First Language Acquisition and Socialization: Children as Socialization Agent

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Abstract: In order to make a fuller interpretation of First language socialization processes in intercultural communication contexts, this study looks into the basic assumptions of language socialization and the tenets of Socialization agent studies before arguing for the feasibility of weaving the two research paradigms to create a more inclusive theoretical framework of intercultural language socialization. An elaboration of such a framework holds promise to enable a more panoramic interrogation of the joint development of L2 learners' language competence and sociocultural knowledge in complex intercultural communicative contexts. This effort will not only expand and enrich the two research paradigms themselves, but also compensate for the dearth of research in this interdisciplinary field.

Keywords: Socialization agent, First language socialization

1. Introduction

As an interdisciplinary approach to the joint processes of enculturation and language acquisition, language socialization (LS), a very vigorous research paradigm, is located at the crossroads between anthropology, developmental psychology, and sociolinguistics. This domain of study grew out of concerns with the narrowness of child language acquisition theories in the 1960s and 1970s. It is rooted in the notion that novices across the life span are socialized into using language and socialized through language not only in the immediate/local discourse context but also in the context of historically and culturally grounded social beliefs, values, and expectations, that is, in socio-culturally recognized and organized practices associated with membership in a social group (Ochs 2002; Schieffelin & Ochs 1986).

In language socialization study, it is increasingly acknowledged that people not only experience their *primary language socialization* during childhood but continue to experience *secondary language socialization* throughout their lives as they enter new sociocultural contexts, join new communities of practice (e.g. a workplace, an educational program) (Lave & Wagner 1991), assume new roles in society, and/or acquire a new language. As Ochs (1996) notes, any expert-novice interaction involves language socialization. This expansion in the realm of LS allows it to stretch beyond its initial research interests in First language acquisition into the fields of bilingualism, multilingualism and First language acquisition. While most of the pioneering studies of language socialization were conducted in small-scale societies or on relatively homogeneous monolingual communities (e.g. Heath 1983; Schieffelin & Ochs 1986; Watson-Gegeo & Gegeo 1986), more and more recent and currently ongoing studies have begun to pay attention to the particularities of secondary language socialization processes within linguistically and socioculturally heterogeneous settings associated with contact between two or more languages and cultures (e.g. Bayley & Schecter 2003; Bell 2000; Crago 1992; Duff et. al. 2000; Katz 2000; Langman 2003; Li 2000; Lotherington 2003; Poole 1992; Pon, et. al. 2003; Roy 2003; Schecter & Bayley 1997, 2004; Willett 1995). In fact, young as LS is in the field of SLA (which gained its voice in SLA only during the last decade), it has quickly become one of the most informative, sophisticated, and promising domains of First language acquisition inquiry (Watson-Gegeo & Nielson 2003; Watson-Gegeo 2004).

In this study, I hope to be able to take LS's line of reasoning one step further to emphasize that for most First language learners/users, their secondary socialization is a process of *intercultural language socialization*. When L2 learners/users are individuals "who have both physically and symbolically crossed the border" (Pavlenko & Lantolf 2001:74) to venture into a new sociocultural and linguistic environment, any of their conversational exchanges with a native speaker in the target culture can be a form of intercultural communication encounter situated in a cross-cultural communication context*,* because cross-cultural interlocutors tend to use diverse culturally-based communicative strategies with different discourse conventions even though they share the same linguistic code (Saville-Troike 2003; Scollon & Scollon 2001).

In order to make a fuller observation and interpretation of First language socialization processes in intercultural communication contexts, this study intends to infuse Socialization agent perspective into LS theory to suggest the feasibility of establishing an overarching theoretical framework of intercultural language socialization. In this study, I will firstly look into the basic assumptions of language socialization theory and Socialization agent theory respectively to unpack their heavy-loaded tenets. Then, I will discuss both research approach's advantages and disadvantages in their power to explore the nature of L2 learning/use in heterogeneous intercultural contexts, as well as their power to capture L2 learners' developmental trajectory in their process of First language socialization. Subsequently, I will argue for the benefits of integrating the two research paradigms for *intercultural language socialization* studies.

1. "Language learning and enculturation are part of the same process" (Watson-Gegeo 2004:339).

Heath (1983) once argued: "all language learning is culture learning" (p.5). Promoting the same viewpoint, Agar (1994) coined the terms *languaculture* to emphasize that language and culture are so tightly interwoven that neither should be studied in isolation from the other, otherwise both concepts will be distorted. Such a belief in the inextricably entwined nexus between language and culture forms the basic premise of language socialization theory. In LS, language and culture co-constitute and co-contextualize each other. Language learning is regarded as the simultaneous acquisition of both linguistic knowledge and sociocultural knowledge (Schieffelin & Ochs 1986). In the languacultural acquisition process, language is "the primary symbolic medium through which cultural knowledge is communicated and instantiated, negotiated and contested, reproduced and transformed" (Garret & Baquedano-Lopez 2002: 339); while culturally based practices, settings and interactions are the primary vehicles which powerfully and necessarily affect both language teaching and learning processes (Poole 1992).

2. Language, as a sociocultural and contextualized phenomenon, is acquired through interactive practices and socializing routines.

Language socialization theory cautions against regarding language only as an intra-psychological cognitive representation and development. Instead, LS argues that knowledge, including knowledge of language, is not only transmitted but also used, acquired and created through concrete interactive practices in specific historical, political, and sociocultural contexts. As Watson-Gegeo (2004) argues, "there is no context-free learning" (p. 340). Knowledge should be properly viewed as inter-

psychologically distributed and constructed. Thus, a complete and valid interpretation of many significant aspects of language acquisition and performance in immediate contexts (micro) cannot be fulfilled apart from the relevant sociocultural and political contexts (macro), which mediate "which linguistic forms are available or taught and how they are represented" (p. 340).

Under this dialectical and holistic theoretical umbrella, LS contends that the sociocultural ecology of home, community, school or workplace impacts strongly on the First language learners' communicative practices, which shape and reshape, construct and reconstruct the learners' interactive routines and strategies. In LS, the focus of research tends to be located on the socioculturally contextualized routines, which are formed through recurrent; sociohistorically grounded as well as contextually situated activities. LS emphasizes the role of interactive routines since they can provide structured opportunities for children/novices to engage with caregivers/experts and other community members (Schieffelin & Ochs 1986). Theorists contend that as repetitive routines become increasingly proceduralized in learners' interactional ability, the structural and predictable properties of the interactive practices facilitate novices' increasing participation in them, which forms a vehicle for learners to acquire the target language proficiency and sociocultural norms (Kanagy 1999; Poole 1992; Schieffelin & Ochs 1986).

For example, in the Japanese immersion kindergarten investigated by Kanagy (1999), the interactional routines--- greeting, attendance, and personal introduction--- were either implicitly or explicitly conveyed through the teacher's verbal and nonverbal modeling, repetition, praise, corrective feedback, and scaffoldings. Over time, the use of formulaic speech decreased, use of voluntary expressions increased, and use of repetition decreased. The children were gradually socialized to engage competently in the target discourse practices through repeated participation in the formulaic routines.

In a study of a First language learner/user's language socialization in the workplace, Li (2000) illustrates how through exposure and participation in social interactions and with the scaffolding of experts or more competent peers, a Chinese immigrant woman came to internalize target language and cultural norms and develop appropriate sociolinguistic competence to make requests strategically and more directly in the target culture workplace for her own rights and benefits.

Although Kanagy's (1999) and Li's (2000) studies approach First language socialization processes in different settings and from different

perspectives, they all demonstrate that in the process of First language socialization, second-language-mediated routines and the consequent intercultural communicative interactions form the major tools for conveying sociocultural knowledge and powerful media of socialization, in which the target culture sociolinguistic conventions and competences are encoded and through which they are transmitted to the learners.

3. In First language socialization, congruency or incongruency between home and target languaculture can impact the L2 learners' learning processes and learning outcomes in very influential ways.

Unlike child language socialization, which normally takes place in a supportive environment, the process of First language socialization frequently occurs within a much less favorable ecology. Being socialized to draw on their home and community linguistic and sociocultural repertoires, First language learners will inevitably experience cross-cultural communication difficulties, to different degrees, when they plunge into the host cultural environments where communicative interactions are governed by the target cultural behavioral standards and cultural values. Generally speaking, intercultural misunderstandings, communication breakdowns, ridicule, and discrimination together with strong feelings of inadequacy will be the ineluctable "tuition and fees" First language learners have to "pay" on their way to becoming bilingual/bicultural individuals. For First language learners, the intercultural language learning/using contexts constitute extremely powerful and influential settings for secondary socialization. As Ochs (2002) argues, in intercultural communication,

There is considerable overlap across speech communities in how language users signal actions and psychological stances but considerable differences in how communities use actions and stances to realize particular activities and identities … commonalities assist novice First language acquirers who venture across geographical and social borders. Alternatively … cross-cultural differences often thwart the language socialization of novices trying to access second cultures… (p.114).

For example, in Willet's (1995) study, while three ESL girls were appreciated as successful learners because they strategically enacted and elaborated interaction routines culturally congruent with the English-medium first-grade classroom environment, the only ESL boy in the classroom was regarded as a problematic learner and was blocked from sufficient access to the languaculture of the classroom because he failed to construct the desirable target culture identities, relations, and ideologies. In the workplace, as shown in Katz's (2000) research in a California electronic cable manufacturing plant, the different politeness systems between employees and managers and the insistence of the employees to keep their own cultural values and social identities lead to misunderstanding between the two parties, at the cost of the employees' being negatively and unfairly assessed as resistant, uncooperative, and even incompetent.

As demonstrated by Willet's (1995) and Katz's (2000) studies, the "survival of the fittest" principle permeates various settings on one's way to First language socialization. While acculturation can facilitate learners' First language socialization, resistance to adaptation and significant sociocultural discontinuities not only impede L2 learners' language practices but also mediate their learning opportunities, cultural obligations, and social identity establishment.

This paper has provided a brief overview of an area which is little studied but ripe for investigation, given the rapid language shift of so many regions where vernacular language speakers are moving to the metropolis, or the metropolis is coming to them. Some questions that may provide a framework for developing future inroads into this area of research are: - What are the characteristics of intergenerational speech interactions in homes where children are the vector for the introduction of new, socially-valued language varieties (or modalities) into the family's daily language behavior? - In such families, how does children's greater access to socially-valued linguistic resources affect other aspects of family life, such as authority relationships and the non-linguistic aspects of children's socialization? 8 Note that this process may involve receptive as well as productive aspects of language use; for example, urbanized children may habitually watch Spanish-language telenovelas (soap operas) accompanied by their parents; as the parents' comprehension of Spanish increases, they may begin to follow the programs on their own, even when the children are not present. 9 Conversely, as indigenous children enter Spanish-speaking contexts and become aware of the social stigma associated with indigenous languages (or indigenous varieties of Spanish), they may begin to criticize or correct their parents' speech, leading older speakers to avoid certain speech varieties. King (2001) reports similar interactions between older speakers of Ecuadorian Quichua, and younger speakers who had learned the standardized "Quichua unificado" in school. • - In immigrant families where children are a source of linguistic input for parents who are acquiring the L2 (formally or informally), what other sources of input do the parents have access to, and in what capacity? - In situations where children serve as interpreters or "language brokers" for adult family members, might the latter gradually acquire competence in the L2 via their role

as "peripheral participants" in these interactions? Do these adults draw upon linguistic knowledge or routines that they have acquired by observing the child language broker's speech, in situations where the child is not present? - In families without a previously established literacy practice, how do children's emerging (school-based) literacy practices affect other family members? When children act as mediators between non-literate parents and written texts, is this role a static or an evolving one? What elements of informal literacy instruction, if any, does it entail? - What role do children's language ideologies play in situations of large-scale language shift away from the parental generation's first language and toward the language preferred by children (or imposed upon them by the school)? How does the family's own language policy adapt or respond to externally-motivated changes in children's developing language ideologies? What impact does this dynamic have on the language ecology of the surrounding community, and beyond? All of these questions, and others, must be considered if sociolinguists are to come to terms with the impact of children's language choices (and obligations) on the language ecology of modernizing and immigrant communities.

4. on their way to accomplishing First language socialization, L2 learners are very likely to confront gatekeeping forces and unequal power relations.

According to Bourdieu (1991), linguistic resources possess symbolic power, because they "can be converted into economic and social capital" by providing "access to more prestigious form of education, desired positions in the workforce or social mobility ladder" (cited from Pavlenko 2001a: 123). Thus, cultural capital (with linguistic resources as a major part) can replace real capital to construct power relations among individuals, institutions and communities, through which symbolic and material resources in a society are produced, reproduced, validated and distributed.

Partly influenced by Bourdieu's symbolic capital theory, Norton (2000) contends that: "power relations play a crucial role in social interactions between language learners and target language speakers" (p. 12). Based on her longitudinal ethnographic study of five immigrant women in Canada, whose second-language-learning environment is "frequently hostile and uninviting" (p. 113), Norton argues that, in First language learning contexts, target language speakers always control both material and linguistic resources. Thus, First language learners' language acquisition and social identity reestablishment processes must be understood with reference to larger and frequently inequitable social structures.

Cautioned by Norton (2000), when we make a closer observation in the literature on the cross-cultural interactions in institutional settings, we can indeed "breathe" the unequal relations of power at every corner. In school settings, only the mainstream linguistic and sociocultural capital is valued. In Lotherington's (2003) study, for example, the Cambodian-Australian and Vietnamese-Australian adolescents' home literacy is not considered as an adequate form of literacy, because "not all literacies are of equal value… School notions of literacy tend to be socially and linguistically hegemonic" (p. 203). Thus, we can see that in Australia, "the concept of literacy and the social demands for literacy tend to be narrowly constructed and expressed in terms of language proficiencies in specific, powerful languages" (p. 202). In the process of the youths' secondary socialization, English literacy, together with the mainstream cultural norms, is legitimized as "perpetual tests of sufficient Australianness" (p. 216), and the minority adolescents' heritage culture and literacy are correspondingly devalued.

In the workplace, as shown in Sarangi and Roberts's study (2002), an international candidate fails the oral membership examination in a medical gate-keeping interview at the Royal College of General Practitioners in the UK not because of her lack of professional competence but because of her "inappropriate conversational and activity-specific inferences" (p. 198), which are not aligned with those expected in professional discourse. According to the authors, the gatekeeping discourse is a hybrid form of institutional, professional, and personal experience modes of talk, which requires a highly sophisticated and demanding form and process of language socialization. For professionals with different cultural, linguistic and social class backgrounds, it can be extremely difficult to be socialized into the *habitus* (Boudieu 1991) of their profession in the new environment and to perform in institutionally and professionally ratified ways at the same time. However, interactional management of the hybrid institutional discourse has been a major measure of socialization and a prerequisite for success for international and intercultural employees. Failure to meet this demand can rapidly result in negative judgments, or simply exclusion from the professional space.

From the above examples, we can sense the unequal socio-cultural power, which opaquely but actively functions in one's First language learning/using contexts. Usually, it is the dominant group's languacultural conventions that are more widely acknowledged as the norms. This bestows the dominant group higher symbolic power to orient what is legitimate, who is legitimate (Blackledge 2001b); "who is in, who is out" (Sarangi & Roberts, 2002: 197).

5. with dynamic agencies, L2 learners tend to take multi-layered actions and reactions in their process of First language socialization.

Although there are always unequal power relations inherently existing in the host culture and the institution in which newcomers' secondary socialization takes place, novices do not just passively absorb or internalize the repertoires of communicative norms and behavioral values poured down on them by institutional structures. Instead, with their own agencies (Ahearn 2001) or subjectivities (Norton 2000), novices are involved in a reciprocal process, one in which they actively co-construct their socialization. In the co-construction process, while novices/newcomers participate in new social and linguistic practices, in which they both learn and contribute, they do not simply co-construct agreement through assimilation (e.g. Li 2000; Duff, Wong & Early 2000); they can sometimes resist and reframe their participation in socializing interactions as well (e.g. Cole & Zuengler 2003; Lantolf & Genung 2002; Katz 2000; Atkinson 2003; Pon, et al. 2003). Thus, language socialization is far from being a one-way process by which learners blindly appropriate static knowledge, skills and shared understandings. Instead, it occurs through dynamic and discursive social interactions. As novices/newcomers act and react themselves in the host languacultural contexts, they individually and/or collectively make intercultural socialization choices, evaluate and contest the target cultural values and beliefs, struggle to broaden their individual agendas, and actively negotiate and reestablish their own multiple identities, ideologies and social networks (Ehrlich 1997; Gal 1978; McKay & Wong 1996; Norton Peirce 1995, 2000; Pavlenko 2001c; Pavlenko & Lantolf 2001; Schecter & Bayley 2004). These interactions do not happen in an insulating institutional environment; instead, they are embedded in and shaped by multifaceted and complex historical, political and social-structural contexts (e.g. race, gender, class, and ethnicity, etc.). Situated in such multifaceted social, political and intercultural constructions, novices'/newcomers' secondary socialization interaction will go through multiple, dynamic, challenging, and sometimes conflicting subjectifying or identification processes. In the process, a speaker may use the indexical value of language to "position" the self within a particular identity in response to particular interactional moments (Goodwin 1990). Any facet of speakers' "repertoire of identities" may be fronted or indexed at a particular moment according to the context of an utterance and the specific goals they are trying to achieve (Giampapa 2001). With such agencies, L2 learners can reproduce, elaborate, resist, or transform the very structures that shape them (Cole & Zuengler 2003; Garret & Baquedano-Lopez 2002).

Overview of Socialization agent Theory

For most adult cross-cultural newcomers, their First language socialization begins after their primary socialization in their original cultures has been more or less completed. That is, before they immerse themselves in the target languacultural contexts, they have already formed a pretty robust sense of "self image" or "identity", together with their own norms of communication, which are forged by their primary cultural, personal, situational, and relational experiences. With deep-rooted preconceptions framed in their primary socio-cultural contexts, the newcomers' exposure to different socio-cultural systems and their encounters with strangers tend to bring severe uncertainty and stress (Gudykunst & Kim 1997, Y. Kim, 1988). In everyday interactions, they may suddenly find many discrepancies between their own familiar frame of reference and those of their counterparts. Host culture interactive routines may appear to be somewhat familiar at first, but can become more unsettling and progressively different. Through an increased awareness of the conflicts between their internal, subjective experiences and the external, objective circumstances, the newcomers come to realize their unfitness and inadequacy in the unfamiliar surroundings. The consequent confusion and disorientation that people often experience "may shake our self-concept and cultural identity and bring the anxiety of temporary rootlessness" (Gudykunst & Kim, 1997: 357). Faced with accumulating conflicts, they may be forced temporarily to question, suspend or abandon their original identification, which may produce at least a temporary state of mental and physical disturbance that propels cross-cultural adjustment.

Two domains in intercultural communication studies

To look into border-crossers' diverse patterns of adjustment or maladjustment to the new socio-cultural environment, the paradigm of intercultural communication has developed two broad domains of interests: (a) the comparative examination of communicative similarities and differences across cultures, and (b) the communicative adaptations made by individuals when they move between cultures. The former, the preeminent line of inquiry in cross-cultural communication, attempts to link variations in communication behavior to cultural contexts. It provides the conceptual tools needed to understand culture, communication, and the ways in which culture influences communications. The latter is relatively a new area, which seeks to understand changes in individual communication behavior that are related to the process of acculturation and

communicative interactions. This approach, young as it is, has provided a substantial body of literature dealing with stages, patterns and outcomes of adjustment. Understanding the two domains in the literature of intercultural communication helps to comprehend daily events in the multicultural world from the depth of socio-cultural, especially cross-cultural level. Generally speaking, the first approach provides theoretical support to understand where cross-cultural misunderstanding occurs, and how such misunderstanding can be minimized in future intercultural encounters. The second approach provides cross-cultural adaptation models, which can serve as informative indexes to understand cross-cultural newcomers' dynamic status of Socialization agent.

The Cross-cultural adaptation model

Although the above domains in intercultural communication can both contribute to the studies on First language socialization, the approach of cross-cultural adaptation is more compatible with that of language socialization. Its adaptational approach transcends the level of reasoning that tries to locate, and then avoid cross-cultural deviation, social ineptitude or existential crises. Instead, it suggests the notion that it is possible to do more than simply survive a cross-cultural interaction or simply to learn survival social skills. An exchange with another culture may lead up to psychological growth and a better understanding of who we are, what we value, and where we might want to go. The specific aspects of the cross-cultural communication experience, therefore, present individuals with opportunities for exploring values, traits, attitudes, and identities that may not have surfaced, or may not have become as explicit and center stage, if they have not crossed the border and confronted a new socio-cultural environment. In other words, the encounter with another culture propels individuals to conduct critical inquiry and self-reflection. It posits the potential for learning and for experience that offers an invaluable opportunity to develop self-awareness and intercultural sensitivity, which can fundamentally transform the newcomers. In short, although an exchange with persons from other cultures can cause psychological disturbance, it, at the same time, offers a vehicle for personal growth.

In this research paradigm, cross-culture encounter and the anxiety accompanying the process are regarded as the functional elements that get individuals prepared to achieve self-transcendence and self-renewal. Several cross-cultural adaptational models have been developed to address various psychological stages an individual undergoes when immersed in a different culture over a long period of time. Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural

Sensitivity (DMLS), for example, seeks to explain process of how people make sense of cultural differences, and to "diagnose stages of development for individuals or groups" (Bennett, 1993: 24). The central concepts in the DMIS theory are ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism. Bennett (1993) defines ethnocentrism as the assumption "that the worldview of one's own culture is central to all reality" (p. 30), and ethnorelativism as the understanding that cultures are relative to one another within a cultural context (p. 46). The model presents six stages that fall into one of those two domains. Three of these stages are identified as ethnocentric — Denial, Defense, and Minimization, and three others —Acceptance, Adaptation, and Integration — are categorized as ethnorelative. Even though the developmental process is not linear, the model is thought of as a continuum where Denial is the stage with the least intercultural sensitivity and Integration the stage where the highest level of sensitivity is reached. Overall, Bennett's (1993) model presents the stages of intercultural sensitivity development, and provides a map to understand the processes of developing intercultural sensitivity and the challenges that it supposes. The shift from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism implies that individuals have overcome the impulse to place their own cultures as central to reality, and are willing to change their frames of reference according to the cultural context. This can finally help individuals to merge aspects of the other culture into one's own identity, thus becoming bi- or multicultural.

Another informative cross-cultural adaptation model was developed by Gudykunst & Kim (1997). In this model, the experience of immigrants in a host culture is illustrated by the four elements in the process of adaptation, namely—enculturation, deculturation, acculturation, and assimilation. Enculturation refers to the socialization of native cultural values and social behaviors prior to an individual's entry into the host culture. Entering into a new and unfamiliar culture and interacting in it, an individual goes through the process of resocialization, or acculturation. As acculturation takes place, an individual detects similarities and differences between home culture and host culture, and begins to acquire some of the host society's sociocultural norms and values. Almost simultaneous with the occurrence of acculturation is deculturation, which involves unlearning the old cultural pattern. As the dynamic concurrence of acculturation and deculturation continues, newcomers gradually undergo a cross-cultural adaptation process and change in the direction of assimilation. It is the final stage of the cross-cultural adaptation, which features a high degree of acculturation into the host milieu together with a high degree of deculturation of the native culture. Although

the direction of cross-cultural adaptation is toward assimilation, conflict often occurs in the process between the desire to acculturate to the new culture and the desire to retain the old and familiar one. Continuous interplay of acculturation and deculturation, as well as cyclical stress and adjustment, is a common experience of cross-cultural adaptation (Kim, 1988).

Intercultural socialization

The above cross-cultural adaptation models both indicate that when newcomers start a boundary-crossing journey, they will naturally and necessarily (although sometimes unconsciously) go through cross-cultural transformation. Through a continuous or prolonged intercultural contact with a new and unfamiliar languaculture, the newcomers experience intercultural socialization at different paces and with different intensity.

In this intercultural socialization process, challenged by the new cultural environment, First language learners tend to go through an internal transformation "in the direction of increasing fitness and compatibility in that environment" (Kim 1988: 9). During the procedure, learners constantly construe, validate, and reformulate the meaning of their cross-cultural experiences. When they discover that their primary meaning structures are ineffective, problematic or even conflictual when they attempt to reflect on or to integrate new knowledge or experience structures, they tend to conduct a critical self-examination to reassesss or critique the presuppositions formed in their primary socialization, which leads them to renegotiate and reconstruct their orientation to cultural belief, values, and behaviors. On the basis of the reevaluation and repositioning, adaptive transformation occurs, which is a procedure of becoming critically aware of how and why their presuppositions have come to "manipulate" the way they perceive, understand, and feel the new world. In the ever-ongoing socializing/transforming process, learners may critically adjust themselves linguistically and socioculturally. Through the transformation, the learners gradually 1) expand their repertoire of language resources and social identities, 2) become more inclusive, discriminating, and integrating in cross-cultural perspectives, and 3) develop multiple lenses to view and make sense of their worlds. All these contribute to promote First language learners'/users' cross-cultural sensitivity and their abilities to operate in different intercultural communication settings with appropriate, effective, and meaningful communicative performance (e.g. Cole & Zuengler 2003; Kanno 2003; Li 2000).

In this complex process of intercultural socialization, cross-cultural transformation can occur with multiple facets and in multiple dimensions. For example, it can occur in the form of changes in perceptions, attitudes, and behavioral patterns; changes in linguistic proficiency and communicative competence; and changes in social, ethnic, or cultural identities. The communicative conventions of the learners' native languages and cultures are very likely to be transported across borders, which are infused with, corroded by and finally even replaced by newly constructed meanings and knowledge. All these changes are constituted by, as well as constitute the transformation in intercultural transition and/or adaptation. With more integrative cross-cultural perspectives and smoother communicative practices, First language learners/users will gradually rediscover a full-fledged intercultural self-identity, which may finally lead them to achieve legitimate participation in a new community (Lave & Wenger 1991).

Why Integrating Language Socialization with Intercultural Communication?

From the above, we can see that First language socialization is an extremely complex developmental process that happens through complex language practices in multiple sociocultural contexts. During the developmental process, language and cultural acquisition are co-constructed by veteran and novice participants in socializing routines and interactions. Since interactive routines tend to be socioculturally reflective and constitutive of cultural beliefs and interactive norms, sociolinguistic activities in such interactive contexts are the sites where local values, ideologies, and cultural preferences are inscribed, and where knowledge and skills are acquired and enhanced.

As the main medium to acquire intercultural communicative competence, social interactions in the target culture institutions (e.g. schools, workplace) form the arena for L2 learners/users to practice their agency, (re)establish their identities, and perform their Socialization agents. Recognizing the increasingly intercultural and/or multicultural trend in educational settings, educators need to raise their intercultural communication sensitivity to avoid impeding gatekeeping forces in cross-cultural education, and to seek facilitating methodologies to empower First language learners' cross-cultural transformation. To achieve this purpose, First language acquisition researchers need to scrutinize L2 learners' interactive practices and participatory routines socialized in target cultural institutional settings. It will be a highly challenging academic attempt to investigate the forms, processes and consequences of L2 learners' intercultural socialization in its immediate communicative contexts (micro) and to explore the underlying principles of cross-cultural orientation and social organization (macro). To capture a more holistic picture, both language socialization theory and

Socialization agent theory can assist in positioning the studies in a different explanatory tapestry that speaks for itself about intercultural socialization. However, neither of them functions without perceivable technical difficulties or limitations in its power to expound on *how* and *why* individuals progress into culture-beings with diverse subjectivities. By combining the two research paradigms, we may elicit and employ the merits of both doctrines to compensate for their respective deficits, which holds promise to facilitate theoretical and methodological exploration on intercultural socialization at a higher level.

Methodologically speaking

Language socialization, as mentioned above, has been quite recently incorporated into the field of First language studies. Derived from anthropology, language socialization study is primarily required to maintain "ethnographic in design, longitudinal in perspective" (Kulick & Schieffelin, 2004, p. 350). This anthropological tradition provides LS with strong methodological advantage to capture, uncover, document, and describe the richness of individuals' experiences on their way to becoming intercultural. The "thick" ideographic, experiential accounts of substantial bodies of data collected from longitudinal studies can help expound the intricate and complex nature of individuals' developmental process. However, having indulged in thick description, many previous language socialization studies overwhelmed the research with data description. Some studies fall into the "erroneous zone" of demonstrating and claiming much more than analyzing and convincing. The data about individuals' intercultural socialization are assumed to be largely self-explanatory. The onus of deducting the reasons for individuals' transformation (or not) is partly pushed to the readers.

Socialization agent studies, on the contrary, have developed an extensive body of theoretical literature to probe the phenomenon of personal constructs, cognitive complexity, as well as transformational stages individuals go through on their way to becoming intercultural in multiple sociocultural contexts. Their inadequacy lies in its overwhelming emphasis on theoretical explanation and psychological assumption rather than empirical and concrete data demonstration of individuals' cross-cultural interactions during their longitudinal developmental processes. In fact, apart from many theoretical and impressionistic studies, there has indeed emerged a tradition in cross-cultural studies to test theoretical hypotheses. However, most studies are conducted at a single point in time during or after the cross-cultural experience, and the majority of the studies have relied on survey techniques, based on data collected from self-reports. Besides suspicions on the validity and reliability of the survey instruments, an important limitation found in such research is the one-point-in-time nature of the research designs. Studies depending on survey instruments are often designed to perpetuate a research orientation that is problem-enumerating or variable-testing, which are inevitably limited to fully capture the multifaceted temporal dynamics and procedural aspects of cross-cultural adjustment. Such single-time approach results in majority of the past studies' failing to address developmental changes among sojourners in their process of transforming. It may also account for the failure in some studies to find cultural differences in the adaptive experiences of some sojourning groups. To overcome the problems of past designs, and to ascertain the developmental changes of cross-cultural newcomers' adaptation both at the individual and cultural level, a longitudinal design is needed. Research methods with multiple, systematic assessments, which are conducted with the same sojourners over a period of time, will be essential.

Theoretically speaking

Theoretically speaking, the language socialization study's emphasis on the interweaving relationship between language and culture itself has already been very complex and intricate. When it is introduced into the field of First language acquisition, this research paradigm's analytical power, originally derived from research on children's primary socialization, may not be comprehensive enough to explain cross-cultural newcomers' much more dynamic and elusive behaviors in the host socio-cultural contexts. Despite its call for examining First language speakers' sociocultural behavior from both macro and micro levels, in the contexts of cross-cultural secondary socialization, language socialization has not provided adequate explanatory power at the macro level to interpret the constant competition between the coexisting home and host cultural systems, which imposes crucial impacts on cultural strangers' languacultural behavior. As a remedy for the underdevelopment of theoretical foundations in First language socialization studies, the introduction of intercultural communication, especially Socialization agent theory, holds promise to provide systematic and well-developed theoretical support to analyze the struggle between individuals' acculturation and deculturation in their intercultural socialization process. The established cross-cultural adaptation models (e.g. Bennett, 1993; Gudykunst & Kim, 1997) offer indexes against which to examine newcomers' dynamic status and patterns of Socialization agent.

By introducing intercultural communication theory into language socialization theory, we get better chances to explain at the macro cross-cultural level about how and why there appears "the

acquisition (or not) of particular linguistic and cultural practices over time and across contexts" (Kulick & Schieffelin, 2004, p.350)**.** However, it is necessary to realize that intercultural communication theory has its inherent weaknesses, which happen to arise directly from its strengths. In order to increase our ability to interpret and predict border-crossers' behavior accurately, thereby decreasing the likelihood of misunderstanding, intercultural communication studies strive to understand dimensions of cultural variability. Such intention to look for regularities and generalizations jeopardizes the research to become formulistic. This tendency can be easily detected from the dichotomous terminologies prevail in cross-cultural communication studies, which have been popularized and have occupied dominant positions in the field, such as high context culture/low context culture, individualism/collectivism, independent self-construal/ interdependent self-construal, feminism/ masculinism, etc. Although the scholars in the field of intercultural communication studies are among the pioneers to argue against the defects of stereotyping cultural behavior, the generalizations and conceptualizations they solidify in their research may easily lead to stereotypical analysis of cross-cultural communicative behavior at another level. In the domain of communicative transformation, there exists a similar tendency of essentializing. Although the existing adaptation models are very revealing and enlightening, they, in different 'disguises', take an assimilationist tone to conceive of Socialization agent as a one-dimensional change at the cost of newcomers' gradually losing their primary cultural heritage. Whereas Kim (1988, 2001), Bennett (1993) and others do attend to the fluid nature of identity, the focus remains on the newcomers' efforts to adapt, their resilience and creativity to counterbalance the pressure imposed by cultural differences, and their ability to assimilate to achieve integration into the new cultural contexts. Little is said about the dominant culture's attitudes towards various forms of culture differences, which inevitably exert impact on sojourners' cross-cultural adaptive experiences. Taking an evolutionary to the point of almost deterministic view on sojourners' process of adaptation, culture strangers are expected to take on the characteristics of the dominant group in any way. Although various phases and modes of adaptation haven been identified, most of the intercultural adaptation studies conducted in the communication discipline have been milieu-free rather than context-embedded investigations. Seldom of the studies emphasize the mediating role of power, either at the disposal of the newcomers themselves to make choices or on the part of the competition between host and home cultures to facilitate or to complicate

newcomers' transformational process. This, to a great extent, explains the inefficiency of the theory to account for sojourners' temporary or prolonged resistance to assimilate, as well as the inconsistency between theories and findings across studies.

Language socialization, however, through adopting the poststructuralist research paradigm, possesses a particular strength of recognizing both the constructive force of sociocultural contexts and individuals' capability of excising their own agencies or subjectivities. The emphasis on the constituting force of "discursive practices" helps focus our attention on the power relations prevail in sociocultural contexts and the subsequent dynamic aspects of intercultural encounters. Through this lens of examination, a person is not regarded as a static social product with fixed identity following a destined developmental trajectory, but as an individual emerges through the processes of social interaction, and one whose identity and personal development are constructed and reconstructed through various social practices in which they participate. Through conversational interaction and self-reflection, individuals go through discursive processes of "positioning" to exercise both continuity and multiplicity of selves, with "continuous personality" and "discontinuous personal diversity" (Davies & Harre, 1999: 46).

In the intercultural communication literature, although the impacts of sociocontextual elements are remarked upon on cultural transitions, the issue of adaptation is mainly addressed at the intra-psychological level, which underestimates the function of external power relations in the transformational experience and places the onus of failing to adapt primarily on the shoulders of border-crossers. Within the language socialization framework, adaptation is envisioned as a process of negotiation situated within the prevailing power relations. Individuals are perceived to construct and reconstruct their social identities with localized tactics and power. By acquiescing, complying, contesting, and resisting "different range of available subject positions" (Pavlenko, 2001:123), individuals gradually extend their repertoire of identities and adaptation tactics. This allows them to take more flexible practices to locate their own notion and agenda of adequation (Bucholtz & Hall, 2003) or passing (Piller, 2002). Under the hegemonic power of social structural order, individuals may adopt diverse passing tactics to scrutinize, question, resist and reinscribe the dominant culture tenets, and to seek the most favorable positions acceptable to the agents themselves as well as compatible with the sociocultural structure. Individuals' multiple and hybrid positionings, together with their diverse criteria for adequation, help us

better understand their discursive degrees of

identifying with the target languacultural group.

Table 1. A comparison of language socialization and intercultural socialization

	Language socialization	Intercultural communication
Research methodology	Longitudinal, ethnographic, documenting the richness of developmental process	Usually one-point-in-time self-reports, problem-enumerating, variable-testing
Theoretical analysis approach	1. data-laden 2. weaker theoretical explanation to specify developmental process 3. no solid foundation to explain intercultural socialization at the macro (cross-cultural) level 4. concepts about power, agency, passing, adequation providing strong analytical tools to explain diversity and deviance in language socialization	1. theory-laden 2. well-developed theory on cross-cultural adaptation 3. solid theoretical support from the depth of cross-cultural level 4. essentializing developmental trajectory, one-sided developmental onus on cross-cultural newcomers

Based on the above analysis on the strengths and inadequacies of language socialization and intercultural communication theories (see in table 1 for an overview), the potential benefits of combining the two research traditions have become evident. To achieve a more comprehensive understanding on intercultural socialization, we can 1) adopt the tenets of both research paradigms' reasoning on languacultural development; 2) employ longitudinal ethnographic research methodology; 3) use intercultural communication/transformation theory to explore intercultural socialization at the macro cross-cultural level, and 4) investigate diverse language practices by taking the intricate individual and contextual power relationship into consideration.

Conclusion

The situations described above cast doubt upon the scholarly habit of treating the home as an isolated sphere with regard to language socialization, by demonstrating that wider sociolinguistic and economic forces affect the most intimate of domestic interactions (cf. Luykx, 2003). On the other hand, the importance of the domestic sphere is regularly underrated in discussions of language planning and policy, which tend to focus on high-status, highly-visible public domains such as the school and the mass media, even though the centrality of these domains to minority language maintenance or revitalization is questionable. Inasmuch as language socialization in the home is a determining factor for language shift or language maintenance, family language policy constitutes an area of urgent concern for both researchers and minority language advocates. A dynamic, relational view of language socialization requires us to attend to children not only as the objects of socialization, but also as its potential agents. Such studies should aim to bridge the divide between language socialization research's two main areas of concern, by linking the study of second language

acquisition with the study of culture change. Such critical, contextually-situated research would combine attention to the details of domestic language use with attention to the broader social dynamics of globalization, modernization, migration, and the emergent identities and social relationships accompanying these processes.

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