Incorporating the Idea of Social Identity into English Language Education

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Abstract: This study provides a synthesis of previous literature on social identity and English language learning. As English proliferates in the world due to the wide-spread notion of globalization, a growing number of students continue to receive strong societal, parental, and educational expectations towards attaining English language proficiencies. English language education is embedded in various social and academic activities in many countries and often requires the learners to negotiate and construct their identities as English language learners (ELLs). The purposes of this study are to explore the relations between social identity and English language learning, to describe some patterns and processes of the complex phenomena of ELLs' social identity negotiation, and to discuss some possible implications of previous studies' findings for the current English language education. This study contains four sections: (a) conceptualizing social identity within language learning contexts, (b) the reciprocal relations: social identity, language learning, and academic learning, (c) patterns and processes of social identity negotiation, and (d) possible implications of social identity issues for English language education. The reviewed literature focuses on diverse ELLs, ranging from kindergarteners through adults, who live in various countries. The findings suggest that social identity is conceptualized, from multidisciplinary perspectives, as socially recognized and enacted selves that are continuously crafted within given social contexts. The relations between social identity and English language learning are reciprocal rather than one-directional. The processes of social identity negotiation are part of language socialization and both developmental and unpredictable in nature. The patterns of social identity negotiation vary among individuals, ranging from their social psychological struggles, such as alienation and marginalization, to their achievement to develop bilingual and transcultural identities. Conducting ongoing discussions on the issues of social identities and creating language learning environments in which all ELLs find their legitimate memberships seem to benefit future English language education.

Keywords: social identity, bilingual identity, English language education, English language learner(s)

Introduction

The proliferation of English has been undeniable in today's internationalizing societies. A series of global events and ongoing reconfigurations of economic blocs have created competitions among languages of the world and English has been taking a dominant role in the existing hierarchical linguistic order as compared to other languages (Maurais, 2003). Within the context of accelerated advancement of information and communication

technologies, English also has been proliferating in the cyberspace (Bray, Brown, & Green, 2004). The phenomenon of English—a single language spread worldwide at a rapid pace—is a first time event in our human history (Ferguson, 1981). With the strong social, political, and economical vitality attached to English, English language education has continued to become part of general curricula and educational policies in many countries. There has been a pervasive notion in our contemporary world that attaining high proficiencies of English, especially so-called Standard English, is the key to better educational, professional, financial, and social prospects (Phillipson, 1992). This notion has been driving the society, educators, and parents to place increasing levels of demands and expectations on students towards English language learning. Kachru (1992) suggested the idea of *three concentric circles*, namely the Inner Circle, the Outer Circle, and the Expanding Circle, based on the sociolinguistic profile of English use, such as acquisition patters, types of spread, and functional allocation of English. The *Inner Circle* includes the countries, such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, where English is spoken as a first language; the *Outer Circle* refers to the countries, such as India, Kenya, and Philippine, where the institutionalized non-native varieties of English are spoken as a second language through the extended period of colonization; and the *Expanding Circle* represents the countries, such as Japan, China, Israel, and Saudi Arabia, where the nationals demonstrate a varied degree of performance in English as a foreign language (EFL) (Kachru, 1992). In this study, I use the term, English language learners (ELLs) to mean the students who possess linguistic and cultural origins from the Expanding Circle countries and who learn English in one of the three concentric circles. I also use the term, English language education, to refer to teaching and learning English as well as teaching and learning in English.

Many of the ELLs are expected to immerse themselves into English language education framed with the educational and language policies that continue to enforce so-called hegemony of English (Macedo, Dendrinos, & Gounari, 2003). For instance, in one of the Inner Circle countries, the U.S., the political campaigns that have occurred in the periods between the 1980's and present, such as the U.S. English, English Only, English First, Ron Unz's initiatives for the Proposition 227, and recent English immersion movements, all emphasized the importance of English language learning for linguistically and culturally minority students while deemphasizing, if not attacking, those students' heritage languages and culture (Ovando, 2003). Moreover, the *No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001* under the U.S. Bush administration has been strongly promoting the attainment of English language proficiency for the students who are bundled under an umbrella term, limited English proficient (LEP), and implementing educational systems based on aligned standards, curricula, instructional strategies, assessments and evidence-based research (U.S. Department of Education, 2002a, 2002b). The monolingual and monocultural orientations seen in these educational policies and public education in the U.S. reflect various ideologies deeply rooted

in the society, such as language parochialism, language elitism, and language restrictionism (Lessow-Hurley, 2005).

Similarly, over and overt emphases on English language education are evident in the educational and language policies in the Expanding Circle, such as Asia-Pacific regions (Nunan, 2003). For instance, in Japan, the government has opened a language policy debate as they issued a report, *Plan for the 21st Century Japan*, which suggested English to be a potential second official language (Hashimoto, 2002). Also, in 2002, the Japanese government began to implement *Period of Integrated Study* which consequently incorporated English language lessons in public elementary school curriculum for students above the third grade (Ministry of Education, 2001; Otsu, 2004). Although the Period of Integrated Study was designed to promote international understanding through providing students with an early encounter to foreign language learning, American Standard English has been chosen by a majority of school administrators over other foreign languages (Parmenter, 2004; Tomita, 2004). Placing high values on English language education in Japan reflect ideological conflicts among the people who support the potentiality of English for educating more multilingual citizens and those who concern about the linguistic and cultural divide that may be caused due to the incorporation of English into public education. Thus, the current educational and language policies in various contexts seem to contribute to a continuous increase of English language learners regardless of lacking general consensus to justify diverse ideologies underlying these tendencies to place high values on English language learning in educational arena.

In no matter which part of three concentric circles, ELLs seem to experience diverse *social recognitions* while engaging in their language learning. Participating in a classroom community of a particular social, linguistic, and learning context is described by (Hawkins, 2005) as "a complicated dance" (p. 62) through which ELLs present themselves, negotiate who they are, and enact their socially recognized selves by aligning their actions and performance to what is expected by others in a particular classroom community. In both English speaking countries and non-English speaking ones, ELLs seem to negotiate and enact their social identities to fit in their classrooms and to comply with social expectations by assimilating to the linguistic and cultural norms attached to English. In short, they seek desirable social recognitions expected in the classroom (Bracher, 2002) and such desirable senses of self, in often cases, do not correspond to their identities that they have constructed through past experiences with their heritage languages and culture. As reviewed more in details in the following sections, previous studies have suggested that ELLs inevitably perform this "dance" of identity negotiation as they begin or continue to learn English.

By reviewing the literature on social identity and English language learning, this study explores the patterns and processes of such "dance" of ELLs' social identity negotiation and

discusses potential implications of their social identity issues for the filed of English language education. The reviewed literature involves the studies done in various parts of the three concentric circles with the ELLs whose age levels widely range from kindergarteners through adults. This study has four sections. The first section presents the conceptualization of identity in relation to language learning and learning in general in order to clarify the definitions and nature of social identity concerned within the context of English language learning. The second section describes the relations between social identity and English language learning and illuminates the complexity and reciprocity existing in the relations. The third section presents a variety of patterns and processes of ELLs' social identity negotiation. The final section contains the discussion on how our understandings of ELLs' identity issues may help improve current approaches of English language education in various learning contexts.

Conceptualizing Social Identity within Language Learning Contexts

In order to conceptualize an abstract and complex concept of social identity associated with language learning, it is important to take a multidisciplinary approach—scrutinizing the idea of social identity from various disciplinary perspectives, such as social psychology, educational philosophy, sociology, and sociolinguistics. The multidisciplinary approach assumes that experiencing identities, for instance constructing, developing, negotiating, and shifting identities, is associated with social activities, including language learning, which are multi-layered and context-dependent. In this view, no one can avoid experiencing identities as long as existing as a member of social communities and no one can possess identity as solely an individual entity. Rather, multiple identities live with individuals who are part of social realities and collective ideas.

James Paul Gee's (2001) *Discourse theory* (with the capital D) takes a multidisciplinary approach and is useful in order to understand the unfixed and dynamic nature of social identity that is negotiated both individually and collectively. According to Gee (2005), identities are "different ways of participating in different sorts of social groups, cultures, and institutions" (p. 1). Although Gee (2005) acknowledged our own unique *core identity*—"whatever continuous and relatively 'fixed' sense of self" (p. 34), what he emphasized in his theory was the idea of *social identity*—sense of "a certain 'kind of person' in a given context…which can change from moment to moment in the interaction, can change from context to context, and of course, can be ambiguous or unstable" (Gee, 2001, p. 99). Gee (2001) categorized four strands of social identity: (a) nature-identity—an uncontrollable natural state (e.g., I am a woman.), (b) institutional-identity—a position that we are authorized to possess in social institutions (e.g., I am a graduate student.), (c) Discourse identity—an individual trait developed in relation to both incidental and intentional social processes (e.g., I am a proficient English speaker.), and (d) affinity-identity—experiences shared with certain affinity groups (e.g., I am a Japanese

citizen.). Gee (2001) stated that these strands are "woven together as a given person acts within a given contexts" (p. 101). The given contexts are what Gee (2005) defined from multidisciplinary perspectives as *Discourse*, which refers to:

> "ways of combining and integrating language, actions, interactions, ways of thinking, believing, valuing, and using various symbols, tools, and objects to enact a particular sort of socially recognizable identity" (p. 21, italics added).

This definition suggests that Discourses involve "social practices and mental entities, as well as material realities" (Gee, 2005, p. 32) and exist across various people and their multifaceted social communities throughout the history, present, and future. According to Gee (2001), everyone lives in the multiple Discourse communities, or the dialogues among "rational individuals" (p. 103), and the degree of access to and participation in each community allows, or sometimes disallows, him/her to recognize him/herself in certain ways. Gee's ideas of Discourse and social identity suggest some important points. First, social recognition in given Discourses becomes the key to one's identity construction. In other words, one's social identities develop through being socially recognized with "a patchwork of thoughts, words, objects, events, actions, and interactions in Discourses" (Gee, 2001, p. 7), and such social identities are multiple, fluid in time, multi-scaled, potentially hybrid, and emergent (Gee, 2005). Second, one's identity construction is a social phenomenon, which involves both individual and collective endeavors, and occurs in various ways, both verbal and non-verbal ways. Third, there are conceptual complexities in the idea of social identity and such complexities are the essence of social identity which should be understood with holistic views rather than simplified ones.

These key points in Gee's views resonate with the concept of *discursive practices* suggested by Corson (2001). In this idea, ELLs engage in visible and invisible social recognitions, interpret social reality, and expand self-consciousness. Similar to Gee's view, Corson's (2001) idea suggests that identity is not a property that one can possess but is deeply rooted within social fluidity. These ideas certainly echo with various theories of identity suggested by other theorists and researchers from different disciplinary fields. For instance, the similar assertions have been made in social theories of learning (e.g., Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998), which defined identity as a social phenomenon reflecting "the mutuality of the individual and community, not as mere social residue within the individual" (Wenger, 1998, cited in Wallace, 2004, p. 199), and identity negotiation as "a relational dimension of human development as the individual navigates his or her membership within and across community contexts through participating in group activity" (Wallace, 2004, p. 199).

Some poststructural scholars in the field of second language acquisition (SLA) also suggested the idea of social identity by preserving the conceptual complexity of identity rather

than systematizing the components of identity. Norton Peirce (1995), for instance, explained social identity as "multiple, a site of struggle, and changing over time" (p. 14), suggesting that individuals struggle in conflict with others in social power relations and even within themselves as they construct their social identities in a fluid, flexible, and dynamic nature. This comparatively holistic view of social identity raises questions against the traditional SLA theories, which focus on the superficial categorizations of affective factors as either individual variables or social ones. According to Norton Peirce (1995), the artificial distinction between individual factors, such as motivation, self-confidence, anxiety, affective filter, and so on, and various social factors have ignored the reciprocal and context dependent relationships of such variables.

Some social psychologists have also regarded identity as not exclusively individual or collective. For instance, Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco (2001) stated that "[w]ithout reference to the inner and interpersonal worlds, we cannot meaningfully consider issues of agency, consciousness, and empowerment—the very things that make us truly human (p. 13). Like the ecological and reciprocal relations existing between social environments and one's sense of self, "the human experience is never solely the product of impersonal structural forces" (Suarez-Orozco, Suarez-Orozco, & Doucet, 2004, p. 422).

A growing number of scholars from multidisciplinary fields also began to incorporate the idea of social identity in the field second language acquisition (SLA). Dittmar, Spolsky, and Walters (1998) described three major areas of study that approached the issues of social identity related to SLA: sociology and social theory, linguistic and sociolinguistic, and social psychology. More specifically, the macro level examinations of social contexts has been employed from the sociological and social theoretical perspectives, the micro level examinations of language acquisition and language change from the linguistic and sociolingusitic perspectives, and the mediating level examination of individual identity and attitudes from the social psychological perspectives (Dittmar et al., 1998).

In addition to these disciplinary fields, educational philosophy also contributes to the conceptualization of identity associated with learning. Although this idea is not particular to language learning, the idea of *individuality* suggested by John Dewey (1998) further illuminates the collective and pragmatic nature of identity negotiation and enactment in relation to the role of education in our democracy. Individuality, in Dewey's sense, is one's self-realization and potentiality formed in given social contexts, and overlaps with the idea of socially negotiated sense of self suggested by Gee and other multidisciplinary scholars. Dewey (1998) explained that individuality is context dependent reflecting particular time and place, what he called "temporal seriality" (p. 102), of individual lives. What is important in his idea is that the contexts, including time, change, and our efforts to understand time and change, shift

throughout history. Negotiation of identity is an unpredictable matter of an indefinite range of social interactions in any given time and involves active realization of one's "moral, intellectual, and physical improvement" (Martinez Aleman, 2001, p. 385). This pragmatic interpretation resonates with the idea suggested by some researchers that certain identities become available to students as they develop certain competences within classroom environments (e.g., Day, 2002; Toohey, 2000).

Moreover, the freedom of self-realization and the hope for the unpredictable growth of people are the essence of Deweyan utopian views of individuality and potentiality (Rorty, 1999). There is always the hope for "the imagined possibilities of unrestricted individualities" (Martinez Aleman, 2001, p. 398). This view is consistent with the view of social identity as three-dimensional matters, which include the sense of self in past, present, and future (Kanno & Norton, 2003). Suarez-Orozco et al. (2004) also stated that identity "has important implications for … how [students] envision their future and mobilize toward that realization" (p. 427). Conceptualizing identity in a flexible way, or what some may call a "fuzzy" way, in terms of time and space, allows us to study students' identities as well as to analyze social contexts, including schools and societies (Gee, 2001), and to imagine social, economical, and political change that development of individual identities will collectively bring to the communities. Deweyan "fuzzy" pragmatic ethics, for instance, have potentialities for developing individuality for all students, providing them with opportunities to reconcile the undemocratic interests in education, such as capitalism, industrialism, and "social and economic feudalism" (Martinez Aleman, 2001, p. 400), and bringing educational changes against inculcating normative values, the standardization of thoughts and practices, unassociated individuals, and unequal class stratifications. A strong tie between learners' social identities and the societies is clear in these views.

The idea of desire suggested by Bracher (2002) from a psychoanalytic perspective also add another dimension to our understanding of the concept of social identity within learning contexts. Bracher (2002), unlike other scholars, suggested that, in order to support students' learning through identity development, educators should have "[a]n explicit and systematic mapping of the field of multiple and conflicting identity components and desires in which education occurs" (p. 23). The premise in this view is that students and teachers in classroom have the very fundamental desire for "secure identity" (Bracher, 2002, p. 94) and "identity-supporting recognition" (p. 97). Their desire reflects three components of their identities: (a) the Symbolic register—the desire to be recognized as embodying certain signifiers, such as "intelligent," "brilliant," or "an excellent student," (b) the Imaginary register—the desire to be recognized for our bodily appearance, physical performance, or body's effectivity, (c) the Real register—the desire for emotional mirroring, the desire to be recognized as the element of being that is excluded from the social order, and the desire to be

recognized as having charm, charisma, sex appeal, or animal magnetism (p. 96). Certain desires for certain types of social recognition become fulfilled with the combination of situational resources (Bracher, 2002). In this perspective, regardless of the conceptual complexities of social identities, we can systematically explain the mechanisms of social identity negotiation by specifying the focus on certain types of experiences. Identity, then, can be used as an analytical tool to describe various situations and events in the learning contexts (Bracher, 2002; Gee, 2001).

Overall, we need to explore across multidisciplinary areas in order to conceptualize the abstract nature of social identity as related to language learning and learning in general. A common thread across various disciplines is the idea that one's social identities represent the sense of self socially recognized and acted upon in various human interactions, therefore, is fluid, dynamic, unpredictable, and context dependent in nature. ELLs' identities are not separable from the social and educational contexts in which they participate. Moreover, studying one's identity often leads us to studying the contexts of learning while understanding the social contexts and one's experiences in the same contexts is necessary to capture his/her social identity issues.

The Reciprocal Relations: Social Identity, Language Learning, and Academic Learning
Some theories have suggested that learners' identities mutually impact the level and nature of their language acquisition (Giles & Johnson, 1987; Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and their overall academic learning in school (Bracher, 2002; Cummins, 1996; Cummins, 2000). The close tie between one's identity and language learning is explainable when we first draw attention to how one's identities are connected to his/her language use. Ochs (1993) asserted that one's language use is the display of his/her identities and group memberships. Similarly, Bialystok and Hakuta (1994) wrote:

Language determines not only how we are judged by others but how we judge ourselves and define a critical aspect of our identity: who we are is partially shaped by what language we speak (p. 31).

This view resonates with *social identity theory* (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) which suggests that the use of language is an important factor affecting our social identity constructed through social comparison with other groups. According to this theory, psycholinguistic distinctiveness (Tajfel, 1982), which can be developed through using language strategies including code-switching and using accentuating ethnic dialects, is an important component of one's identity. *Ethnolinguistic identity theory*, which emerged from the same trend as the social identity theory, further elaborated the connectedness of one's social identity and language use by proposing three variables affecting one's social identity development and language learning: (a) ethnolinguistic vitality (social recognition of the ethnic group and ethnic language), (b) group boundaries (perception of ethnic categorization), and (c)

multiple group membership (sense of membership in various social groups). The degree of each factor differs for each learner depending on the social contexts in which he/she lives. Constructing social identities, therefore, is a complex phenomenon through which one's social identities and his/her language use are closely related within the social world.

Some scholars went further to discuss that learning language is also closely connected to ideologies existing in the social world. Poststructural scholars, such as Bourdieu (1991), Fairclough (2001), and Foucault (1984), have asserted that an examination of language reveals the power relations involved in discourse. For instance, Bourdieu (1991) stated that language should not be viewed as mere means of communication, rather it should be perceived as a medium of power through which individuals pursue their own interests and display their practical competence. In this view, linguistic utterances are the product of relations between a linguistic market and its linguistic *habitus*—a system of dispositions or lasting, acquired schemes of perception, thought, and action. When individuals use language in particular ways, they organize their linguistic resources and implicitly accommodate the demands of the particular social market. What Bourdieu as well as other poststructural scholars have suggested is that every linguistic interaction, however personal or insignificant it may seem, holds the traces of the social structure that contributes to social reproduction of particular ideologies and linguistic order.

Ochs (1993), similarly, asserted that one's social identity is not fixed prior to the occurrence of social interactions. Rather, a speaker and his/her interlocutor(s) use certain verbal acts and stances in the process of *language socialization* through which they communicate and accomplish not only his/her own identity but also the interlocutors' social identities. Ochs (1993), from the social constructivist's view, criticized that many correlational studies in the field of SLA have treated social identity as the stimulus and the language behavior as the response. According to Ochs (1993), "the relation between language and social identity is predominantly a sociolinguistically *distant* one" (p. 288, italics in original) and using certain grammar, for instance, does not automatically tell us the speaker's social identity. The relation of language to social identity is more complex and is mediated by the speakers' and the interlocutors' knowledge of how certain acts and stances are conventionally related to certain identities in the particular social contexts. Thus, social identity and language are related through fluid social interactions that reflect social, linguistic, and cultural conventions existing certain place and time.

The relations between social identity and learning have been emphasized by some researchers. For instance, the framework of *collaborative empowerment* suggested by Jim Cummins (1996, 2000) ecologically situated learning and social identity negotiation as fundamental aspects of social interactions in classroom. Most essentially, this framework

promotes the transformative and intercultural orientation for the classrooms of linguistically and culturally minority students over the exclusionary and assimilationist orientation. The *transformative and intercultural orientation*, which ensures additive cultural and linguistic incorporation, collaborative community participation, transformative pedagogy, and advocacy assessment, promotes social interactions between all students and teachers in a collaborative way rather than in a coercive one and ensures that students shape their identities in open-ended communications and inquiries.

Cummins' emphasis on active and critical participation in social interactions is consistent with Dewey's (1998) emphasis on identity negotiation in the democratic manner, which greatly and positively impacts on students' attainment of language and academic competences. According to Dewey (1916), active participation in communities and inquiries provides students with the opportunities to invent their own forms of freedom and identity in a very open-ended way. Dewey suggested that social contexts, including educational ones, are unpredictable, yet need a certain direction, as the seemingly unpredictable water of river always streams into the ocean. Dewey (1916) expected that individuality would serve as a directing force in educational contexts when developed through democratic communications. Similarly, Cummins' idea suggested that developing positive identity, or empowered sense of self, through social interactions in school would result in successful learning. Identity negotiation was the heart of Cummins' framework and power for change, as Dewey described individuality as potentialities for educational change. Cummins (1996) stated that students' "empowerment derives from the process of negotiating identities in the classroom" (p. 11).

Cummins' idea also suggested that negative identity, or coerced sense of self, would result in less success in learning. From a social psychologist's point of view, Steele (1997) asserted that academic performance declined on various tasks when minority students experienced "identity threats." Similarly, Bracher (2002) suggested that threats to the "desire for a secure identity" (p. 94) could "not only prevent learning and development, but actually trigger resistance and regression (p. 175).

Some empirical studies also suggested such reciprocal relations between social identity, language learning, and learning in general. Some researchers used the framework of *communities of practice* suggested by Lave and Wenger (1991) (Day, 2002; Kanno, 2003; Norton, 2000; Toohey, 2000). Toohey's (2000) study, a three-year longitudinal ethnography of two ELLs in a Canadian classroom from kindergarten through the second grade, examined their participation in classroom events and their access to English language learning as related to social practice, including teacher practice, identity construction, resource distribution, and discursive organization. According to Toohey, her participants' positioning in social practices

and their social status led them to participate in classroom activities as well as provide access to English language development and academic learning.

Similarly, Day's (2002) year long ethnography of a Punjabi speaking ELL named Hari in a Canadian mainstream kindergarten suggested that Hari's social interactions with his teacher and classmates within his classroom and his unconscious and conscious emotional and affective engagement in the interactions influenced his participation, access to English language practice, and academic learning. Day's discursive analysis of the social and political dimensions of classroom relationship also revealed that Hari's "language learning, language choice, social interaction, and identity are inextricably interwoven" (p. 54). Thus, Toohey and Day both suggested that the interdependency between students' social status in classrooms and second language learning was mediated through their social participations.

Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco's (2001) large scale ethnographic study, which was a part of the Harvard Immigration Project, explored major themes in the lives of the children of immigration in the U.S. who were both U.S.-born and foreign-born children and adolescents. The focused themes included the nature of their journey to the U.S., their earlier self-perceptions, and their subsequent transformations. Based on the results from questionnaires and interviews, the authors conceptualized how the participants shaped their identities through social interactions. They suggested the idea of "*social mirroring*" (p. 96, italics added)—the phenomenon in which students' sense of self is dependent upon the reflected image mirrored back to them by others in the environment, including parents, relatives, caretakers, siblings, teachers, peers, media, and so on. A sense of worthwhile self or non-worthwhile self emerges according to the socially reflected self image. The idea of social mirroring certainly echoes with the idea of social recognition described by Gee (2005) who emphasized the reciprocity and reflexivity between identity, Discourses, and language use.

Suarez-Orozco, Suarez-Orozco, and Doucet (2004) further extended this idea of social mirroring in connection to the idea of academic engagement. Within the framework for understanding the processes of social adaptation and learning outcomes among Latino adolescents in the U.S., the authors proposed some factors affecting the Latino youth's opportunities for learning, such as their educational backgrounds, poverty levels, neighborhoods and schools, undocumented status, and migration situations. They found that these factors were all taken into the phenomenon of social mirroring, resulting in the development of certain type of academic identities. Consequently, the types of the students' academic identities determined the level of their academic engagement. An important aspect of this framework is the incorporation of psychological influence in the process of academic identity development. In other words, Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco (2004) demonstrated that social practice and contexts were powerful yet not the only factors affecting students'

learning: What they conceptualized was the process of ongoing social mirroring and the development of certain type of self image, which greatly impacted students' cognitive, behavioral, and relational engagement. They also suggested that students' positive psychological involvement in the social contexts, such as high levels of affiliative motivations, were necessary in order to achieve the high levels of academic engagement.

Hawkins' (2005) ethnography of two ELL kindergartners in the U.S. classroom, Anton and William, further elaborated the relations among ELLs' social identities, their participations in classroom activities, and their social status in classroom. In this study, a socioeconomically disadvantaged Spanish-speaking child, Anton, immersed himself in the interactions related to classroom academic activities by using series of strategies, such as observing and analyzing the classroom discourses, choosing to sit with high-status children, questioning, extending the conversations, claiming expertise, and using the acquired academic languages in interactions. As a result, Anton constructed and acted upon his positive academic identity—an identity as a good learner. In contrast, a Korean-speaking boy from a middle class family, William, earned a desirable social status in classroom but not a positive academic identity because his interaction strategies, such as opting out of the activities, fooling around with his classmates, and avoiding questions about academic contents, were not aligned with academic success and thus denied him to access new experiences through school-based learning activities and language practices. Although both students proclaimed themselves as good learners, Anton's academic identity was constructed through his academic performance whereas William's academic identity was a mere self-claimed label based on the image perceived by his parents detached from his particular classroom. The findings suggested that these students' social status in the classrooms and their socioeconomic and sociocultural background were distinct from their language and literacy development. These students' engagement in dynamic social interactions and their use of interaction strategies specifically within academic literacy activities were important to the development of their positive academic identity. Moreover, the resonance or alignment between their academic identities and the school's academic discourse was found to be crucial for their academic success in school.

The reciprocal relation between social identity and English language learning in a English-speaking countries was well explained in the concept of "*investment*" (Norton Peirce, 1995, p. 17). In her ethnographic case studies, Norton Peirce (1995, 2000) found that her participants, immigrant women in Canada, *invested* in English expecting a good return of so-called cultural capital—"the knowledge and modes of thought that characterize different classes and groups in relation to specific sets of social forms" (p. 17). In the participants' views, learning English would open an opportunity for "access to hitherto unattainable resources" (Norton Peirce, 1995, p. 17) and eventually lead them to socio-economical success. Unlike the concept of motivation, which presupposes the fixed and individually unique identity of the

learner, the idea of investment presupposes the dynamic and changing nature of social identity in existing power relations (Norton Peirce, 1995). The learners' purposes for investing in English are diverse and consistently changing over time as they experience various power relations in the living contexts.

Norton Peirce's (1995) also found that power relations impacted social interactions between the participants and native English speakers. The inequitable power relations found in the study influenced not only the amount of exposure to English, but also participants' perceptions of the *right to speak English*: When they felt inferior to the dominant native English speakers due to the discrepancies between the dominant's socio-economic, social, and political status and their own, they perceived the dominant as the owners of English. Such perceptions subsequently diminished the amount of their English usage.

Similar findings have been reported by Goldstein (1995) in her study of language choice among female Portuguese immigrant workers in Canada. The results revealed that power structures existing in their living experiences influenced the participants' acquisition and use of English. The female participants, who had been socially and socioeconomically disadvantaged in the society, depended on their Portuguese ethnic ties, or sense of solidarity, to survive in their lives. As a result, they viewed learning English as a betrayal to their ethnic group, or as a social and economic risk that might alienate them from the same group. What Goldstein (1995) emphasized was the different ways of accessing to power and resource among ELLs and the importance of challenging their social status and community values in order for them to gain resources and social power. Thus, the framework suggested by Suarez-Orozco et al. (2004) regarding social mirroring and academic engagement and the relations between social dynamics and academic identity formation explored by Day (2002), Toohey (2000), and Hawkins (2005) all resonate with the findings suggested by Norton Peirce (1995) and Goldstein (1995) which situated identity and learning within a fluid, flexible, and dynamic power relations of social phenomena.

In addition, learners' psychological, emotional, and affective sphere of their lives seems to play an important role as they engage in social practices and identity formation. Unlike the researchers, who examined the relations between academic identities and academic engagement by proposing the socially prescribed agenda, such as academic achievement or second language acquisition, Soto (2002) investigated her elementary age Spanish-English bilingual/biliterate children's views of bilingualism and biliteracy in their community. She found the participants' positive views of becoming biliterate due to their beliefs in the potentiality to create and maintain altruistic—compassionate and loving—relationships with their families and others.

By exploring the relation between culture and language learning as a starting point, Choi (2002) found that the language learners' personal identities have been "invisible issues" (p. 55) in the existing SLA theories. Choi described the reciprocal relations among identity, emotion, culture, and power relations and their impacts on one's English language learning in the U.S. context. She explained her participants' struggle for learning English as following:

English is often seen as the language of hegemony, imperialism, and superiority, Thus the participants, many times, struggle with the resentment of having to comply with the dominance of the English language in their reality. This means that their egos or identities became subordinated to the dominance of English. Then, under this dominance a sense of shame, inferiority, loss of power, subordination, and oppression arose. As such, the native cultural identity and mother tongue of subordination caused isolation and a desire not to follow the dominant discourse, which largely resulted in failure in second language acquisition (p. 57).

Choi's explanation of how negative emotional experiences under unequal power relations negatively affect the learner's SLA is also consistent with the interpretations of power relations suggested by Norton Peirce (1995). The studies by Soto (2002) and Choi (2002) remind us that, within the framework of reciprocal relations among identity, language learning, academic learning, and various Discourses, there are always influential affects and individually unique intensions in identity development and academic engagement.

Overall, some theories and empirical studies have suggested reciprocity existing in the relations between ELLs' social identities and their language and academic learning within dynamic social interactions. More specifically, under the influence from multiple Discourses associated with English language education and existing power relations in the social contexts, the academic engagement and the attainment of certain linguistic and academic competences mutually influence ELLs' constructions of social identities. The relations between social identity and English language learning are not systematic or one-directional.

Patterns and Processes of Social Identity Negotiation

The construction of social identity is an ongoing activity or never ending "dance", which begins in one's infancy and lasts throughout his/her life time. Some studies on ELLs' social identity negotiation have suggested some processes—how the development of social identities proceeds—and patterns—what types of identities become available to them. Each "dance" of social identity negotiation, though it seems to be a holistic work, has its unique flows, steps, and variations. Ochs (1993), for instance, described the processes of social identity negotiation as part of learner's language socialization. According to Ochs (1993), as the child encounters his/her social world and develops various skills, such as sensorimotor skills and social reference skills, he/she begins to experience various actions and stances in the particular social

context and becomes increasingly capable of structuring his/her own identity as well as others' identities. The social interactions that the child engages in, such as co-authoring of narratives with his/her mother, foster his/her capacity to associate certain actions and stances with certain identities (Ochs, 1993). Thus, the developmental processes of constructing social identities seem to overlap the development of skills and competencies throughout one's lifespan.

Some researchers particularly associated the processes of identity construction with the development of competences in classroom environment. For instance, Toohey (2000) suggested that a certain type of learners' identity developed in relation to their abilities and competences, such as academic competence, physical presentation, behavioral competence, social competence, and language proficiency. According to Toohey, the learners' integration into the mainstream classroom community through becoming socialized into the norms, values, and behaviors of the community helped them develop those competences and construct the associated sense of self.

Similarly, Day (2002) reported that the way in which the learner has situated him/herself in classroom community over time was also related to his/her identity negotiation. Her subject, Hari, revealed his multiple identities contextually developed over the course of year long research. He demonstrated different identities in different social networks within the classroom by engaging in different oral language practices. In other words, there were multiple variations of patterns in his identities and these patterns shifted over time. For instance, he attempted to respond to the image of a student as an ELL which his teacher projected onto him. Also, his identity shifted from a new member of the classroom discourse community to an expert in the same group when a new student, Casey, joined his class. These researchers suggested that learners' identities shifted over time along with their developing competences and varying experiences in classroom communities.

As a certain identity becomes available with one's natural developing skills and competences, some researchers have also suggested that there are some aspects of "craft" in identity construction. Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco (2001) explained that, since one's identity is not set in stone, ELLs consistently need to be "crafting identities" (p. 101) in given contexts. ELLs' experiences of crafting their social identities were documented by Duff's (2002) in her ethnography of Chinese-speaking ESL students in a high school social studies class. Duff's (2002) study showed different patterns of classroom participation and identity negotiation among the participants who varied in the duration of stay in Canada. The newcomers in this study freely revealed their cultural interests and identities in the mainstream classroom whereas the students who had lived in Canada for a more prolonged time tended to reveal their multilingual repertoires, literacies, expertise, and identities in different discourse communities to which they belonged both locally and internationally.

In a study which particularly focused on the cross-cultural socialization patterns among elementary age Japanese sojourner students in Canada, Podolsky (1994) found some unique ways in which her participants invested in the host country's language and culture. Within three types of socialization patterns, namely host-culture-oriented, dual, and Japanese-culture-oriented, the participants, who were expecting their return to Japan, were more likely to be categorized into dual or Japanese-culture-oriented groups and less likely to invest in Canadian culture and English. By doing so, these ELLs avoided risking their sense of Japanese identity. The Japanese elementary students in Ishikawa's (1998) study similarly perceived their native language as a key to their existence in the world and associated it with their everyday life and identity. Overall, the unique social, linguistic, and educational contexts in which ELLs live, such as temporary schooling and multilingual and multicultural immersion, seem to influence their levels of investment in their English language learning and ways to craft their identities.

In the process of identity craft, many learners seem to experience various types of challenges, struggles, and difficulties (Duff, 2002; Macpherson, 2005; Morita, 2004; Sarroub, 2001; Soto, 2002). In Soto's (2002) study, Spanish-speaking children, who experienced the socio-historical view of Puerto Rico as a colonized minority group in the U.S., found themselves "in a scene of displacement, filled with contradictions and reconfigurations that begin to influence the construction of [their] present identities" (p. 606). Being both U.S. citizens and Puerto Ricans resulted in "the struggle for identity" (p. 607).

Similarly, in a more than two-year longitudinal case study, Sarroub (2001) found that different ways of "being"—being an U.S. citizen and a Yemeni girl—created gaps and a duality in the identities of a Yemeni female high school student, Layla. Being obligated to practice Yemeni cultural traditions and rituals, including marrying a Yemeni boy at the age of fifteen, Layla became disengaged with home and school worlds and began to imagine spaces in which she could bridge her Yemeni and American lives. This study revealed the tension between her lives and the U.S. school goals. To her, the U.S. schooling could be liberating yet, simultaneously, threatening to her sociocultural sense of self. In the case of Layla, the multiple spaces existing in her life was the site of struggle for her identity negotiation.

The contradictions and tensions in students' identity negotiation and classroom discourse were also evident in Duff's (2002) study. The Chinese-speaking students in this study experienced the need for negotiating "a number of different identities, discourses, and expectations—including expectations from their own peers about how they should behave and speak, and which language they should use and when, whether Mandarin, Cantonese, or

English" (p. 313). As a result, these students were often caught between two "unfavorable options: silence or mockery and hostility" (p. 312).

Morita's (2004) study, a multiple case study of six female first year master's degree students from Japan, also demonstrated the patterns, processes, and experiences of their identity negotiation in a Canadian university. As the students experienced "changing sense of competence as a member of a given classroom community" (p. 583), they demonstrated individually unique patterns of participating and negotiating their memberships in the new second language communities, particularly through open-ended discussions. For instance, one of the students constantly challenged her identity as an ELL and became committed to improving her linguistic and academic competence while another student took a different path and remained silent in her classes. Another student resisted the marginalized sense of self in the classroom with native Canadians and engaged in negotiating her positionality. An interesting point is that the student who chose to be silent in her classes used her silence for different reasons in each class. In one class, her silence was legitimized by her instructor, in another her silence meant the lack of power in her membership, while in another a sense of alienation made her remain silent. Morita explained that students' identities represented a wide variety of their positonalities and were "locally constructed" (p. 597) by the individual students and particular classroom contexts. Morita also added that "the co-construction of learner agency and positionality is not always a peaceful, collaborative process, but is often a struggle involving a web of power relations and competing agendas" (p. 597).

In her large scale study of over one thousand adult multilingual participants, Pavlenko (2006) investigated whether the participants felt that they became different people when altering between languages. Her results from a web questionnaire revealed that perceptions of "different selves" (p. 27) or the view of "bilingualism as linguistic schizophrenia" (p. 3) was common among the participants. For many of the participants, changing language created a different world and different sense of self. Pavlenko (2006) also suggested that the participants' perceptions were associated with the link between their languages and the contexts in which they use the languages. For instance, the participants who lived in multilingual contexts did not perceive sharp differences between their "selves" as did those who lived in monolingual contexts.

Some researchers also demonstrated the individual differences in identity negotiation (Suerez-Orozco & Suerez-Orozco, 2001; Macpherson, 2005) and the process of developing more harmonized sense of self through multilingual and multicultural experiences (Kanno, 2003). Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco (2001), whose focus was on students' craft of their ethnic and cultural identities, found three major patterns: (a) *ethnic flight*—students identify themselves with dominant mainstream culture, feel shame, marginality and alienation when

they are affiliated with their native language and culture, and loose the feeling of belonging to their families; (b) *adversarial identity*—students develop adversarial stance toward the mainstream, feel that doing well in school is an act of ethnic betrayal, and find sense of belongings in own ethnic group such as gang groups; and (c) transcultural identity—students achieve bilingual and bicultural competencies, preserve affective ties to their home language and culture, successfully cope in the mainstream culture, and become creative agents who fuse aspects of both culture.

Based on an ethnographic action research of Tibetan refugee women who learn English in the Indian Himalayas, Macpherson (2005) found five alternative patterns of identity negotiation: (a) *rejection*, (b) *assimilation*, (c) *marginality*, (d) *bicultural accommodation*, and (e) *intercultural creativity*. The intercultural creativity is similar to the transcultural identity suggested by Suarez-Orozco and Suerez-Orozco (2001). The women named Rinchen, who demonstrated this type of identity negotiation, was an enthusiastic, vocal, and conscious participant in both English and Buddhism classes. According to Macpherson (2005), Rinchen pushed against the limit to accommodate her cross-cultural development and showed "the additional willingness and ability to transfer knowledge, concepts, and skills between the two languages and culture" (p. 602). Macpherson explained that intercultural creativity requires the learner to have a "third space", or what she called "metacultural awareness"—"the capacity to step outside of culture and identity and look back" (p. 602).

Kanno (2003) also described the development of this metacultural awareness among four Japanese sojourner students who moved back to Japan for college education after attending Canadian high schools as sojourners. Kanno examined the development of "bilingual and bicultural identity" (p. 6) which represents how bilingual learners' incorporate their positionalities between two languages and culture into their sense of who they are. As the students grew up from adolescence to young adulthood, they became "more sophisticated in negotiating their bilingual and bicultural identities with their surroundings" (p. vii) by striking a better balance between two languages and culture and acquiring skills to participate in multiple communities. The development of their transcultural or hybrid identities involved their awakening realization and appreciation of the possibility that they could become bilingual and bicultural. Kanno explained that they "moved away from the simplistic strategy of total assimilation or total rejection, and shifted to more flexible ways of negotiating bilingual bicultural identities" (p. 122).

Overall, the construction of social identity is deeply embedded in human experiences. ELLs' continuous changes in perceptions and the levels of competences require ongoing craft of their social identities. The processes of social identity negotiation seem to be part of language socialization and both developmental and unpredictable in nature. The patterns of

social identity negotiation vary among individuals, ranging from their social psychological struggles, such as alienation, marginalization, and feelings of being torn between two languages and culture, to their achievement to develop bilingual and transcultural identities, which reflect their more sophisticated levels of creativity to deal with their own multilingualism. Certain contexts (e.g., monolingual or multilingual context) and certain experiences (e.g., being socio-economically disadvantaged or having a new classmate) may suggest a common tendency of how ELLs' language and academic identities develop. However, individual differences certainly exist in the patterns of social identity negotiation and make every identity story unique and distinct.

Possible Implications of Social Identity Issues for Educational Language Education

Understanding the dynamic, fluid, and unfixed nature of social identity negotiation in relation to English language learning helps us view the educational processes in a light of ecological social systems. Some researchers have suggested potential implications of their findings for the improvement of current educational practices and policies of English language education.

First, educational goals for all students in any English language learning contexts in any part of three concentric circles (Kachru, 1992) should promote not only the high standards of linguistic and academic performance or outcomes but also the high levels of their participations in educational processes. The issues of social identity should not be marginalized when we discuss English language education. Rather, the educational policies for English language education should be built on our understandings of the strong link between ELLs' social identities and their attainment of linguistic and academic competences. As mentioned earlier, supporting ELLs develop their social identities as legitimate members of the school community would simultaneously foster their English language learning, academic engagement, and social psychological development (Kanno, 2003; Morita, 2004; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). The issues regarding students' social identities should be explicitly stated in educational goals.

Second, in order to successfully bring attention to the issues of social identity, the educational goals should also reflect individually unique circumstances of and purposes for learning English. Even within a same country, school, or classroom, not all ELLs develop their linguistic identities in a same way since their social identities project not only their present status as ELLs but also their pasts and future. For instance, in English-speaking countries, educational policies tend to propose educational goals for ELLs in a way that their social identities are not sensitively understood and valued. Kanno (2003), for instance, pointed out that there were some concrete differences between identity negotiations among immigrants and temporally sojourners. Educational decision makers need to avoid projecting

the automatically generalized experiences of the majority of the minority students, such as immigrant students as compared to sojourning student, to the design and development of educational policies.

Third, curricula for English language education at any levels of educational systems also need to be designed based on afore-mentioned educational goals and policies and to promote as much as access for individual learners to the Discourses particular to the educational contexts. Hawkins (2005) suggested that promoting students' access to academic Discourses helped them build their identities as learners while promoting the construction of their academic identities reciprocally endowed them with access to the academic Discourses. There should be strong awareness among policy makers, educators, and decision makers about the notion that providing the guideline for teaching and learning English requires the effort to consistently search for the contextually appropriate balance of individual needs and societal needs. In other words, on the efforts of improving current educational policies, individuals should not be categorized into a single group based on their social, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds. Individual's dynamic and multiple perspectives do not remain within the artificial boundaries as Benet-Martinez (2002) pointed out that "culture and mind are mutually constituted across and within national boundaries" (p. 512). Individual's perspectives and their unique belongings to multiple Discourses should be acknowledged in educational endeavors.

Fourth, at the educational institution level, a network of various relationships, such as families, local communities, and peers can foster the building of a new school community based on more profound understanding of diversities rooted in the social structures of the multiple relationships. Such efforts to build a new school community require all community members to be familiar with linguistic and cultural heritage of each other (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2004). For instance, Suarez-Orozco et al. (2004) suggested that scrutinizing family circumstances among some minority students may reveal the cultural differences of expectations toward parents' school involvement. Through building a school community, some students may find support from other members for overcoming difficult time in their identity development and language learning and also may find their role-models and develop mentoring relationships within the community (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2004). Being a member of a school community, which is non-threatening, respectful, and nurturing, is an experience that fosters the construction of present self. Such experience of having a place in which ELLs comfortably and securely recognize themselves as legitimate members would continue to intersect their perceptions of past self and future self. Macpherson (2005), for instance, suggested to establish not singular but multiple educational systems which sufficiently prepare students for their unique experiences and challenges by allowing them to use necessary resources to exercise their linguistic and cultural choices. Kanno (2003) also

asserted that educational systems need to prepare multiple criteria to select and accept the students with varied experiences of international migration. These efforts of community building should also occur at the classroom levels. Social networks and relationships within classrooms, such as teacher-child interactions, friendship development, interpersonal bonds, and discourse practices among classroom members are important aspects when building a classroom community that helps ELLs negotiate their self-perceptions through learning English (Day, 2002). The classroom community, in which the sensitivities towards such relationships are interwoven, allows ELLs to become more able to participate in developing and shifting their positioning and situatedness in an ongoing manner.

Fifth, teachers are expected to study their own assumptions regarding their students who have different backgrounds from their own in terms of language, culture, social class, socio-economic status, and so on. Hawkins (2005) asserted that teachers need to know that their students' cultural capitals or social status in the classroom do not necessarily correlate with the levels of their academic competences. Like when building a school community, building a classroom community requires teachers to shift from "designing lessons to designing ecologies" (p. 79). Knowing individual students in relation to ever changing social realities of the classroom is what teachers need to strive for. Toohey (2000) emphasized that teachers need to ensure that in their classroom communities, resources are accessible to all members and "desirable and powerful positions" (p. 127) are available for all students.

There seem to be some specific pedagogical strategies to incorporate the issues of students' social identities into the practices of English language education. For instance, teachers can scaffold their students for not just learning English or academic contents in English but also learning the ways of being members of the academic discourse community (Hawkins, 2005). In other words, certain ways of talking, thinking, acting, and perceiving become available to the students only when teachers provide varying participation patterns across varied classroom activities by designing instructions that requires students to collaboratively negotiate their languages, culture, and experiences (Hawkins, 2005). Morita (2004) also suggested that, in order to facilitate ELLs' language learning, academic learning, and identity formation through classroom discussions, teachers can use some pedagogical strategies, such as clearly explaining the purpose of a given discussion, providing cultural and background information of the topic discussed, briefly summarizing the discussion from time to time, incorporating ELL's perspectives as legitimate sources of knowledge, using small groups, and assigning students to present in the class. These strategies were suggested for the university-level students in Morita's (2004) study, yet seem to be extendable for the instructions for ELLs of all ages. Bourne (2002) also found that students develop their academic identities as they receive feedback from their teachers on their writings. For

instance, teachers can point out students' mistakes in their writings only few at a time so that the students will not develop the images of themselves as incompetent writers.

Teachers also need to find the ways to interact with their students in "locally appropriate ways" (Toohey, 2000, p. 128) in which their conversations are based on appropriate voices of one another. Lin, Wang, Akamatsu, and Riazi (2002) asserted the idea of "glocalized communication" (p. 312) to improve the current teaching situations in the field of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). In their idea, English language teachers need to attend to socioculturally situated perspectives of themselves and their learners in order to provide effective pedagogy. In other words, teachers need to attune to the identity issues among local social actors, such as their students and the students' parents, who associate English language learning with purposes specific to their local contexts. The glocalized communication among teachers and students reduces the divide between the global views of English language learning, such as the hegemonic status given to English, and the local realities of learning English among diverse students. Through these suggested ways of interactions and communications, teachers can listen to the voices of their students. Kanno (2003) warned teachers not to be rigid and judgmental about classroom activities and their own roles as teachers and suggested them to listen to their students' voices in given circumstances rather than simplistically determining who is in the center and who is in the periphery of the given community.

Participating in the online discussions, similarly, was found to serve as a tool for teachers to understand their students' language socialization processes as well as identity construction (Nguyen & Kellogg, 2005). An important point regarding "knowing students" is that the knowledge of the students derived from discourse analyses or any types of interactions and communications are not fixed as though individual characteristics are to the students. Social positions of the students greatly affect the identities with which the students recognize themselves and others recognize them. For instance, Nguyen and Kellogg (2005) found that "the position that [the students] take in discussions, with whom they choose to align and how they negotiate meaning with others" (p. 131) were more important for their identity construction than their individual traits. It is also important to note that, as much as teachers need to know their students, the students themselves need to be aware of their own experiences of identity negotiations and constructions. Vyas (2004) found that students' bicultural identities became illuminated through their participations in series of literacy activities and that students themselves began to know about themselves on the processes. Overall, teachers could benefit from more explicit education, training, and experiences in intercultural communication (Macpherson, 2005) in order to shift their roles in classrooms.

Lastly, discussing these potential implication suggested by literature is meaningless without proposing necessary social changes since classrooms, schools, communities, and all agents who participate in educational processes are ecologically linked to each other within multiple levels of societies. Certain assumptions and ideologies need to be reconciled and further understandings are necessary for the changes of our societies towards a direction more desirable for English language education for the increasing number of ELLs throughout the world. Existing power relations, such as the hegemony of English and "linguistic Anglo-Americanization" (Modiano, 2004, p. 215), need to be questioned and destabilized. Lin et al (2002), for instance, criticized the historically deep-rooted general consensus that native speakers are better English language teachers than non-native English speakers. Many of our current societies, which have been generating English proliferation, have not been placing values on multilingualism and cultural resources. ELLs, therefore, have been deprived of opportunities to recognize their bilingual and bicultural identities as both individual and collective assets. Changing social structures often leads to restructuring these power relations and unequal ideological relations. When we evaluate and deconstruct the power relations associated with English language in a societal level, many ELLs may become able to access the roles or the identities which they would not have gained access otherwise. The societies, in which multilingualism is appreciated, may support the educational policies, curriculum, and practices that foster ELLs' optimal construction of social identities, such as the construction of bilingual/bicultural and translingul/transcultural identities. Valuing multilingualism at a societal level will also promote the maintenance of students' first language and foster understandings of multiple influences of their heritage culture.

However, at the same time, English language learning should not be optimistically regarded as mere positive experiences of adding another linguistic competence to the other. Learning a language is encountering the culture attached to the language. Therefore, language learning often lead the learners "to the intense discomfort of unknowing, to the frustration of ambiguity and the possibility of conflict" (Macpherson, 2005). In other words, what is valued in one culture can easily become a threat to the learners who have different cultural background. In Macpherson's (2005) study, the culture of English-speaking countries associated with the Western modernity, became a threat against some Tibetan female ELLs' traditional cultural affiliation, languages, and identities. Similarly, Sarroub (2001) documented that the Yemeni female high school student in her study had experienced inevitable cultural clash between the U.S. culture and Yemeni culture. This student, after all, did not find her "home" in neither in the U.S. nor Yemen and chose to identify herself in the imagined space. What this study suggests is not to celebrate multilingualism with simple mind by promoting English language education. Rather, what needs to be emphasized is that, in the situations where English needs to be taught and learned, English should be introduced critically and ELL's social identities should be always discussed as a central issue.

Thus, the possible implications suggested by previous studies are for multiple levels of educational arena, including society, community, school, and classroom, as well as various agents involved in educational processes, such as policy makers, local community members, teachers, school administrators, parents, and students. A common thread across the implications is the importance of understanding English language learning as not only linguistic processes but also cultural and social ones. The task is to create language learning contexts in which all students, including ELLs, are able to explore and negotiate their identities without being coerced or restricted by others. Building school and classroom communities in which ELLs can find their legitimate memberships and also reconciling teachers' roles and pedagogy seem important. Overall, we need to be aware the importance of experiences and interactions between ELLs and others in social contexts. When we are able to think the processes of English language learning ecologically, there seems to be multiple possibilities to incorporate the idea of social identity into the field of English language education.

Conclusion

This study showed that the idea of social identity needs multidisciplinary scrutiny in order to illuminate the patterns and processes of ELLs' social identity negotiation associated with their integrations into English language learning. The multidisciplinary approach helps us conceptualize social identity as the learners' socially recognized and enacted selves that are continuously negotiated within given contexts. Previous studies suggested that the relations between social identities and English language learning were not one-directional. Rather, through receiving mediations from the learners' participations in social practices, their identity negotiation appeared intrinsically interwoven into the combination of contextual and individual learning experiences. The relations seem to be reciprocal as English language learning in given contexts allow, or restrict in some cases, access to certain types of social recognitions and enactment of the socially recognized self while learners' social identities influence their positions in the social communities and their overall experiences with English language.

The developmental processes of social identity negotiation are not universal since they overlap with the processes of language socialization, which ELL's various experiences in the linguistic, social, and cultural contexts dynamically influence their construction of self and language acquisition. Developing certain competences in English and academics is part of ELLs' overall experiences, which seem to help us understand their linguistic and academic identities. The patterns of social identity negotiation associated with English language learning differ dramatically among individuals since human experiences are, like a "dance", never understood as a uniformity. The patterns found in previous studies ranged from ELLs'

intense personal struggles of searching for home between two languages and culture to their construction of self-perceptions as bilingual and bicultural beings.

In order to incorporate the issues of social identities into the English language teaching and learning in the world, all agents involved in the educational processes need to reconcile the multiple levels of educational structures which may have been rigid to the historically established social, linguistic, and cultural hierarchies. To activate the idea of social identities in the field requires ongoing interactions and conversations on shared experiences as well as the experiences that each member uniquely brings to the community. Understanding individual learners within given contexts seems to be the first step to achieve the incorporation of social identities into English education. Igoa (1995) explained that the feeling of being understood was one of the most powerful and healing human experiences for her students who were ELLs. By being understood in terms of not only their present identities but also their past and future identities, an increasing number of ELLs may find creative ways to interact with English and the related culture rather than receptively absorbing the existing dominant language, culture, and social values.

It is important to note that the issues of social identities deserve more attention when we discuss a variety of topics in the field of English language education. ELL's social identities reflect their linguistic, social, and educational experiences. Studying their social identities, therefore, holds potentialities to open the windows to their individual needs, their relations to others, and the new directions to which existing educational practices should take. What this study has captured is a partial picture of a complex whole—like describing the colors of threads and the motif from a small part of a great tapestry or identifying some variations of steps in a complicated dance. More conceptual and empirical studies are expected to be developed in this field and continue to add new perspectives and interpretations.

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