ADOPTING CROSS-DISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVES IN CONSTRUCTING A MULTILINGUAL'S IDENTITY[1]

MAGDALÉNA BILÁ, ALENA KAČMÁROVÁ & INGRIDA VAŇKOVÁ

Abstract: The cultural phenomenon of globalization has led to bilingualism and/or multilingualism (at least from a socio-pragmatic point of view). This brought to the attention of professionals the issue of the transformation of an identity from monolingual to multilingual. Due to the individual and at the same time social nature of the setting in which a man interacts, the study of the issue of personal identity has to be cross-disciplinary. We claim that in the course of this transformation the language-culture-identity interrelationship is vital and a multidisciplinary approach including (social) psychological, anthropological, philosophical, and discursive perspectives has to be undertaken. The paper approaches the issue of a multilingual's identity through the prism of the four perspectives and in doing so offers justification for the above claim.

Key words: identity; multilingual; language; culture; psychology; anthropology; philosophy; discourse; sociality.

Introduction

In the present-day world, as it were, monolinguals represent a minority. Most of the populations all over the world live, work, or become engaged, for different reasons, in interactions involving a language that is not their native. Most foreign language users are to a certain degree bilingual or multilingual from a socio-pragmatic perspective. This is to say, they become bilingual by virtue of their regular exposure to social encounters in native settings or with native speakers (Kačmárová, 2011). It follows that when a person becomes bilingual/multilingual, their identity is subjected to a great change. What differentiates the mind of a monolingual from the mind of a multilingual is the nature of the common underlying conceptual base (on this term, see Kecskes & Papp, 2000). Kecskes and Papp (2000, p. 42) argue that

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the full acquisition and proper use of a concept requires the learner to know not only its lexical-semantic counterpart and associated declarative knowledge but also the multimodal mental representation and culturally based behavioral scripts and schemas that are acquired through genuine communication.

They support the argument by quoting Lakoff and Johnson (qt in Kecskes & Papp, 2000, p. 42): "our ordinary conceptual system in terms of which we both think and act is fundamentally metaphorical in nature"; in other words, it is culture-dependent. The interdependence between language and culture was tackled by Sapir and Whorf as early as in the 1920s. Despite some criticism, it is indisputable that Sapir and Whorf's theory has allowed for two stances: that language reflects culture and delineates our mindset and that language cannot be decontextualized since culture is expressed through language (Chang, 2004).

Some twentieth-century cultural phenomena (globalization, detraditionalization, individualization, etc.) have resulted in a tendency to contemplate a human being as a "language animal" (Taylor, 1985). As early as in the 1960s, philosophy starts to view the issue of personal identity as a structure created by means of one's interpretation of their contact with reality. In other words, personal identity is permanently shaped during socialization and individualization; yet it is also the outcome of customized verbal behavior. Language, thus, becomes a means of describing personal identity. The language practice is, hence, used for creating the meaning of self and of others. This is to say, personal identity is a "narrative structure", i.e. "I" as the principle formed by linguistic practice (often idiosyncratic) in the mother tongue and in a foreign language. Becoming aware of the differences between the two languages has to be accompanied by the hermeneutic understanding of their structured systems. Since hermeneutic understanding is the fusion of learning and experiencing, we can understand a foreign language expression through the conceptualization of its relative equivalent in our mother tongue. The notion of hermeneutic understanding derives from the assumed varying conceptualization of an expression both on an individual level (in terms of an individual person) and a collective level (in terms of a community). This results in a differing signification of extralinguistic reality in the system of language signs in languages. Since language signs are conventional in nature, the process of comprehending has to involve social context.

When we speak or write, we use the lexicon and grammar of a particular language, and through verbal patterns we project an image of ourselves. However, not only does our public conduct include verbal behavior, it is also shaped by external conditions, by extralinguistic reality. For Sapir (2007, p. 13), language is not an inherent (biological) function …

it is of course true that in a certain sense the individual is predestined to talk, but that is due entirely to the circumstance that he is born not entirely in nature, but in the lap of a society that is certain, reasonably certain, to lead him to its traditions.

Our verbal performance in different social events mirrors different sides of our personality and the different social roles that we undertake. Depending on the activity in which the speaker is engaged, he/she produces different discourses, and these help the listener recognize the speaker's identity and the illocutionary force of the interaction. Once the listener is able to recognize who the speaker is and why his/her behavior is the way it is,

they can engage in meaningful interaction, and the communication is successful (Foucault, 1980). It follows that successful communication means more than just language. As Gee (1985 qt in Holliday, Hyde, & Kullman, 2004, p. 76) maintains,

> [i]t involves acting-interacting-thinking-valuing talking (sometimes writing-reading) in the *appropriate* way with the *appropriate* props at the *appropriate* times in the *appropriate* places …; [this implies] socially accepted associations among ways of using language, of thinking, valuing, acting, and interacting, in the *right* places and at the *right* times with the *right* objects (associations that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group or 'social network') [emphasis added].

A human being expresses his/her presence through language within a particular cultural context; hence, it appears at the crossroads of several types of social sciences and cultural studies.

> The term 'identity' defies precise definition and crosses traditional boundaries between disciplines in the social sciences. Increasingly in recent years there has been an emphasis on the interrelationship of culture and identity, as well as on the longer-established emphasis on the interrelationship between culture and behaviour" (Holliday, Hyde, & Kullman, 2004, p. 66).

Multicompetence does not represent the mere sum of two or more minds, as it "is not the sum of two or more well-developed systems but is a system on its own right" (Kecskes & Papp, 2000, p. 38). Moreover, it encompasses looking into the issue of identity as an individual and as a social being since a multilingual's identity is not only a matter of personal identity but to a great extent influences come from sociocultural context. The justification has to be sought in (social) psychology, anthropology, philosophy, or discourse-related studies. In order to justify the claim that the language-culture-identity interrelationship is indisputable in the course of transformation from a monolingual/monocultural being to a multilingual/multicultural one, a multidisciplinary approach has to be undertaken and the following perspectives need to be accounted for: (social) psychological, anthropological, philosophical, and discursive.

A (social) psychological perspective

In recent decades, in psychology, with regard to language-related studies, constitutive sociocultural perspectives occur. They argue for a view that sociocultural structures and phenomena lie behind specific interpersonal and social placement of an individual. Psychologists and sociologists supporting the interlinkage between the psychological and socio-cultural fields have verbalized the need for constitutive sociocultural approaches, also labeled as social constructivism in (social) psychology. These approaches consider cognition, emotions, memory, identity, personality, and other psychological constructs as relational entities formed in the interaction with other entities present in the sociocultural context.

Numerous Anglo-American and European psychologists (such as Wundt, Baldwin, Werner, Janet, Vygotsky, Mead, Dewey, Cooley, etc.), modern era philosophers (Wittgenstein, Gadamer, Taylor, etc.), poststructuralist theoreticians (Derrida, Foucault, etc.), and Bachtin (a philosopher and literary critic) uphold a view that our social relations with other individuals

are of primary importance to our psychological being; this makes them a resource for knowing the world and ourselves. As a matter of fact, as early as at the beginning of the twentieth century, when psychology gained the status of an independent field, several prominent psychologists favored a sociocultural and relational way of thinking in their theories. Vygotsky (Vygotskii & Cole, 1978) argued for the concept of a being as a social construct resulting from one's interpersonal and intrapersonal interactions with others. For Vygotsky and Cole (1978), achieving the capacity of self-expression and self-reference is the most important phase in the process of social construction of identity. Vygotsky (1986, p. 218) asserts: "Thought is *not merely expressed* through words; it *comes into existence* through them. Every thought tends to connect with something else, to establish a relation between things. Every thought moves, grows and develops, fulfils a function, solves a problem" [emphasis added].

Psychologists adhering to social constructivism are interested in the ways in which the identity is constructed through cultural symbols and traditions, as well as power relations in a society. For instance, Eva Magnuson and Jeanne Marecek (2010) maintain that the discursive construction of an individual includes on one side pragmatic interactions, on the other side epistemic institutionalized symbols and narrations. A discourse creates systems of knowledge that at once form and delimit an individual's dispositions to act in a certain way. Psychologists drawing from ontological hermeneutics, like F. C. Richardson, B. Fowers, M. Freeman (resorting to Heidegger, Gadamer, Taylor, & Ricoeur) explain the concept of a human being as a creator of a meaning, as a self-interpretive being that is present in the incessant interpretation of the world and of self, and the interpretation of which is always evaluative in nature. In adittion to how this delimits human knowledge, social constructivists are interested in how human experience is created through discourse. Based on the stated, sociocultural construction of human "I" and a human sense of personal identity are formed by means of a language, cultural narrations, symbols, and routines. Consistent with social constructivism in psychology, the distinctive feature of a human being is the capability of self-interpreting and of conceptualizing experience in language; it has to be borne in mind that specific relational contexts give rise to psychological qualities and personality traits of a human as a self-interpretive being.

A human verbal and non-verbal behavior and acting has a performative quality. No two identical relational contexts exist; social meanings constructed in a particular context are specific in nature (Shotter, 2010). Shotter (2010), drawing on Wittgenstein, calls attention to the concept of consciousness and that of "I" as discursive entities occurring and interacting within the relational field. He stresses that we use words so that we can act. Vygotsky (1986, p. 251) stressed the relationship between words, thought, and meaning claiming that "[p]recisely because thought does not have its automatic counterpart in words, the transition of thought to word leads through meaning. In our speech there is always the hidden thought, the subtext." Vygotsky and Cole (1978) differentiate a human being from other living beings in that a man uses such tools that substantially altered the conditions of humans' existence. What he implies is not physical instruments, rather social practice and language. These tools act as mediators between their users, tasks, and goals to be achieved. In this sense, culture comprises all artefacts and practices that have been accummulated by a particular community throughout its historical development.

An anthropological perspective

Language use is to a great degree interconnected with all different forms and ways of social behavior; this interlinkage makes the core of approaches adopted in cultural anthropology. Lévi-Strauss (1998), one of key anthropologists, believes that the goal of cultural anthropology is to go beyond the diversity of the unique empirical facts and to unveil hidden, invariant, and generally valid language structures as well as principles governing human activities. This is so because, in his analysis of society and culture, Lévi-Strauss upholds a view that the observable and conscious levels of cultural reality represent just a departure point for any study on the principles governing its functioning and organization. Anthropology, also, explains culture as socially acquired knowledge (Hudson, 1980). However, it is often the case that different anthropologists explain the notion of culture differently; yet, they seem to agree that culture represents the "property" of a particular community, especially when that feature differentiates one community from another. This idea is expressed by Hofstede (2001, p. 9, author's emphasis) in that culture is, "the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another".

Research in social sciences studying society and culture had gradually changed from diachronic to synchronic and structuralist theories of language gained ground. This can be evidenced by the work of Lévi-Strauss who chose to analyze the elements of cultural systems as signs forming structure in which a particular meaning originates; by doing so, he favored a structuralist analysis over a mere account of the history of a particular culture and over relating it to some external universal meaning. In his research, he focuses his attention to signs, structures, and models that during the analysis become abstracted from the tangible reality.

Authors adhering to structural anthropology hold an assumption that a finite number of structural settings as well as general rules of the "grammar" of these settings exist. In his approach, Lévi-Strauss (2000a, 2000b) draws on the assumption that the necessary condition for humans' social activities are non-conscious rules attainable through mind. The basis of any social phenomenon is communication on every single level of social reality. This can be supported by J. K. Hall's (2012, pp. 6-7) idea:

> A sociocultural perspective on human action locates the essence of social life in communication. Through our use of linguistic symbols with others, we establish goals, negotiate the means to reach them, and reconceptualize those we have set. At the same time, we articulate and manage our individual identities, our interpersonal relationships, and memberships in our social groups and communities.

In order to study individual social levels, Lévi-Strauss (ibid.) makes use of the method of structural linguistics; this is so because all of the levels correspond with communication and form a system analogical to the language system. Communication, in fact, involves a deep-rooted plan of non-conscious norms and structures of thinking.

In addition to looking into how a human being acknowledges their biological existence/presence, an anthropological aspect also accounts for the "life"/presence of signs—*signes*—in the life of society. Lévi-Strauss' work contributed the notion of a cultural

sign as a representation of an unconscious thought structure of a cultural phenomenon. He emphasized that cultural signs cannot be studied as autonomous entities; they fall into a set of syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations, and through their presence in these relations they obtain a specific meaning. E. T. Hall (2001) views culture as a combination of four elements: learning, awareness, affect, and attitude to change, while each element can be seen from formal, informal and technical perspectives. The distinctiveness of each culture derives from the vertical and horizontal interlinkage of these elements and perspectives.

The notion of structure has a rich history. Lévi-Strauss contributed his understanding in that he emphasized a linguistic (structuralist) reading of the notion. He defines a structure in the same way as a language in that it configures the sense data and turns them into a code for the transition of meaning by means of phonic oppositions (Lévi-Strauss, 2000a). A structure brings interconnections into the sensory part, which in fact is a system of symbols; as a system of symbols, it is a means of communication and knowability. Structure, configuration, or relation between/among interactants is what shapes and manages the social system of a particular culture and its meanings. Thus, a structural analysis proceeds from conscious structures to the subconscious structure of a system, and to the formation of general principles. A language is a means of configuring a meaning. The process of configuring a meaning can take place because of the presence of the relation through which internal interconnections between elements of a system can be formed.

A philosophical perspective

Philosophical studies on the conceptualization of a personal identity also pay attention to linguistic constructing of 'I'. This line of research can be observed in Charles Taylor's work; he views language not only as a means of interaction among humans, but as something enabling a man to create and express meaning. Since a man is able to articulate his experience, he can acquire a view of himself and evaluate himself through language. In Taylor's view, a man as a human agent creates himself through self-interpretation, thus, creates his own identity. It follows that a man is a being inherently dependent on self-interpretation and self-understanding (Vaňková, 2013).

Considering the identity of 'I' outside the domain of self-interpretation does not make sense since 'I' cannot exist on its own without any relation whatsoever to specific language means central to the language of self-understanding. It is worthwhile adopting Taylor's view (1985) that a language is not a mere cluster of discrete tools; rather, it is a network, and in each part of the network a whole is represented. Language is not a mere sum of words; it is a structure that cannot be reduced to single components. Indivisibility, being a feature of language as structure, explains that a single word mirrors the wholeness of language. Both Taylor (1985) and Lévi-Strauss (2000a) characterize language as a net, and anytime a word is used, the whole net is set to vibration. This is to say that specific positioning of a word in a net affects the meaning of that word.

Taylor (1985) maintains that it is thanks to a man's ability to use language that a man is responsible for having a share in incessant creating a language. This process is ceaseless, which makes us believe that a man can never capture a language in its complexity: "Men are constantly shaping language, straining the limits of expression, minting new terms, displacing

old ones, giving language a changed gamut of meanings" (Taylor, 1985, p. 232). In her paper entitled *Charles Taylor – Jazyk a identita* [*Charles Taylor – Language and Identity*] (2010), Prokešová understands Taylor's stance as such that language is not separated from a human action; rather it takes place in a certain activity. That activity is speech. Language becomes realized as an activity in speech. The relationship between language and speech is symmetrical to the relationship between a language and a man. On one side, a man uses a language to communicate meaning; on the other side, he never masters a language in its entire complexity. This is so, because the limits and the structure of a language succumb to unremitting change due to the speech dynamics. Speech happens in a language community. A language makes it possible for a man to interpret himself and to express his own intentions and aims. Prokešová (2010) reads Taylor in such a way that language is part of a subject's life and of his existential anchoring within the world. A language opens up the space beyond a man. Taylor (1985) argues that through speech a man shares emotions and affection, and is capable of self-understanding. As a matter of fact, a man experiences himself indirectly, through the perspective of other people and that of the community of which he is a member.

Ricoeur and his contemporaries consider a language at once an objectivized system (or a code) and a discourse. They justify this view by saying that a language as a code is collective in nature as it is present in the form of parallel rules (as a synchronous system) and it is anonymous in the sense of not being the outcome of anyone's intention. It is non-conscious, yet not in the Freudian sense, rather in the sense of structural or cultural non-consciousness (Ricoeur, 1976). Discourse brings a message in terms of its being an event that is part of the sequence of events (as if diachronic interval), which is why it stands for a temporal event in a language. For this reason, it can be claimed that a language becomes realized in and/or through discourse. A language cannot be attributed to a user, while discourse always carries its author's intentions and is always directed toward somebody. In line with Ricoeur's theory, it can be argued that a language does not entail a world, however, a discourse always revolves around a subject-matter. Even though language is a prerequisite for communication, it is in discourse where the exchange of messages actually happens. This makes Ricouer believe that a language is a mediator between meaning (as the outcome of an activity) and discourse (as an event) (Ricoeur, 1976). In other words, discourse as an event is linked with a person (the speaker), thus, discourse illustrates the dialectical relationship between an event and a meaning.

Discourse as a means of conceptualization

Discourse and language are distinct from each other based on several features. Discourse always takes place at a particular time; it is self-referential—by means of deixis (e.g. personal pronouns)—it refers to its producer; it is always related to the world at large, to extralinguistic entities, not necessarily literally but also metaphorically. When discourse refers to the external world, it is inevitably linked to language in that it materializes a language. The necessary part of discourse is the addressee (the receiver of the message). Language is a timeless entity, i.e. it is located outside of a time span; it refers to signs situated within the same system. Ricoeur (1974) asserts that a language cannot be reduced to unambiguous meanings for a language as such provides space for abundance of meanings.

This feature causes discourses like poems and stories to require interpretation (Ricoeur, 1976, p. 33); probably rather than description or explanation. Ricoeur (1978) defines interpretation as a way of thinking that employs decoding of a hidden meaning projected through a putative meaning and unveiling layers of the meaning lurking in the literal meaning of a word. A symbol necessitates our involvement; this is so because it calls for interpretation since it reveals more than it says and it never ceases to speak to us (Ricoeur, 1974).

Discourse involves in itself processes of interpretation that make meanings available. The interpretation as a dynamic process consists of a non-methodical aspect of comprehension and a methodical aspect of explanation. Ricoeur (1991) describes this relationship as follows: Comprehension precedes, accompanies, completes, hence, surrounds the explanation, while explanation improves analytical comprehension. The two processes are in a dialectical relationship: on one hand, they are different from each other, on the other hand, they are interconnected. They cannot stand by themselves since the interpretation cannot be reduced to either of them. Just like a language happens as an event through being realized in a discourse, also a discourse enters the process of comprehension and becomes an event and a meaning (Ricoeur, 1991). The understanding of extralinguistic reality is feasible thanks to the interpretation and conceptualization of a man's experience; a man's experience being the outcome of the configuration process of creating meaning.

Since a language does not represent a sum of words, rather an internally structured system within which unique combinations conceptualizing a man's experience originate, a discourse as an event in a language evolves in the process of configuration. The process of configuration (Ricoeur, 2000) involves prefiguration, i.e. the implicit understanding of a man's experience, the ability to master a certain conceptual network as a whole and each of its components as part of that whole; configuration, i.e. the composition of discourse in which single events make up a whole; reconfiguration, i.e. a delivery of the message, discourse comprehension, and its interpretation. Gadamer (1999) regards speech to be a manifestation of variability and that of a man's freedom, as well as a means of grasping the world. Through language and speech, we can understand the world in general, and also another man's world. Gadamer (in Malpas, 2015, online) approaches understanding

> … as always linguistically mediated. Since both conversation and understanding involve coming to an agreement, so Gadamer argues that all understanding involves something like a common language, albeit a common language that is itself formed in the process of understanding itself. In this sense, all understanding is, according to Gadamer, interpretative, and, insofar as all interpretation involves the exchange between the familiar and the alien, so all interpretation is also translative.

Heidegger (in Grodin, 1994, pp. 93-94) upholds a view that

> understanding means less a 'kind of knowledge' than a 'knowing one's way around' … This everyday understanding almost always remains implicit. As a 'mode of being' it is not consciously thematized. We live too much within it for it to need to be made explicit. Nevertheless, all the 'things' and events that we deal with in our life-world are pre-interpreted by this anticipatory understanding (author's emphasis).

In interactions that we are engaged in, it is often the case that a human being who is talking is not as important as the discourse produced by them. A human being is a mere

carrier of the discourse that might have existed before, and may exist in the future. It is often the case that a speaker only represents and endorses discourses that were passed to him/her from previous generations of speakers, or discourse occasions. In this way, speakers may adopt somebody else's stance and in so doing construct and/or reconstruct their own identity. Identity is thus created through discourse, which implies that discourse has a role in shaping human history (Gee (1999; qt in Holliday, Hyde, & Kullman, 2004, p. 77). He (ibid.) exemplifies this by comparing discourses of five pairs of 'identities': the Discourses of 'being an Indian' and 'being an Anglo' (in the U.S. and Canada), those of 'being a Maori' and 'being an Anglo' (in New Zealand), those of 'being a British Anglo' and 'being an American Anglo' (worldwide discussion), those of creationists and biologists, (worldwide discussion), and those of African-American teenage gang members and the L.A. police (in Los Angeles). In the term Discourse above, capital D is used in compliance with Gee (ibid., p. 75); he opts for the capitalization of the term to assign it a specific feature of the term standing for "different ways in which we humans integrate language with non-language 'stuff.'" Adopting somebody's discourse may contribute to constructing an identity that is, in its nature, false; this happens when a speaker is willing to conform to the discourse of a certain cultural group, yet is not fully aware of the entire social context in which these discourses were created and what their purpose was.

Discourse, culture, and identity

Linguistic meanings cannot be separated from their linguistic contexts. If we want to understand what is being talked about, we need to know the cultural environment and the speaker's way of life. Language and culture cannot be separated: culture is a system of symbols, and language is one of these symbols; moreover, the language usage is always associated with a cultural context (Bilá, 2010). As Kramsch (1998) asserts, language is an essential means for a social life to happen. When it is used in the context of communication, it is linked to culture in myriad ways. Duranti (1997) asserts that a language is a part of culture since this is the case of the interlinkage of inner thoughts and outward behavior; we speak of a language 'in' a culture, rather than a language 'and' a culture. Functional linguists speak of a language as a social phenomenon; functional linguistics explains the current form of a language as such that derives from a culture-specific need to express social functions. It follows that "[w]e can thus no longer assume that language and culture are co-extensive and shared understandings cannot be taken for granted. The one to one relationship between language and cultural variability must now be seen as an oversimpli cation;" this is so because "[c]ultures are no longer homogenous and language divisions have become more and more permeable ... speakers of the same language may find themselves separated by deep cultural gaps, while others who speak distinct languages share the same culture" (Holliday, Hyde, & Kullman, 2004, p. 75).

Language-culture interrelation necessarily influences the construction of identity. Gee (1999, qt in Holliday, Hyde, & Kullman, 2004) ponders over what tools can be used to (collaboratively with others) recognize and build identities, and recognize the identities that are being built around us. Gee (ibid., pp. 75-76) proposes the following four tools: a) *'situated identities,'* i.e. identities in the sense of social roles undertaken by the speaker, occurring and

being recognized in different communicative events; b) *'social languages,'* i.e. language styles occurring and being recognized in different communicative events, and letting the speaker participate in conversation; c) *'discourses' with a capital 'D,'* i.e. different manners of relating linguistic to paralinguistic and extralinguistic means (that is, how and what words, intonation, body language, symbols, etc., we use, how we prioritize cultural values, share experience, make sense of the world, etc.); d) *'conversations' with a capital 'C,'* topics and themes of communicative events (spoken or written) taking place in a variety of settings and over time. Gee (ibid., p. 76) makes the matters easy saying that "'Big D' Discourses are always language plus 'other stuff.' They are innumerable." He adds that big D Discourses can range from very general to very specific, and provides examples like African-American or Anglo-Australian and modern British young second-generation affluent Sikh woman respectively; further examples include, for instance, "a middle-class American, factory worker, or executive, doctor or hospital patient, teacher, administrator, or student, student of physics or of literature, member of a club or street gang, regular at the local bar," etc. For Gee (ibid.), conversation means "the range of things that count as 'appropriately' 'sayable' and 'meaning-able', in terms of (oral or written) words, symbols, images, and things, at a given time and place, or within a given institution, set of institutions, or society, in regard to a given topic or theme (e.g. schools, women's health, smoking, children, prisons, etc.)."

In the above mentioned tools, a central term is recognition. This makes it clear that for Gee (ibid.) recognition is the key to Discourses:

> If you put language, action, interaction, values, beliefs, symbols, objects, tools, and places together in such a way that others recognize you as a particular type of who (identity) engaged in a particular type of what (activity) here and now, then you have pulled off a Discourse (and thereby continued it through history, if only for a while longer). Whatever you have done must be similar enough to other performances to be recognizable. However, if it is different enough from what has gone before, but still recognizable, it can simultaneously change and transform Discourses. If it is not recognizable, then you're not 'in' the Discourse.

Recognition needs to be present in everything that the discourse comprises, in relation to both variable and invariable entities. In a discourse that the speaker produces, a certain pattern should be present; moreover, it should be recognizable if the conversation is to be successful and so that the speaker's affiliation to the group is granted. At the same time, however, the discourse should comprise a personal voice so that the speaker's personal identity can be revealed and acknowledged. Hence, in a discourse, one's identity should be of both individual and social nature. If a language user can communicate their unique experience via the symbols of a foreign language, they are granted the symbolic power to enter another culture community and even to be accepted as one of its members, and, at the same time, are given a new sense of self, another identity (Kramsch, 2010).

Conclusions and implications

During the process of transformation from a monolingual to a multilingual, a person's mind undergoes many a change. When we live in an environment, where we understand other people's linguistic and non-linguistic behavior and where we become understood, there is

no reason for close contemplation and reasoning of verbal and social behavior or cultural norms. We automatically abide by conventionalized routines, and understand cultural signs. However, when a person is exposed to a different world's view of a different language and/or culture, what used to be self-evident, or almost trivial, is not necessarily so anymore. We are forced to learn a new social reality for the sake of successful interaction. Bauman (1990, pp. 15-16) claims that the process of 'defamiliarization' (i.e. what happens on the path from a monolingual to a bilingual or multilingual)

> takes us away from our comfortable, limited, commonly accepted and often unconsidered opinions about what everybody and everything is like and makes us more sensitive to the way that those opinions are formed and maintained. It alerts us to the ways that things which at first sight appear obvious and 'natural' are actually the result of social action, social power or social tradition.

The identity of a foreign language speaker can be built; yet it will be mapped on the personal identity of an L1 speaker. On one side, we can keep our personal value system, our personal history, yet at the same time it is necessary to acquire the social dimension underlying an L2 (FL) culture. As Vygotsky (1979, p. 30) maintains, "The social dimension of consciousness [i.e. all mental processes] is primary in time and fact. The individual dimension of consciousness is derivative and secondary". A multilingual speaker's mind will never retrieve the qualities of a monolingual's mind. The mind of a multilingual speaker is set to a new way of thinking, evaluating, or conceptualizing, moreover in both directions, L2/FL to L1 and L1 to L2/FL. Once triggered, this quality is ever changing, never ceasing to evolve. The ego is permeable, thus enabling to adopt as many or as few impulses as the exposure makes available or the individual is willing to and/or ready to adopt. This can be supported by Lantolf and Pavlenko (qt in Zuengler & Miller, 2006, pp. 38-39):

> Lantolf and Pavlenko (1995) clarify that even though Vygotskian sociocultural theory does not deny a role for biological constraints, "development does not proceed as the unfolding of inborn capacities, but as the transformation of innate capacities once they intertwine with socioculturally constructed mediational means" (p. 109). These means are the socioculturally meaningful artifacts and symbolic systems of a society, the most important of which is language. Of significance for SLA research is the understanding that when learners appropriate mediational means, such as language, made available as they interact in socioculturally meaningful activities, these learners gain control over their own mental activity and can begin to function independently.

It follows that a language user's development depends on the impulses from the outside world and implies both cognitive and sociocultural growth. Both Vygotsky and Bakhtin foreground the social aspect, since this is where meaning originates. A language that a speaker comes to learn does not happen outside society; it embodies individual and cultural elements. Bakhtin (1981, p. 293) calls attention to the social nature of intellectual processes claiming that "language, for the individual consciousness, lies on the border between oneself and the other." The sociality activates the individual in that the individual is derived from the social. From all that has been said it follows that "language invents rather than defines a person" (Holliday, Hyde, & Kullman, 2004, p. 85).

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Institute of British and American Studies,
Faculty of Arts,
Prešov University,
Ul. 17. Novembra 1,
08078 Prešov,
Slovakia
E-mail: magduska_bila@yahoo.com
E-mail: alenakac@unipo.sk
E-mail: ingrida.vankova@unipo.sk