter does not seek to answer this capstone's guiding question. Instead, it creates a broad foundation and context, drawn from peer-

reviewed research exploring identity-focused SLA for the more specific systematic literature review to follow. The systematic review described in Chapter Four, on the other hand, is methodical, structured and focused specifically on finding answers to the guiding question for this capstone. In other words, this chapter provides a wide-angle view on identity-focused SLA, while Chapter Four takes a closer look at the field to discover what is known about its applications in the classroom.

This review begins by defining SLA and the more recent sub-field of identity-focused SLA. Next, the theoretical foundations of identity-focused SLA are established and discussed. Common themes of the sub-field are identified (Norton, 2006) and elaborated upon to provide a foundation for the systematic review that follows in Chapter Four.

<div align="center">Identity-Focused Second Language Acquisition Research</div>

Second Language Acquisition (SLA)

SLA is the study of how "non-primary" languages are learned (Gass & Selinker, 2009). An additional language is often referred to as an L2; by contrast, an L1 represents a first language. SLA researchers are concerned with all the questions around how a learner creates a new language system in the L2, how thoroughly the new system is acquired, what impact L1 and L2 systems have on one another, whether all second language learners share certain patterns of acquisition, and much more. These questions are interdisciplinary in nature and engage the interests of researchers in such varied disciplines as linguistics, psychology, sociology, education, and more. This variety creates rich debate, multiple perspectives, and, often, disagreement amongst contributors to the field (Gass & Selinker, 2009).

According to Gass and Selinker (2009), while scholars have been interested in second language learning for centuries, the field of SLA is a relatively new one, emerging in the last fifty or so years. Prior to the emergence of the modern field of SLA, researchers were primarily interested in language teaching, not language acquisition. Thus, "…the impetus for studying second language learning was derived from pedagogical concerns" (Gass & Selinker, 2009, p. xvi). The field traveled away from these pedagogical concerns, except as they relate to acquisition, and, interestingly, a stated goal of SLA, according to the above authors, is to "disentangle the two fields" (p. 2). It is somewhat ironic that the stated goal of this capstone is to reengage the two interests.

Identity-Focused SLA

Firth and Wagner (1997) are often credited with launching the conversation about identity-focused SLA research (Block, 2007) by offering a criticism of the state of the field of SLA in the 1990s. Firth and Wagner (1997) argued that SLA had, to date, been overly concerned with cognitive and "mentalistic" factors relating to language acquisition and not adequately concerned with social factors. They called for a more "holistic" approach to SLA, one that does not reduce the language learner to a "deficient communicator" in the code of the L2, and one that refuses to be limited by traditional dualities such as native speaker/non-native speaker and individual/society (Firth & Wagner, 1997).

Regardless of whether Firth and Wagner (1997) were really the first or not (Gass, Lee, & Roots, 2007), there has been a chorus of voices drawing attention to this subfield of SLA study over the past thirty to forty years (Block, 2007). In fact, academic literature

searches on ERIC, Communication and Mass Media Complete, and Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts databases show results for the combined search terms of *identity* and *Second Language Acquisition* beginning in the early 1970s, rising sharply in the 1990s, then continuing to grow steadily, with a peak in 2008. Gass et al. (2007) assert that Firth and Wagner (1997) did not launch the identity-focused SLA movement, but instead gave a "new articulation" of an already emerging sub-field.

Theoretical Influences of Identity-Based SLA

Norton, Peirce, or Norton Peirce, depending upon the publication, has contributed significantly to an identity-focused SLA sub-field. She states that identity-focused SLA is built on the theoretical foundations of post-structuralism and sociocultural theory (Norton, 2006). In a post-structuralist paradigm, individuals are not considered to have a "coherent identity" (Ajayi, 2011, p. 255); instead, identity is decentralized and viewed as changeable, multiple, potentially conflicting and irrefutably social (Norton, 2006).

Twenty years before Firth and Wagner (1997), Bourdieu, a prominent post-structuralist, began applying economic metaphors to social theory (1977). In addition to economic capital, Bourdieu spoke of social or cultural capital, with linguistic capital being a form of cultural capital. Capital that did not fall into those categories was characterized as "symbolic" capital and included any kind of advantage that benefitted an individual's social position in some way (Bourdieu, 1984). Bourdieu's theory (1977) stressed the importance of power in the relationships between individuals and society and emphasized that language served as a means of expressing power in those social relationships. In this view, the meaning of an individual's use of language cannot be understood outside the context of the social relationships involved.

In fact, Bourdieu (1977) insisted that the study of sociology ought not to be separated from linguistics. He suggested that linguistics should be reinterpreted by replacing "language" with "power" and substituting linguistic "correctness" with social "acceptability." Bourdieu (1977) speculated that linguistics, by limiting its consideration of communication to linguistic forms and failing to consider the role of power in social relationships as a linguistic factor, unintentionally limited its own contributions to scholarship. Mendoza-Denton (2008), in her ethnography of Latina gangs, summarizes this succinctly many years after Bourdieu by saying, "We must look at language by looking beyond language" (p. 3).

Another important post-structuralist influence on identity-focused SLA is Weedon (2004), who examined how people "negotiate identity and difference" (p. 4). Expanding on Bourdieu's ideas, Weedon (1987) was particularly interested in identifying and understanding the conditions in which individuals choose to speak or remain silent. She clarified the idea of identity positions by noting that some are assigned by circumstances of birth or biology, such as gender, or citizenship, while others, such as teacher or student, rely on active performance through ongoing "processes of identification" (2004, p. 7), a process Weedon terms *subjectivity.*

The following definition consolidates Weedon's (2004) post-structuralist perspective on identity, describing it as "a limited and temporary fixing for the individual of a particular mode of subjectivity as apparently what one *is*" (p. 19). However, she is careful to add that there may be a distinct difference between how a subject sees himself or herself and how he or she is seen by others. Another important facet of Weedon's (2004) explanation of identity is that at the center of the identity performance is a longing

to be "in control of meaning" (p. 21) by narrowing down subjectivity options to attain a knowable self; it is also suggested that in this attempt to know who one is, an individual may inadvertently fix others in false positions.

Norton has been publishing steadily, both alone and in collaboration with other researchers, since well before Firth and Wagner's (1997) call for change. She has been applying the post-structuralist theories of Bourdieu and Weedon to second language research, and her influence in identity-focused SLA is an important one; in fact, she is credited with playing a critical role in the reframing of identity within SLA (Block, 2007).

According to Norton, in addition to understanding the post-structuralist foundations of identity-focused SLA, it is also essential to consider sociocultural theory (SCT) (Norton, 2006; Norton & Toohey, 2011). Based on the work of Russian psychologist, Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934), sociocultural theory is built on the premise that all learning is socially mediated and that learners construct knowledge within social relationships (Gass & Selinker, 2009; van Compernolle & Williams, 2013). Though it has its foundations in Vygotsky's work, SCT has been extended and modified by numerous other researchers (Norton & Toohey, 2011).

Van Compernolle and Williams (2013) discuss the important connection between Vygotsky's theories and language pedagogy. They emphasize that in SCT it is impossible to separate language learning and language pedagogy, as has been artificially done in SLA. Instead, they stress that pedagogical intervention, to Vygotsky, is an essential part of the process of further developing sociocultural theories of cognition and human development (van Campernole & Williams, 2013). Since learning is mediated in social

relationships, it is impossible to isolate learning from social relations.

Earlier in her career, in a similar vein, Peirce (1995) argued that the integration of the individual language learner and his or her social context had historically represented a fundamental gap in SLA research. The author accused SLA theorists of an "arbitrary mapping" (p. 11) of factors onto language learners, attributing certain elements to the individual and others to society or culture, without adequate support or evidence (Peirce, 1995). What was missing from SLA, suggested Peirce (1995), was a theory of social identity that "integrates the language learner and the language learning context" (p. 9). By contrast, over ten years later, Norton (2006) stated that social identity was now being addressed in SLA and that over time the field had come to endorse an interdisciplinary, critical, sociocultural approach, incorporating identity as an important facet of SLA research.

One of the defining characteristics of this identity-focused SLA research is the notion that language learners must be considered in context (Peirce, 1995). The individual learner influences the context, which influences the learner, and on and on ad infinitum. In this back and forth, the learner is negotiating and renegotiating his or her position within society. For this reason, when referring to learner (or researcher) identity, researchers often use the term *identity position, positioning,* or *subject positions* (Block, 2007) to reflect the active nature of the identity process.

Initially, Peirce (1995) distinguished "society" and "culture" as two important factors of the learning context within which the individual is positioned. Her position was that "social identity" referenced the relationship between the individual and society, and "cultural identity" referenced an ethnic group association. Her primary interest was

in social identity (Peirce, 1995). However, a decade later (Norton 2006), she described a "collapsing of boundaries" between social and cultural distinctions. Over time, Norton (2006) says she has come to see that the distinctions between social and cultural facets of identity are less important to understanding SLA than are the commonalities; the critical distinction, instead, is between individual and context, not between the variables of which the context is constructed.

Nunan and Choi (2010) even further delineate the relationship between individual and context by defining culture as those factors that are "outside the individual," and identity as that which is "inside" an individual learner. After giving these working definitions, they then go on to suggest that researchers actually need to consider whether the concepts of language, culture, and identity are really even separable. Regardless of how the terms are defined, there is a theme within identity-focused SLA of personal struggle (identity) within a larger context (culture/society) (Nunan & Choi, 2010).

With room for variation, of course, the primary tools for data-gathering within identity-focused SLA are narratives (learner, teacher, researcher) and ethnographic interviews (Coffey & Street, 2008). The content of these narratives and interviews can vary, but the common themes are second language learning stories and reflections about factors relating to the learner and the learning context that deepen understanding of the relationship between learner and context (Coffey & Street, 2008). In addition to the cornerstone of narratives and interviews, researchers also use recordings, videotapes, field notes, and other qualitative materials that broaden the data-gathering picture.

Norton's Five Beliefs of Identity-Based SLA (2006)

Besides the themes of post-structuralism, sociocultural theory, and qualitative

tools for data-gathering, Norton (2006) proposed that there are five common beliefs about identity underlying most identity-focused SLA research:

1. Identity is dynamic and constantly changing across time and place,

2. Identity is "complex, contradictory and multifaceted,"

3. Language is both a product of and a tool for identity construction,

4. Identity can only be understood in the context of relationships and power, and

5. Much identity-focused SLA research makes connections to classroom practice.

This section explains Norton's (2006) five beliefs about identity, as they are essential to the systematic literature review conducted for this study. While the beliefs are originally Norton's, this literature review is not exclusively focused on Norton's work. Rather, a broad foundation of identity-focused SLA research is presented with Norton's five beliefs providing a framework for the discussion.

Identity is dynamic and constantly changing across time and place. Identity is described by Peirce (1995) as "multiple, a site of struggle" (p. 9). In essence, this means researchers are abandoning the search for fixed identities and universals (Block, 2012). This notion of multiplicity in identity is in direct contrast to traditional ideas, which often tend toward dualities or binaries of, for example, native/non-native or motivated/unmotivated (Block, 2012). The post-structualist construct of identity as a dynamic process helps in "dislodging these binaries" (Weedon, 2004, p. 21) found in traditional models. From this perspective, according to Nieto (2002), previous binary views of learner identity as motivated or unmotivated or as introverted or extroverted oversimplify learner identity and fail to consider that learners are constantly engaging and positioning themselves in relation to an external world that can change over time, can

differ from one situation or location to another, and can present variable power differentials even within one individual learner across a given day, much less a lifetime.

Nero (2005) states that SLA needs to be especially wary of the native speaker/non-native speaker (NS/NNS) binary because many learners who are positioned as ESL students by an educational institution may themselves consider they have two L1s instead of an L1/L2 and may not consider themselves language learners at all or see "any disparities between their perceived and their actual linguistic competence" (p. 202). This over-emphasis on a particular standard of native language use may result in researchers being overly focused on form and correctness and not adequately attentive to the other forms of capital the students may already possess (Nero, 2005). Nero (2005) introduces the term "language identity" to facilitate moving away from dichotomies of NS/NNS and L1/L2, dualities that simply do not exist for some students.

Christian and Bloome's (2004) research, which uses Bourdieu's (1977) economic metaphors in research with children and literacy, exemplifies the complexity of multiple identity positioning. The authors found that children enter the classroom with multiple identities (girl, Hispanic, good-reader, shy, middle class, etc.); these identities are often associated with varying degrees of status or capital. Their research suggests that 'ESL student' is an identity with limited symbolic capital assigned to them by other students, whereas 'good reader' carries a great deal more (Christian & Bloome, 2004). Thus, the amount of symbolic capital a learner possesses can vary depending on how he or she is positioned socially in a given situation, and the forces that influence a learner's identity positioning in a given situation may be internal or external and are not fixed, but dynamic and fluid (Norton, 2006).

While Nunan and Choi (2010) prefer to define learner identity broadly, other researchers filter identity according to gender, ethnicity, class, race, nationality and other categories (Swain & Deters, 2007). However, as discussed earlier in this chapter, Norton (2006) believes the distinctions in categories of identity, and between other social and cultural factors, are less important than the common role they play in contributing to the more fundamental distinctions between learner and context. One thing is certain amongst identity-focused SLA researchers: the identity of the learner is multiple and cannot be separated from the social context.

Identity is "complex, contradictory and multifaceted." The multiple subject positions discussed above result in identity performances that are "complex, contradictory and multifaceted" (Norton, 2006, p. 3). Depending upon social context, an individual may position himself or herself in different ways. He or she may even find that certain identity positions are in conflict with one another. Two concepts that can help explain this complexity of identity expression come from Norton: investment and imagined communities.

Traditionally, language learners have often been characterized as motivated or unmotivated, with the label being applied according to the behaviors or attitude of the learner (Norton & Toohey, 2001). Placing language learners in a context with important power disparities casts a different light on the issue of motivation; motivation becomes less of an individual issue and more of a contextual one. For this reason, identity-focused SLA researchers often prefer the term *investment* to describe a learner's engagement in the target language (TL) learning process (Norton & Toohey, 2001). Norton chose this term as an extension of Bourdieu's (1977) economic metaphor of capital (Peirce, 1995),

suggesting that students only invest when they see an opportunity for personal profit. When the often unequal and sometimes very challenging power differentials for learners are considered, it becomes easier to see why a learner might have an uncertain desire to speak the TL and/or become a part of what that TL represents to him or her (Lee & Norton, 2009).

The concept of investment not only pertains to individuals, but also to communities. The power relationships of and between communities certainly affect investment on the individual and collective level. In addition, some researchers are exploring the investment of "periphery communities" (Norton, 2010). These are communities globally that have different local and global investment in English than might be found within an English dominant country. Though these studies are beyond the scope of this capstone, the notion of investment as a function of power in relationships is an important one throughout identity-focused SLA.

Imagined communities is another of Norton's significant additions to identity-focused SLA. One of Norton's earliest studies (1994) featured adult immigrant women using diaries to reflect on, amongst other things, their interactions with TL speakers. In subsequent studies, Norton (1995, 2001) particularly looked at resistant and non-participating learners from that earlier study, in other words, those lacking investment. She proposed that the learners' non-participation may have resulted from a disparity between what the teacher was offering and the students' "imagined community" (Norton, 2001).

For example, Norton (2001) discusses two women, Katarina and Felicia, whose investment decreased as a result of their lack of inclusion in imagined communities.

Katarina, who had been a teacher for 17 year in her home country of Poland, became offended when her English was not deemed adequate for participation in a career-oriented computer class. She imagined herself as part of a community of professionals; when that identity was not validated, her investment in participation plummeted. On the other hand, Felicia, a Peruvian immigrant, felt her teacher had been dismissive of her home culture, and she never went back to class. Though the circumstances were different, both women experienced situations in which their imagined communities were not validated; as a result, their investment suffered (Norton, 2001).

In 2001, Norton and Toohey further discussed and analyzed data from the 1994 study, reconsidering why the women resisted speaking in certain situations. They concluded that learners are defined both by what they are and what they are not (Norton & Toohey, 2001). If learners do not have an "image" of themselves in a target community, they will not be invested in participating. Norton & Toohey suggest that teachers need to help all learners see themselves as living in multiple communities to encourage investment in these "imagined communities."

Language is both a product of and a tool for identity construction. Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) was the first to propose that language is symbolic and that words are the products of our social interactions (Saussure, 1959), ideas which continue to inform linguistics today. Saussure was a linguistic structuralist, believing that linguistic competence is the result of learning and internalizing a language's relatively fixed patterns and structures (Norton & Toohey, 2011). By contrast, post-structuralists are interested not only in linguistic code, but in the communicative and symbolic function of the speech act itself and, more specifically, in the speech act as a symbolic tool for

participating in "speech communities" (Norton & Toohey, 2011, p. 416).

Thus, the emphasis shifted from the individual alone, to the individual within his or her social context and the symbolic nature of those interactions. In fact, Norton and Toohey (2011) note that Mikhail Bakhtin, a Russian linguistic theorist, described speech acts as "situated utterances" (p. 416), or only possible to be understood within the context of social community and interaction. Once again, as Bourdieu (1977) suggested, sociology and linguistics are connected, and social context proves to be of fundamental importance in understanding identity and language (Norton & Toohey, 2011).

Consequently, language learning involves much more than acquiring a linguistic code. Instead, it must also include learning a role or taking a position or positions within a larger social context (Ogulnick, 2000). "In other words, language learning entails a process of fitting into one's place in society, or rather, one's imposed place" (Ogulnick, 2000, p. 170). Thus, part of language learning must be the acquisition of sociolinguistic competence, an ability to appropriately vary language according to communicative purpose, status of participants, location of discourse and other contextual factors (Rothenberg & Fisher, 2007).

Ogulnick (2000) further believes that societal factors are illuminated in the language learning process and, therefore, people use language to "negotiate" their identities. Language use and language learning thus become critical instruments in the definition of self. This is truly a two-way dynamic process, however, because as learners are accessing and learning language to participate in various communities, they also function as "differentially-positioned members of social and historical collectivities" (Norton & Toohey, 2011, p. 419), whose words and actions, in turn, shape the dynamic

processes of both language and society. In fact, Block (2007) suggests that the relationship between the self and the social world can be represented as a Möbius strip, a continuous band with a half twist, whose one-sided nature symbolizes a blurring of the distinction between inside and outside, individual and society. He states that while "…identity is conditioned by social interaction and social structure, it conditions social interaction and social structures at the same time" (pp. 865-866).

For example, Mendoza-Denton (2008), in a linguistic ethnography of a sub-culture of Latina girls in the 1990s, discovered that seemingly unrelated linguistic choices, for example, discourse markers for the word 'thing' and pronunciations of other key words, or the choice of English or Spanish, were actually distinctly part of identity performances. In addition, choices in hair, music, clothing and tattoos were found to be linked to these linguistic choices, indicating there was a relationship between language and the body. Identity negotiation and expression, thus, is evident in the symbolic practices both of and beyond language.

Watkins-Goffman (2001) states that every time we speak we are negotiating and renegotiating our identities. Language, in this view, becomes a means of identity negotiation through the many choices available to a speaker, such as L1 or L2, dialect, register, style, intonation, or silence, and, as Mendoza-Denton (2008) indicated, these kinds of choices can also be extended to the body. Thus, "Language learning opens [learners] up not only to other cultures and ways of understanding the world, but ultimately to themselves, by providing a wider spectrum of feelings, thoughts, and ways of expressing their different personas in various languages" (Wallerstein, 1983, p. 4). Hence, identity, language and context are inextricably entwined. Identity-focused SLA,

then, follows the lead of post-structuralism and sociocultural theory by emphasizing the critical importance of social context for language learning and identity negotiation (Norton & Toohey, 2011).

Identity can only be understood in the context of relationships and power. Relationships and power can help make sense of identity-focused SLA, since both of these factors influence language learners significantly (Norton, 2006). One of the biggest debates arising out of the discussion on the relationship between identity and social context centers on how much individual versus social power or control there is in the identity development process. Researchers fall across a spectrum, believing there is considerable individual agency involved (Giddens, 1991; Mathews, 2000) on the one hand, and little room for individual agency (May, 2001) on the other. Again, the answer to the question of degree of individual agency is probably not a static one, but depends upon the specific situation under discussion, the social factors in question, and the many factors influencing a given individual's identity (May, 2001).

Power is a factor in all relationships. Wallerstein (1983) references Bourdieu (1977) when she describes how structural power in society affects what people say and how they speak. From this perspective, speech cannot be seen as a neutral force. Instead it carries both the encoded power dynamics of a society and the individual stances of those using the language. One of the myriad ways these power dynamics manifest is through social class structures.

Many researchers are interested in the role of class as it relates to power and SLA (Block, 2012). In fact, Block (2012) suggests that class may be central to understanding second language identities in migrant contexts and hopes that SLA researchers will delve

more deeply into issues of how language learners are positioned relative to social class. To illustrate the potential interest of class to SLA researchers, Block describes his research with an adult migrant in London. Carlos, a Spanish speaker from Columbia, had been learning English for two and a half years at the time of Block's research. In spite of Carlos' middle-class family background, doctoral-level education, and largely middle-class, Spanish speaking social network, Carlos labored at a working-class job as a porter in London. Block delved into micro-level analysis of details around accent and discourse patterns and discovered that Carlos had developed English language practices that affected his class positioning with co-workers. Despite his middle-class background, Carlos was able to participate in the characteristic banter, content and Cockney accent of his working-class co-workers well enough to be accepted; however, he acknowledged in later interviews that he sometimes had trouble following his co-workers' language and, in another layer of identity positioning, did not want to spend too much time learning to speak what he knew was a lower-class variety of English. In analyzing Carlos' linguistic choices, Block (2012) observed that language is "at the centre of class-making" (p. 199), and suggests that class is vastly underexplored in SLA research and may hold a key piece of the puzzle in understanding why some learners are so much more successful than others.

According to Nieto (2002), in addition to class, power is at the heart of another key issue in language acquisition: that of having meaningful access to the target language (TL) community. Without access to and interaction with fluent and effective language models, it is very difficult to progress linguistically. Norton and McKinney (2011) agree, and they question how structures of power in the social world have an impact on

individual language learners and the opportunities they have to interact with target language speakers.

Furthering this point of view, Hall, Cheng, and Carlson (2006) assert that learning is the product of social interaction and, thus, access to L2 communities is an essential factor in language learning (Hall et al., 2006; Peirce, 1995). According to this perspective, communicative participation produces language competence instead of being a product of it (Norton & Toohey, 2011). Thus, having access to TL communities is not just beneficial; it is essential (Hall et al., 2006).

Power dynamics have a profound influence on learner investment, opportunities for interaction with TL communities, and the development of imagined communities (Norton, 2006). Opportunities to practice speaking, listening, reading and writing, activities that are critical to the SLA process, are highly structured socially (Nieto, 2002). SLA and identity researchers are exploring social power dynamics from various viewpoints (gender, race, class, religion) and are also considering researcher and teacher identity, in addition to that of learners (Ajayi, 2011).

Language, as a symbolic tool, carries both the literal and social messages of a society. As the language learners and those individuals and systems they interact with use or resist using language to communicate, they form and reform relationships with one another (Norton & Toohey, 2001). Within these social relationships, identity positions are negotiated and renegotiated via language use. In addition, there exist power differentials that can have neutral, positive, or negative impact on learner experiences, investment, and participation in imagined communities. It is clear that power and relationships are, indeed, major factors in language learning.

Much identity-focused SLA research makes connections to classroom practice.

Traditional models of language education position the teacher as the head of the classroom, responsible for delivering content (Herrera & Murry, 2011) and possessing the most capital (Bourdieu, 1977). In 2000, Norton related that at the beginning of her year working with five immigrant women (Peirce, 1994; Peirce, 1995), all five held the traditional belief that the teacher was the most important, powerful part of the classroom dynamic. However, by the end of the year, four of the five had shifted away from idealizing the teacher-centered classroom. Instead, these women had learned to value their own participation and investment in speaking to communicate and in exploring their feelings around language participation and resistance.

As part of that same shift, these women were simultaneously rejecting the traditional social positioning of students as recipients of information, solely responsible for their own investment and success (Norton, 2000). Traditional models place responsibility for investment in the learning process on the learners, typically framing learners as motivated or unmotivated (Norton & Toohey, 2001). However, identity-focused SLA theorists, such as those mentioned in this chapter, suggest that social and power relationships render the traditional model regarding motivation overly simplistic since they fail to consider the power of social context and individual agency in identity negotiation.

Many researchers besides Norton have considered identity in the classroom and have suggested implications for teaching. For example, Skilton-Sylvester (2002) investigated how various social roles (spouse, mother, sister/daughter, worker) influenced the participation and investment of four Cambodian women. Her research showed an

intersection between generalizable social roles, such as those named above, and more specific individual identities. However, she found that focusing on roles was not specific enough to be predictive of behavior because how those roles were expressed in the individual women's lives was not consistent. For example, one woman, in her role as "spouse," was considered the "language learner" in her family. Thus, her spousal role increased her investment. However, another woman's role as spouse decreased her investment because spousal responsibilities were assigned differently in her relationship with her husband. Skilton-Sylvester (2002) concluded that it was not enough to consider generalizable social roles; instead, the "lived experiences" (p. 24) of the learners need to be considered. In short, each learners' social roles are mediated by their "multiple and shifting identities" (p. 23).

Skilton-Sylvester's (2002) work extends that of Bonny Norton Peirce to the classroom. Norton Peirce (1995, 2000) focused primarily on the importance of L2 learners claiming the "right to speak" outside the classroom. However, Skilton-Sylvester (2002) suggested that the classroom must also be considered fundamentally important and should be considered every bit as "real" as the world outside the classroom. She stated the classroom is the "real place where the multiple selves of learners are central to teaching, learning, and program development" (p. 22).

Ultimately, the classroom, and identity-focused applications of SLA within it, is the central focus of this capstone. Of course, one of the primary goals of the second language learning classroom is the achievement of bilingualism. The concept of bilingualism, however, is not as straight-forward as might be assumed (Gass & Selinker, 2009). It is beyond the scope of this review to delve in depth into bilingual research. Nevertheless,

the important concepts of *additive* and *subtractive bilingualism* (Herrera & Murry, 2011)

are briefly clarified here because bilingualism is a primary goal of second language

classroom practices.

When the benefits of bilingualism are frequently discussed, it is generally additive

bilingualism that is really being considered (Herrera & Murry, 2011). An additive

bilingual is one who attains high levels of proficiency in both L1 and L2; additive

bilingualism may often be the goal of second language education. However, it is not

always the result. A subtractive bilingual is one whose L1 is, to a greater or lesser extent,

gradually replaced by the L2. The result of subtractive bilingualism is often low academic

language proficiency in both languages (Herrera & Murry, 2011). If language and

identity are deeply interrelated, as has been shown in this literature review, then it follows

that subtractive bilingualism, or the gradual loss of the L1, will have a potentially

profound impact on identity. This possibility of additive or subtractive language learning,

then, renders the classroom a critically important space for social positioning (Skilton-

Sylvester, 2002).

Paolo Freire (1921-1997) was a Brazilian theorist whose work endorsed the

notion that language and education are never neutral. He recommended critical pedagogy

and problem-posing as tools for social transformation. Ogulnick (2000) follows Freire's

problem-posing approach by engaging students in dialogue and critical questioning and

embedding instruction in topics that are relevant to learner experience. As Freire (2000)

advocated, Ogulnick (2000) explores the idea that education is never neutral or objective,

nor is the role of teacher.

Ogulnick (2000) describes U.S. educational history as carrying a negative bias

towards students whose cultures and languages differ from the majority and claims they are considered to have "…a deficiency rooted in their very identities" (p. xi). Ogulnick (2000) asks questions about how issues of equity and social justice in the educational system affect the identities of learners and their language learning. Institutions, including schools, governments, and other social structures, are never neutral, according to this perspective, but are always making decisions about what is worth knowing and what it means to be educated. These decision, in turn, have a profound affect on the learners themselves.

<div align="center">Summary</div>

With the exception of Peirce's 1995 study, the research studies mentioned in this chapter are in keeping with most of the identity-focused SLA literature in that they are descriptive, qualitative studies relying on narratives, ethnographic interviews, second language learning histories and other tools of SLA research (Coffey & Street, 2008). These L2 learning histories and identity case studies are an effective way to gain access to information about how second language learners reconstruct and transform new identities (Tremmel & De Costa, 2011).

However, while many of the studies give *implications* for classroom practice, the implications are often untested. There is a gap in the literature when it comes to classroom application of identity-focused SLA research (Nassaji, 2012). The goal of this capstone is to investigate this sub-field more thoroughly to find examples, where they exist, of deliberate and applied practice of identity-focused SLA theory and to answer the

guiding question: What does research say about identity-focused SLA as applied in the classroom?

This chapter gave a brief summary of identity-focused SLA. It considered the theoretical foundations for this sub-field: post-structuralism and sociocultural theory. Then, using Norton's (2006) five categories of common agreements amongst identity-focused SLA researchers, an overview of the major currents of the field was given. Particular attention was paid to the work of Bonny Norton.

The following chapter outlines the methodology used for examining the literature and ascertaining what is known about how identity-focused SLA has been applied in the classroom and the goals and efficacy of those applications.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

This systematic literature review is designed to ascertain the current state of knowledge regarding identity-focused SLA as applied in the classroom. While classroom applications are not a primary focus of SLA research (Gass & Selinker, 2009; Nassaji, 2012), it was found that enough research on classroom applications exists to constitute a robust review. By synthesizing the available data via a systematic review, I hope to find an answer to the following guiding question: what does research say about identity-focused SLA as applied in the classroom?

Chapter Overview

In order to conduct a systematic review, the reviewer must select a question that is answerable via a focused review of the literature. Next, databases and resources are identified, a review protocol is defined with specific inclusion criteria, and a comprehensive, structured search is conducted. The following section discusses each of these steps in the systematic review process as they pertain to this capstone.

Parameters for Data Collection

Data collection was completed primarily via the internet through the following library search engines: Education Full Text (EBSCO), Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), Communication and Mass Media Complete, Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts (LLBA), Modern Language Association International Bibliography (MLA), ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global Full Text, and Google

Scholar. Initial searches were made using Summon, a relatively new information tool

designed to facilitate one-stop searching of all databases. However, it was discovered

through cross-referencing that the Summon searches were not always comprehensive;

key sources were sometimes missed. Therefore, a more methodical search of each of the

above databases was conducted instead.

I began with searches combining the terms "second language acquisition" and

"identity," as well as "language" and "identity." Since some journal article titles contain

only the acronym "SLA," separate searches were done using both the full term and the

acronym. The above-mentioned terms were also searched in combination with

"curriculum" and "pedagogy," in order to refine the results. A combined search of

"bilingualism" and "identity" resulted in an unmanageable number of results, but when

these terms were qualified with "curriculum" and "pedagogy," they became more

applicable. Many terms were tried and discarded. However, the following additional

search terms were found to be germane: "identity negotiation," "cultural identity," "social

identity," and "ESL," especially when combined with "curriculum" and "pedagogy."

Articles were gathered from multiple journals, both print and electronic; books and

doctoral theses were also included.

<center>Criteria for Inclusion</center>

<u>Identity</u>

Identity is multi-faceted and difficult to define, as was discussed at length in the

literature review in Chapter Two. In addition, the term *identity* is used with many

qualifiers including national, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, social, gender, and more. It is a

significant term in multiple disciplines with each field and subfield imbuing the term with

its own particular shades of meaning. For the purposes of this research, a broad inclusion

of meanings for the term *identity* was endorsed. In recording the data, identity was

tracked according to its qualifier(s) (ethnic, cultural, linguistic, etc.); if no qualifier was

given, then identity was coded as "unspecified."

Date of Publication

As discussed in Chapter Two, the burgeoning interest in identity-focused SLA

arose in the mid-1990s (Block, 2007; Firth & Wagner, 1997; Peirce, 1995). Bonny

Norton Peirce's ground-breaking 1994 study using language learning diaries with

immigrant women was taken as a starting point for this research. Thus, only results from

1994 onward were included in this study.

Target Language

This review was limited to English language learning environments. In addition,

included studies were also limited to those situated in English-dominant local

communities, since those situations most closely match the learning conditions of most

K-12 public education students in the U.S. Studies with a primary focus on maintenance

of heritage languages were also excluded from this research.

Educational Context

Pre-school and early childhood studies were excluded. However upper primary,

secondary, post-secondary and adult learning environments were all included. In

addition, since most ELLs in the U.S. are educated in classrooms in which English is the

primary language of instruction (Herrera & Murry, 2011), those environments were

included, while bilingual and dual-immersion, as well as foreign language learning

environments were excluded. Furthermore, only in-person learning environments were

included; studies with online and distance learning as the primary mode of instruction were excluded.

Student and Teacher Identity

Participants in all studies were either students who were second language learners, teachers of second language learners, or both. Findings related to teacher identity in a general sense are included in this study. However, since an extensive body of research was found to exist on the sub-topic of identity in non-native teachers of English, studies were excluded if that was their primary focus. In addition, a considerable amount of research on the identity of pre-service teachers (teachers-in-training) exists; this was also excluded as it was considered beyond the scope of this review.

Classroom Application of Identity-Focused SLA

With such broad criteria for inclusion, how were the data narrowed and focused? The primary criterion for exclusion was the absence of applied identity work. In other words, some element of applied, identity-focused SLA work had to be present for the study to be included in the systematic review.

Peer-Reviewed Status

Finally, though sources for the literature review in Chapter Two, which provided grounding in SLA and identity, were exclusively peer-reviewed, the scope was widened in the systematic literature review. This choice was made in acknowledgement of the fact that some of the more interesting, exploratory efforts in applied identity work are being done by teachers, graduate students, and other professionals who are not necessarily publishing in peer-reviewed journals but are, nonetheless, contributing to the discipline. Thus, if a study was thought to give insight into identity-focused SLA in the classroom,

peer-reviewed status was not a reason for exclusion.

Data Gathering

As part of the review process of each study, criteria for analysis were collected and organized via Excel spreadsheet. The following categories were recorded: author, year, publication type, peer-reviewed status, type of identity (unspecified, linguistic, ethnic, social, academic/literate, racial, cultural, national, class, and gender), teacher or student identity, number of participants, educational setting (primary, secondary, post-secondary, adult), country of study, heritage language, English proficiency level of participants, methods of data collection, and identity foci of study.

Initially, information was recorded in a single spreadsheet. During analysis, the spreadsheet contents were transferred into multiple tables to facilitate presentation of the data. Thus, appendices exist for Publication Type and Peer Reviewed Status (Appendix A), Type of Identity Studied (Appendix B), Participants and Educational Setting (Appendix C), Country of Study, Participants' Heritage Language and English Proficiency (Appendix D), Methods of Data Collection (Appendix E), and Identity Foci of Study (Appendix F).

Summary

This chapter outlined the procedures and criteria used in selecting studies for the systematic review. Studies were chosen using the guiding research question as the most fundamental condition for relevance. A broad definition of identity and an inclusive range of educational contexts were endorsed, with some manner of classroom application of identity-focused SLA being the most limiting parameter for inclusion. In the following

chapter, the results of this systematic literature review are presented, discussed and analyzed for common themes and trends.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

Over the past thirty years many researchers in the field of second language

acquisition (SLA) have turned their attention away from exclusively cognitive theories of

language acquisition (Firth & Wagner, 1997) and towards an identity-focused SLA

(Block, 2007; Norton, 2006). The purpose of this chapter is to examine a sub-set of that

research that has included a classroom-based application, via systematic literature review,

to ascertain how what is known about identity-focused SLA has been used to inform

classroom practices. In particular, an answer to the following guiding question is sought:

What does research say about identity-focused SLA as applied in the classroom?

In Chapter Two, a traditional literature review was conducted in order to

contextualize this subsequent systematic literature review within the field of identity-

focused SLA. This chapter's more specific and systematic pursuit of an answer to the

above guiding question is based on the foundation laid in Chapter Two. Sources were

excluded if they did not meet the criteria outlined in Chapter Three; namely, for the

purposes of the systematic review, only sources that actively tested identity-focused SLA

practices in the classroom were considered. After multiple and systematic academic

literature searches, 24 studies were included in the final analysis.

This chapter first discusses the variety of materials consulted and summarizes key

features. Data were analyzed according to type of identity; whose identity is under

consideration (students, teachers or both); number of participants; educational setting;

and country of study. In addition, heritage language of participants and their level of

English proficiency were also identified in the data analyzed where available. Finally, the

data were evaluated for common themes and considerations.

Presentation of Findings

<u>Materials Consulted</u>

This systematic review was conducted on studies that applied identity-focused

SLA in the classroom via curricular or pedagogical choices; relevant works consisted

primarily of journal articles and dissertations. All in all, 17 journal articles, all peer

reviewed, and seven dissertations were included, for a total of 24 studies (see Appendix

A). Fifteen studies were from the US, eight from Canada and one from the United

Kingdom. Two authors, Ajayi and Morgan, each have two studies included in the

systematic review. Data were similar in that they all had some element of explicitly

stated, applied identity work in a second language-learning environment. However, there

was great diversity across studies as well.

<u>Identity Type</u>

As discussed at length in earlier chapters, *identity* is not a straight-forward or

easily defined concept; this complexity was also reflected in the data analyzed for this

review. Detailed records were kept about how identity was framed in each study. In total,

10 categories of identity emerged: unspecified, linguistic, ethnic, social, academic or

literate, racial, cultural, national, class, and gender (see Appendix B). Interestingly, nearly

all studies defined identity using two or more categories of definition. In fact, only 3

isolated a single dimension of identity: social identity (Peirce, 1994) and academic or

literate identity (Steinman, 2007; Vollmer, 2000). Five studies did not specify or qualify

their use of the term identity in any way; these were coded as unspecified. Seven others

used both specified and unspecified definitions in combination. Table 1 displays the

distribution of identity terminology within the studies; of course, since 13 of the 24

studies specified more than one identity type, the total number of identity types specified

far exceeds the total number of included studies. Cultural identity was the most

frequently specified dimension, though not overwhelmingly so.

Table 1
Frequency of Identity Types

Identity Type	Frequency of Use
Unspecified	12
Cultural	7
Linguistic	4
Ethnic	4
Social	4
Racial	4
Academic/Literate	3
Gender	3
National	2
Class	1

Participant Variables

Learner identity and teacher identity are both of interest to researchers. Seventeen

studies focused exclusively on learners, while one focused on teachers. The remaining six

considered both (see Appendix C).

The teacher-only study (Ajayi, 2011) had 57 participants. Learner-only studies ranged from 5 to 52 participants. Combination studies had smaller numbers of teachers, ranging from 1 to 3, although one (Lee 2015), which included other non-teaching staff, counted 17 "other" participants. Number of learners in combination studies ranged from 7 to 87 participants.

<u>Learning Context</u>

Relevant data were distributed across the four learning contexts as follows. Two studies from upper primary grades were considered. Eight took place in secondary school environments, nine in post-secondary institutions, and five in adult education contexts (see Appendix C).

<u>Participant Language</u>

All included studies were situated in educational contexts with English as the target language. Heritage language of participants varied widely and, in most cases, within studies. One study (Gold, 2008) was conducted exclusively with learners of Chinese ethnicity, while two were with Hispanic-only learners (Salazar, 2010; Frye, 1999). All other studies reported some degree of linguistic diversity amongst participants (see Appendix D).

English proficiency level also varied. Indeed, it was somewhat problematic to track these data since proficiency is reported in widely varying terms at different institutions. Only one study (Lau, 2010) described all learners as "low" proficiency. Most were "mixed" or "multi-level" with only one study that described its participants explicitly as "advanced" (Ajayi, 2008) (see Appendix D).

Methods of Data Collection

Researchers employed 13 different methodologies to collect data across the 24 studies included in the systematic review. Methods were recorded via spreadsheet using the specific terminology of each individual study (see Appendix E). However, after the initial analysis, they were grouped in like categories; for example, surveys and questionnaires were grouped together. In addition, rather than creating separate categories for analysis of "students assignments," "student writing," and "student projects," a more general "analysis of student-produced work" category was created. The categories of methods used are reported in order of frequency of use in Table 2. Multiple data-gathering methods were used in all but two studies with an average of 3.2 methods per study and a maximum of eight. For this reason, the total number of methodologies exceeds the total number of studies reviewed.

Table 2
Frequency of Data Collection Methods

Method	Occurrences
Observations, Reflections, & Field Notes	19
Analysis of Student-Produced Work	14
Interviews	11
Analysis of Classroom Documents, Curricula, and Artifacts	10
Surveys/Questionnaires	6
Focus Groups	4
Group Processing (discussion/reflection)	4
Study-Specific Pedagogical or Philosophical Framework	3
Audio Recordings	3
Student/Teacher Conferencing	2
Videos	2
Communication Records	1
Photographs	1

Focus of Identity Application

A primary criterion of inclusion for this systematic analysis was, of course, some element of applied identity work present in the curriculum or pedagogy under consideration. However, while all identified studies shared this trait, the nature of the applied identity work varied considerably. The complexity of identity as a concept and as a topic of study is reflected in the many diverse ways it is applied in the classroom.

There is no pre-existing taxonomy of study types when it comes to applied identity-focused SLA in the classroom. Each author's own description of his or her study focus or purpose was included in the data recorded via a spreadsheet (Appendix F). Thus, initially there were 24 unique study foci recorded. However, with a bare minimum of analysis, a number of the types fell into larger categories. For ease of reporting, these larger categories have been used to group the data here. Importantly, though, it must be noted that these categories have permeable boundaries. For example, all studies with a literature focus also made use of writing, but since the researchers defined the studies primarily in terms of literature, they are categorized that way here as well.

The distribution of identity application foci is presented in Table 3, and studies are alphabetized according to author within each category. It should be noted that with one exception (Ntelioglou, 2011), each study reported only one primary research focus. Four of the foci were represented by single studies, with the rest of the foci occurring in from 2 to 6 studies. Thus, in considering the 24 studies, there are 25 foci reported across 10 categories.

Table 3
Distribution of Identity Application Foci

Applied Identity Focus	Number of Studies	Author and Year
Identity-Based Curriculum	6	Frye 1999 Gladstein 1999 Lau 2010 Rambo 2005 Smidt 2007 Wilson 2012
Multimodal/Multiliteracies	5	Ajayi 2008 Fitts & Gross 2010 Ntelioglou 2011 Shin & Cimasko 2008 Vinogradova 2011
Pedagogical Stance or Philosophy	3	Ajayi 2011 Lee 2015 Salazar 2010
Writing/Narrative	3	Hubbard & Shorey 2003 Peirce 1994 Steinman 2007
Literature	2	Carrison & Ernst-Slavit 2005 Gold 2008
Theater/Role Play	2	Brash & Warnecke 2009 Ntelioglou 2011
Intonation and Prosody	1	Morgan 1997
Teacher Identity Performance	1	Morgan 2004
Pop Culture	1	Duff 2002
Social Media/Social Networking	1	Chen 2012

More detailed data relating to the focus of applied identity work in these studies will now be presented. Each of the following sub-sections will address one of the categories identified in Table 3 above. First, each category will be briefly defined in

general terms. Then, more specific details pertaining to individual studies will be presented. As in the Table 3, categories will be discussed in order from most to least common.

<div align="center">Presentation of Studies by Identity Application Foci</div>

Identity-Based Curriculum.

Six of the studies tested some form of identity-based curricula in the classroom; in other words, the entire curriculum in use was, to a greater or lesser extent, organized around issues pertaining to identity. Two of the researchers (Lau 2010; Wilson 2012) worked with lower secondary students, three (Smidt, 2007; Gladstein, 1999; Rambo, 2005) with post-secondary populations, and one (Frye, 1999) with adults. Key details and findings from these studies are discussed below.

Lau (2010) worked with new immigrants from various Asian cultures. Throughout the study, identity was occasionally referred to as cultural, academic or literate, but the term was most often used in an unspecified way. This dissertation aimed at exploring using critical literacy education and critical pedagogy with lower proficiency learners through the use of multicultural texts, rigorous scaffolding, and critical questioning. Notably, this was the only study of the 24 whose participants were all described as "low" proficiency language learners, and findings suggest that with adequate scaffolding, lower proficiency students can engage in critical thinking around identity issues and do not need to be limited to more surface-level language features as might be assumed.

One of Lau's (2010) key findings was in discovering the importance of this work not just for development of critical literacy language skills, but also for its significant

social ramifications. For example, as the class progressed, it was discovered that many ELLs were experiencing discrimination, stereotyping and bullying throughout the school community. Students, through a process of re-writing their bullying experiences, were able to negotiate stronger and more positive identities. Thus, the curriculum provided opportunities for social transformation and identity development, not just critical literacy development. Overall, results were positive for students in both self-confidence and critical literacy. In addition, the teacher's position changed from one of reluctance to enthusiasm as these low-proficiency students demonstrated their ability to engage critically, given adequate supports.

Another researcher, Wilson (2012), worked with eight secondary learners of varied Asian heritage and intermediate English proficiency. An 18-week curricular unit was designed using multi-modalities and multi-literacies to explore identity. The unit initially built learner capacity for understanding the "meta-messages" conveyed by images. The class then explored themes of identity and heritage across genres, including literature, poetry and prose, as well as in pictures and other digital formats. The unit culminated in learners creating a podcast that used a digital story format to express their identities. Using texts, recordings, images and more, students were able to draw on their communicative strengths and support their weaknesses, as well as explore various facets of their identities and use multi-modal tools to experiment with identity positions.

For example, one student with strong writing skills was able to include extensive written text, enabling her to practice but take the pressure off of her relatively weak speaking skills. Other students, with greater confidence in speaking English, drew more heavily on their oral skills. Still others included more L1 communication, while others

did not include any L1 elements. Wilson (2012) found that empowering students with multiple forms of representation, especially when combined by the user, led to more nuanced expressions of identity and deeper engagement with the content. Overall, the net effect was in each student's building an identity as a "successful communicator" (p. 384) and increasing investment as a communicator in the L2 community.

Identity-based curricula have also been piloted in post-secondary environments. Smidt (2007) conducted a case study of four post-secondary students enrolled in a multicultural writing class for second language learners. Smidt's (2007) goal was to explore how a second language writing curriculum focused on race, class and gender identities might lead to students exploring their own identities. Students wrote extensively in response to class discussions and assigned texts. They also conducted their own research and participated in small group discussions, peer review processes and learning communities.

Smidt (2007) found that race, gender and religious identities were more important to students than those of sexual orientation or class. In addition, development of personal relationships with those of different identity positions, whether those positions were determined by birth, biology, or by active performance (Weedon, 2004), was shown to bridge social differences. Though the curriculum was designed for language learners, the primary research focus was on identity, and the study made no report on any findings related specifically to language acquisition.

Another post-secondary curricular study of 38 students across three locations was described in Gladstein's 1999 dissertation. In this study, identity type was not specified, and students were described as intermediate and advanced learners of different linguistic

backgrounds. Gladstein's (1999) identity focus was infused throughout both curriculum and teaching methods and oriented around the concepts of "identity, culture and difference." In Gladstein's (1999) view, in traditional classroom approaches there is often an "intrusion of power" (p. 105) when a teacher or curriculum presents an already fixed representation of American culture to L2 students because it prohibits the learner from forming his or her own representation or acknowledging his or her already existing representations. Her goal was to find a way to critically approach the subject of "students' representations of others in American society" (p. 297) and give learners a platform from which to define and interpret concepts for themselves, rather than have those concepts presented to them already articulated.

This comprehensive curriculum made use of journals and other written works, critical questioning, and the notion of students as co-investigators. The curriculum used multiple genres for identity exploration with many student-centered products. Critical questioning was approached as an advanced linguistic skill, requiring learners to grapple with abstract concepts, think deeply, and be accountable for the language they used in both questioning and responding. Results validated the importance of considering students' existing experiences and identities in approaching American culture and, particularly, affirmed the need for critical questioning about identity, for an integrated approach to literacy, and for a conception of literacy as a social practice. Participants experienced improved communicative competence as questioners and greater confidence and skill in oral discussion, as well as increased vocabulary acquisition. Gladstein believes that critical questioning about identity is an essential part of language learning and that the field needs much more research in the teaching of critical questioning. In

fact, Gladsteins (1999) work provides evidence for critical questioning as a language tool

for identity construction (Norton, 2006), as discussed in Chapter Two.

In a third post-secondary study, a dissertation entitled *The Language and Culture*

of Identity: Crafting a New Self in a Second Language, Rambo (2005) studied the

linguistic identities of six learners. In particular, Rambo was hoping to discover whether

the infusion of identity theory into practice could facilitate improvement in language

proficiency for upper-intermediate and advanced learners, a level at which learners often

cease to progress. Through a curriculum comprised of literature focused on immigrant

voices and student autobiographical, self-expressive writing, Rambo (2005) tested a

hypothesis that immigrant students, many of whom may have little notion of or

experience with the concept of identity, need to be explicitly taught affective language so

they have the linguistic resources available to negotiate identity. The curriculum was

designed to explore how English learners can develop an understanding of self that both

transcends language and can be articulated through it.

Rambo (2005) found that the quality and quantity of student writing increased and

improved as the course progressed, in addition to overall increased sincerity and personal

investment in the content of their writing. Significant proliferation of "causal thinking"

and "self-reflective" (p. 105) words occurred, as well as an increase in "I" statements

such as "I feel" and "I think." Rambo (2005) interpreted these features to represent a

growing sense of self in English and evidence that they "felt they could be themselves in

their writing" (p. 108). Overall, key findings indicated that identity-infused, self-

reflective classrooms are of particular importance for English learners. The study showed

the importance of making the identity negotiation process explicit and visible through

deliberately identity-focused curricular and pedagogical choices.

Finally, Frye (1999) developed an identity-centered curriculum in a study that included 17 adult Latinas of mixed language proficiency. In this study, identity was defined primarily in terms of ethnicity, race, and gender; all participants were female. Frye hoped to offer an alternative to the often-limited options in women's programming at the institution where she worked by developing a program focused on issues central to these Latina women's lives. The curriculum centered on the sharing of life stories and integrated many genres such as pictures, poetry, songs, storytelling, discussion and more.

Frye's (1999) program successfully helped her students to build social and linguistic survival skills and functional literacy; however, the author's stated goal was to move beyond survival and support the women in developing stronger identity positions to take into the world outside the classroom. Her work was grounded in Freire's (2000) problem-posing theory, implemented in the hope of giving the women voice in defining the issues that were most important to them. Frye (1999) states that, "In articulating their experience verbally, they legitimated themselves, strengthening their identities," (p. 508). Other successes included building solidarity and community with the other women and a greater understanding in general of social issues pertaining to women. Participants also developed linguistic and relational tools for exploring areas of difference with one another, especially as pertained to certain trigger issues such as age, national origin, variety of Spanish used, and educational backgrounds. The class format gave them the opportunity and tools to explore their feelings about issues they "had simply reacted to in the past" (p. 508). Frye (1999) saw these discussions of difference as one of the primary successes of the curriculum; the discussions gave the women opportunities to negotiate

and renegotiate their identities and practice identity positions that might afford them greater social power outside the classroom. No specific findings related to language learning were reported beyond the participants' increased ability to discuss issues of personal empowerment in various social contexts.

Multi-Modality and Multi-Literacies.

Traditionally, literacy has been assumed to pertain to the reading and writing of written text. However, that definition has been undergoing a transformation in recent years resulting in the still evolving concept of multi-literacies and multi-modalities (Ntelioglou, 2011; Shin & Cimasko, 2008). This literacy redefinition was prevalent across the identity-based research and redefines literacy to include communication including and beyond the traditional linguistic mode. The New London Group (1996) discusses the importance of developing competence in using and combining the range of modes available for meaning-making and communication and includes techniques for communicating through visual, spatial, audio, performance, and, of course, linguistic modes in the new literacy.

Shin and Cimasko (2008) argue that multimodal communication enables writers to present knowledge and communicate meanings more powerfully than can words alone. The array of modes available for communication gives the communicator options for nuance and agency that exceed those of traditional linguistic literacy. Ntelioglou (2011) concurs, and references Bourdieu (1977) in emphasizing the importance of multi-modality and multi-literacies along with the ability to combine and move between modes as a new kind of cultural capital. Five studies, discussed below, self-described with multi-modality and/or multi-literacies as their defining focus. Three of the studies used digital

storytelling or multi-modal composition (Fitts & Gross, 2010; Shin & Cimasko, 2008; Vinogradova, 2011), one used multi-modal tools in vocabulary acquisition (Ajayi, 2008) and the fifth used drama, through the lens of multi-literacies (Ntelioglou, 2011).

In their 2010 article, Fitts and Gross describe their work with 17 late primary students of mixed English proficiency and varying heritage languages, using digital storytelling to explore linguistic and cultural identity. Learners constructed multi-modal language learning autobiographies using poems, images, and audio to express their ideas and convey their identities. Learners were encouraged to draw on their proficiencies in languages other than English as part of the process. The authors noted increased pride and personal investment on the part of the students as a result of this identity-focused project. Specific findings related to second language acquisition were not mentioned.

Digital storytelling was also a focus in Vinogradova's 2011 dissertation exploring identity through digitally supported narrative. Twenty post-secondary students of advanced English proficiency participated in the project, which supported the digital storytelling process from inception to completion. Students participated in story circles and peer feedback cycles on ideas, images, and music. They created storyboards and wrote and recorded narratives. Vinogradova (2011) found that, though all students were second language learners, their English learner identity was less important to them than their other identities. The study reflected improved participants' communicative competence and increased overall investment in telling personal stories. Though participants reported that "they felt improvement of their English language skills, particularly writing" (p. 250) resulted from the digital storyboard project, data on language acquisition were not specifically gathered. In fact, Vinogradova proposes this is

an important area for future research.

Vinogradova's (2011) study also concluded that multi-modal discourses are an important and emerging type of cultural capital. As mentioned in Chapter Two, access to various kinds of capital (Bourdieu, 1977) can change depending on how identity is positioned (Christian & Bloome, 2004). Vinogradova's (2011) study shows that building capital in multi-modal discourses may give L2 learners additional, potentially valuable, identity positions with which to negotiate.

Shin and Cimasko (2008) investigated multi-modal composition as a tool for exploring identity with 14 post-secondary students of various heritages. In this study, identity was framed primarily in terms of academic, literate, cultural, and national identities. The authors' aim was to redefine literacy as a means of providing tools to improve communicative capacity and agency both in the communication of knowledge and the expression of personal identities. With the ultimate goal of publishing argumentative essays on the World Wide Web, students developed their capacity to use color, sound, words, and images as interactive communication (The New London Group, 1996). They were encouraged to consider all modes at the same time in creating a multi-layered product, not just as a written text augmented with other modes. Shin and Cimasko concluded that multi-modal composition can be a powerful tool for identity development, but found that students gave preference to linguistic resources and struggled with the legitimacy of non-linguistic modes, not taking full advantage of their potential, perhaps because of their identities as language learners and the primacy of the linguistic struggle in their lives (Shin & Cimasko, 2008). It was concluded that multi-modal composition needs to be taught and the various modes considered from the beginning of the

composition process to the end.

In contrast to the above three researchers, who framed their entire units or courses in multi-modality, Ajayi (2008) investigated multi-modal communication in a narrower context, a vocabulary lesson with 33 advanced English language proficiency high schoolers of Hispanic heritage. The task was to negotiate word meanings by integrating learners within the broader context of the content and language being taught. A political text, images, video clips, advertisements, and other modes were used to support students as they negotiated the meaning of key vocabulary and phrases through meaning guessing, group and class discussions.

Ajayi (2008) found that students drew on the multi-modal resources to position their identities; for example, there were significant differences in students' attempted definitions of key vocabulary in pre- and post-assessment. Pre-assessment definitions were often left blank or contained generalized and abstract definitions of concepts, such as *immigration* and *undocumented worker*. In contrast, post-assessment definitions often contained personal social references, such as "To move from you own place in Mexico to stay in America" and "Mexican who works in America and does not have permission to stay and work" (p. 225). Ajayi (2008) saw this as evidence that learners felt free "to impose their sociopolitical realities and voices in their meanings" (p. 225) and that contextualizing learners within the social framework of the content gave opportunities to challenge and position power relationships. Thus, findings showed both increased vocabulary acquisition and access to more meaningful, socially positioned comprehension of major concepts within the content area. In addition, similar to Shin and Cimasko (2008), Ajayi (2008) found that multi-modal competence requires explicit

instruction that should be delivered in a sustained and integrated way, not as an add-on to text-based communication.

Finally, Ntelioglou (2011) studied 50 adult immigrant learners of various cultural and linguistic backgrounds who were taking part in a mandatory drama class as part of a program that serves adults working towards high school diplomas. Type of identity was unspecified in this study, and participants were of varying levels of English proficiency. The class explored situated practice (learning environments that create opportunities for students to engage in meaningful experiences and make use of their own lives and experiences) and multi-modality within a multi-literacies framework. Since it was clearly framed in terms of multi-literacies by the author, this study is presented here in this section, as opposed to in the section detailing other uses of theater and drama in applied identity work.

In this course, which many students approached with initial reluctance, students created and produced identity texts by combining multi-modal forms such as writing, speaking, music, drama, and other modes to explore key issues in their lives. Ntelioglou (2011) emphasizes the importance of expanding multi-modality beyond technology to include the "embodied pedagogy" of body, movement, and space. Findings supported the use of drama and identity texts in engaging learners and increasing their investment as well as supporting their language acquisition and social identity negotiation. Ntelioglou (2011) attributed improvements in linguistic and social performances to students finding the multi-modal curriculum cognitively engaging in a way that gave them access to important identity positions and concluded it is a "potent pedagogy" (p. 598) in the second language classroom. An unexpected finding was student-reported improvement in

L2 writing performance attributed to the course providing them with "meaningful writing tasks through the reciprocal relationship between text and embodiment" (p. 609).

Pedagogical Stance or Philosophy.

The three studies within this category are grouped together because they share the purpose of looking specifically at the challenges of taking an identity-focused pedagogical or philosophical approach into practice and exploring its impact in the classroom. Unlike most of the other studies, these three do not focus on particular tools, techniques, or strategies. Rather, they explore the stance from which teaching occurs; it is no surprise, then, to find that these studies focus on teacher identity.

In fact, Ajayi (2011), in his second included study, attempts to define and fill a gap in the study of language acquisition and language teaching, namely improved understanding of language teachers' identities as mediating factors in their teaching practices. In the only included study focused exclusively on teacher identity, Ajayi's (2011) study used questionnaires, interviews, and teacher self-reflections to uncover how 57 urban junior high teachers connected their ethnic and social identities to their ESL pedagogy. The students taught by these teachers were of predominantly Hispanic heritage and, though student data were not gathered, student heritage did reflect in the teacher data discussed below. In this study the terms "ethnic" and "social" were used "to encompass the notions of ethnicity, class, gender, language, beliefs, attitudes, education, and prior life experiences" (p. 253) since it was determined that teacher backgrounds that related to pedagogy were constructed at multiple sites. Results showed clearly that teachers of different backgrounds interpreted their classroom roles differently and that those interpretations affected how teachers were able to take socio-cultural theory into practice.

It was discovered that teachers "deployed different approaches and strategies for ESL instruction based on personal dispositions, perspectives, beliefs, teaching experiences, and education" (Ajayi, 2011, p. 270). It was also evident that teachers from similar backgrounds employed similar pedagogy. Hispanic teachers tended to value connecting lessons to students' personal, social, historical, and cultural experiences. These teachers were also most likely to draw on their own personal histories and experiences in their classroom practice. African American teachers, on the other hand, were more likely to focus on socioeconomic backgrounds, setting high expectations, making connections to students' families, and incorporating music and the arts. Their pedagogy was often mediated by their personal views on social structure and their own experiences in the social system. White teachers tended to focus their pedagogy on notions of cultural diversity, empathy, and appreciation of differences. They emphasized trying to learn from their students and working to build connections across cultural boundaries. White teachers were also more likely to point to their university educational experiences as instrumental in influencing their pedagogy. There were also many findings showing that teacher identity, as defined by this study, correlated with very different positions on issues such as relevance and efficacy of school policies, instructional materials, and social and educational climate. For example, 69% of white teachers believed state and district tests were effective in assessing progress, as opposed to 20% of African American teachers and 12% of Hispanic teachers. Thus, in general, teachers' classroom stances were highly mediated by their own personal backgrounds and histories.

Ajayi (2011) found that it is important to deconstruct connections between teacher identity and pedagogy, and implications were primarily for teacher education programs

providing opportunities for pre-service teachers to do that important work. The study also recommended prospective teachers have immersion opportunities within the communities they serve in order to better understand the needs of diverse populations. While this study did investigate how sociocultural theory is applied in the classroom, Ajayi (2011) points to the need for further research in exploring the effectiveness of actual classroom practices and their impact on SLA.

Lee (2015) studied racial and cultural identity in a post-secondary context with 87 ELLs and 17 other participants (three administrators and 14 teachers). Students were of various heritages, though mostly of Chinese descent. The Canadian post-secondary institution where Lee (2015) conducted this study was committed to using a critical dialogic approach to culture in teaching language learners. The entire institutional philosophy held that learners need to be provided with appropriate social and cultural context in order to effectively learn to communicate; in other words, language is not enough. Lee (2015) wanted to explore the impact of this pedagogical philosophy on the learning environment. In addition, through extensive observation and analysis of curriculum, classroom documents, and other artifacts, Lee wanted to explore the interplay between culture and race.

Findings show that even in a setting where culture is thoughtfully and explicitly addressed, race can be tacitly involved; Lee (2015) states that "the everyday terminology of culture and cultural difference enables an avoidance of the clearly more controversial terminology of race…the work of race is able to continue to pervade invisibly in our everyday classroom discourses" (p. 82). Lee (2015) observed that daily talk around culture constructed dichotomies between students' cultures and "Canadian" culture,

creating an "implicit intersection of the English language with Whiteness" (p. 90). Often, a "nation-based understanding of culture" (p. 84) prevailed in the classroom. For example, a student of Japanese heritage, when questioned in a mock-news show classroom activity, was made to represent Japanese culture with her response, instead of her own individual opinion. In another scenario, a student interested in developing a project organized around the topic of grief over pet loss, was met with nation-based interpretations of her topic. It was suggested she could research how Canadians respond as opposed to how Japanese or other cultures do; the student's desire to investigate a topic that transcended nation-based definitions of culture was met with resistance and confusion. Though the program advocated critical questioning of culture, the questioning itself was seen to dichotomize. Cultural identities were literally "talked into being" (p. 82). Lee (2015) concluded "…there is a fundamental need for language educators to critically analyze and question how culture and cultural difference are constructed and constituted throughout everyday race talk…" (p. 91).

The last of the three pedagogical studies was conducted by Salazar (2010). This study focused on linguistic and cultural identity and included 60 high school English language learners of Mexican origin with varied English proficiency levels. The study tracked students' responses and reactions to different pedagogical styles. Specifically, three teachers with very different pedagogical styles, ranging from "dehumanizing" to "humanizing," or from rigidly enforced institutional English-only language policies to more student-centered and inclusive ones, were studied. Observations, interviews, focus groups, and other means were used to collect student responses to pedagogy. It was observed that the "dehumanizing" style engenders resistance in various forms, whereas

the "humanizing" one supported students in negotiating bilingual/bicultural identities without resistance. Key findings show that educators should carefully consider messages being sent by teacher and institutional pedagogical positions about heritage language and culture. Results favor a student-centered approach that builds critical links between students' two worlds. This study also made district-level recommendations for policies that promote and maintain heritage languages and a focus on building inclusive school cultures and ESL programs that celebrate multilingualism and additive identities rather than a more exclusive focus on building English proficiency.

Writing/Narrative

As with literature, writing and narrative was a feature of many of the identified studies. The following three, however, identified writing as the primary means by which identity was negotiated in the classroom space. These studies were situated in secondary, post-secondary, and adult environments and are presented in that order.

Hubbard and Shorey (2003) used writing workshops to explore identity, particularly linguistic identity, with secondary students of mixed heritage and proficiency level. Their goal was to develop writing skills by telling personal stories. They placed equal value on all linguistic resources, de-emphasizing the importance of English, and encouraged using first language skills especially when getting started on a story. They found that memories are often linked to the first language and, in encouraging first language use, students often found they had access to stories in a different, deeper way than when using only English. Once they had accessed them in the first language, they were more readily able to transfer them to English. They also incorporated multi-modal elements into the narrative process, finding that drawings and images also helped unlock

memory and imagination. Hubbard and Shorey found that telling stories in both languages develops academic strategies in both languages and a sense of identity that bridges the two. They strongly concluded that teachers and institutions need to put aside English-only attitudes and treat any and all linguistic resources as capital.

At the post-secondary level, Steinman (2007) used literacy autobiographies to investigate and negotiate academic and linguistic identity with 24 students of mixed heritage. These first-person accounts of writing development went through many phases, from timeline to the development of a critical incident paper. Steinman (2007) found that these autobiographies provided a means for students to develop meta-awareness about the languages and cultures in their lives. Through the autobiography, students positioned themselves in their story of becoming a multi-literate being. Another dimension of this research was a research project in which students did contrastive analysis between their heritage language and English. This also proved to be a powerful tool for building metacognition in the language learners. Both these projects enabled learners to develop a multi-literate identity that increased their sense of their heritage languages as linguistic capital.

Interestingly, Bonny Norton is one of only two researchers cited in both Chapter Two and Chapter Four of this capstone. Unlike many in the field, her work has bridged both research and practice. Her 1994 article "Using Diaries in Second Language Research and Teaching" (Peirce, 1994) details her experience bringing identity research into practice with five adult immigrant women. The diary study is framed in terms of social identity, but the role of gender is also acknowledged since all the participants are women whose gender necessarily plays a role in their social experience.

The diary study was an eight-week addition to a six-month ESL class. The author wanted to use diaries with the students to explore both how they understood their relationships with the social world and how they used English across environments. In particular, since research shows that enhanced learning takes place with greater opportunities for social interaction with native speakers, the diaries provided a place to document and elaborate on interactions with native speakers of English. They used the diaries and regular group discussions to reflect on social interactions with native speakers and on the difference between language as used inside and outside of the classroom. The women made notable progress in quality and quantity of writing and appeared to gain confidence in their social interactions. In particular, the diaries proved to be a powerful tool for analyzing their encounters with native speakers and negotiating their social identities in the process (Peirce, 1994).

Literature

Some use of literature, particularly multicultural literature, was found in many of the studies uncovered in this systematic review. The two studies in this section, however, are here because they described literature as their primary means for accessing identity. Interestingly, there appears to be a wide degree of relevance to using literature across the learner age spectrum, since these two cases were situated at the primary and secondary levels. In addition, Rambo (2005), discussed in the section on identity-based curricula earlier in this chapter, also used literature as the foundation for identity negotiation at the post-secondary level.

In 2005, Carrison and Ernst-Slavit reported significant gains in reading comprehension resulting from the use of literature circles with upper primary students.

Five ELL students of varied heritage and English proficiency levels were studied, along with 24 non-ELL students. Literature circles gave students informal opportunities to practice language skills and explore social and cultural issues and their own identities in relationship to those issues. In addition to student-driven discussions and group text analysis, learners engaged in a variety of multi-modal activities, generating their own drawings, books, maps, and other artifacts in response to texts and discussions. In addition to improved reading comprehension, learners experienced measurable growth in confidence, enjoyment, and investment in the reading process and in their identities as readers. One ELL student progressed from total refusal to read during independent reading time to frequently requesting to go to the library to check out new books and voluntarily doing book reports for extra credit.

Similarly, Gold (2008) used book groups organized around young adult novels and non-fiction with multicultural themes to explore ethnic, racial, cultural, and national identity amongst middle school students of Chinese heritage with a range of English language proficiency. Gold (2008) found that by middle school, bilingual/bicultural identity development is well underway. Within book group discussions learners visibly grappled with conflicting identity positions, showing a "degree of discomfort with all their roles" (p. 142). They struggled to find a balance between becoming "whitewashed" and being too "fobby," a term derived from F.O.B., or "fresh off the boat" (p. 142). One student talked about noticing stages of being "whitewashed and then accepting yourself" (p. 142). The student recounted a process she observed in herself and many friends of initially wanting to become "whitewashed" or Americanized because it was cool, then slowly coming around to realizing that "being Asian is awesome" (p. 142) and,

ultimately, trying to find a balance.

In addition to exploring the identity positioning of students in relationship to society, Gold (2008) also wanted to experiment with creating a safe school climate for addressing these issues. In the literature circles, students felt safe to respond to themes raised in the literature such as parental influence, peer interactions, and "in-group" versus "out-group" friendships. One piece of literature, in which the main character's grandmother frequently shares stories, shifted the perspective of one of the book group's participants. This student went from "tuning out" (p. 165) her own grandmother's stories to wanting to make a film project about Chinatown that was reflective of her grandmother's experience. Gold (2008) interpreted this as "a major breakthrough in her identity negotiation" (p. 165), having witnessed the student struggling to integrate her multiple identities over the course of the study. Gold found that identity negotiation can be considerably influenced by curricular and pedagogical choices at this key time in adolescent identity development, and using multicultural literature showed beneficial effects on both identity negotiation and confidence. Though participants were chosen because they were Chinese or Chinese-American, findings related to language acquisition were not included. Participants did experience meaningful access to literature written in English; however, these results were not framed in terms of language proficiency by the author.

Theater/Role Play

In addition to Ntelioglou's (2011) study, discussed earlier in the chapter due to its multi-modal emphasis, Brash and Warnecke (2009) also used acting and role-play to explore and negotiate identity. Their journal article summarizes extensive experience

using role-play as a teaching tool for language development and identity negotiation. Role-play can be used in a variety of scenarios: transactions, negotiations and other drama-based situations. Brash and Warnecke (2009) prioritized the role being portrayed by the student actor over his or her language accuracy in performing the role, and their findings show that role-play enables language learners to step out of rehearsed roles and language patterns, experiment with new identity positions in a fun and playful context, and explore fears and other strong emotions in a sheltered way.

Intonation and Prosody

In Morgan's (1997) first included study, he experimented with using the negotiation of intonation patterns to facilitate the negotiation of identity positions. Working with adult immigrants of Asian heritage, Morgan used a teacher-created dialogue, contextualized in a relevant social situation of a woman wanting to take English classes and her husband questioning her choice. In the dialogue, the word "oh" took on significance; depending on the intonation used, it could position the woman as confident and dismissive of the husband's questions, or fearful and accommodating. Students were able to practice identity positions using intonation and prosody. The class used this experience as a springboard to write and perform their own dialogues exploring other social contexts. Morgan (1997) found that this approach offered reciprocal advantages to both identity and language; using intonation in this way offered transformative options for identity negotiation, and understanding the identity positioning going on in the dialogue led to greater facility with the more advanced level language performance features of intonation and prosody.

Teacher Identity Performance

Morgan (2004), in his second included study, applied identity theory in the classroom with adults, primarily of Chinese heritage. He found over time that a "performance" of his own identity positions was a powerful tool in making student positions visible. He experimented with making certain features of his own identity more visible in response to class discourse. For example, when it became clear that his students had assumptions about men not participating in cooking, cleaning, and child care identities, he emphasized his own role in home-making to challenge their preconceptions of possible identity positions for men. Over time, Morgan (2004) saw this technique of "teacher identity as pedagogy" lead to gradual shifts in the options students imagined for their own identities and in their social relationships.

Pop Culture

The use of pop culture and discussions about current events in a social studies class was the subject of Duff's (2002) research in a secondary school with approximately fifty percent ELL students of various Asian backgrounds. Pop culture discussions were used to give students a chance to co-construct social identities and socio-cultural affiliations as they built content knowledge. It was discovered that these conversations were effective for the non-ELLs, but did not take into account the varying pop-culture knowledge and perspectives of the ELLs. Thus, while the intent of the teaching strategy was sound and brought about desired results for some students, it was not effective for most of the ELLs. Duff (2002) suggests a need to both make "local" pop culture more accessible to ELLs in these discussions by explicitly teaching about the importance of key figure and ideas, and to expand the conversation to include other elements of pop

culture that ELLs are immersed in, taking a critical look at media literacy and whose voices are represented so that non-ELLs also become aware of alternative voices.

Social Media/Social Networking

Chen's (2012) dissertation could have been included with multi-literacies, but it is discussed separately since it is the only study defined primarily in terms of social media and social networking. Chen (2012) studied 18 post-secondary students of varying heritages in a college-level ESL writing class; identity type was unspecified in this study. In an effort to apply research findings about social networking and second language learning, namely that social media can provide a kind of "third space" (p. 123) for identity negotiation, the class incorporated social networking into L2 writing pedagogy in an effort to build a bridge between school and non-school literacy practices.

Students built an awareness of genre by first studying Facebook as a genre. In this process they negotiated identity positions as genre analysts and researchers using their own Facebook exposure. As part of the student-conducted research, participants examined their own Facebook use in both L1 and L2 online communities. It was discovered that students engaged in more passive activities, reading friends' status updates and looking at pictures, in their L1s. In L2 interactions, they more frequently updated their own statuses and engaged in conversations. Students then extended the skills they learned in the social media research to academic genres, contrasting digital and traditional genres for common elements. Chen (2012) found that using social networking as part of L2 writing curriculum offered opportunities for complex identity work on a variety of levels. In examining social media use, Chen (2012) found the choices "to be indicative of the L2 users' representations of their identities, identities that were fluid,

dynamic, and developmental over time" (p. 174). Making connections to informal literacy practices also led to deeper content understanding of traditional literacy.

Discussion of Themes

The guiding question of this systematic review was: what does research say about identity-focused SLA as applied in the classroom? In pursuit of an answer, this review has examined studies undertaken in teaching environments using some manner of applied identity theory in a second language learning environment. The various classroom applications were as narrow as a single vocabulary lesson (Ajayi, 2008) and as broad as an institutionalized pedagogy of sociocultural language learning theory (Lee, 2015). And while no two studies were the same, several commonalities did emerge in the review, and many positive results were seen across the studies both in terms of identity negotiation and language learning. Upon analysis, seven themes have been defined and are discussed below. These themes are: fostering linguistically and culturally inclusive environments, incorporating multi-modal learning and multi-literacies, using writing, contextualizing learning, integrating personal stories and autobiography, engaging the student as researcher, and utilizing drama and role-play.

Linguistically and Culturally Inclusive Environment

An important theme that emerged in various ways was the notion of building a classroom culture on a foundation of inclusion and acceptance (Salazar, 2010). Valuing the cultural and linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1977) that all students bring to the classroom was a key factor in achieving an explicitly open and accepting environment. Including home languages and building bridges between L1 and L2 helped students access memories and build communicative competence (Hubbard & Shorey, 2003). Valuing

heritage languages as important linguistic capital helps students build multi-literate identities. In addition, Salazar's (2010) research clearly showed that English-only, teacher-centered approaches are disenfranchising and diminish student investment. Salazar (2010) also recommends extending the inclusion environment beyond the classroom to school-wide and district-wide initiatives.

<u>Multi-modal Learning and Multi-literacies</u>

Another common theme was that of incorporating multi-modal learning and multi-literacies into the learning environment (Ajayi, 2008; Carrison & Ernst-Slavit, 2005; Frye, 1999;Gladstein, 1999; Hubbard & Shorey, 2003; Shin & Cimasko, 2008; Wilson, 2012). Multi-modal methods, which layer together visual, spatial, and auditory modes with more traditional literacy, provided benefits for receptive learning, such as grasping new vocabulary words (Ajayi, 2008) and understanding literature (Carrison & Ernst-Slavit, 2005), as well as productive learning, such as creating web pages (Shin & Cimasko, 2008) and podcasts (Wilson, 2012).

Norton (2006) described identity as "complex, contradictory and multifaceted" (p. 3), emphasizing the dynamic and shifting nature of identity across time. In the applied studies, multi-modality provided an opportunity for learners to layer their expressions of self and distance themselves from the limitations of binaries such as native/non-native (Nero, 2005; Block, 2012). Researchers also learned that using multi-modal tools as a springboard for writing helped learners access memories (Hubbard & Shorey, 2003) and express the complexities of multilingual/multicultural identities.

Shin and Cimasko (2008) and Wilson (2012) emphasized the importance of multi-modal communication as an emerging kind of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1977). They

agreed that it must be taught explicitly and in an integrated manner, not as an add-on to more traditional linguistic communication. Shin and Cimasko (2008) noted that when engaging in multi-modal projects, language learners tended to overly emphasize linguistic modes, perhaps because of their own struggles. Thus, expanding the array of communicative possibilities available to language learners through multi-modal learning, while beneficial, may require explicit attention on the part of the teacher to building investment (Norton & Toohey, 2001) in this non-traditional learning mode.

Using Writing

Another theme that surfaced repeatedly was that of using writing for identity development and, conversely, identity for writing development. Diaries and journals were an often-used tool for learners to explore ideas in an uncensored way (Gladstein, 1999; Hubbard & Shorey, 2003; Lau, 2010; Peirce, 1994; Rambo, 2005; Smidt, 2007). For example, Hubbard and Shorey (2003) discovered that placing equal value on all linguistic resources, both L1 and L2, enabled students to engage more freely in the writing process. Using the L1 often helped students get started on their writing projects more easily. Fascinatingly, Rambo (2005) discovered that using writing to develop identity awareness helped push already high-proficiency students to even more advanced levels of writing, speculating that the identity work supported the development of "voice" in their writing.

In another example, Peirce's (1994) adult students used journal writing as a means of exploring interactions with target language (TL) speakers and their own responses in those circumstances. Access to TL communities has been identified as an essential part of the language learning process, and one that is fraught with power dynamics (Nieto, 2002). Thus, self-reflection gave learners the opportunity to understand

and challenge their own identity positioning in relationships with TL speakers (Norton & Toohey, 2001; Peirce, 1994; Peirce, 1995). Writing was also used to develop identity-texts (Ntelioglou, 2011) and respond to literature (Gold, 2008; Hubbard & Shorey, 2003).

Contextualized Learning

As discussed at length in Chapter Two, one of the fundamental beliefs of identity-focused SLA is that learners must be considered in context (Peirce, 1995). Thus, contextualizing learning in issues that are relevant to students proved to be an important classroom choice. Researchers found that embedding instruction in critical, student-centered issues led not only to learning, but also to opportunities for social transformation (Chen, 2012; Frye, 1999; Lau, 2010; Norton, 1994), rendering Freire's (2000) legacy of problem-posing and social transformation highly visible in a wide variety of manifestations. For example, Chen (2012) personalized genre study with post-secondary students by having them investigate their own social media use, while Frye (1999) developed an entire curriculum around issues pertaining to Latina adults in community education. Bullying and stereotyping of ESL students became a springboard for both language learning and social empowerment (Lau, 2010), and identity-texts and dialogues, embodied via role-play, gave students safe opportunities to negotiate identity options for many critical situations in their lives (Morgan, 1997, Ntelioglou, 2011). Other studies (Carrison & Ernst-Slavit, 2005; Gold, 2008) made use of multicultural texts and immigrant literature as a core component of the identity focus that naturally built in a connection to relevant issues.

Personal Stories and Autobiography

Language learning narratives have long been an important tool for SLA

researchers (Coffey & Street, 2008). These personal language learning stories and other forms of autobiography and personal reflection featured in identity-centered classroom environments as well. These narratives were developed through both traditional linguistic means (Frye, 1999); Hubbard & Shorey, 2003; Rambo, 2005) and through digital storytelling (Fitts & Gross, 2010; Ntelioglou, 2011; Shin & Cimasko, 2008; Vinogradova, 2011). One effective variation on this theme was composition about language learning or literacy autobiographies (Fitts & Gross, 2010; Steinman, 2007). It was shown that the process of positioning oneself within a narrative as a developing multilingual was a powerful process for many learners, helping them emerge with a greater sense of competence and ownership of linguistic confidence.

Student as Researcher

Another theme that manifested in a number of different ways was that of the student as researcher. For example, as mentioned earlier, Chen (2012) built student investment by having them research their own social media use and analyze it with the same rigor they needed to learn to bring to other genre studies. The active engagement in research peaked student interest for the work that followed. Investigating their own language use on social media also gave transparency to Watkins-Goffman's (2001) assertion that identity is constantly being negotiated and renegotiated through language use.

Gladstein (1999) involved students as co-investigators in multiple activities that invited their critical questioning of American culture, allowing students to bring their own interpretations to it, as opposed to being given interpretations by the instructor. Steinman (2007), by having students engage in a contrastive analysis project between

their first language and English, helped students position themselves as analysts and academics in a new way. Students negotiated identities as researchers while simultaneously building metalinguistic understandings of their L1 and L2 language use (Steinman, 2007).

Drama and Role-Play

Drama and role-play were also highlights that emerged. Brash and Warnecke (2009) worked with role play in many different ways over time, building a repertoire of techniques using socially relevant scenarios that included transactions, negotiations, and social positioning. Ntelioglou (2011) also used drama to give learners opportunities to rehearse potentially difficult or socially challenging situations in a safe environment and build the language needed to navigate complex social relationships and interactions. Finally, Morgan (1997) also used dialogues and role-play, with an emphasis on intonation, to support students in learning accurate oral language skills and broaden their awareness of identity options in their social lives. Using drama and role-play gave learners opportunities to build identities in imagined communities (Peirce, 1995) in safe and structured ways.

Norton's Five Beliefs About Identity-Focused SLA Revisited

The 24 studies reviewed in this chapter all test classroom applications of identity-focused SLA. Since Chapter Two uses Norton's (2006) five beliefs about identity as a framework for defining the sub-field, the beliefs are now reconsidered with an emphasis on application. Once again, the beliefs are:

1. Identity is dynamic and constantly changing across time and place,

2. Identity is "complex, contradictory and multifaceted," (p. 3)

3. Language is both a product of and a tool for identity construction,

4. Identity can only be understood in the context of relationships and power, and

5. Much identity-focused SLA research makes connections to classroom practice.

All studies made use of one or more of Norton's (2006) beliefs. The discussion below does not present a comprehensive analysis of each manifestation of Norton's beliefs in the systematically reviewed studies. Instead, the beliefs are once again used to frame an understanding of what identity-focused SLA is and to extend that understanding to include how the five beliefs look when put into action.

The first belief describes identity as dynamic and constantly changing across time and place (Norton, 2006), and researchers experimented with applications of this belief in different ways. Through theater and role-play (Brash & Warnecke, 2009; Ntelioglou, 2011), learners increased their understanding of the dynamic and changing aspects of identity by playing new roles and experimenting with unfamiliar identity positions. Similarly, Morgan (2004) performed different identity positions as a teacher in an effort to present other options for identity to adult learners. In addition, through exposure to multicultural literature and identity-focused discussions in book circles, other learners became aware of how their identities as Asian Americans were changing over time (Gold, 2008) and built new investment in their identities as readers (Carrison & Ernst-Slavit, 2005). Duff (2002) noted that attempts to facilitate students' co-construction of social identities and socio-cultural affiliations failed if the content did not reflect the knowledge and perspectives of the ELL learners. Finally, Chen (2012), Steinman (2007), and Wilson (2012), worked with students to help them develop new identities as genre analysts, researchers, and multilingual communicators respectively.

In Norton's (2006) second belief, identity is described as "complex, contradictory and multifaceted," (p. 3). For example, Chen's students (2012) noticed that their identities were expressed differently in the Facebook community depending upon their use of L1 or L2. Also, many researchers found that multi-modal and identity-based curricula effectively supported students in expressing the complexities of individual identity in a more nuanced way than traditional methods (Fitts & Gross, 2010; Shin, 2008; Vinogradova, 2011; Wilson, 2012), while journals and autobiographical storytelling offered additional opportunities to explore the complexities and contradictions of identity (Frye, 1999; Norton, 1994). To illustrate these contradictions, Frye (1999) reported the women in her study experienced both solidarity and competition as a result of their identity positioning as Latinas. Lee (2015), on the other hand, discovered that even system-wide efforts to address identity and culture in a conscious and informed way can have unexpected complexities, such as making unconscious connections between whiteness and English.

The third belief (Norton, 2006) describes how language can be both a tool for and a product of identity construction. Studies with a role-playing identity application focus (Brash & Warnecke, 2009; Ntelioglou, 2011) displayed this dual focus. Learners inhabited unfamiliar roles that forced them to experiment with using language in different ways, and they also constructed language that allowed them to take on new identity positions. Frye (1999) taught the language of critical questioning in order to facilitate identity development, while Rambo (2004) taught "I-statements" and self-reflective language explicitly to give students the linguistic tools for identity construction. Lau (2010) learned that these activities are possible even with students of very low English

proficiency provided adequate scaffolds are in place. Morgan (1999) used intonation and prosody work to help students experiment with different identity positions and found that both language and identity development benefitted. Finally, Shin (2008) and Vinogradova (2011) noticed that in the absence of adequate linguistic capital, images become a kind of language that supports expression and construction of identity.

Norton's (2006) fourth belief about identity emphasizes the importance of relationships and power. For example, Salazar's (2010) study demonstrated the critical importance of inclusive classroom and institutional practices; "dehumanizing" power dynamics expressed in individual pedagogical choices led to resistance in both behavior and language learning. Ajayi (2011) found that teachers of all ethnic backgrounds were very aware of the social power dynamics involved in identity construction for their students and used this awareness to tailor their classroom activities in various ways. Frye (1999) and Peirce (1994) encouraged adult learners to explicitly explore power and relationships through discussion and storytelling activities (Frye, 1999) and language learning journals that examined relationships with target language speakers (Peirce, 1994). In addition, intonation and prosody were used to explore power positions in relationships in new ways (Morgan, 1999). Finally, Lau's (2010) students were able to reposition themselves in response to bullying by rewriting their bullying experiences and engaging in critical thinking about identity.

The fifth of Norton's (2006) beliefs about identity is that much identity-focused SLA makes connections to classroom practice. Of course, since classroom practice is the focal point of this capstone, only studies that attempted these connections were included in the systematic review. Thus, all studies in Chapter Four exemplified this fifth belief of

Norton's (2006). In fact, they sought not just to make connections between research and practice, but to test them.

Summary

Ultimately, it became evident in this literature review that attention to identity can be woven successfully into almost any aspect of curriculum or pedagogy and, in fact, should be viewed as a critical part of providing relevant and supportive instruction to language learners from late primary school through adulthood. Using an additive model of bilingualism (Herrera & Murry, 2011) that values all language as capital (Bourdieu, 1977; Hubbard & Shorey, 2003), casting aside all notions of an English only, teacher-centered mentality (Salazar, 2010), becoming deeply aware of teacher identity and pedagogical choices (Lee, 2015), providing adequate scaffolding (Lau, 2010) for even the lowest learners to access critical thinking and questioning, and building community across cultures and with native speakers (Nero, 2005), can create a solid foundation for second language learning, heritage language preservation, and identity development that supports the complexities and multiple forces at play in the lives of multilingual multicultural students.

This chapter presents the results of a systematic literature review analyzing the findings of 24 studies characterized by inclusion of classroom application of identity-focused SLA. The guiding question for this review is: what does research say about identity-focused SLA as applied in the classroom? Details of included studies were summarized according to type of identity, publication type, peer reviewed status, student/teacher identity, number of participants, educational setting, country of study, participants' heritage language and English proficiency, identity application foci of study,

and methods of data collection. Then, highlights of each individual study were presented, including study purpose and major findings related to identity and language acquisition. Chapter Five will address the major findings of this review. Limitations of this research are then discussed, followed by implications for teaching and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

This systematic literature review searched through the considerable body of

research exploring identity-focused SLA to look for studies that sought to take theory

into practice in the classroom. Bonny Norton's (2006) five common beliefs of identity-

focused SLA were used as a framework for conceptualizing this sub-field of SLA. The

guiding question for this review was: what does research say about identity-focused SLA

as applied in the classroom? This chapter will review the major findings of this study,

discuss the limitations of this research, present implications, and consider possibilities for

further research.

Major Findings

Before conducting this review, it was clear there was a substantial body of

research linking SLA and identity and, often, creating *implications* for the classroom. In

fact, Norton (2006) explicitly stated that one of the themes of identity-focused SLA is

that "much research seeks to link identity theory with classroom practice" (p. 3).

However, these implications are often untested, asserted Nassaji (2012), stating that

classroom applications of identity-focused SLA represent a gap in the research. In an

effort to reconcile the above two perspectives, this capstone sought to explore the gap and

discover what does exist when it comes to application of identity-focused SLA in the

classroom.

Fortunately, it was discovered that since the mid-1990s there have been a number

of researchers testing identity-focused SLA theory in the classroom in a variety of ways; in fact, there were enough examples to make application of identity theory a criteria for inclusion. Since it was initially considered a possibility that this review might need to be based on the untested suggestions and implications of identity-focused SLA theorists, the *existence* of a body of research on applied theory is considered one of the findings of this review.

In total 24 studies were found to not just include implications and suggestions for curriculum and pedagogy, but to test these ideas actively and explicitly; all of Norton's (2006) five beliefs about identity were exemplified in the studies selected. Seventeen journal articles, all peer reviewed, and seven doctoral dissertations were ultimately included. All were from English-dominant local communities: fifteen from the United States, eight from Canada, and one from Great Britain.

Identity, as defined in the included studies, was found to reflect the ambiguity and flexibility of definition discussed in Chapter Two; in fact, ten major categories of identity were used throughout the 24 studies. The term "identity" was found qualified by the following terms (from most to least frequently): cultural, linguistic, ethnic, social, racial, gender, academic/literate, national, and class. Most often, however, it was used without qualification; in those cases, it was defined as "unspecified."

Overall, it was discovered that identity can be integrated into the classroom in many ways and expressed in both attitudes and actions, and seven major themes emerged from the data. In Chapter Two, Peirce (1995) was quoted as saying that identity is "multiple, a site of struggle" (p. 9). Multiplicity is also reflected in the seven major themes identified in this review, and it must be noted that there is considerable overlap

between the themes, with one theme rarely being used in isolation from one or more of the others. For example, the tool of autobiography was frequently employed alongside the tool of writing (Fitts & Gross, 2010), and multi-modal methods were used in conjunction with multicultural literature (Hubbard & Shorey, 2003). However, the themes were isolated in Chapter Four and below for discussion purposes.

Firstly, the most pervasive notion was to build a classroom (and institutional) culture of inclusion and acceptance that does not just tacitly accept difference, but openly invites the expression of it (Salazar, 2010). Researchers repeatedly reported the importance of valuing what learners already bring to the classroom in terms of linguistic and socio-cultural tools as assets. Building bridges between first and second language and cultures and valuing, maintaining and building L1 or heritage language skills and identities was an essential feature of this work. This valuing and acknowledging of the multiple selves of multilinguals provided a critical framework for supporting both identity negotiation and second language acquisition.

Secondly, using multi-modal tools and multi-literacies to both access and produce knowledge of content and of self was an important instructional theme. Across the studies, learners combined and augmented traditional literacies with other visual, spatial and auditory modes as they accessed literature and other content, created podcasts and web pages, used dialogues and theater techniques to explore relevant issues and learn key linguistic features, and composed personal stories and autobiographies to express and develop identity positions. In addition to being an effective tool for teachers to use, Shin & Cimasko (2008) and Wilson (2012) strongly expressed the position that skill with multi-modal communications is an essential and emerging kind of cultural capital for all

learners.

Using writing was another important finding across the studies. Teachers and learners used journals and diaries to develop identity positions, explore social interactions, and improve linguistic capacity. Students wrote personal stories, responses to literature, reflections, academic papers and literacy autobiographies. Writing took place in English and home languages, using traditional linguistic methods and augmenting them with digital and multi-modal tools. While there was certainly variety in its many uses, there was a common thread of frequent and repeated use of writing across learning environments.

An additional theme that emerged involved the use of problem-posing techniques, originating from the work of Pablo Freire (2000), and other methods such as incorporating multicultural literature, to contextualize learning in issues of relevance for the students and their communities. This review confirmed that embedding language instruction in contexts that matter to learners supported both language acquisition and identity development. Responsiveness to learners' multiple identities and life circumstances enabled teachers to build investment across age groups and educational settings, from primary students in English dominant classrooms (Carrison & Ernst-Slavit, 2005) to middle school learners with low English proficiency (Lau, 2010) to post-secondary students exploring social media to adult Latina immigrants (Frye, 1999). In some cases, this strategy of using student-centered contexts took learners from reluctant to fully invested participants (Ntelioglou, 2011).

The above theme of contextualizing instruction in relevant issues overlaps seamlessly with the fourth theme: using personal stories and autobiography. Throughout

the literature, learners developed personal stories in many contexts with multiple tools. Personal memories, key events, and literacy autobiographies were related via spoken word presentations, podcasts, multi-modal composition and, of course, traditional linguistic expression. The use of personal stories and autobiography helped students position their identities explicitly in their own lives, an important feature of identity-based instruction (Gold, 2008; Rambo, 2005).

Another theme is that of the student as researcher. Students used the above mentioned personal stories and autobiography to research their own lives (Fitts & Gross, 2010; Frye, 1999; Hubbard & Shorey, 2003; Smidt, 2007). However, they also became analysts of social media (Chen, 2012), American culture (Gladstein, 1999), and language through contrastive analysis (Steinman, 2007). Positioning themselves as researchers and analysts played an important role in building identities that supported them, not just as multilingual/multicultural individuals, but as academics.

Finally, the use of drama, dialog and role-play emerged as an important theme. Teachers used these tools to build the language and the identity positions necessary to meet the challenges of their students' lives and, perhaps, build identities within imagined communities (Peirce, 1995). The "embodied pedagogy" (Ntelioglou, 2010) of theater and role play was also viewed as an additional layer of multi-modality.

Limitations of this Research

Of necessity, due to the parameters of time and purpose imposed on this project, the scope of this research was limited in a number of ways. Thus, while several interesting and relevant findings emerged, there are limitations to what has been uncovered. Some of this study's limitations are likely common characteristics of all

systematic literature reviews, but others are specific to this review.

Systematic literature reviews, by definition, use data generated by other researchers. It follows, then, that the data are shaped by the perspectives and frameworks used by the many researchers and institutions involved. It cannot be expected that every study will use the same terminology or describe the same phenomena uniformly. This was evident in the multiple definitions for identity used across the included studies, as well as in the many, diverse applications of identity work in the classroom. This inevitably made it more challenging to look for themes across categories when, for example, students were classified by one study as proficiency Level 3, by another as high, by a third as advanced, with proficiency level not discussed at all in another. These differences across studies were also visible, of course, in the many types of identity and identity-application foci considered by the various researchers. Identifying common themes without common language is definitely one of the primary challenges and limitations of this type of research, requiring interpretation in areas where it might not be necessary in more traditional research.

Every study reviewed had a different purpose; thus, findings were difficult to analyze for consistency since each study had a different investigative purpose. All studies reviewed implemented identity-focused SLA in a classroom comprised partially or entirely of second language learners. However, language acquisition was not always a stated goal, and some studies presented no explicit findings for SLA (Ajayi, 2011; Duff, 2002; Fitts & Gross, 2010; Gold, 2008; Morgan, 2004; Salazar, 2010; Smidt, 2007; Vinogradova, 2011). Some stated vague findings, such as improved communicative competence (Shin & Cimasko, 2008), greater accountability for language use (Lee,

2015), increased investment (Chen, 2012; Frye, 1999; Peirce, 1994), or student reported improvements in writing (Vinogradova, 2011; Ntelioglou, 2011) without defining those improvements in measurable ways.

In addition, the scope of this particular research was narrowed in a number of ways that were ultimately limiting. First of all, included studies were conducted in English dominant regions only, excluding possibly significant findings from other parts of the world with different language dynamics and, potentially, relevant research written in languages other than English. Additionally, when it comes to teacher identity, significant bodies of potentially very interesting work on non-native teachers of English and pre-service teachers were excluded.

Last but not least, as discussed in Chapter Two, there is a division, albeit a fuzzy one, between second language acquisition (SLA) research and bilingual research; SLA focuses on learners who clearly learn a first language followed by a second one, while bilingualism tends to address learners who grow up learning both languages, though the use of the term bilingual is not consistent across the literature. Despite the distinction made between the two in the research, there is not necessarily a clear division in the classroom, and many of the identity struggles experienced by these populations are similar. "Bilingual" was included in some of the literature search term combinations, but it was mostly necessary to exclude the enormous body of research on bilingual/bicultural students to keep the scope of this capstone realistic. However, the constructs of additive and subtractive bilingualism (Herrera & Murry, 2011) were valuable to this analysis.

Implications of the Systematic Literature Review

This review has examined 24 studies that sought to integrate identity-focused

SLA research into classroom practice. Though the means differed greatly across studies, the results seem definitive. Twenty-two of the studies reported positive results pertaining to identity, SLA or both, with only two studies reporting mixed or inconclusive results (Duff, 2002; Lee, 2015). Thus, at least in a broad sense, the implications are clear; identity matters to SLA, and paying attention to issues pertaining to identity in the classroom has a measurable impact on identity negotiation and second language learning.

Bilingual education has been strongly shown to support additive bilingualism (Herrera & Murry, 2011) and to be the best form of education for culturally and linguistically diverse learners. However, for many reasons having to do with social context, such as lack of financial and human resources, geographic challenges, political pressures, and lack of advocacy for ELLs, bilingual education is often not an option for language learners. Most language learners in the U.S. are educated without the benefits of bilingual education (Herrera & Murry, 2011).

One startling statistic Ajayi (2011) uncovered was that 72% of white teachers surveyed believed that the "English-only" policies of their schools were effective at meeting the "social, linguistic and affective" needs of ESL students (p. 268), while only 20% of African American and 24% of Hispanic teachers believed the same. Thus the challenge for educators is to both become aware of how their own identities are positioned in relationship to language learners and the social structures those learners must navigate, and to create learning environments and social contexts in the classroom, that mitigate the disadvantages that arise in the absence of ideal circumstances.

This review has also shown that identity can be integrated into curriculum and pedagogy in many ways to support language learners both in acquiring language and in

negotiating identity. Indeed, this research has potential implications not just for an

isolated vocabulary lesson in a single class (Ajayi, 2008), but for programs, schools,

districts, states, and even the nation as a whole (Ajayi, 2011; Salazar, 2010).

Hopefully, teacher education programs are beginning to take notice of the

implications of identity work both for learners and for teachers as well. Ideally, teachers

should explore their own identities and the impact of their identities on their future

choices in the classroom during their teacher training. Salazar (2010) focused an entire

study on the critical importance of teacher pedagogical stances on learner investment;

however, many of the other reviewed studies implicated teacher identity as well (Ajayi,

2011; Gladstein, 1999; Gold, 2008; Lau, 2010; Lee 2015; Morgan, 2004). This should

come as no surprise since, as shown in Chapter Two, identity is highly relational, and it

would, therefore, be nearly impossible to discuss learners and their identity positions

without also discussing teachers.

Whether pre-service or already actively in the classroom, individual teachers can

begin or continue making identity a consideration in their classrooms on whatever levels

they are comfortable with. Using the seven themes identified in this review, teachers can

incorporate more multi-modal learning, both for receptive and productive purposes. In

addition, they can use writing or multi-modal narratives, making certain to teach the

affective language necessary for writing about self (Rambo, 2005). In particular, writing

can be used to support the telling of personal and autobiographical stories. Teachers can

also strive to embed learning in contexts that students have identified as relevant and

personal, and engage students as researchers and analysts of their worlds. Finally, they

can incorporate dialogs and role-plays to give students real-time experience engaging

with different identity positions and contexts and practice with the language needed to navigate them; in doing this, they support students in establishing membership in imagined communities (Peirce, 1995), which may build personal investment and empower learners both inside and outside of the classroom. Any of these techniques, alone or in combination, can be used to enhance learning by integrating identity into the classroom experiences of second language learners.

Though this review was focused on classroom experiences, it revealed implications beyond the classroom as well. Creating a safe learning community where everyone's cultural and linguistic assets are valued is much easier when there is a system-wide approach. Programs, schools and districts can take this information into account when making curricular decisions, but also when crafting policies and modeling inclusive perspectives at a systems level. For example, encouraging and celebrating heritage language use, not just in ESL classes, but school-wide, could go a long way toward supporting multilingual students in negotiating their full and complex identities. It was clear from this research that English-only models not only risk engendering resistance (Salazar, 2010), but they may also quite literally prevent students from having access to their full repertoire of memories and experiences (Hubbard & Shorey, 2003).

<div align="center">Further Research</div>

This review suggests many possibilities for further research. In the 24 studies by 22 researchers, no two researchers explored identity from the same angle. There are seemingly infinite ways to experiment with identity negotiation in the language learning classroom. The more research that exists actively applying these ideas, the more refined and comprehensive the suggestions for teachers can be.

Additionally, it would be very beneficial to experiment with the seven identified themes. Having teachers test these themes in their classrooms would be an important next step in assessing their impact on language learning and identity negotiation. It could then be discovered whether the results are replicable and whether these themes can be applied effectively across student populations and learning environments.

It also seems important to bridge the divide between SLA and bilingualism. These populations are addressed separately in the literature, but are often together in the classroom. What role does identity play in the growing population of long-term ELLs? How much of a factor is identity in the epidemic of subtractive bilingualism in the United States today? Could identity-work and programming that builds pride and identity in *both* English and heritage languages and cultures make a difference?

Finally, it was surprising how little attention to class identity appeared in the literature. Class is an emerging focus of research in many areas, but its popularity does not seem to have extended to identity-focused SLA research yet (Block, 2012). It would be interesting to specifically investigate the impact of class identity on language learning.

Communicating the Results

This research will be made available in an electronic format via the Hamline University website. It is hoped that the themes uncovered here may be of interest to others interested in applying identity-focused SLA theory in the classroom. In the future, I hope to also publish a summary of these findings in a relevant journal.

Conclusion

This systematic literature review began with a personal interest in identity that has since become professional. When I was getting my ESL teaching license, an exploratory

paper was assigned. I recall wondering, when I did my first academic literature searches on language learning and identity for that exploratory paper, whether there would be any results, whether this was a topic that anyone, anywhere had written about. It turns out that many have, and I have subsequently benefitted both personally and professionally from their work; I hope that my students will too.

If I have learned anything, it is that taking what is known about identity-focused SLA into the classroom is a complex, imperfect process that often generates more questions than answers. The post-structural and sociocultural roots of identity-focused SLA are visible in my classroom every day. There is an awareness of the classroom as a social space, of relationships and positioning, of power, confusion, and ambivalence. I am interested in learning more, in taking the tools I have learned about in this systematic review and applying and testing them purposefully in my own classroom.

Recently, I began a new semester with a group of sixth grade language learners. I explicitly invited them to use their home languages in discussions in my class, explaining how much I personally value that they are multilingual. There was an excited energy in response to my comments, and one girl of Hmong heritage gasped and said, "This is the *best* class *ever!*" I was startled by their enthusiastic response. I am confident that if any of my colleagues were asked their opinions, they would state that they value our multicultural students' cultural and linguistic heritage and most would welcome L1 use in their classrooms. However, my students' delighted responses clearly expressed that despite what we teachers may think, the students do not necessarily feel their heritage cultures are seen or welcomed in our school. I was made startlingly aware that as a teacher my silences often speak even more loudly than my words.

In many ways, since completing this systematic review, I feel more equipped with tools and strategies for making the identity negotiation process explicit and visible in the classroom. Simultaneously, it is also daunting to more fully understand how the classroom is a space where my and my students' identities are quite literally "talked into being" (Lee, 2015, p. 82) on a daily basis. Perhaps Peirce's (1995) often quoted words for describing identity could equally be applied to the classroom. It too is "multiple, a site of struggle" (p. 9).

APPENDIX A: PUBLICATION TYPE AND PEER REVIEWED STATUS

Author	Year	Type	Peer Reviewed Status
Ajayi	2011	Journal	Yes
Ajayi	2008	Journal	Yes
Brash & Warnecke	2009	Journal	Yes
Carrison & Ernst-Slavitt	2005	Journal	Yes
Chen	2012	Dissertation	No
Duff	2002	Journal	Yes
Fitts & Gross	2010	Journal	No
Frye	1999	Journal	Yes
Gladstein	1999	Dissertation	No
Gold	2008	Dissertation	No
Hubbard & Shorey	2003	Journal	Yes
Lau	2010	Dissertation	No
Lee	2015	Journal	Yes
Morgan	1997	Journal	Yes
Morgan	2004	Journal	Yes
Ntelioglou	2011	Journal	Yes
Peirce	1994	Journal	Yes
Rambo	2005	Dissertation	No
Salazar	2010	Journal	Yes
Shin & Cimasko	2008	Journal	Yes
Smidt	2007	Dissertation	No
Steinman	2007	Journal	Yes
Vinogradova	2011	Dissertation	No
Wilson	2012	Journal	Yes

APPENDIX B: TYPE OF IDENTITY STUDIED

Author	Year	Unspecified	Linguistic	Ethnic	Social	Academic/Literate	Racial	Cultural	National	Class	Gender
		\<Type of Identity\>									
Ajayi	2011			x	x						
Ajayi	2008	x									
Brash & Warnecke	2009	x									
Carrison & E.-S.	2005	x									
Chen	2012	x									
Duff	2002				x			x			
Fitts & Gross	2010		x					x			
Frye	1999			x			x				x
Gladstein	1999	x									
Gold	2008			x			x	x	x		
Hubbard & Shorey	2003	x	x								
Lau	2010	x				x		x			
Lee	2015						x	x			
Morgan	1997			x	x						x
Morgan	2004	x									
Ntelioglou	2011	x									
Peirce	1994				x						
Rambo	2005	x	x								
Salazar	2010		x					x			
Shin & Cimasko	2008					x		x	x		
Smidt	2007						x			x	x
Steinman	2007					x					
Vinogradova	2011	x									
Wilson	2012	x									

APPENDIX C: PARTICIPANTS AND EDUCATIONAL SETTING

Author	Year	Identity of Participants		Number of Partici-pants	Education Setting			
		Student	Teacher		Primary	Secondary	Post-sec	Adult
Ajayi	2011		x	57		x		
Ajayi	2008	x		33		x		
Brash & Warnecke	2009	x					x	
Carrison & E.-S.	2005	x		5 EL 24 local	x			
Chen	2012	x		18			x	
Duff	2002	x		25 EL 27 local		x		
Fitts & Gross	2010	x		17	x			
Frye	1999	x		17				x
Gladstein	1999	x	x	38			x	
Gold	2008	x	x	7		x		
Hubbard & Shorey	2003	x				x		
Lau	2010	x	x			x		
Lee	2015	x	x	87 EL 17 other			x	
Morgan	1997	x						x
Morgan	2004	x	x	1 T 10-20 EL				x
Ntelioglou	2011	x		50				x
Peirce	1994	x		5				x
Rambo	2005	x		6			x	
Salazar	2010	x	x	60 EL 3 T		x		
Shin & Cimasko	2008	x		14			x	
Smidt	2007	x		4			x	
Steinman	2007	x		24			x	
Vinogradova	2011	x		20			x	
Wilson	2012	x		8		x		

APPENDIX D: COUNTRY OF STUDY, PARTICIPANTS' HERITAGE LANGUAGE,

AND ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

Author	Year	Country of Study	Heritage Language	English Proficiency Level
Ajayi	2011	US		
Ajayi	2008	US	various Spanish	advanced
Brash & Warnecke	2009	UK		
Carrison & Ernst-S.	2005	US	various	various
Chen	2012	US	various	college level ESL
Duff	2002	Canada	various Asian	
Fitts & Gross	2010	US		various
Frye	1999	US	Latina	various
Gladstein	1999	US	various	Intermediate & advanced
Gold	2008	US	Chinese	
Hubbard & Shorey	2003	US	various	various
Lau	2010	Canada	various Asian	low
Lee	2015	Canada	various /Chinese	
Morgan	1997	Canada	various Asian, mostly Chinese	high-intermediate
Morgan	2004	Canada	mostly Chinese	multi-level
Ntelioglou	2011	Canada	various	
Peirce	1994	Canada	various	
Rambo	2005	US	various	advanced
Salazar	2010	US	mostly Mexican	various
Shin & Cimasko	2008	US	various	
Smidt	2007	US	various	
Steinman	2007	Canada	various	
Vinogradova	2011	US	various	advanced
Wilson	2012	US	various, mostly Hispanic	intermediate

APPENDIX E: IDENTITY APPLICATION FOCI OF STUDY

Author	Year	philosophy & practice	multimodal/ multiliteracies	role play/theater	social networking	student research/ethnography	pop culture	identity-based curriculum	literature	writing, narrative, diary, autobiography	Teacher identity performance	Intonation/Prosody
Ajayi	2011										x	
Ajayi	2008		x									
Brash & Warnecke	2009			x								
Carrison & E.-S.	2005								x			
Chen	2012				x							
Duff	2002						x					
Fitts & Gross	2010		x									
Frye	1999							x				
Gladstein	1999							x				
Gold	2008								x			
Hubbard & Shorey	2003									x		
Lau	2010							x				
Lee	2015	x										
Morgan	1997											x
Morgan	2004										x	
Ntelioglou	2011		x	x								
Peirce	1994									x		
Rambo	2005							x				
Salazar	2010	x										
Shin & Cimasko	2008		x									
Smidt	2007							x				
Steinman	2007									x		
Vinogradova	2011		x									
Wilson	2012							x				

APPENDIX F: METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

Author	Year	Interview	Analysis of Student Work	Study Specific Pedagogical or Philosophical Framework	Observation & Field Notes	Surveys/Questionnaires	S/T Conferencing	Analysis of Classroom Curricula & Materials	Audiotapes	Focus Groups	Communication Records	Group Discussion	Videos	Photographs
Ajayi	2011	x	x	x		x								
Ajayi	2008				x									
Brash	2009				x	x								
Carrison	2005		x		x	x							x	
Chen	2012		x			x	x							
Duff	2002	x			x									
Fitts & Gross	2010				x									
Frye	1999				x									
Gladstein	1999	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x				
Gold	2008	x			x	x			x					
Hubbard & Shorey	2003	x	x		x									
Lau	2010		x		x					x	x	x		
Lee	2015				x			x						
Morgan	1997		x		x									
Morgan	2004		x		x									
Ntelioglou	2011	x			x			x		x			x	x
Peirce	1994		x		x							x		
Rambo	2005		x					x				x		
Salazar	2010	x			x			x		x				
Shin & Cimasko	2008		x				x	x						
Smidt	2007	x		x	x			x				x		
Steinman	2007		x		x			x						
Vinogradova	2011	x	x		x									
Wilson	2012	x	x					x						

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