



**HEBREW LANGUAGE EDUCATION LITERATURE REVIEWS**

# Contributions of Second/Foreign Language Learning Scholarship to Identity Development and Hebrew Education

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Sharon Avni  
*BMCC - City University of New York (CUNY)*



## Preface

CASJE (Consortium for Applied Studies in Jewish Education) is an evolving community of researchers, practitioners, and philanthropic leaders dedicated to improving the quality of knowledge that can be used to guide the work of Jewish Education. CASJE was launched with lead funding from the Jim Joseph, AVI CHAI, and Mandell and Madeleine Berman Foundations.

Early on, CASJE stakeholders and partners identified the potential for research to contribute to the improvement of Hebrew language education. To date, CASJE's activity in this field has included an effort to gain a better understanding of core issues that might benefit from a systematic applied research program, and on formulating a series of questions that might guide such a program over time.

To that end, this literature review is the second in a series commissioned by the CASJE Board. These reviews explore the implications and applications to the teaching and learning of Hebrew of recent research in heritage, second and foreign language learning.

**Sharon Avni**, the author of this second review, is Associate Professor of ESL and Linguistics at BMCC - City University of New York (CUNY).

*Michael Feuer*  
Co-Chair, CASJE Board

*Lee Shulman*  
Co-Chair, CASJE Board

 **Contents**

<b>Introduction</b> .....	4
<b>Theme 1: Intergroup Relations and Motivation</b> .....	6
<b>Theme 2: Culture and Context</b> .....	11
<b>Theme 3: Critical Approaches, Repertories, and Performance</b> .....	14
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	17

Many Jewish studies educators, policy makers, and philanthropists look to Hebrew education as one of the central mechanisms for creating and strengthening Jewish identity among Jewish American youth and adults. The premise underlying this perspective for many is based on the belief that knowledge of Modern Hebrew will enable a person to speak with other native Hebrew speakers (e.g., Israelis) and engage with Israeli literature and pop culture. As a result, they would feel a deeper and positive connection to Israelis, Israeli culture, and the state of Israel. A complementary logic is also at work in the teaching and learning of Biblical and/or Mishnaic Hebrew. Accordingly, knowledge of *lashon hakodesh* enables a person to gain access to the Jewish textual tradition and participate in Jewish religious traditions, which in turn, will lead to a stronger commitment and affiliation with Judaism. Underlying both of these theories of action is the belief that the acquisition of spoken and/or written linguistic codes can change people's identity — an “everyday word for people's sense of who they are,”<sup>1</sup> and “who people are to each other.”<sup>2</sup>

This report seeks to probe these proposed connections between language learning and social identity by examining the theoretical and empirical scholarship from the field of second/foreign language learning. Its aim is to equip Jewish educators and policymakers with a better understanding of how this connection has been conceptualized in the fields of second language acquisition (SLA) and applied linguistics.<sup>3</sup> The topic, unsurprisingly, is extremely complex. The good news is that, on one hand, there has been growth in the number of publications on these topics, and that we therefore know a great deal about the relationships between second language acquisition (SLA) and identity. On the other hand, for those looking for a simple solution for creating and/or strengthening children's affiliation with Judaism through Hebrew acquisition, they may be surprised to find out that **the literature shows that there is no guarantee that the language(s) that a person learns directly shapes or determines his/her social or cultural identity or affiliation.**<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ivanič, R. (1998). *Writing and identity: The discursive construction of identity in academic writing* (Vol. 5). John Benjamins. pg. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Benwell, B., & Stokoe, E. (2006). *Discourse and identity*. Edinburgh University Press.

<sup>3</sup> Applied Linguistics is an interdisciplinary field that addresses a broad range of language-related issues and draws on a wide range of theoretical and methodological approaches from various disciplines. Applied linguistics includes SLA and SLA-related domains of research.

Kramsch, C. (2000). Second Language Acquisition, Applied Linguistics, and the Teaching of Foreign Languages. *The Modern Language Journal*, 84: 311–326.

<sup>4</sup> Ricento, T. (2005). Considerations of identity in L2 learning. *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning*, 895-910.

With these caveats in mind, this report covers the leading perspectives regarding the ways in which identity and language learning have been connected.<sup>5</sup> I have opted for a theme-based approach rather than a chronological description, though I have tried to indicate how particular frameworks have developed in relation to each other. The three themes that have emerged in this review of the literature are: **Intergroup Relations and Motivation, Context and Culture**, and **Language Repertoires and Performance**. Due to space considerations, each theme is discussed in broad brushstrokes. The reader does not need to have requisite specialized knowledge in second language acquisition to engage in this report; great efforts were made to present this material in an accessible way so that it can reach a wide audience, including practitioners, policy makers, and funding agents. Each section concludes with some general questions as to what the themes in each section might mean for the case of Hebrew education. These questions represent a determined effort to distill from the scholarship some particular points of inquiry that can serve as a springboard for ongoing discussions; they are not necessarily designed as specific research questions. Rather, they are presented as potential directions for framing future research studies and educational explorations.

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<sup>5</sup> Overall, the scholarship presented in this report draws more heavily on the use of spoken language than written language.

## Theme 1: Intergroup Relations and Motivation

One of the earliest and most influential theories regarding social identity was developed by Henri Tajfel, a social psychologist, who conceptualized social identity as being derived from an individual's membership in a social group.<sup>6</sup> He defined social identity as "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the emotional significance attached to that membership."<sup>7</sup> Tajfel's work propelled a group of scholars to investigate language processes in social psychological accounts of intergroup relations. Following Barth's seminal work on ethnic groups,<sup>8</sup> this work widely approached identity as constituted through the boundaries that groups create between themselves, rather than the internal characteristics of group members.

Around the same time, scholars in the newly-emerging field of second language acquisition were working to better understand how notions of group membership affected language learning. Though these early language acquisition theories did not always explicitly mention identity, they were deeply concerned with understanding how people understand and categorize themselves in relation to others, and how these categorizations influenced language learning.<sup>9</sup> John Schumann's Acculturation Model, for example, offered the notion of social distance, a concept referring to the degree of similarity between two cultures. He hypothesized that the greater the social distance between the cultures, the more difficulty the language learner would have in acquiring the target language. Conversely, his theory postulated that the smaller the social distance, the more likely the learner would be successful in acquiring the target language.<sup>10</sup> Put more simply, **acculturation was affected by the degree of social and psychological distance between the learner and the target language culture**. This model has been critiqued by SLA theorists for its lack of relevance to the second language classroom.<sup>11</sup> However, it remains topical to discussions about language acquisition and identity because it raises questions about how a learner's feelings about being a part of the target language community may determine his/her language learning success.

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<sup>6</sup> Tajfel, H. (1974). Social identity and intergroup behaviour. *Social Science Information/sur les sciences sociales*.

Tajfel, H. (2010). *Social identity and intergroup relations*. Cambridge University Press.

<sup>7</sup> Tajfel, H. (1974). Social identity and intergroup behaviour. *Social Science Information/sur les sciences sociales*, pg. 69.

<sup>8</sup> Barth, F. (1998). *Ethnic groups and boundaries: The social organization of culture difference*. Waveland Press.

<sup>9</sup> McNamara, T. (1997). Theorizing social identity; what do we mean by social identity? Competing frameworks, competing discourses. *TESOL quarterly*, 31(3), 561-567.

<sup>10</sup> Schumann, J. H. (1986). Research on the acculturation model for second language acquisition. *Journal of multilingual & multicultural development*, 7(5), 379-392.

<sup>11</sup> Doughty, C. & Long, M. (2003). *The handbook of second language acquisition*. New York: Blackwell.

In contrast, Communication Accommodation Theory — also originating in the early 1970s<sup>12</sup> — aimed at explaining why speakers accommodate (change the manner in which they speak) in face-to-face interaction with others.<sup>13</sup> It postulated that accommodation can take the form of either convergence or divergence depending on the attitude that speakers show towards each other, their language varieties, and the shared social context. While convergence is an accommodative process in which a speaker changes his/her own speech to resemble more closely other's speech, divergence refers to a process in which a speaker linguistically moves in the opposite direction in order to make his/her speech sound more unlike that of the person he/she is talking to. Hence, these two processes, according to the theory, enable speakers to linguistically signal social solidarity and similarity or social difference and distance. This model is related to identity because at its core it attempts to explain how members of a group use language to create dimensions along which group similarity and difference are made. For our purposes, this theory attempts to explain why individuals who identify themselves as Jews may learn and choose to use Hebrew (or other Jewish languages) as an ingroup speech marker.

**Both the Acculturation Model and the Accommodation Theory link successful language acquisition with the relationships between the language learner's social group and the target language community.** Both also tapped into the role of motivation in language learning, a topic that language researchers were beginning to explore in the early 1970s. Gardner and Lambert were the first to theorize that motivation was independent of ability or aptitude, and was a significant cause of variability in SLA.<sup>14</sup> They also hypothesized that there were social and psychological dimensions which distinguished motivation to learn a second language from other types of learning motivation on the basis that learners were expected to not only acquire the language but to also identify with the target language community. They propose two kinds of motivational orientations in language learning: integrative, "reflecting a sincere and personal interest in the people and culture represented by the other group"; and instrumental, "reflecting the practical value and advantages of learning a new language."<sup>15</sup> Whereas instrumental motivation reflected targeted and pragmatic purposes for learning a language, such as the need to study in another country or to advance in one's career, integrative motivation was the result of learners' desire to integrate themselves in the target language cultural group, and to become a part of that society.

By the late 1980s and early 1990s, however, the study of language learning motivation underwent a dramatic break with the past, with the general sense being that the social-psychological line of inquiry had run its course. In general, there was a call to move beyond the macro perspective of ethnolinguistic group behavior to a more dynamic and situated

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<sup>12</sup> Communication Accommodation Theory was originally developed by Giles et al (1973) as Speech Accommodation Theory, a sociopsychological model that attempted to account for modifications in first language speech style during interaction.

<sup>13</sup> Giles, H., Coupland, J., & Coupland, N. (1991). *Contexts of accommodation: Developments in applied sociolinguistics*. Cambridge University Press.

Giles, H., Taylor, D. M., & Bourhis, R. (1973). Towards a theory of interpersonal accommodation through language: Some Canadian data. *Language in society*, 2(02), 177-192.

<sup>14</sup> Gardner, R. C., & Lambert, W. E. (1972). *Attitudes and Motivation in Second-Language Learning*.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p. 132

account of the complexity of the learning process. This line of inquiry went into two broad directions: poststructural and psychological, each furthering the notion of identity in the language learning process in their own theoretical and methodological ways. This shift was also accompanied by a push for more qualitative and ethnographic methodologies, especially in the poststructural area of inquiry.

The **poststructural turn** was arguably aided by the new generation of SLA researchers, many of whom were women and members of other minoritized groups, who called for theories of SLA that could account for the ways in which people actually learn and use language in their daily lives. Recognizing that individuals do not belong to one single group, but rather belong to multiple and overlapping groups based on ethnicity, gender, class, race, and other social categories, this wave of theorists argued for a theoretical approach that could adequately integrate the language learner and the context of language learning while acknowledging these intersectionalities. In opposition to intergroup scholarship that theorized identity as an invariant attribute of a particular group, second language theorists working in a poststructural framework argued that identity is a contingent process involving dialectical relations between learners and the various contexts of which they are a part.<sup>16</sup> Analysis of identity and language learning therefore shifted to questions of how, when, and why individuals perceive themselves and are seen as members of particular groups, and how this social reality may shape and be shaped by the conditions of language learning.

The leading voice of this post-structuralism turn was Bonny Norton, who used personal diaries and interviews to show how the identities of adult immigrant female language learners in Canada were constructed in their interactions with others in and out of the classroom.<sup>17</sup> Whereas earlier research in motivation had suggested that all language learners were approaching the goal of acquiring a second language from a level playing field, Norton's work demonstrated that successful second language learning was not necessarily about being internally motivated, but about a person's access (or lack thereof) to powerful social networks that give the learner the opportunity to use the language. Norton coined the term "investment" to characterize the complex motives and desires that language learners may have in acquiring a target language, writing, "if learners invest in the second language, they do so with the understanding that they will acquire a wide range of symbolic and material resources, which will in turn increase the value of their cultural capital".<sup>18</sup> Norton's theory of second language learning highlighted that investment in the target language is also an investment in the learner's own identity, which is constantly changing over time and across contexts. **A critical insight that poststructuralist theory brings to bear is that the pursuit of an identity, however dynamic and fluid it is, is never simply in the hands of the motivated individual language learner. It is also a function of how the target commu-**

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<sup>16</sup> Pavlenko, A. (2002). Poststructuralist approaches to the study of social factors in second language learning and use. *Portraits of the L2 user*, 277-302.

Morgan, B. (2007). Poststructuralism and applied linguistics. In *International handbook of English language teaching* (pp. 1033-1052). Springer US.

<sup>17</sup> Norton Peirce, B. (1995). Social identity, investment, and language learning. *TESOL quarterly*, 29(1), 9-31.

Norton, B. (2013). *Identity and language learning: Extending the conversation*. Multilingual matters. The author now goes by the name Bonny Norton.

<sup>18</sup> Norton, B. (2010). Identity, literacy, and English-language teaching. *TESL Canada Journal*, 28(1), 1.



## **nity practices may accept or marginalize non-native language users and/or facilitate their attempts to learn and use their second language.**

The **psychological turn** in motivation research also critically examined situated language use. Specifically, language educators examining the psychology of motivation pushed back against the notion of integrative motivation. They argued that precisely because we live in an era of global flows of people, trade, and information, it is increasingly difficult to talk about a clearly defined language community tied to a fixed location with which a language learner can identify and integrate.<sup>19</sup> The implications of these global changes are that there is a great deal of variation even within so-called language speaking communities. Hence, it is more difficult to measure motivation, or to discern what the object of motivation is. In the case of Hebrew, whereas it may have once been common to talk about American Jews' motivation to learn Modern Hebrew as a means of integrating into Jewish Israeli society, today learning Modern Hebrew can be equally an integrative factor for doing business with backpackers in India, gaining access to local Israeli media for BDS or other advocacy causes, or promoting the cognitive benefits of bilingual education in public schooling.

Leading voices in the psychological field have therefore called for a shift in focus from an external reference group to one's internal representation of oneself as a member of a community.<sup>20</sup> What this shift means is that it is not a matter of seeing oneself in relation to another specific group, but rather one's sense of self on its own. We can get a better sense of this model when we think about the case of English, given its status as an increasingly global language used by a wide range of speakers from different language backgrounds around the world. It has been argued that as English loses its association with particular Anglophone cultures and becomes identified with the powerful forces of globalization, the desire for language learners to integrate to a particular community may lose its explanatory power. Drawing on self-reported data from teenage school students learning English in Indonesia, one study shows that the motivation to learn English may partly be determined by the pursuit of a bicultural identity that includes a global or world citizen identity as well as a local or national identity as an Indonesian.<sup>21</sup> This research points to the limitations of dividing the world into *them* and *us* through a process of social categorization (i.e. placing people into social groups), showing how a person's choice of language use may no longer be solely based on distinct group membership(s).

Dörnyei, a leading figure in the area of psychological motivation, drew on the psychological theory of "possible selves"<sup>22</sup> to develop the L2<sup>23</sup> Motivational Self System, a model that fo-

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<sup>19</sup> Dörnyei and Ushioda (2006). Ushioda, E., & Dörnyei, Z. (2009). Motivation, language identities and the L2 self: A theoretical overview. *Motivation, language identity and the L2 self*, 1-8.

Ushioda, E. 2011. Language learning motivation, self and identity: current theoretical perspectives. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, Vol.24 (No.3), pp. 199-210.

<sup>20</sup> Dörnyei, Z. (2009). The L2 motivational self system. *Motivation, language identity and the L2 self*, 36(3), 9-11.

<sup>21</sup> Lamb, M. (2004). Integrative motivation in a globalizing world. *System*, 32(1), 3-19.

<sup>22</sup> Markus, H., & Nurius, P. (1986). Possible selves. *American psychologist*, 41(9), 954.

<sup>23</sup> L2 refers to second language, in contrast to L1 (an individual's first language).

cuses on people's vision of themselves as language learners in the future.<sup>24</sup> One of its central constructs, the *ideal self*, signifies the attributes that one would ideally like to possess (i.e., a representation of personal hopes, aspirations, or wishes). In contrast, the *ought-to self* signifies the attributes that a person believes he/she ought to possess (i.e., various duty, obligations, or responsibilities) in order to avoid potential negative outcomes. Dörnyei speculates that if proficiency in the target language is integral to one's ideal or ought-to self, it will serve as a powerful motivator to learn the language due to the psychological desire to reduce the discrepancy between one's ideal self or possible self in the future. **Put differently, identification with a vision of oneself in the future may provide the motivational impetus for learning a second language, rather than identification with a particular group of target language speakers.** Along with this research, there has also been a renewed interest in returning to psychological models of identity and the self.<sup>25</sup>

The research highlighted in this section leads to the following questions regarding Hebrew education:

- ▶ If an assumption is that American Jews are learning Modern Hebrew to identify and connect with the target language group (i.e., Israelis), we need more in-depth analysis of the following questions:
  - + How do different Hebrew language learning conditions facilitate or hinder this connection?
  - + Is Hebrew the only or best way to facilitate this connection?
  - + In what ways do some members of Israeli communities accept or marginalize non-native Hebrew language use and/or facilitate Americans' attempts to learn and use Modern Hebrew?
- ▶ In what ways does the acquisition of Modern Hebrew fit into learners' "ideal self" and "ought-to-self"?
- ▶ How does the notion of "investment" help us to think about the type of cultural capital that comes with learning different varieties of Hebrew? In what ways do types of Jewish youth make varying "investments" in Hebrew learning, and why? In what ways is learning Modern or textual Hebrew a form of cultural capital for American Jews?
- ▶ In what ways do American Jewish youth (across the wide variation that makes up this social group) use or think about Hebrew in varying contexts (e.g., home, school, social media, religious institutions) as well as activities (e.g., shopping, eating, and playing)?
- ▶ Are there particular aspects of Hebrew learning (e.g., particular words, topics, contexts of use) that generate more interest or lead to a stronger desire to know and use the language?

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<sup>24</sup> Dörnyei and Ushioda write, "Possible selves act as 'future self guides,' reflecting a dynamic, forward-pointing conception that can explain how someone is moved from the present toward the future." Dörnyei, Z., & Ushioda, E. (Eds.). (2009). *Motivation, language identity and the L2 self* (Vol. 36). Multilingual Matters.

<sup>25</sup> Block, D. (2009). *Second language identities*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

## Theme 2: Culture and Context

In addition to the role of **motivation** in second language learning focused on throughout the 1980s and 1990s, there was a growing interest in the role of **context** in the language learning experience from the field of interactional sociolinguistics. Broadly speaking, interactional sociolinguistics is concerned with how speakers signal and interpret meaning in social interaction. Its roots can be traced back to Erving Goffman, whose 1960s scholarship located the relationship between self and society at the micro level of analysis, that is, within the everyday encounters, interactions, and activities in which people routinely engage.<sup>26</sup> This relationship was further developed by John Gumperz in the 1970s, who theorized that people use language in face-to-face interactions to not only reflect their group-based identity, but also to provide information about who they are, what they want to communicate, and how they know how to accomplish their interactional goals.<sup>27</sup> Taken into the field of SLA, interactional sociolinguistics has helped to reveal the relationship between bilingual speakers' use of linguistic choices and the social situations in which they interact, how this reflects or shapes a speaker's social identity, and how these practices work in classroom settings. Specifically, the topic of code switching — the phenomenon of switching from one language to another — emerged in the 1980s as a way of understanding how language learners use different linguistic codes to signal identity and build intimate interpersonal relationships with other speakers.<sup>28</sup> Not just a linguistic practice, code switching was seen as an act of identity among individuals who share the same ethno-cultural identity.<sup>29</sup>

Linguistic anthropology has also furthered an understanding of how language shapes and is shaped by individuals and groups' relational senses of themselves and others in society. One of its main contributions has been to show that **identity is produced in linguistic interaction, meaning that speakers produce and reproduce particular identities through their language use.**<sup>30</sup> Linguistic anthropologists have likewise addressed what it means to

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<sup>26</sup> Goffman, E. (1978). *The presentation of self in everyday life* (p. 56). Harmondsworth.

<sup>27</sup> Gumperz, J. J. (1982). *Language and social identity* (Vol. 2). Cambridge University Press.

<sup>28</sup> Trudgill, P. 2000. *Sociolinguistics*. London: Penguin.

Heller, M. (1992). The politics of codeswitching and language choice. *Journal of Multilingual & Multicultural Development*, 13(1-2), 123-142.

Coulmas, F. (2013). *Sociolinguistics: The study of speakers' choices*. Cambridge University Press.

<sup>29</sup> Le Page, R. B., & Tabouret-Keller, A. (1985). *Acts of identity: Creole-based approaches to language and ethnicity*. CUP Archive.

<sup>30</sup> Bucholtz, M., & Hall, K. (2005). Identity and interaction: A sociocultural linguistic approach. *Discourse studies*, 7(4-5), 585-614.

be “a speaker of a culture”.<sup>31</sup> This focus means that while they are concerned with what is specifically said at any one point, they are also interested in the construction of social identity that takes place through routine day-to-day interactions across multiple sites over time. Language socialization research, for example, illuminates how children or other novices (of any age) acquire communicative competence — knowledge about how and when to use language appropriately — which enables them to interact meaningfully with others and participate in the social life of a given community.<sup>32</sup> Language socialization theorists emphasize that novices are simultaneously socialized *into and through* language; that is, they are socialized *into* specific uses of language so that they can master the formal features of a community’s language. They can, for example, produce grammatically and pragmatically well-formed sentences. They are also socialized *through* language to become familiar with their community’s ways of thinking, feeling, and acting in the world. That is to say, through language they learn about a community’s values, beliefs, and ideologies. Research has shown that these values are conveyed through ways of speaking that include praising, prompting, repetition, shaming, storytelling, evaluating, requesting, and disputing.<sup>33</sup>

While the early language socialization work was carried out by linguistic anthropologists who examined the child-rearing practices in non-Western societies, it has since been taken up in a vast array of contexts, including in religious communities.<sup>34</sup> In recent years, this paradigm

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<sup>31</sup> Ochs, E. (2002). Becoming a speaker of culture. *Language acquisition and language socialization: Ecological perspectives*, 99-120.

<sup>32</sup> Schieffelin, B. B., & Ochs, E. (1986). *Language socialization across cultures* (No. 3). Cambridge University Press.

Ochs, E. (1993). Constructing social identity: A language socialization perspective. *Research on language and social interaction*, 26(3), 287-306.

Ochs, E. (1988). *Culture and language development: Language acquisition and language socialization in a Samoan village* (No. 6). CUP Archive.

Schieffelin, B. B. (1990). *The give and take of everyday life: language, socialization of Kaluli children* (No. 9). CUP Archive.

<sup>33</sup> Paugh, A. L. (2005). Multilingual play: Children’s code-switching, role play, and agency in Dominica, West Indies. *Language in Society*, 34(01), 63-86.

Lo, A., & Fung, H. (2011). Language Socialization and Shaming. *The handbook of language socialization*, 71, 169.

Lempert, M. (2013). No ordinary ethics. *Anthropological Theory*, 13(4), 370-393.

Watson-Gegeo, K. A., & Gegeo, D. W. (1986). Calling-out and repeating routines in Kwara’ae children’s language socialization. *Language socialization across cultures*, 3, 17-50.

Moore, L. C. (2006). Learning by heart in Qur’anic and public schools in northern Cameroon. *Social Analysis*, 109-126.

García-Sánchez, I. M. (2012). Language socialization and exclusion. *The handbook of language socialization*, 391-419.

Burdelski, M. (2010). Socializing politeness routines: Action, other-orientation, and embodiment in a Japanese preschool. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 42(6), 1606-1621.

Cook, H. M. (1999). Language socialization in Japanese elementary schools: Attentive listening and reaction turns. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 31(11), 1443-1465.

Howard, K. M. (2008). Language Socialization and Language Shift Among School-Aged Children. In *Encyclopedia of language and education* (pp. 2753-2765). Springer US.

<sup>34</sup> Fader, A. (2009). *Mitzvah girls: Bringing up the next generation of Hasidic Jews in Brooklyn*. Princeton University Press.

Moore, L. (2011). Language Socialization and Repetition. *The handbook of language socialization*, 71, 209.

He, A. W. (2001). The Language of Ambiguity Practices in Chinese Heritage Language classes. *Discourse studies*, 3(1), 75-96.

has also been taken into second language acquisition theory. Second language socialization, a subfield of language socialization, seeks to understand the process by which non-native speakers of a language gain communicative competence in the target language and acquire the ability to participate in the practices of communities in which that language is used.<sup>35</sup> **One of the most interesting findings of second language socialization research is that not all socialization is “successful” (and that the notion of “success” is itself culturally constructed and situated). Though there may be high levels of second language achievement in a particular group, there may also be outcomes that include ambivalence, resistance to or rejection of the target language culture or community.** Additionally, though a given language learner may have a strong desire to learn the target language and become a member of its community, there may not always be sufficient opportunities for interaction with appropriate socializing agents.<sup>36</sup> Second language socialization research therefore raises compelling questions about the connections between language learning and the process of identifying as a member of a particular community.

The research highlighted in this section leads us to consider the following questions regarding Hebrew education:

- ▶ In what ways are Hebrew language learners in all forms of formal and informal learning contexts (e.g., social media, preschools, day and sleepaway camps), being socialized to think about what it means to become a “speaker of [Jewish] culture”? In what way does the teaching of Hebrew as a second language socialize American youth into particular ways of thinking about themselves as Jews?
- ▶ What does Hebrew language socialization look like across the lifespan? How do different Hebrew language learning opportunities work together over time and across contexts?
- ▶ Are there particular linguistic practices that ‘mark’ individuals as members of particular communities?

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García-Sánchez, I. M. (2010). The politics of Arabic language education: Moroccan immigrant children's language socialization into ethnic and religious identities. *Linguistics and Education*, 21(3), 171-196.

<sup>35</sup> Duff, P. A. (2007). Second language socialization as sociocultural theory: Insights and issues. *Language teaching*, 40(04), 309-319.

Duff, P. A. (2011). Second Language Socialization. *The handbook of language socialization*, 564.

He, A. W. (2004). Identity construction in Chinese heritage language classes. *Pragmatics*, 14(2/3), 199-216.

<sup>36</sup> Duff and Talmy Duff, P. A., & Talmy, S. (2011). Language socialization approaches to second language acquisition. *Alternative approaches to second language acquisition*, 95-116.

Talmy, S. (2008). The cultural productions of the ESL student at Tradewinds High: Contingency, multidirectionality, and identity in L2 socialization. *Applied Linguistics*, 29(4), 619-644.

## Theme 3: Critical Approaches, Repertoires, and Performance

For much of the history of SLA, languages have been thought of as distinct, bounded, and autonomous codes consisting of phonology, morphology, syntax, and lexis. However, this fundamental conceptualization has recently been called into question. Applied linguists have begun to theorize differently what constitutes a language and whether bilingualism is also a social construction (and not just a cognitive condition). Working within a critical social perspective, some applied linguistics theorists conceptualize language in a more political framework, as a “set of resources called into play by social actors, under social and historical conditions which both constrain and make possible the social reproduction of existing conventions and relations, as well as the production of new ones.”<sup>37</sup> At its core, this new way of seeing language is an epistemological shift from describing language as a system of structures to one that emphasizes the fluid and heteroglossic<sup>38</sup> of language practices.<sup>39</sup> A plethora of terms have been produced to capture this new reality, including, translanguaging,<sup>40</sup> language crossing,<sup>41</sup> transidiomaticity,<sup>42</sup> polylingualism,<sup>43</sup> metrolingualism,<sup>44</sup> bilanguaging, multivocality,<sup>45</sup> and codemeshing.<sup>46</sup> These terms demonstrate a focus on process (i.e., languaging) as opposed to product (i.e., language). What all of these terms also share is a belief

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<sup>37</sup> Heller, M. (2007). Bilingualism as ideology and practice. In *Bilingualism: A social approach* (pp. 1-22). Palgrave Macmillan UK, p. 13.

<sup>38</sup> Heteroglossia describes the coexistence of distinct varieties within a single “language”, introduced by the Russian philosopher and linguist, Mikhail Bakhtin in 1934 in his monograph, *Discourse in the Novel*.

<sup>39</sup> Blommaert, J. (2010). *The sociolinguistics of globalization*. Cambridge University Press.

Blommaert, J., Collins, J., & Slembrouck, S. (2005). Spaces of multilingualism. *Language & Communication*, 25(3), 197-216.

Makoni, S., & Pennycook, A. (Eds.). (2007). *Disinventing and reconstituting languages* (Vol. 62). Multilingual Matters.

<sup>40</sup> García, O., & Wei, L. (2013). *Translanguaging: Language, bilingualism and education*. Springer.

<sup>41</sup> Rampton, B. (2014). *Crossings: Language and ethnicity among adolescents*. Routledge.

<sup>42</sup> Jacquemet, M. (2005). Transidiomatic practices: Language and power in the age of globalization. *Language & Communication*, 25(3), 257-277.

<sup>43</sup> Jørgensen, J. N. (2008). Polylingual languaging around and among children and adolescents. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 5(3), 161-176.

<sup>44</sup> Otsuji, E., & Pennycook, A. (2010). Metrolingualism: Fixity, fluidity and language in flux. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 7(3), 240-254.

<sup>45</sup> Higgins, C. (2009). *English as a local language: Post-colonial identities and multilingual practices* (Vol. 2). Channel View Books.

<sup>46</sup> Canagarajah, S. (2011). Codemeshing in academic writing: Identifying teachable strategies of translanguaging. *The Modern Language Journal*, 95(3), 401-417.



that speakers do not merely code switch — since codeswitching assumes that the languages are distinct codes with no reference to each other — but rather draw from and create one linguistic repertoire from which they strategically select features, thereby facilitating communication and positioning themselves in particular ways in their interactions.

In recent years, this social approach to bilingualism has taken root in educational research on multilingual practices and contexts.<sup>47</sup> Broadly speaking, since language is seen as heteroglossic and unbounded, theorists working in this paradigm frequently question monolingual teaching and learning practices, and reject long-standing notions like native speaker and mother tongue.<sup>48</sup> **Interesting case studies focusing on religious and ethnic schools in the United Kingdom have also challenged the notion that supplementary schools or community schools can guarantee the transmission of heritage solely through language education.** While these schools, they argue, are designed to promote heritage through the teaching of language, they do not reflect what language learners believe about their language or how they use language. Additionally, they have found that the belief that language can transmit particular notions of heritage masks divergent and contested views that students may have about the values and status of particular linguistic resources.<sup>49</sup> This research shows that while particular cultural and ethnic groups continue to believe that their ethnic or sacred languages are crucially important for their members' sense of identification with the group, heritage identification and language learning and knowledge are not always or necessarily connected. Indeed, they argue that this association between having to know a particular language and having a strong ethnic identification is a "social artifact" that was invented and perpetuated to accentuate group boundaries and attenuate differences among group members.<sup>50</sup> Research in this vein goes against the very core of long-standing beliefs that ethnic and cultural groups need intergenerational language learning to ensure heritage identification.

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<sup>47</sup> Wei, L. (2011). Moment analysis and translanguaging space: Discursive construction of identities by multilingual Chinese youth in Britain. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 43(5), 1222-1235.

Garcia, O. (2009). Education, multilingualism and translanguaging in the 21st century. *Multilingual education for social justice: Globalising the local*, 140-158.

Creese, A., & Blackledge, A. (2010). Translanguaging in the bilingual classroom: A pedagogy for learning and teaching?. *The Modern Language Journal*, 94(1), 103-115.

Johnson, K. E. (2006). The sociocultural turn and its challenges for second language teacher education. *Tesol Quarterly*, 40(1), 235-257.

<sup>48</sup> Leung, C., Harris, R., & Rampton, B. (1997). The idealised native speaker, reified ethnicities, and classroom realities. *Tesol Quarterly*, 31(3), 543-560.

Rampton, M. B. H. (1990). Displacing the 'native speaker': Expertise, affiliation, and inheritance. *ELT journal*, 44(2), 97-101.

<sup>49</sup> Angela Creese, Taşkın Baraç, Arvind Bhatt, Shahela Hamid, Li Wei, Vally Lytra, Peter Martin, Chao-Jung Wu, and Dilek Yağcıoğlu (2008). "Contesting 'language' as 'heritage': Negotiation of identities in late modernity." *Applied Linguistics* 29, no. 4: 533-554.

Creese, A., Bhatt, A., Bhojani, N., & Martin, P. (2006). Multicultural, heritage and learner identities in complementary schools. *Language and Education*, 20(1), 23-43.

Creese, A., & Blackledge, A. (2011). Separate and flexible bilingualism in complementary schools: Multiple language practices in interrelationship. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 43(5), 1196-1208.

Blackledge, A., & Creese, A. (2009). 'Because tumi Bangali': Inventing and disinventing the national in multilingual communities in the UK. *Ethnicities*, 9(4), 451-476.

<sup>50</sup> Bourdieu, P., & Thompson, J. B. (1991). *Language and symbolic power*. Harvard University Press.

One other relatively new theory of identity that has entered into language learning scholarship is based on the construct of performance, and the idea that “identity categories have to be enacted and performed in order to be socially salient.”<sup>51</sup> In more simple terms, performance posits that for people to successfully take on a specific identity, they must use the situationally appropriate language *and* their actions must be acknowledged by others as felicitous.<sup>52</sup> This implies that language teachers and learners are engaged in a performance with an audience of spectators in the classroom. It also means that language learners are engaged in a performance with a broader global audience that may not be physically present, but who, in fact, are also actively involved rejecting or ratifying the learners’ displayed linguistic and cultural knowledge. One pertinent example of this is a compelling study of how Israeli *shlichim* families in the United States learn to recognize and mock Americans’ non-Israeli pronunciations of Hebrew, thereby allowing Israelis to reinforce and blur the boundaries between Israeli and American Jews. By doing so, they can claim Israeli authenticity.<sup>53</sup> This perspective also illuminates another critical point. Language is *only one of the many* semiotic tools in which people can use to perform their identity, but it is not the only one. As research on “metalinguistic communities” demonstrates, language learners can also form communities and perform identity through discourse *about* language and cultural symbols, especially if (or even though) they may lack communicative competency or familiarity in the heritage language itself.<sup>54</sup> The notion of metalinguistic community therefore highlights the ideological and affective connections individuals or groups may have with a target language or with the group it represents. Whether these ideological and affective connections can or should replace actual linguistic competency in the target language remains an unanswered question for ethnic and religious communities to address.

The research highlighted in this section leads us to consider the following questions regarding Hebrew education:

- ▶ **What are the multilingual practices of Jewish youth, including the use of English, Hebrew, Russian, Spanish, and other languages that make up their linguistic repertoire?**
- ▶ **What does Hebrew language learning look like when it is not embedded in discourses of identity and heritage? What does it mean to have an affective relationship with Hebrew?**
- ▶ **How is Hebrew learning and use a performance of Jewishness?**

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<sup>51</sup> Blommaert, J. (2005). *Discourse: A critical introduction*. Cambridge University Press.

<sup>52</sup> Renewed interest in performance can be traced back to Erving Goffman’s work on dramaturgy. Goffman, E. (1978). *The presentation of self in everyday life* (p. 56). Harmondsworth.

<sup>53</sup> Kattan, S. (2009). “Because she doesn’t speak real Hebrew”: Accent and the socialization of authenticity among Israeli shlichim. *Crossroads of language, interaction, and culture*, 7, 65-94.

<sup>54</sup> Avineri, N. (2014). Yiddish endangerment as phenomenological reality and discursive strategy: Crossing into the past and crossing out the present. *Language & Communication* 38: 18-32.



## Conclusion

This report offers a synthesis of the seminal ideas in identity and language learning research, in relation to Hebrew language learning. If the past is any indication, the future of research on this topic holds tremendous promise. As each theoretical wave has advanced a new way of thinking and pointed in a new direction, language educators can anticipate that the already substantial catalog of research will yield even greater insight into the ways in which identity is constituted through and by language. For Jewish educators, this research synthesis illuminates some new directions for thinking about the teaching and learning of Hebrew and hopes to open a conversation about future directions to explore within the field of Hebrew language education.

CASJE is an evolving community of researchers, practitioners, and philanthropic leaders dedicated to improving the quality of knowledge that can be used to guide the work of Jewish education. The Consortium supports research shaped by the wisdom of practice, practice guided by research, and philanthropy informed by a sound base of evidence. To achieve these ends, CASJE aims to build the capacity needed to do high-quality applied research, nurture the institutions where research is conducted, and secure funding that supports and enables these important activities.

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