〔Articles（論説）〕

The Importance of Self-Identity and Ego Permeability in Foreign Culture Adaptation and Foreign Language Acquisition

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the role that self-identity and ego permeability play in determining an individual's ability to function effectively in foreign cultures and gain fluency in foreign languages. In a quantitative study, I examined the relationship between cultural adaptation and foreign language acquisition in terms of the psychological traits that are deemed to influence success/failure in both these endeavors (Keeley, 2013). The study was carried out with 86 Chinese students studying in Japanese (as the language of instruction) at Kyushu Sangyo University in Fukuoka, Japan. The main quantitative instrument used to measure psychological traits that facilitate cultural adaptation was Kozai Group's Global Competency Inventory (GCI). Some additional psychometric scales focusing more on foreign language acquisition were also employed. The 16 items of the GCI as well as the additional psychometric scales served as independent variables while the students' relative rankings in Japanese oral/aural performance served as the dependent variable. Among the 16 competencies that comprise the GCI, Self-Identity proved to have one of the strongest associations with the Chinese students' oral/aural ability in Japanese. Likewise, Language Ego Permeability (a non-GCI scale) was also strongly associated with their oral/aural ability in Japanese. The aim of this paper is to provide an in-depth look at Self-Identity and Language Ego Permeability in relation to cultural adaptation and foreign language acquisition.

Introduction

When it comes to foreign languages and foreign cultures people react in astoundingly different ways. You may have wondered why some people are frustrated in trying to learn even the basics of a foreign language while others speak multiple foreign languages fluently; or why some people seem to flourish in almost any culture while others quickly become overwhelmed and flounder. I have always noted that assimilation of a foreign culture in terms of acceptance (not feeling awkward or estranged when functioning in the foreign culture) takes the study of the corresponding foreign language beyond meta-linguistic knowledge (understanding of semantics, grammatical rules, syntax, phonology, etc.) to a level of acquisition that enables a high level of performance in the target

language. In other words, in such a state it does not feel unnatural to participate in the culture and speak the language. There is no feeling of being a traitor to your identity associated with your mother tongue and the culture of your upbringing.

Thus, I hypothesized that the psychological traits, affective factors, and attitudes of individuals who demonstrate successful cultural adaptation (living, working or studying, and functioning in a foreign culture) may also facilitate acquiring a foreign language in the terms of high-level performance defined as approximating that of a native speaker in oral communication. I specify oral communication because that requires interaction with others, usually native speakers of the target language. In such interaction the foreigner usually also has to deal with cultural differences. Furthermore, our emotions are engaged to a much greater extent in a conversation compared to using the language in another form that does not involve direct on-the-spot communication such as reading and writing.

Schumann's Acculturation Model (1978) is one of the most well known early attempts to explore the relationship between cultural adaptation and Second Language Acquisition (SLA). Communicative competence in the target language facilitates cultural adjustment and vice versa. Schumann's (1986) acculturation model predicts that learners will acquire the target language to the degree they acculturate to the target language group. Schumann (1986) argued that two groups of variables - social factors and affective factors - cluster together into a single variable that is a major causal variable in SLA. Schumann called this variable <u>acculturation</u> - the social and psychological integration of the learner with the target language group. Schumann (1986) stated:

> I also propose that any learner can be placed on a continuum that ranges
> from social and psychological distance to social psychological proximity
> with speakers of the target language, and that the learner will acquire
> the second language only to the degree that he acculturates (p. 379).

Larsen-Freeman & Long (1991) argue that Schumann did not specify the combinations and/or levels of social and psychological factors to predict language outcome and that Schumann did not explain how these factors affect the rate of attainment. This remark shows the excessive demands of strict empiricism, expecting definitiveness where it may not be available. My quantitative study (Keeley, 2013) partially addresses this concern, however, it must be understood that there is no one single recipe for success in becoming highly fluent in a foreign language. Kozai Group's Global Competency Inventory (GCI) is a psychometric

instrument that focuses on the psychological traits associated with success in cultural adaptation. It was employed to test the hypothesis that these psychological traits are also related to success in foreign language acquisition.

This paper presents the results for the GCI competency Self-Identity and an additional non-GCI psychometric scale termed − Language Ego Permeability. Thereafter, there is a detailed discussion of the important role Self-Identity and Language Ego Permeability play in cultural adaptation and foreign language acquisition.

Kozai Group's Global Competencies Inventory

The Kozai Group is the product of over 20 years of collaboration in the area of international human resource management by its partners (Allan Bird, Mark Mendenhall, Gary Oddou, Joyce Osland, Michael Stevens, and Norihito Furuya). Together they bring over a century of combined research and consulting experience with major U.S. and international business clients. Their mission is to assist companies with global operations to develop effective human resource strategies to support their business objectives. The Kozai Group, Inc. offers two intercultural assessments − GCI and the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale (IES). GCI and IES assessments are based on comprehensive research of the core competencies required for global leadership and effective intercultural engagement. The GCI is more comprehensive than the IES. These survey assessments are used with very good results by educational faculty, human resource managers, consultants, and researchers.

The GCI is designed to assess your personal qualities associated with effectiveness in environments where there are cultural norms and behaviors different from your own. The GCI measures leadership competencies of corporate managers and global leaders in areas critical to interacting and working effectively with people from different cultures. In developing the GCI, the Kozai group began with the question: What characteristics do people have who adapt to foreign cultures better than others, but are not part of the domain of operational and technical competencies? This question is similar to the questions often asked concerning the characteristics of successful learners and users of foreign languages. This observation was one of the key reasons I chose to use the GCI in my research.

The Kozai Group's GCI served as a validated instrument for measuring psychological traits affecting cultural adaptation (associated with effective

behavior in a cross-cultural environment). Rankings were obtained for the Chinese students in the 16 competencies that comprised the GCI. Essentially, I wanted to explore if relatively higher scores on these competencies corresponded with higher oral/aural performance in a foreign language (in this case the oral/aural performance in Japanese of Chinese students).

The GCI Competency Self-Identity

This competency considers a leader's ability to maintain personal values and beliefs regardless of the situation. A strong self-identity means one has strong personal values and maintains a high sense of personal integrity while at the same time being openly accepting of those who are different, without feeling personally threatened.

5-point Likert scale anchored with 1 = "Strongly Disagree" and 5 = "Strongly Agree"
Overall Scale Reliability = 0.73 – Cronbach's Alpha

Sample Questions:

◇ Even if you have strong beliefs, you can still get along with those who differ.
◇ People should adjust their values to fit their circumstances.
◇ I have a personal philosophy that guides my behavior.

(Note that some questions are reversed-coded in calculating the dimension score.)

Kozai Group's Description of the Self-Identity (SI) Competency

Self-Identity refers to the extent to which people maintain personal values independent of situational factors and have a strong sense of personal identity. People with high self-identity can adapt culturally, but will do it in a way that maintains a strong framework of personal values, thus allowing them to maintain a sense of their personal integrity. This allows them to integrate their new cultural knowledge into existing mental models, whereas those low in self-identity are either unable to integrate new knowledge, or when they do, they experience life crises that overwhelm them.

Self-Identity is akin to the construct of independent self-construal (Markus & Kitayama, 1991:22), which involves "construing oneself as an individual whose behavior is organized and made meaningful primarily by reference to one's own internal repertoire of thoughts, feelings, and actions rather than by reference to thoughts, feelings, and actions of others." Oguri & Gudykunst

(2002:580) noted that interdependent self-construals (the opposite of independent construals) result in individual identity and behaviors that "are largely dependent on external factors such as in-groups and social contexts." Research findings suggest that expatriates with independent self-construals have higher levels of psychological adjustment overseas than expatriates with interdependent self-construals.[1]

Mendenhall & Osland (2002) found in their review of the global leadership literature that self-identity emerged in a variety of studies.[2] Black and his colleagues found that global leaders had to have a strong sense of their own values and ethical frameworks in order to maintain integrity in a global context. Being able to find and maintain the balance between what is ethically unacceptable on a global basis and what is locally permissible is an important part of global leadership (Black, et. al., 1999). Bird and Osland (2004), in their review of this literature, argue strongly that this competency is crucial to success in working in global and cross-cultural settings.

Similarly, McCall and Hollenbeck (2002) reported that one of the primary characteristics that emerged from their study of 101 global leaders was the quality of "operating from a state of honesty and integrity" and Wills and Barham (1994) also concluded that integrity, holding true to one's beliefs and values, was an important influence on managerial success in a foreign environment. Bird and Osland (2004) place integrity as one of their threshold competencies in the ION global competencies framework. Spreitzer, McCall, & Mahoney (1997) also found that integrity was an important competency in identifying international executives. In the expatriate literature, Kealey and Ruben (1983) refer to this competency as positive self-image in their research.[3] Kealey (1996) classifies this as an important adaptation skill in his review, noting that it "reflects the ability to be comfortable with and accepting of oneself . . . the need to be acknowledged or rewarded is minimal [and the] ability to deal with the new environment without excessive worry about one's personal and professional security is evident." (p. 86)

High scorers are extremely aware of their core personal values and never violate them, yet are open and comfortable around those who have different beliefs and values. Low scorers are not sure of what they really believe or are weak in their commitment to what they believe, and are thus very quick to

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[1] Cross, 1995; Oguri & Gudykunst, 2002; Pi-Ju Yang, Noels, & Saumure, 2006; Yamaguchi & Wiseman, 2001.

[2] Black et al., 1999; Goldsmith et al., 2003; McCall & Hollenbeck, 2002.

[3] Arthur & Bennett, 1995, 1997; Ronen, 1989

compromise their values in order to fit in or avoid a conflict.

Statistical Results for the Self-Management Variable Self-Identity

The 86 Chinese students were separated into 5 groups according to their relative performance ratings in 'Japanese Ability' (oral/aural communication).[4] The results of the ANOVA for Self-Identity yielded an F Value of 70.531 (Sig. = 0.000) between the 'Top 17' (the highest of the five groups) and the 'Bottom 17' (the lowest of the five groups). Furthermore, the F Value for all five groups was 17.499 (Sig. = 0.000). These F Values are the highest for all the 16 GCI competencies (independent variables in the quantitative study) and confirm the validity of the correlation and difference of means analyses.

Table 1 shows that the correlation between Self Identity scores and 'Japanese Ability' are significant for the 'Top 17' and 'Bottom 17' as well as for all 86 participants. In fact this correlation is the highest for all the competencies for the GCI and demonstrates the importance of the Self-Identity competency in acquisition of native-like fluency in foreign languages.

Table 1: Self-Identity & 'Japanese Ability' Correlation

Scale	Pearson Correlation	Significance (2-Tailed)	Subjects
Self-Identity	0.801/0.589	0.000/0.000	34/86

Additionally, there is a significant difference between the mean of the 'Top 17' subgroup's scores for Self Identity and that of the 'Bottom 17' subgroup as seen in Table 2.

Table 2: Differences of Means for Self-Identity Scores

Self-Identity	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Sig. 2-tailed	Mean Difference	Interval 95% Conf.
'Top 17'	17	3.6529	0.3184	0.0772	0.000	0.8294	0.6282 to
'Bottom 17'	17	2.8235	0.2538	0.0616			1.0306

Self-Identity and Language Ego Permeability

"We know what we are, but not what we may be" – William Shakespeare

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[4] See Keeley (2013) for the method used to rate the students' 'Japanese Ability'.

The discussion of self-identity here in relation to oral performance in additional languages is closely related to Language Ego Permeability". In relation to ego permeability Guiora (1972:145) stated, "Second language learning in all of its aspects demands that the individual, to a certain extent, take on a new identity." Guiora (1972) contends that in order to have permeable language-related ego boundaries, you must have a well-defined, secure, integrated ego or sense of self in the first language. In the same way the GCI Self-Identity also measures a sense of self that is based on awareness of core values, which are modified upon introspection in the process of reflecting upon experiences, particularly in a cross-cultural context.

Language Ego Permeability Scale

The higher one's score in Language Ego Permeability, the more likely one will succeed in learning foreign languages. High scorers tend to feel comfortable in developing new cultural and language identities, are emphatic learners able and willing to mimic native speakers of the target language, and have sufficient confidence in their language learning abilities.

5-point Likert scale anchored with 1 = "Strongly Disagree" and 5 = "Strongly Agree"
Overall Scale Reliability = 0.737 – Cronbach's Alpha

Scale Questions:
- ✧ I think I'm a pretty good at language learner.
- ✧ My language learning aptitude is probably pretty high.
- ✧ I think that I could learn pretty much any language I really put my mind to, given the right circumstances.
- ✧ I don't like the idea of relying on speaking Chinese in another country.
- ✧ I think the people of the country where I'll be living would like for me to learn their language.
- ✧ I like to mimic other accents, and people say I do it well.
- ✧ I can do impressions for famous people.
- ✧ I find it easy to "put myself in other people's shoes" and imagine how they feel.

The Statistical Results for Language Ego Permeability

The results of the ANOVA for the Language Ego Permeability Scale yielded an F Value of 21.306 (Sig. = 0.000) between the 'Top 17' and 'Bottom 17'. Furthermore, the F Value for all five groups was 8.947 (Sig. = 0.000). These high F Values confirm the validity of the correlation and difference of means analyses. Table 3 shows that the correlation between Language Ego Permeability Scale scores and 'Japanese Ability' are significant for the 'Top 17' and 'Bottom 17' as well as for all 86 participants.

Table 3: Language Ego Permeability Scale & 'Japanese Ability' Correlation

Scale	Pearson Correlation	Significance (2-Tailed)	Subjects
Language Ego Permeability	0.593/0.449	0.000/0.000	34/86

Additionally, as seen in Table 4, there is also a significant difference between the mean of the 'Top 17' subgroup's scores for the Language Ego Permeability and that of the 'Bottom 17' subgroup.

Table 4: Difference of Means for Language Ego Permeability Scale

Language Ego Permeability	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Sig. 2-tailed	Mean Difference	Interval 95% Conf.
'Top 17'	17	3.2574	0.4026	0.0985	0.000	0.8015	0.4478 to
'Bottom 17'	17	2.4559	0.5895	0.1430			1.1551

Guiora et al. (1972) stated,

The development of the language ego directly parallels that of general ego development. In the early stages of development the boundaries of the language ego are in a state of flux and, hence, pronunciation ability is quite malleable. One clear manifestation of this state of affairs is the child's relative ease in assimilating native-like pronunciation in a foreign language. Once these boundaries become set, in terms of the degree to which they will be allowed to fluctuate under normal circumstances, the ability to approximate authentic pronunciation in a second language will be drastically reduced (p. 422).

Guiora equates emphatic capacity with the concept of permeability of ego boundaries. Individual variations in the ability to approximate native-like pronunciation are, in part, determined by certain psychological variables best subsumed under the construct of empathy, or more broadly speaking, the concept of permeability of ego boundaries. Guiora considers pronunciation to be the most

salient aspect of the language ego, the hardest to penetrate in acquiring a new language and the most difficult to lose in one's native language. Guiora et al. (1972) went on to contend,

> Second-language learning in all of its dimensions exerts a very specific demand with regard to self-representation. Essentially, to learn a second language is to take on a new identity. Since pronunciation appears to be the aspect of language behavior most resistant to change, we submit that it is therefore the most critical to self-representation. Hence, we propose that the most sensitive index of the ability to take on a new identity, i.e., the degree of permeability of language ego boundaries, is found in the ability to achieve native like pronunciation in a second language (p. 442).

Later, Guiora et al. (1980) designed a study as an extension of previous research in which pronunciation of a foreign language was experimentally manipulated using alcohol or hypnosis, to confirm a relationship between permeability of language ego boundaries and pronunciation. The study in question used Benzodiazepine (Valium) to manipulate pronunciation in Thai. Results suggest that Benzodiazepine facilitates the empathic sensitivity of the subjects to the tester rather than to the voice on the tape. The combined findings of the Valium and alcohol studies are interpreted as supporting the theoretical connection between language ego boundaries and ego boundaries in general and illustrate the extraordinary sensitivity of the test to fluctuations in the state of the subject's ego.

Thus, we see that in the context of foreign language acquisition (FLA) the term ego refers to a person's awareness of his/herself in relation to others in terms of self-expression through language and associated communicative behavior. Language Ego Permeability deals with both social and affective factors. The tendency to develop a rigid identity as we mature can make adult learners more self-conscious than younger language learners who may be more flexible in modifying or expanding their identity. Identities are formed in social/cultural contexts that are particular to each individual. A lack of ego permeability and rigid cultural identification can be stumbling blocks for adults learning another language, particularly in areas of phonology, accent, and fluency. Language Ego Permeability also refers to the ability to move back and forth between languages and the different 'language personalities' that develop in the process of acquiring the languages. People with highly permeable language egos do not feel that their identity associated with their native language is threatened by the acquisition and

use of additional languages.

The problem is often that "it just doesn't feel right" or in other words there is a resistance to imitating speakers of the target language. This is the essence of observations that seemingly support any so-called "critical" or "sensitive period," not the mistaken belief that the brain does not have enough plasticity for an adult to succeed in additional language acquisition. If adults cultivate greater ego permeability in the process of becoming multilingual and multicultural they can outperform their younger counterparts in learning additional languages due to potentially greater metacognitive and metalinguistic development. Furthermore, an adult is also more likely than the child to value the maintenance of acquired ability in additional languages.

What is Identity?

"It's like everyone tells a story about themselves inside their own head. Always. All the time. That story makes you what you are. We build ourselves out of that story." – Patrick Rothfuss, *The Name of the Wind*

There is no single answer to this question and the answer will always depend on the context. Identity is sometimes conceptualized as a stable, fixed entity within us, which controls our actions and understanding of the world. However, the belief that an individual has one unique and consistent identity is an illusion. We have multiple self-identifications, some of them inconsistent, and their relative importance is a function of context. The assumption of stability in regards to self-identity is belied by the malleability, context sensitivity, and dynamic construction of the self as a mental construct. Identities are not fixed markers but are instead dynamically constructed in the moment (Leary & Tangney, 2012).

Identity is something that usually receives little explicit consideration, except when a situation or event moves it to the forefront. As Mercer (1990:43) stated, "Identity only becomes an issue when it is in crisis, when something assumed to be fixed, coherent, and stable is displaced by the experience of doubt and uncertainty." Cross-cultural interaction combined with intensive learning of a foreign language can trigger such crises. In such a case there is a simultaneous challenge to both our cultural identity and linguistic identity. Our cultural identity can be thought of as those aspects of our identities that arise from our belonging to distinctive ethnic, racial, linguistic, religious, and national cultures. Our linguistic identity is an integral part our cultural identity and is what most often signals to others the characteristics of cultural identity. Given that so many

factors come together in defining our identity, it is most useful to view identity as a plurality and not a unitary construct.

Our overall self-concept can be thought of as being composed of two key parts: personal identity and social identity. Personal identity focuses on what defines us in terms of what may be considered more personal attributes such as our emotions, intellect, behavior, goals, achievements, desires, etc. Social identity focuses on an individual's roles, position, and attributes in relation to society. It includes such labels as father/mother and other terms defining one's position in the family, citizenship, profession, ethnicity, race, etc. Social identity is also the portion of our self-concept derived from perceived membership in social groups or perceived affiliation with others according to what we have in common. In these terms a simple example could be: an Asian American, Southerner, Democrat, wife, mother, classical music lover, and a card-carrying member of Green Peace.

DeVos (1992) argues that identity formation is not simply a conscious process but is influenced by unconscious psychological processes that are dynamic and continuous. There is a constantly ongoing discourse with others and consequently an ever-changing narrative about one's self-identity that is embedded within broader sociocultural frameworks and symbolic practices that suggest complex social and power relations. Much of Bonnie Norton's second language acquisition (SLA) research focuses on these power relations in which immigrants or sojourners in foreign countries acquire and use the target language. Norton (1997: 410) defines identity as, "how people understand their relationship with the outside world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how people understand their possibilities for the future."

The Enlightened Subject, Sociological Subject, & Post-Modern Subject

Stuart Hall distinguishes between three different conceptions of identity, namely those of the enlightened subject, the sociological subject, and the post-modern subject (Hall et al. 1992:597). Hall's distinctions represent a sort of evolution of the concept of identity.

The enlightenment subject was based on the conception that a human being is a fully centered, unified individual, endowed with the capacities of reason, consciousness, and action, whose center consists of an inner core, which first emerged when the person was born, and unfolded with it, while remaining essentially the same − continuous or 'identical' with itself − throughout the

person's existence. Further it was believed that it was in this core that the individual's identity was found. The enlightened subject may be understood in terms of the distinct personality of an individual regarded as a persisting entity, individuality.

The idea of the sociological subject was a reflection of the growing complexity of the world, together with the awareness that the inner core of the subject could not be self-sufficient, but actually was formed in interaction with others. In particular, the formation of one's sociological identity occurs through one's identifications with significant others (primarily with parents and other individuals during one's biographical experiences, and also with 'in-groups'). These others may be benign such that one aspires to their characteristics, values and beliefs (a process of idealistic-identification), or malign when one wishes to dissociate from their characteristics (a process of defensive contra-identification) (Weinreich & Saunderson 2003:45-61). These others mediate values, meanings, and symbols of the society the person was born into. Thus, according to this conception, an identity is formed by the interaction between the self and the society. A person still consists of an inner core, but it is formed and modified in an on-going dialogue with the world, and the identities offered by it. The previous experience of having a unified and stable identity became fragmented. Consequently, we began to consist of not a single identity, but rather several identities, as we project ourselves into different cultural identities. Doing so helps us fit into the respective societies. Identity in this sense may also be seen as the set of behavioral or personal characteristics by which an individual is recognizable as a member of a group.

The post-modern conception is that individuals tend not to have a fixed, essential, or permanent identity. Essentially post-modern identity is a product of increased globalization in terms of greater movement of people and greater communication of ideas, lifestyles, beliefs, perspectives, etc. In such a situation identity can become something that may be formed and transformed in relation to the ways we are represented or addressed in the cultural system surrounding us. More and more people are confronted with diversity and have a choice whether or not to directly engage in that diversity or to build psychological barriers. When there is a willingness to engage in diversity an individual may assume different identities at different times. One view is that these identities are not unified around an inner core; therefore if we feel that we have a unified identity from birth to death, it is because we construct a story about ourselves. In the past, people had a number of central elements to help construct their identity:

family, nation, social class, gender, ethnicity, etc. However, post-modern societies introduce more sources of identity producing a more complex pattern of both identity and a sense of belonging. Today identities are increasingly based on a multiplicity of lifestyles, not simply on nationality.

Post-structuralism and Identity

Post-modernism is closely related to the post-structural movement and sometimes the terms are used interchangeably (e.g., Pavlenko & Norton, 2007). In the realm of the social sciences and applied linguistics in particular, identity is most often framed as a social process following the principles of post-structuralism (Block, 2013). Duff (2012) describes this post-structural approach as follows:

> Post-structuralism is an approach to research that questions fixed categories or structures, oppositional binaries, closed systems, and stable truths and embraces seeming contradictions […] Post-structural researchers examine how such categories are discursively and socially constructed, taken up, resisted (the sight of struggle), and so on. (p. 412)

When engaged in a conversation with a new acquaintance, both parties in the conversation are constantly sending and reading cues that help establish their respective identities. This is a basically a process of establishing the relative position or status of each individual. The way language is used is a central part of this process. Post-structuralist theorists see identities as being contingent, shifting and context-dependent, and that while identities or positions are often given by social structures or ascribed by others, they can also be negotiated by agents who wish to position themselves by the cues or signals that they send. Foreign language learners and users should not be simply defined in binary terms (e.g., motivated or unmotivated, introverted or extroverted, inhibited or uninhibited). Identity theorists see these affective descriptors as constructed in frequently inequitable social contexts, as variable over time and space, and sometimes co-existing in contradictory ways within a single individual (Norton & Toohey, 2011).

Social Identity Complexity

In relation to social identity factors, Roccas and Brewer (2002) introduced 'social identity complexity' as a theoretical construct that refers to an individual's subjective representation of the interrelationships among his or her multiple

social group identities. Social identity complexity reflects the degree of overlap perceived to exist between groups of which a person is simultaneously a member. The theory maintains that when the overlap between multiple in-groups is high, the individual maintains a relatively simplified identity structure whereby memberships in different groups converge to form a single in-group identification. Such an individual would most likely lack a great deal of experience in dealing with diversity. On the other hand, when a person acknowledges and accepts membership in multiple in-groups that are not fully convergent or overlapping, the associated identity is both more inclusive and more complex.

Social identity issues are a very important part of the language acquisition process and may determine not only what languages we acquire, but also how those acquired languages manifest themselves pragmatically in the idiolect (accent, discourse norms, etc.). The process of becoming a successful multilingual individual requires the development of a complex gestalt of multiple disparate linguistic and socio-cultural identities. The ability to maintain these identities and switch from one identity to another facilitates fluency and inhibits interference from other languages known by the individual. From my personal experience, this is one of the most important factors in minimizing negative cross-linguistic influence.

Identifying with and Imitating Other Human Beings

The ability and tendency to identify with other human beings plays an essential role in the development and transmission of human culture as well as language acquisition (both primary and additional language acquisition). The first step in the process is the development of a self-concept in infants and viewing others as intentional agents. The latter ability usually occurs between nine to twelve months of age. Concerning the transmission of culture Tomasello (1999) wrote,

> After they *(infants)* understand others as intentional agents like themselves, a whole new world of intersubjectively shared reality begins to open up. It is a world populated by material and symbolic artifacts and social practices that members of their culture, both past and present, have created for the use of others. To be able to use these artifacts as they were meant to be used, and to participate in these social practices as they were meant to be participated in, children have to be able to imagine themselves in the position of the adult users and participants as

they observe them. Children now come to comprehend how 'we' use the artifacts and practices of our culture – what they are 'for' ... this ability to see the self as one participant among others in an interaction is the social-cognitive basis for the infant's ability to comprehend the kinds of socially shared events that constitute the basic joint attentional formats for the acquisition of language and other types of communication. (p. 91-93)

Thus, we can view natural language as a symbolically embodied social institution that arose historically from previously existing social-communicative activities and not as some bizarre genetic mutation unrelated to other aspects of cognition and social life as envisioned by Chomsky (1980) and propagated by Pinker (1994).[5]

Language acquisition is also a process of identity construction and how a person sees him/herself in relation to the language being acquired and in relation to the speakers of that language along with their culture. Every time language learners interact in a foreign language, whether in the oral or written mode, they are engaged in identity construction and negotiation. Wegner (2000:239) commented, "Identity is not an abstract idea or label, such as a title, and ethnic category, or a personality trait. It is a lived experience of belonging (or not belonging). A strong identity involves deep connections with others through shared histories and experiences, reciprocity, affection, and mutual commitments." The languages we speak and how we speak them serve to define our linguistic and cultural identities. Everyone has a dialect and speaks with an accent. It is only when the accent and dialect have strong social and political status do people feel that they do not speak with an accent. Accents and dialects are a sign of our social, cultural, historical, and geographical identity.

Through our accent(s) we reveal affiliation with specific cultures(s) and groups defined at various levels: national, regional, ethnic, social, educational, etc. Your accent in a given language can be a conscious or unconscious choice and is strongly affected by your linguistic and cultural identity along with the emotions associated with the sense of belonging to the group represented by the accent you use. The importance of identity is evident in both primary and additional language acquisition. It determines which speech style (accent, grammar, vocabulary, etc.) that people imitate.

Language is so closely tied to identity that when someone does not look like

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[5] See Tomasello (1999) for a more detailed discussion of the evidence.

he/she should speak with a certain accent (e.g., if a person of Pakistani origin speaks with a Scottish accent) people often become suspicious or at least want to find out why it is so. Ethnicity often leads to certain assumptions about language ability in in various cultural and social environments. In Asia the native speaker of English is assumed to be Caucasian. In particular, native speakers of English with Asian ethnicity often face discrimination in hiring for positions teaching English. I face the opposite problem. I have lived in Asia all most of my life (mostly in Japan – 33 years as of the present). The fact that I am 191 cm blonde Caucasian often leads people to assume that I do not speak the local language. So whether I am in Japan, China, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, Korea, Indonesia, or Malaysia I must constantly establish that in fact I do speak the local language before the people I am addressing will speak their mother tongue in a natural manner (no pidginization for the supposed benefit of the foreigner or resorting to broken English). Additionally, both my sons are native speakers of Japanese. Though they do have some slight Asian features inherited from their Japanese mother, their overall appearance and names belie the fact that Japanese is their mother tongue. However, their speech and mannerisms tend to establish immediate legitimacy as a native speaker of Japanese as long as the interlocutor is open to reading the signals (sometimes people do not see with their eyes nor listen with their ears).

In today's modern world children are exposed to a wide variety of speech as they acquire their first language (television programs, videos, and all other sorts of audio/visual media). Nevertheless, children acquire a particular style that is emotionally significant for them. McGilchrist (2009) stressed the importance of empathetic identification in the process of acquiring language,

> A child does not acquire the skill of language, and more than the skill of life, by learning rules, but by imitation, a form of emphatic identification, usually with his or her parents, or at any rate with those members of the group who are perceived as more proficient. I have suggested that such identification involves an (obviously unconscious) attempt to inhabit another person's body, and this may sound somewhat mystical. But imitation is an attempt to be 'like' (in the sense of experiencing what it is 'like' to be) another person, and what it is 'like' to be that person is something that can be experienced only from the inside. Not just the acquisition of language, but the everyday business of language involves such inhabiting. Communication occurs because, in a necessarily limited, but nonetheless crucially important, sense, we come to feel what it is like to be the person who is communicating with us. This explains why we

pick up another person's speech habits or tics, even against our will. It explains many of the problems of emotional entrainment in conversation, the countertransference that occurs, not just in therapy, but in ordinary, everyday life, when we experience in our own frames the very feelings that our interlocutor experiences. And empathy is associated with a greater intuitive desire to imitate. (p. 115)

A Strong Core Identity & Flexibility of Linguistic/Cultural Self-Identity

From a phenomenological point of view, I have developed the belief (or theory) that there is a strong direct correlation between an individual's flexibility of self-identity in terms of language and culture (linguistic/cultural ego permeability) and the individual's openness to learning other languages (including dialects, variations in pronunciation, speech patterns and other attributes of the spoken word) as well as adapting to different cultural patterns of behavior. Flexibility here is not meant to indicate a lack of stability in one's core identity; rather it signifies a strong core identity that allows for taking on new linguistic and cultural identities without the feeling of dissonance or feeling threatened. Gee (1999:39) distinguishes between 'socially situated' identities (as "the multiple identities we take on in different practices and contexts"), and 'core' identities (as "whatever continuous and relatively 'fixed' sense of self underlies our continually shifting multiple identities"). This is the same distinction I am making here. However, I would emphasize that this 'relatively fixed sense of self' is also constantly evolving and at times revolutionized through certain 'life-changing' experiences.

Hitlin (2003) argues that conceptualizing values as a cohesive force with personal identity and conceptualizing values as the core of one's personal identity leads toward understanding the cohesion experienced among one's various social identities. Hitlin views values as the most important, but not the only, phenomena constituting personal identity. He cites other aspects of personal identity that theoretically include (but are not limited to) traits, abilities, bodily self-perceptions, other perceived unique characteristics, and personality. In this perspective, it is understood that values develop in social context, draw on culturally significant material, and are experienced as a necessary and fundamental, but non-coerced, aspect of the self. Values fulfill five criteria: (1) they are concepts or beliefs, (2) they pertain to desirable end states or behaviors, (3) they transcend specific situations, (4) they guide selection or evaluation of behavior and events, and (5)

they are ordered by relative importance (S. Schwartz, 1992). Additionally, values operate at the level of individuals, of institutions, and of entire societies (B. Schwartz, 1993). It also should be noted that values deal intrinsically with issues of cognition and feeling. Values are emotion-laden conceptions of the desirable that underlie value-identities, which themselves are developed around affective meanings appropriated to the self (Gecas, 2000). Essentially, what we want to be and become is embodied in our value-identities.

Self-Identity as measured by the GCI also appears to embrace this view of a core self-identity related to values. As seen in some of the sample questions for the GCI Self-Identity measurement scale above, this competency includes elements such as strong beliefs, a personal philosophy guiding behavior, and core values (note that some items are reverse-coded in analysis). We are born without the awareness of being a separate individual, which implies that the formation (construction) of a personal or self-identity begins in earnest with interaction with our surroundings − mainly social interaction. The feedback we receive in social interactions helps create a sense of self-awareness or self-identity. Core beliefs, core values, and the possibility of constructing a more encompassing personal philosophy are facilitated through the feedback that we receive, mainly from significant others (with whom there is strong emotional valiance).

Core beliefs and core values are not necessarily static nor do they have to be in order to be considered strong. Core beliefs and core values deserve examination and reexamination. Consistent reexamination leads to greater awareness of these core beliefs and core values. Lack of awareness ultimately leads to weakness and confusion when confronted with situations that conflict with these beliefs and values since it is inherently difficult to shape something when that something is not visualized or the image the thing is too amorphic (lacks definitiveness). Foreign language acquisition coupled with cross-cultural interaction creates abundant opportunities for potential conflicts with beliefs and values (as well as with a personal philosophy when such a philosophy has reached a certain threshold of development − essentially composed of awareness of core beliefs and core values).

In the process of learning foreign languages I noted that the more I identified with a new culture and language, the easier it became to imitate the speech patterns, accent, body language and other ways which individuals express themselves in the frame of a given culture and language. This type of resonating behavior also facilitates the acquisition of vocabulary and syntax. This process leads to the formation of a new linguistic and cultural identity that becomes part

of my repertoire of linguistic and cultural self-identities, each offering a particular systematic way of self-expression. The ability to identify with a new cultural and language while maintaining the integrity of other existing cultural and linguistic identities is contingent on flexibility grounded in core beliefs and core values that evolve through constant reexamination. Simultaneously, an interdependence and independence of these beliefs and values exist. The interdependence is in relation to the sociocultural and linguistic environments in which these core beliefs and core values are formed and continuously modified. The independence is in relation to the fact that many of the core beliefs and core values become unique, associated with my own personal multicultural and multilingual experiences, and evolve through introspection.

If people have a rigid view of who they are in cultural and linguistic terms, which does not evolve in response to interaction with different cultural and language patterns, then those individuals will tend to limit the effect that these interactions have on his/her form of self-expression. This behavior may be related to a lack of willingness to challenge core beliefs and core values that have been constructed within the cultural/linguistic environment(s) that are most emotionally salient. In this mode the individual continues to perceive a foreign language/culture as something distant and external, even in the case of prolonged exposure. As a result, there is minimal learning and adaptation. People who never acquire the language or make major adaptations to cultural differences even though they live for a long time in a foreign language/cultural environment typify this phenomenon. In order to evolve linguistically and culturally, the individual must have an open attitude towards transformational learning that comes with having a flexible self-identity rooted in a strong core identity that is modified through careful introspection in relation to experience. As mentioned above, this view is supported by the results of the quantitative study with the 86 Chinese students. Self Identity was the dimension most closely associated with 'Japanese Ability' in terms of correlations and analysis of variance.

Sarah Jones as a One-Woman Global Village

Sarah Jones is Tony-Award-wining monologist who truly understands what it takes to have flexible linguistic and cultural identities. She demonstrates a 'chameleon-like' ability to slip in and out of characters in her solo performances. She does an amazing job in imitating the accents, prosody, and body language of her characters representing different cultural and linguistic backgrounds as well

as working with the stereotypic cultural thought and behavior patterns of these cultures in her monologues. In her off-Broadway hit Bridge & Tunnel she portrayed as many as fourteen personae. In a TEDx talk she describes how she has always been interested in the invention of self or selves. She states,

> We're all born into certain circumstances with particular physical traits, unique developmental experiences, geographical, and historical contexts. But then what? To what extent do we self-construct, do we self-invent? How do we self-identify and how mutable is that identity? Like, what if one could be anyone at any time? Well my characters, like the ones in my shows, allow me to play with the spaces between those questions.[6]

Some of Sarah's performances are available on YouTube and I encourage you to watch them so you can get a direct experience of her mastery of flexible identity. For Sarah, the body and the voice serve as the laboratory for the social experiments that she performs on stage. Through her struggles with her racial identity at a young age, her mother is European and Caribbean mix while her father is African American, she learned to be confident about her beauty outside of Western constructs of what is beautiful. She learned about the essential and important aspects of one's core identity allowing her to be flexible in regard to all the rest.

Construction of New Linguistic and Cultural Identities

In recent years, there has been a move towards recognizing the relationship between identity and motivation in Foreign Language Acquisition (FLA). Among the affective variables modulating FLA, Ehrman (1996:137) focuses in particular on learner identity and self-concept: "Every imaginable feeling accompanies learning; especially learning that can be as closely related to who we are, as language learning is." A purely ethnocentric and monolingual mind is in a state of minimal transformation in reference to new cultural and linguistic identities. The development of a strong core identity is a critical factor in benefiting from the transformative process of acquiring a foreign language and relating to the culture in which it is embedded. Though monolinguals are in no way always ethnocentric and a multilingual could have ethnocentric tendencies, I draw a parallel between ethnocentric states with what I would call monolingual-centric states of mind that have not been substantially transformed. My own personal journey in learning

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[6] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sucza6EOIf0

languages as well as discussion with others has made me aware of the importance of the transformational experience brought on by the process of acquiring a new language. This transformational experience has been described in various ways in the SLA/FLA literature as well.

In *Never Quite a Native Speaker: Accent and Identity in L 2 and L 1*, Nicole Marx (2002) states:

> The desire to learn a new language can sometimes be an overwhelming influence on an individual's life. Even where the 'ultimate' acquisition of a foreign language is not essential for survival in a new cultural milieu, participation of any form in the culture and the intentional acquisition of a new linguistic identity can result in a 'seismic mental shift' (Hoffman, 1989:105) in a language learner's understanding and interpretation of the world around him. This is especially pertinent in the case of immigrants and other language learners who are immersed in the new language and culture and who intend to remain in that culture, at least for a significant amount of time (p. 264).

In her paper, Marx focuses on how identity and identity change is reflected in one's accent. As a Canadian native speaker of English she explores the construction of her new linguistic and cultural identity in German over a three-year sojourn in Germany. Initially her attempt not to be labeled as an American by her accent modulated how her mother tongue affected her accent in German. Still not able to mimic a native speaker of German and having already experienced learning French, she superimposed aspects of a French accent on her German. The fact that French students were more readily accepted than Americans by the locals she encountered was one of the motivating factors for doing so. As she began to mimic her local counterparts in non-linguistic forms such as style of dress and social behavior, she made progress in developing a more native-like German accent. She started to imitate aspects of regional German dialects and accents; not just the accent and dialect of where she spent most of her time but also the accents and dialects of places she visited. During this process she experienced significant influence on the way she spoke and wrote in her native English. She actively pursued the game of trying to pass as a native speaker in short interactions with locals.

After reaching a high level of proficiency in German and more success in creating the impression of being a native speaker of German, she returned to Canada. For the initial three months her accent in English was not only affected by her German but also her impression of a British accent since she often sought

to mimic a British accent to a certain extent while teaching English in Germany since it seemed to her that this was the preferred accent in English amongst her students there. One important reason for the 'foreign' accent in her native English was the desire to express that her experiences and acquired ability in foreign languages had transformed her and she was no longer the same as monolingual Canadian speakers of English.

There are certain aspects of her account with which my experiences while becoming a multilingual coincide. I have often and still do at times play the game of trying to see how long I can pass as a native speaker in the target language I am studying. Though this is not really possible for me to do in Asian countries due to my physical appearance except over the phone. I have also consciously and unconsciously mimicked regional accents and dialects of the languages I have learned. My American accent in English was also strongly affected by my first year studying abroad at a university in Colombia at the age of 19. Instead of directly returning to America, I continued to study and travel abroad learning Portuguese, French, German, and Serbian/Croatian before an extended stay in America (nine months). So there were quite a few linguistic and cultural identities at that time that could potentially affect my accent in English. Similar to Nicole Marx, I sometimes did and still do allow this effect on my accent in order to express a distinction between monolingual speakers of English and myself. I use the term 'allow' here to express that it is possible to prevent this from happening. However, it is much easier to approximate my original monolingual accent in American English when interacting with people who have a similar accent due to the chameleon effect.

Everyone experiences the chameleon effect to a certain extent in our language and behavior. Often the chameleon effect is expressed as the unintentional physical and verbal mirroring between people who are getting along well. People may mimic each other's body posture, hand gestures, accents, word choices, and other behaviors. In such cases the body may be autonomously (without conscious awareness) making the interaction smoother and increasing the level of liking while communicating. Chartrand and Bargh (1999) describe the chameleon effect as the perception-behavior link in social interaction. Their experimental evidence indicated that (1) the motor behavior of participants unintentionally matched that of strangers with whom they worked on a task, (2) mimicking the posture and movements facilitates the smoothness of interactions and increases liking between interaction partners, and (3) dispositionally emphatic individuals exhibit the chameleon effect to a greater extent than do other people.

Their first experiment demonstrated that the perception-behavior link is the proximal cause of the chameleon affect: changes in the interlocutor's behavior caused changes in the participant's behavior, in absence of the participant's awareness of this influence. Experiment 2 provided explicit evidence that nonconscious mimicry serves the adaptive function of smoothing interactions and fostering liking. Finally, Experiment 3 demonstrated that those who frequently take the perspective of interaction partners mimicked the mannerisms of the confederate to a greater extent than did those who less often take the perspective of others, as would be expected if social-perceptual activity mediated the effect.

Furthermore, it has been noted that conversational participants also tend to immediately and unconsciously adapt to each other's language styles: a speaker will even adjust the number of articles and other function words in their next utterance in response to the number in their partner's immediately preceding utterance. This remarkable level of coordination is thought to have arisen as a way to achieve social goals, such as gaining approval or emphasizing difference in status. I propose that the intentional acquisition of foreign language and adaptation to foreign cultures tends to strengthen the potential of the chameleon effect both in the verbal and non-verbal forms. In other words, becoming multilingual and multicultural increases the potential and likelihood of expressing the chameleon effect − that automatic adaptation of our physical and linguistic behavior to smooth and promote social interaction in diverse socio-cultural contexts. Furthermore, this is part of the transformational process of becoming multilingual and multicultural − the construction of new linguistic and cultural identities. I find that over the years I have increasingly developed the tendency to modify my accent and choice of words in all the languages I know to better fit with those of the person with whom I am interacting. Often it is an automatic response that comes into awareness as I continue with the interaction. In other words, to a certain extent this adjustment coincides with the nonconscious adjustment seen in the chameleon effect described here. However, since I am keenly aware of this phenomenon it usually comes into consciousness.

Possible-Selves

Dörnyei and Csizér (2002:453) speculated that the process of identification theorized to underpin integrativeness might be better explained as an internal process of identification with a person's self-concept, rather than an external reference group. Within one's self-concept (identity) exist possible-selves. These

possible-selves are in contrast with the traditional view of a person's self-concept as the summary of the person's self-knowledge related to how the person views him/herself at present. Carver et al. (1994) investigated possible-selves in relation to studying dispositional optimism. They emphasized that these possible-selves refer to future rather than current self-states and they represent the individuals' ideas of what they might become, what they would like to become, and what they are afraid of becoming (as suggested by Markus & Nurius, 1986). Possible-selves denote a unique self-dimension in that they refer to future rather than current self-states. Markus and Ruvolo (1989:213) maintain, "Imaging one's own actions through the construction of elaborated possible selves achieving the desired goal may thus directly facilitate the translation of goals into intentions and instrumental actions." They have also provided empirical evidence that imagery manipulations increased the accessibility of possible selves and this was reflected in the subjects' performance. The subjects who were asked to imagine themselves as successful did better than those who were asked to imagine themselves as unsuccessful before a task. Dörnyei (2005) concludes that if the person we would like to become speaks a certain second language, the ideal second language self is a powerful motivator to learn the language because of the desire to reduce the discrepancy between our actual selves and our ideal selves.

I see this concept as being related to the nature of dreams in which one is dreaming in a foreign language in the process of being acquired. The mind can explore the self-image of becoming a speaker of the target language and experience the associated emotions and somatic reactions to such an image more freely in a dream state than in an awakened state of awareness. Languages and their associated cultures can be said to have personalities in a metaphorical sense. When a learner mimics representatives of a given language/culture the learner experiences emotional and somatic shifts associated with the target language/culture to the extent that the mimicking is successful. My body feels different when I am speaking Japanese compared to Portuguese, or Chinese, or German, or Russian, etc. The emotions associated with my attitude towards the language/culture and accumulated experiences within the language/culture seem to rise to the surface in emotional forms, somatic reactions, and sometimes images. If one chooses to become multilingual and multicultural, one encounters the process of developing new linguistic and cultural identities. One is constantly considering new possible-selves associated with these identities. In such a process, the importance of the tensile strength of the core of one's self-concept is evident. It must be malleable enough to incorporate different cultures and languages and

strong enough to maintain the feeling of being grounded and not fragmented.

Many researchers have argued that a variety of differences between individualist and collectivist cultures can be traced back to different ways of construing identity within these cultures. On a macro level interdependent self-construals are associated with collectivist cultures while independent self-construals are associated individualistic cultures. However, both types of individuals exist in both types of cultures. When individuals are seeking to adjust to a foreign culture and seeking to acquire a foreign language they are in a state of different cultural and lingual contexts. The greater the degree of identity contextual dependency (interdependent self-construals) the less likely one will be able to develop a new linguistic/cultural identity (not necessarily negating the existing identity) that will facilitate language acquisition. Investigation into the difficulties that Japanese face on a macro-scale in negotiating new identities may reflect this phenomenon. Furthermore, it is logical to hypothesize that independency of self-construals corresponds with the likelihood of developing a strong well-developed core identity that transcends the conditioning associated with one particular language/culture allowing for the development and co-existence of other identities associated with languages acquired. In other words, the existence of multiple self-construals, or in Norton's (2000) words "investment in identities," is associated with multilingual ability.

Gary Oddou of the Kozai Group made the following comment in correspondence with me related to this topic,

> The best second language learners are people who can switch identities, much like outstanding actors/actresses. The worst language learners seem to be those who maintain their current identity (view of self) as they try to learn the language. Their sense of competence seems threatened because they cannot disassociate their foreign language learning self from their native language self.

The connection between acting and FLA cries out for us to examine what makes an outstanding actor/actress. The previous discussion of the diverse ethnic characters played by Sarah Jones is directly related to answering this question. In FLA, particularly important is the ability to put one's main identity (associated with L 1 'mother tongue' and C 1 'mother culture') aside (on-hold, suspended, co-existing but not dominating) and create a new one that integrates the shared aspects of the target language/culture without feeling like a traitor to the identity (self-construal) associated with L 1 and C 1 and/or without experiencing a sense of falsehood.

In a TESOL article on accent and identity, Inna Hanson[7] shares her findings from numerous interviews with learners of English as a second language. She concludes that the reasons nonnative speakers of English keep or lose their foreign accents in English go way beyond established theories of brain and speech development. She believes that anyone can learn to speak English with almost no foreign accent, but subconscious reasons and inhibitions get in the way. The reasons she gives include unwillingness to assume another identity, a lack of confidence, and rejection of native-like speech. I strongly agree with her view and I contend that willingness to assume or create another linguistic/cultural identity is one of the most important factors in determining success in mimicking native accents in a target language.

As Hanson says the reasons for accents go way beyond some established theories of brain and speech development, which usually are simply rationalizations − if you believe that you can't you are right. However, on the other hand, if you believe you that you can then you will also be right given the appropriate level of awareness, attention, effort, and training. Your limitation is the possible-selves that you can image along with the degree of sustained motivation you can engender and the establishment of the instrumental components to make it come true − self study, language course, practice with native speakers, immersion, etc. Monolinguals struggling with a foreign language in a classroom setting often do not develop the capacity of imaging themselves as fluent speakers of the target language. On the other hand, successful multilinguals usually have little difficulty in creating the mental image of speaking the language like a native.

The most difficult language to learn is your first foreign language. Success engenders success and as you learn more and more languages you not only acquire metalinguistic knowledge and skills but also metacognitive knowledge and skills. Essential elements of the metacognitive knowledge and skills not only include becoming aware of the best way for you to learn but also how to image yourself as a competent speaker of the target language and how to assimilate the associated culture − creation of a new linguistic and cultural identity.

We can see the importance of identity in the emic-based research perspective on foreign language acquisition. There are numerous examples of research that seek to give voice to the emic perspectives while employing etic approaches of analysis such as Kramsch's (2009) *The Multilingual Subject,*

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[7] http://www.tesol.org/read-and-publish/journals/other-serial-publications/compleat-links/compleat-links-volume-4-issue-3-(september-2007)/accent-and-identity

Norton's (2000) *Identity and Language Learning*, and Pavlenko's *Emotions and Multilingualism*. This mode of inquiry allows for discovering more concretely the importance of identity, emotions, and other affective factors that can have a great influence on success in multilingualism. In particular, in relation to identity, there is a passage in the introduction to her book in which Kramsch (2009:1) quotes a bilingual participant in a seminar on intercultural communication that is having a deep identity-related emotional experience in response to reflection triggered by the seminar; "... the tears I was shedding along with the pain in my lower back were somatic connections to identity issues I had not begun to resolve."

The Power of Flexible Identities

I postulate that those who suffer from Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID) or, if you wish, Multiple Personality Disorder (MPD) are tapping into this same power that lets us create a new identity in FLA, though in the case of DID it is in relation to escaping from a traumatic experience. Nevertheless, DID demonstrates to what extent new identities can be created and the perceptions and powers associated with new identities. In the case of willfully created LX/CX (an additional language and its associated culture) identity, inter-language interference can be avoided to the degree a person can switch from one identity to another that is completely in tune with the cultural/linguistic context of the moment.

The ability to keep languages separate (avoid negative cross-linguistic influence) is connected with the ability to enter and exit the identities corresponding with the languages being spoken, not just intellectually but more importantly emotionally — something that is felt. It is facilitated by a highly developed ability to adjust to and more importantly to identify with a gestalt of language and culture as an interwoven entity (including the logic, norms of experiencing and expressing emotions, and the shared common reality of the language-culture gestalt). When shifting from one language to another, the polyglot will actually feel different and relate from a distinct set of culturally-based perceptions that seem to be part of a co-existing system of identities, modes of self-expression and perceptions; one for each language. To be adept at creating and switching between identities requires the development of a strong integrated core identity. This core identity/self-concept/worldview (no single label does it justice) is developed as an individual deals with incongruent values, beliefs, behaviors, and perceptions that are continuously confronted through contact with

different languages/cultures.

The strength of an individual's core identity is revealed in how the individual deals with apparent incongruent values, beliefs and perceptions he/she confronts in a foreign cultural/linguistic setting that lead to cognitive and emotional dissonance. Does a red light go on calling for examination of the validity of the incongruence or is it blindly accepted or dismissed? If the incongruence is examined through the process of understanding the supporting context and proves valid then does it require a modification of the core set of values (slight or fundamental) or does it lead to an informed acceptance of the incongruence based on the realization that it is simply a different expression of universal human traits that are valid within the boundaries of the language/culture context and correspond to, or you might say, are actually congruent to those of the mother language/culture when understood on a contextual basis?

The above reference to incongruence may also be interpreted in the framework of the schemas, assimilation, and accommodation in the psychological constructivism paradigm of learning. In the constructivism paradigm schemas refer to abstract but organized memory structures that consist of concepts linked together. Schemas are dynamic in the sense that they change through experiences and instruction. They provide a context for analyzing and interpreting observations and information (Piaget and Inhelder, 1968; Winn and Snyder 1996). Assimilation involves attaching new observations, information or experiences to an existing schema and accommodation refers to a situation where observations and experiences do not fit the already existing schema and there must be adjustment to the existing schema so that a new information structure is formed. Restructuring schemas is a key element in the learning process. It is through the restructuring of schemas that changes in ways of thinking and worldview take place – and in a sense the fortification of one's core identity composed of core beliefs, perceptions, awareness, and understandings. Dissociation occurs when the juxtaposition of the incongruent (the best definition for humor) is not dealt with on a conscious or subconscious level (on the conscious level especially when the individual has a habit of going through the said processes). Interestingly humor produces laughter, which, in one sense, can be viewed as medicine for dealing with incongruence allowing the body to relax and relaxation reduces stress and provides the psychological room to deal with the incongruence.

There is support for the use of the DID parallel in past literature, though the aim of psychological disorder parallels used in the past was to demonstrate a

negative undesirable state rather than to point out the potential of identity flexibility to facilitate multilingual acquisition and performance. In her book *Emotions and Multilingualism*, Pavlenko (2005) discusses early 20th century views of bilingualism as a form of psychopathology that portrayed different identities as a negative consequence of foreign language acquisition.

In her discussion of the subject Pavlenko (2005:26) states, "The view of bilingualism as a problem of split identity or two incompatible identities is also involved in another set of terms used to refer to bilinguals — schizoglossia and schizophrenia." Beatens Beardsmore (1982) borrows Haugen's term schizoglossia — which originally referred to insecurity of speakers of more than one linguistic variety — to refer to bilinguals' apprehension and anxiety about non-normative linguistic elements in their own speech as compared to the imaginary standard. Schizophrenia, used metaphorically, refers to the problems brought on by culture shock, by cognitive, linguistic, and cultural dissonance, by conflicting definitions of reality, and by different social roles occupied by bicultural bilinguals (Amat-Mehler, & Canestri, 1993; Clarke, 1976; Todorov, 1994). Clark (1976:382) offers an expanded version of this argument, framing second language learning as "a clash of consciousness, in which double bind phenomena are viewed as the result of differences between culturally determined definitions of reality."

Pavlenko (2005:27) counters the above perspective pointing out that attempts to pathologize bilingualism in scholarly work diminished as evidence to the contrary was accumulating. She believes that most of these attempts to pathologize stemmed from a monolingual view of bilinguals as two individuals in one body, in conflict with each other. In a review of polyglot psychoanalysis, Pavlenko demonstrates that language is attached to the emotions and memories formed in the process of acquiring a foreign language. This analysis as well as many other examples in her book *Emotions and Multilingualism* demonstrates that separate sets of language-embodied emotions may coexist in an individual. Thus, even when semantic equivalence of a word or phrase may be argued to exist in the language repertoire of a multilingual individual, different languages may cause different emotional reactions and somatic experiences. Furthermore, numerous examples related to the non-use of German by immigrants from the Nazi Germany are discussed in terms of a coping mechanism. From this perspective multiple identities associated with multilingual ability may play a positive role of maintaining a desired emotional and cognitive state of mind. People suffering from DID use alternative identities as a coping mechanism usually associated with a traumatic episode. On the other hand, multiple language

identities need not be and are most likely rarely a pathological symptom. On the contrary, they can serve as vehicles for greater integration into different cultural settings and be the source of enriched experiences.

Investment in New Language/Cultural Identities

Bonnie Norton (2000:10) stated, "To invest in a language is to invest in an identity." Norton uses the term investment to describe the socially and historically constructed relationship of learners to the target language and how it relates to motivation for SLA. Norton's reason for re-conceptualization of motivation in this context is revealed in an interview with the author published in *The Language Teacher*, June, 2002:

> When we speak of the motivated or unmotivated student we tend to think of the student as having a unified, coherent, ahistorical identity that is unchanging across time and space. In this view, motivation is considered an immutable personality trait of the language learner. I have known students to be in one context motivated, in another context unmotivated. Theoretically, too, the notion of motivation does not capture the complexity of student identity − an identity that is often the site of struggle … it struck me that there was a need for a more powerful construct to capture the complexity of student motivation … I found this new language in the concept of investment … investment is best understood in the context of a post-structural identity. When we invest in a second language, we desire a wider range of identities … Investment, then, is not at fixed personality trait, but a construct that attempts to capture the relationship of the learner to the larger, changing, social world. We are encouraged to seek broader explanations for success or failure in language learning; we are encouraged to view the student as having a complex identity that is best understood in the context of wider social, historical, and economic processes. To invest in a language is to invest in an identity.

Accents in Hebrew − Identity and Empathy

Ibrahim, Leikin, and Eviatar (2008) at the University of Haifa in Israel concluded from a study they carried out that the more empathy one has for the native speakers of the foreign language one is speaking, the lighter the accent will

be in that language. The researchers also indicated that in addition to personal-affective factors, it has been found that the 'language ego' is also influenced by the sociopolitical position of the speaker towards the majority group. Israel offers a perfect location for exploring SLA due to that fact that, besides the core group of native Hebrew speakers, the population of the country is composed of many immigrants who learn Hebrew. There is also an ethnic minority of Arabs, some of whom learn Hebrew from an early age and others who learn the language as mature adults.

The participants in the study (students from the University of Haifa) were divided into three groups: 20 native Hebrew speakers, 20 Arabic speakers who learned Hebrew at the age of 7-8, and 20 Russian immigrants who learned Hebrew after the age of 13. The participants' socioeconomic characteristics were identical. All were asked to read out a section from a report in Hebrew, and then to describe – in Hebrew – an image that was shown to them. The pieces were recorded and divided into two-minute sections. Additionally, the participants filled out a questionnaire composed of 29 statements to measure their empathetic abilities. Thereafter, 20 other native speakers of Hebrew listened to the pieces that had been recorded and rated each piece according to accent 'heaviness'. Thus, each participant received a score on the weight of his or her accent and another score for level of empathy. This experimental design was similar to that of the quantitative study I carried out (Keeley, 2013) but less broad in scope.

The study has shown that the accent level of Russian immigrants and of native Arabic speakers is similar. It also revealed that for the Russian immigrants, there is a direct link between the two measures: the higher the ability to exhibit empathy for others, the weaker the accent. Amongst the Arabic speakers, however, no such link – either positive or negative – between level of empathy and heaviness of accent could be seen. The researchers' hypothesis is that in the group of Arabic speakers, a new factor enters the 'language ego' equation: sociopolitical position. The researchers believe that the pattern among Arabic speakers demonstrates their sentiment toward the Hebrew-speaking majority group, and the Arabs consider their accent as something that distinguishes them from the majority. The research shows that both personal and sociopolitical aspects have an influence on accent in speaking a second language. For identity-based reasons some people do not seek to mimic accents when speaking in a foreign language such as in the case of the native speakers of Arabic. When identity issues are not limiting the mimicking of accents we can see that empathy towards the native speakers of the target language can clearly account for

individual differences – such as in the case of Russian speakers of Hebrew.

More on Empathy, Identity, & Accent

Empathy is also predicted to be relevant to acquisition in that the empathic person may be the one who is able to identify more easily with speakers of a target language and thus accept their input as intake for language acquisition (lowered affective filter). Guiora developed the notion that empathy can be conceptualized as a comprehending modality alongside inference, and intuition. According to Guiora (1965:780), "Empathy is the process of comprehending in which a temporary fusion of self-object boundaries, as in the earliest pattern of object relations, permits an immediate emotional apprehension of the affective experience of another, this sensing being used by the cognitive functions to gain and understanding of the other." Language behavior is a unique and complex attribute of man, not only in the evolutionary sense, but also in the developmental psychology history of each individual. Language behavior evolves within the context of a more general psychological growth. It is reasonable to speculate that even certain structural aspects of language are in part shaped by and express the broader personality context from which they have emerged (Guiora, 1968).

Guiora and his colleagues have suggested that empathy might play a significant role in a learner's relative ability to acquire authenticity or pronunciation in a second language. Along with his colleagues, Guiora studied this relationship with the aid of a test for Micromomentary Expressions (MMEs) to measure the quality of empathy (Guiora et al., 1972). The study confirms the original hypothesis that empathy as measured by the test for MMEs is positively related to the ability to authentically pronounce a second language. More empathetic individuals tend to be better listeners and better attuned to the native features of speech; therefore, empathetic individuals tend to acquire a more native-like proficiency in pronunciation. Second language learning exerts a very specific demand with regard to self-representation since a change in accent signals a change in linguistic/cultural identity. The most sensitive index of the ability to take on a new identity (the degree of permeability of the language ego boundaries) is the ability to achieve native-like pronunciation. Empathic capacity is also dependent upon the ability to give up one's separateness of identity. Guiora and his colleagues (1972) propose that individual differences in the ability to pronounce a second language should reflect individual differences in empathic ability.

The most salient determining factors of developing native-like accents in additional languages are not necessarily age-related or age-dependent. They include the degree of relationship interest, flexibility of identity or ego permeability, curiosity, interpersonal engagement, and empathy. Infants are strongly driven by the interactional instinct and once caregivers basically satisfy this need the desire to seek more interaction can wane or be maintained depending on an individual's traits and experiences. People learn to communicate to satisfy their needs. As people develop a feeling of belonging to specific groups they conform to the modes of communication used by those groups. This will not only determine their accent(s) but also the way they express themselves in terms of numerous aspects of verbal and non-verbal communication.

Schumann also studied empathy through hypnosis of individuals and concluded that empathy was more than a factor in pronunciation in an L2 and had a positive relationship to overall success in L2 acquisition. Schumann also maintains that emphatic capacity or ego flexibility, particularly as operationalized under the concept of lowering of inhibitions, is best regarded as an essential factor in the overall ability to acquire a second language, rather than simply in the ability to acquire native-like pronunciation. Thus, the concept that lowering inhibitions is an important part for SLA in general is seen in both Schumann's and Guiora's experiments. The idea is that artificial agents such as alcohol can foster permeability of ego boundaries and reduce inhibitions suggests that permeability of ego boundaries might be possible for everyone.

Stevick (1978) views learner reluctance to imitate sound patterns of a target foreign language in terms of how the positive effects of empathy may be limited by socio-cultural factors − identity issues. In particular, for a person whose upbringing and previous social development have left him uncomfortable with the people of a certain culture, any success at mimicry of the language of that people will set up conflicts with the self-image he has come to depend on. This observation was evident in the experiment involving Arabs speaking Hebrew in Israel. Concerning pronunciation, Stevick claims that the learner's attitude towards the target culture may be the most significant factor in the level reached. If a learner's own cultural heritage reference group does not approve of the foreign culture of the target language then the learner will have to choose between two alternatives: submit to the pressure of the reference group or defy that pressure and attempt to acquire native-like pronunciation of the target language.

Stevick contends that the subtle 'subphonemic' and 'suprasegmental' aspects

of pronunciation, precisely because they are less necessary for intelligibility or for 'academic correctness', are the parts of pronunciation which carry the greatest amount of information about the student's loyalty to his native group or his openness to the target culture. I believe this can also hold true even when there is not a specific target culture associated with the foreign language learning activity. In the case of Japan the main stumbling block is the fear of not sounding like a member of their native linguistic/cultural community when they are studying English in school. Japanese students who have acquired a native-like accent while overseas are quick to hide their ability to sound like a native in English classes back in Japan for fear being bullied for their differences. Mimicking a native accent in English is often interpreted as an indication of being a traitor to Japanese identity.

Empathy and identity are also elements of Gardner and Lambert's integrative orientation for explaining motivational factors. In particular, integrative motivation can facilitate native-like pronunciation and accent. The very existence of high integrative motivation suggests empathy and openness towards the target language native speakers or in the case of ill-defined groups, such as learning English as a lingua franca, empathy and openness towards others not belonging to the learner's heritage language/culture. A person who does not progress in mimicking a native speaker of a target language may be resisting what seems to him/her to be an encroachment on his/her personality. As we have seen identity issues can suppress the power of empathy to facilitate mimicking of accents. We can conceptualize empathy as engendering or promoting somatic experience in the learner of the native speaker's communicative actions. Depending on the degree of successful mimicking, the body will reflect the native speaker at least in the movements of the body associated with vocalization and more comprehensively in all the associated non-verbal communicative embodied actions.

The accumulation of the experience of successfully acquiring additional languages obviously empowers learners in many ways in their quest to learn more languages. One of these ways can be an increase in the ability to use empathy and identity in a facilitative manner — allowing empathy and identification with speakers of the target language. In this process you can lower your inhibitions to mimic their speech and other communicative patterns. You can develop greater empathic resonance in terms of the function of the appropriate mirror neuron circuits. That is to say, in a biological motor-response sense, empathy sets the stage for more sophisticated responses — a more

complete mastery over verbal and non-verbal embodied communication responses.

Third Culture Kids & Identity

We can learn lessons from so-called 'third cultural kids' (TCKs) who often develop parallel identities in order to fit in and function well in the diverse cultural and linguistic settings in which they grow up. Maria Foley, who raised two TCKs, made some interesting observations about the positive aspects of growing up in multiple cultures and languages.[8] She noted that TCKs often develop valuable skills including multilingualism, open-mindedness and adaptability. In the case of US President Barack Obama who grew up as a multiracial child and lived in Indonesia as a boy, you can perceive that he has developed an aptitude for cultural sensitivity and cautious deliberation. In a Foreign Service Journal article, McCaig (1994:32) wrote, "In an era when global vision is imperative, where skills in intercultural communication, linguistic ability, mediation, diplomacy, and the ability to manage diversity are critical, global nomads are probably better equipped than others."

TCKs become highly adaptive since they must deal with a new set of behavioral norms every time they move to a new country. They are apt to become keen observers of human nature and comprehend that every attitude and behavior is situated in a given cultural context. Pollock and Reken (2001), the authors of *Third Culture Kids: The Experience of Growing up among Worlds*, use the term 'cultural chameleons' to describe TCKs who successfully adapt to and function in various cultures and languages. The authors write that TCKs easily adapt to new situations. They quickly internalize many of the core values that account for the behavior in a given culture and thus are successful in adapting. The kids that are successful at learning the local languages of their temporary homes tend to be social creatures and enjoy meeting new people as well as learn to make new friends quickly.

Dewaele and van Oudenhoven (2009) studied the effect of multilingualism and multiculturalism focusing on TCKs. They administered the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire to London teenagers, half of whom were born abroad and settled down in London during their childhood. TCKs scored higher on the dimensions of Openmindedness and Cultural Empathy while scoring lower on

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[8] http://iwasanexpatwife.com/2012/03/19/the-positives-of-growing-up-overseas-as-a-third-culture-kid/

Emotional Stability. Concerning the difference between those TCKs dominant in just one language and those with dominance in more than one language, the multidominant group scored significantly higher on Openmindedness, marginally higher on Cultural Empathy, and significantly lower on Emotional Stability. The researchers contend that, as other researchers have noted, to speak another language authentically is to take on a new identity and this process requires a higher degree of Openmindedness and Cultural Empathy, but it does create stress, uncertainty, and anxiety, lowering the level of Emotional Stability of the multilinguals. Their findings suggest that both the trauma of immigration and additional language acquisition affect the TCKs' levels of Emotional Stability.

In the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire Emotional Stability refers to a tendency to remain calm in stressful situations versus a tendency to show strong levels of emotional reactions under stressful situations. I believe that emotional stability is affected dramatically during the first few experiences of adjusting to new cultures and learning new languages. However, with maturity and repeated success in adapting to new cultures and learning new languages a high level of emotional stability may be achieved. In fact, one would expect that individuals who learn more than just a few languages in corresponding multiple cultural settings over extended periods of time to exhibit much higher levels of Emotional Stability than monolingual/monocultural subjects when faced with unfamiliar cultural and linguistic environments. In other words, when comparing subjects who have immigrated to a given cultural milieu with subjects who are native to the culture, you would expect an advantage on the part of the natives in terms of Emotional Stability. However, when both types of individuals are exposed to a third unfamiliar cultural and linguistic environment over an extended period of time the multilingual/multicultural subjects would most likely experience less stress.

In my own case, I did not grow up as a TCK, rather I voluntarily decided to become a 'cultural and linguistic chameleon' after I left the US at the age of 18. From the age of 18 to 22 I went from being partially bilingual (English and Spanish) to become proficient in five additional languages. Then I never looked back and kept on going. The first few years were difficult at times adjusting to new languages and cultures. However, I found the excitement of meeting new people as well as exploring new ideas and worldviews in the process of learning new languages and cultures to greatly compensate for any of the emotional and psychological difficulties encountered in this transformational process.

Self-Identity and Self-Efficacy in Language Acquisition

Self-Identity and self-confidence are strongly related. Self-Confidence is in a large part determined by one's self-efficacy, the measure of the belief in one's ability to complete tasks and reach goals. Clyne (2003) argues,

> Since an individual's identity is developed within a context of communication and interaction — for example, with family members and peers — and since language plays a salient role in interpersonal relations, language becomes central to the sense of self. Changing that basic sense of who you are can be difficult, to say the least, particularly where the individual's sense of self-efficacy or confidence in her or his key abilities is challenged in the process. Competence in communicating with others is just such a key ability central to the individual's self-esteem. Facing that stripping away of language competence that occurs when we try to communicate in a second language requires tremendous ego strength in terms of being able to retain a sense of self-esteem (p. 2).

Concluding Remarks

It is clear from the analysis of the data from the experiment carried out using the GCI (Keeley, 2013) and the related literature that there is an extremely strong connection between self-identity and oral performance in foreign languages. Likewise, the evidence also indicates that Language Ego Permeability is also an important factor in determining whether or not one allows oneself to successfully mimic native speakers of a target foreign language. In reference to examining how self-identity can greatly influence FLA, particular emphasis should be placed on oral performance since identity issues are at the core of accents in foreign languages. Flexible cultural/linguistic identity also can play an important role in limiting negative cross-linguistic influence from one's mother tongue or other languages that may have been acquired.

Emotions related to self-identity are at the forefront when learning a new language. The language we speak and how we speak it at any given time is a social signal about our social and cultural identity. Some people are not comfortable with constructing new social/cultural/linguistic identities and the reasons for this phenomenon vary. It can be a feeling of betrayal to their existing identity. It can be the fear of the unknown and fear of change in general. It can be the fear of how you are perceived when your ability in the target language is still

very limited in comparison to your mother tongue. It can be the fear of how you will be perceived by those close to you in your country of origin once you are transformed by your new cultural and linguistic experiences. It is well-known that when people return from life-changing experiences abroad involving learning a new language and adapting to a new culture there is often a feeling that they can not truly relate what they have experienced when they return to family and friends back home. It is at the core of what is sometimes referred to as reverse culture shock upon repatriation. There can be a fear of alienation in the relationships with one's family and friends back home.

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