Exploring EFL Business-Major College Students' Imagined Communities, Perceptions of English, and Their Agency

Pei-Chia Liao

Feng Chia University
Taiwan, Republic of China

Abstract
Highlighting technology as a site for learners' agency, this study attempts to contribute new knowledge in EFL learning in out-of-classroom contexts, which is the little-explored area in the TESOL field. This study employs qualitative case studies to explore EFL business college students' perspectives on English and their imagined communities. It examines how their imagined communities shaped their current language practices and investment in language learning. It also offers an analysis of the interconnectedness of the students' perspective on English as capital and their agency. The findings demonstrate that for EFL business-major college students, English embodies more than its linguistic power; it is often associated with symbolic and economic value. Taking the students' personal histories and aspiration into account, the study points that imagined communities played a vital role in shaping the participants' learning trajectories, as well as inspiring and directing them into who they wanted to be or become. It also shows that the students were highly aware of the resources associated with their target language(s), and they strived to gain those resources. Furthermore, the study reveals that the students exercised their agency using myriad forms of technology to engage in their imagined communities. Implications for language classrooms will also be discussed.

Introduction

Over the past two decades, many scholars in the field of Teaching English to students of other languages (TESOL) have described learners' language learning as participating in imagined communities, which refers to an idealized space to which learners wish to belong (Darvin & Norton, 2015; De Costa, 2016; Kanno & Norton, 2003). Studies have showed that students' engagement in English learning or other areas where students decided to put their efforts were shaped by their imagined

communities (Chang, 2015; Kanno & Norton, 2003; Yim, 2016). Norton (2001) notes that imagination provides 'new ways of understanding one's relation to the world that transcend more immediate acts of engagement' (p. 163-164). I set out to contribute to this line of inquiry by shedding light on the imagined communities of business-major college students in Taiwan in order to better understand students' decisions and actions in language learning beyond the classroom context.

Furthermore, by looking at language learners' learning practices beyond classroom environments, I situate my work within the conceptualization that language learning is a process of resource-acquiring as learning transforms what learners can do (Norton, 2001). I explore the interaction between learners' engagement in language learning and the resources the college students believe they need in order to successfully move into a next new context, such as graduate school or the workplace. The process of imagining one's memberships in multiple communities may influence agency and investment in English learning (Norton & Pavlenko, 2019). In the field of language education, due to technological advances that have led to information explosion, the importance of self-directed lifelong learning has gained attention and many scholars have dedicated themselves to the concept of agency (i.e., Benson, 2011; Larsen-Freeman, 2019; Mercer, 2011). Van Lier (2008) was one of the pioneers who explored language learner agency in the classroom. However, many studies that touched upon the concept of language learner agency remain theoretically based and empirical studies centering on language learner agency have been explored less. Language learner agency centering on EFL contexts is even more understudied (Author, 2019). Furthermore, studies focusing on how language learners in EFL contexts exert agency beyond classroom environments are scarce. In the present study, I examine students' agency and the resources they hope to get from their language learning investment. The following questions guided this study: How do business college students in an EFL context view English? Focusing, in particular, on the beyond the classroom contexts, why and how do those students pursue English?

Literature Review

The literature review will synthesize current knowledge on three sets of scholarship that the research is drawing from: imagined communities, capital, and agency.

Imagined Communities

In the literature of second language acquisition (SLA), historically scholars have dedicated their research to learners' language engagement or investment in face-to-face communities (Pavlenko & Norton, 2007). For example, researchers have focused on how learners' immediate learning environments or in-class communities mediate their learning process and practices (Duff & Doherty, 2015; Willett, 1995). It is only over the past two decades that researchers have described learners' language learning as participating in imagined communities, which refer to intangible or not immediately accessible groups to which a person desires to belong (Kanno & Norton, 2003; Norton, 2001). Pavlenko and Norton (2007) pinpointed the crucial role that imagined communities play in the lives of language learners:

We humans are capable, through our imagination, of perceiving a connection with people beyond our immediate social networks. Our orientation toward such imagined

communities might have just as much impact on our current identities and learning as direct involvement in communities of our everyday life (p. 590).

Through the lens of imagined communities, scholars have explored the interaction between language learners' imagined communities and their learning actions. For instance, Kanno (2003) described how Rui, a Japanese teenager who spent most of his life in English-speaking countries such as Canada and Australia, identified with his imagined Japan strongly and this identification profoundly motivated Rui to keep his Japanese language proficiency. In the same vein, Norton (2001) described and illustrated through the case of Katrina how a learner's imagined community shapes one's engagement with learning. Before immigrating to Canada, Katrina, an experienced teacher in Poland, envisioned herself belonging to a professional community in her host country. However, as a newcomer to Canada, her imagined professional community stood juxtaposed to her ESL teacher, who claimed that her English was not good enough to take a computer course that could have been helpful for her career advancement. Katrina thought her ESL teacher treated her 'as a mere immigrant' (Kanno & Norton, 2003, p.243) and this view was in discrepancy with Katrina's imagined professional community. This incident led Katrina to never return to the ESL class.

Imagined community can also represent someone's dreams for the future at a particular point in a learner's life (Liggett, 2011). For example, Chang (2015) described how a Taiwanese graduate student in the United States envisioned himself working as a professor in the context of Taiwan. Identifying himself as a member of the academic community, the graduate student decided to invest deeply in his research, which meant spending the majority of his time in the laboratory and in publication since these two areas were highly valued in the context of Taiwanese higher education.

Dedicated to the study of learners' imagined communities in the EFL context, Yim (2016) focused on South Korean elementary students' approaches to learning English. Yim indicated that the construction of the students' imagined communities was influenced mainly by their learning experiences outside of school which involved private lessons, English test systems, parental attitudes towards English, and an emphasis on grammar teaching and learning. However, their imagined communities (i.e., their learning outside of school) were in conflict with the national primary curriculum that focused on communicative language teaching. Therefore, this resulted in gaps caused by students' poor engagement in taking English lessons at the state schools.

Capital

Many researchers in the field of SLA have pinpointed that English learning is deeply ideological and the English language is often viewed as a source of material and immaterial resources (De Costa, 2016; Norton, 2001). Norton (2001) indicated that language learners expect or hope to have a good return on their investment in the target language. Bourdieu's (1986, 1991) concepts of capital provided helpful insights into an understanding of the resources that my participants expect to gain from English (or in one of the participants' case, Japanese). Capital means material and immaterial resources that grant power to the people who have access to them (Bourdieu 1986, 1991; Chang & Kanno, 2010). In this study, the capital that I particularly shed light on is symbolic capital, which refers to the resources available on the basis of honor, prestige or recognition, and serves as value that one holds within a culture (Bourdieu, 1991). Lin (1999) describes how English serves as

symbolic capital in Hong Kong as it is often treated as a gate-keeper and is widely considered a language of power and high status in Hong Kong. In the context of Taiwan, Tsai (2010) through conducting a study regarding the relationships between English skills and socioeconomic status found that English proficiency can contribute to advancement in socioeconomic status more than can Mandarin proficiency. In addition, Tsai indicated that language skill is viewed as a form of human capital that indicates one's ability and this ability also indicates one's job performance. Other forms of capital that I touch upon in this study are linguistic capital and economic capital. Linguistic capital means one's competence in a language and economic capital refers to one's financial resources (Bourdieu, 1986). One noteworthy point is that one form of capital can often be converted into another in Bourdieu's conceptualization of capital (Oropeza et al., 2010).

Agency

Agency used to be viewed as one property of being human (van Lier, 2008). Later many scholars underscored the element of action in one's agency and theorized agency as action-oriented endeavors. For example, Inden (1990) indicated that agency is the power of people to 'act purposively and reflectively' upon their world (p.23). Lantolf and Pavlenko (2001) referred to agency is 'the ability of language learners to assign relevance and significance to things and events' (p. 143).

In accord with the conceptualization of agency as action-oriented efforts, many researchers have highlighted the relationship between agency and language learning. For instance, Lantolf and Thorne (2006) indicated that 'learning a language is necessarily the action of an intentional agent' (p. 142). Little

.

et al. (2017) conducted an empirical study of the learner agency of lower secondary level Danish students in an English-learning classroom setting. According to this study, agentive language learners were intentional learners and managed their own learning: they set targets, made choices, monitored their learning progress, and evaluated outcomes.

Furthermore, many studies have further examined the interconnectedness of agency and learners' resources or capital. For instance, drawing on Giddens (1979), Sewell (1992) stated that one's resources or capital shape one's actions and such actions resulting from one's agency also constitute and reproduce one's resources. In other words, according to Sewell (1992), agency is both formed by one's available resources and reciprocally shapes one's capital or resources (Giddens, 1979; Sewell, 1992). More recently, Mercer (2011) argued that how and when learner agency is used depends on a number of factors including one's resources in specific settings. Larsen-Freeman (2019) theorized that one manifested agency if he or she 'optimized conditions for one's own learning and chose to deploy one's semiotic resources to position oneself as one would wish in a multilingual world' (p. 70).

As mentioned earlier, many TESOL studies that addressed the concept of language learner agency remain theoretically based and empirical studies centering on language learner agency have been understudied. Furthermore, language learner agency centering on EFL contexts is even less studied and studies focusing on how language learners in EFL contexts exert agency beyond classroom environments are scarce. The identified lacuna serves as the focus and, therefore, the unique contribution of the present study

Method

This study uses a qualitative case study method that helps examine and understand the experience of the participants (Yin, 2006). The strength of the case-study method is its ability to examine a case within its "real-life" context (Yin, 2006, p. 111). Additionally, what can be learned from a single case may indicate a larger phenomenon, even though individual's experience and descriptions are unique (Wolcott, 2005). I conducted semi-structured interviews to have a better understanding of the college students' engagement with English beyond the classroom context. As a teacher-researcher inspired by the work of Chang (2015), I aimed to minimize the possibility of coercion and hoped the interviews would yield genuine opinions regarding students' views on English and their English learning trajectories. Therefore, the interviews were administered after the course had finished and after the students had been notified of their grades. I emailed an interview invitation to all the students enrolled in the course and eight students agreed to participate in the interview. The inclusion of only three students in this study is due to the employment of purposeful sampling (Merriam, 2009), which allows selection of those participants having representative case examples that fit the central focus of this study.

The Site and the Participants

The university where the study was conducted is a comprehensive university in central Taiwan, comprising nine colleges among them, Business, Engineering, and Humanities and Social Sciences. All junior students across the spectrum of majors are required to take a course called Third-Year English, the main purpose of which is to prepare and train students' oral speaking skills for the workplace, such as English interviews and presentation skills. The participants were the researcher's students in this course who majored in international business in the college of Business. The students were all in their fourth year when the interviews were conducted.

	Yong	**Len**	**Yu**
Age	21	21	21
First Language	Mandarin	Mandarin	Mandarin
Years of formal English language study	12	13	13
Age of starting to learn English	6	5	5

Table: Overview of Case Study Participants

The graduation benchmark of the Department of International Business is 600 points in the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC). Those whose TOEIC scores fall below 600 have to take additional English courses at the school. The participants indicated that, before entering college, they all had at least eight years of formal English education at elementary and secondary schools in Taiwan. In this study, two participants indicated that they had started learning English at a kindergarten or institute where the English language was one component before entering elementary schools, and one participant had started learning English in his first grade of elementary school. The following table shows an overview of the case study participants.

Data Collection and Analysis

The data included semi-structured one-on-one interviews and, as mentioned earlier, the semi-structured interviews were conducted after the course was finished. The interview protocol was designed and the first round of interviews was carried out with each participant individually. When necessary, the second-round interviews with individual participants were conducted in order to clarify questions or confusing statements gathered from them during the first round of interviews. All the participants chose to converse in Mandarin and the interviews were audiotaped and fully transcribed.

In terms of data analysis, first, since the interviews were conducted in Mandarin, I translated and transcribed the interviews in English. Then the interview transcripts were analyzed line-by-line and labeled with open coding (Murray, 2009). I also employed content analysis and categorized the data by possible themes. During this process of open coding, I also noticed some overlapping key phrases among the interview transcripts and therefore proceeded to group codes into categories (Murray, 2009). Additionally, to engage the member check, I also provided the participants their individual interview transcript(s) and some potential theme.

Results

The interview findings are organized and presented in the following discussion of the results. The first point presents the students' comments on how and why they viewed English as a source of symbolic and material capital. The second point addresses the students' imagined communities and how their imagined communities offered them inspiration and provided a sense of direction in their engagement with language learning.

English as Linguistic, Symbolic, and Economic Capital

Yong, Len, and Yu were highly aware of the resources associated with English early on in their childhood. The students' perspectives on English and their notions regarding the resources of English had been shaped by their family.

When Yong was a first grader in elementary school, his parents took him to an after-school, English-only institution and told him that English is very important. Quoting his parents own mantra, he said that both his parents had stressed that 'good English can lead to more success.' Although Yong's parents had not gone to college

themselves, they very often upheld Yong's cousin as an example to encourage Yong to study English. According to Yong's parents, the cousin had good English and then entered a good college, which later helped him find a good job at a well-acclaimed international company in Taiwan from which he gained socioeconomic status. Ever since Yong was a child, he deeply believed that if he invested in English, he would earn the linguistic capital that would eventually lead to higher employability and thus, through this, gain economic capital.

Yong worked hard in the English-only institution and his hard work paid off when he entered junior high school. He found he was ahead of many of his peers. Achieving good scores in both junior and senior high school kept Yong highly motivated in the subject of English. According to Yong, because of the test-oriented culture in his junior and senior high schools, good English at that time meant having good scores in the subject of English. Whereas many of Yong's peers found studying English to be stressful, for Yong getting ahead in the subject of

English gave him tremendous confidence in pursuing his study. Yong indicated that he felt grateful his parents had instilled in him in his childhood the idea that English is important and had encouraged him to study English. Furthermore, Yong believed that a having a good command of English is an important gateway into the business world and this notion regarding English's symbolic capital led him to choose International Trade as his college major. In this way, he would be motivated to continue learning English and thus gain further advantages in his future career in business.

Len too said that since his youth his father had underscored the value of English and had encouraged Len to study it. Len's father worked in the Human Resources department of a business company and since childhood, Len had heard him say, 'English is the ticket to enter the business world.' His father's words internalized now rolled off Len's tongue with ease. Len's father often used his company employees' delivery of English presentations as examples of how English is not just a language, but has symbolic and economic value. He told Len that those who did well in their English presentations in his company usually received more recognition and were, therefore, granted more job opportunities or chances at promotions.

Len started to learn English in pre-school where he associated the language with fun-filled English learning games. Growing up, Len always thought English was more interesting than other subjects in school. In addition, because of the influence of his father, in college, Len decided to choose a major related to business.

Yu had been made aware of the power of English by her family since she was young. Yu's uncle worked in a company whose headquarters was located in the United States.

When Yu was in elementary school, her uncle sometimes brought his overseas clients from the U.S. or Canada to his home in Taiwan and Yu had many chances to interact with those clients. Even though Yu was not able to speak English fluently at that time, she liked to interact with those people. Furthermore, Yu's uncle often shared interesting stories with Yu and her parents of things he had experienced in the U.S. or Canada. Seeing her uncle owning the linguistic capital of English and being able to interact and do business with that kind of client, Yu felt motivated to learn English well and set her uncle as a role model. Yu admired how her uncle was able to expand his world and vision beyond the borders of Taiwan. Because of her uncle, Yu also felt interested in business and chose International Trade for her college major.

Imagined Communities Developed Aspiration within the Participants and Provided a Sense of Direction in Their Engagement with Learning

The data analysis shows that Yong, Len, and Yu constructed their imagined communities outside school and, with the help of technology, their imagined communities offered them inspiration and shaped their language learning practices.

When asked what motivated Yong to learn English, in addition to the aforementioned symbolic and economic resources associated with English, Yong emphasized that he did not just want to compete with his peers at school. He acknowledged that there were 'students from the top-tier universities in Taiwan' who worked hard and learned English diligently. During his third year in college, Yong and his classmates formed a team participating in a national competition hosted by a well-known business company in China. During the competition, Yong met groups of other

students from the top-tier universities in Taiwan. Delivering an English business presentation was one of the requirements for the competition. Those students, according to Yong, 'work quite hard and they usually persist and do not give up easily. They may not feel interested in every subject; however, because they persist, they succeed in their academic pursuits.' Yong and his team eventually won third place in the competition. Yong indicated that he was more amazed with getting to know those groups of students beyond his immediate academic community than with receiving the prize itself.

Meeting those students from top-tier universities had a huge impact on Yong. After that competition, Yong envisioned himself as a member of a group called 'graduate students' wherein he was surrounded by that group of students as his peers. This imagined academic community pushed Yong to do his best in his current school work as he imagined what his peers from good universities would be doing in their school work. For example, almost all of Yong's textbooks were in English and published in English-speaking countries. Unlike some of his peers who relied on translated versions of the textbooks, Yong enjoyed reading his English textbooks and made organized study notes by himself. Additionally, if Yong had a chance to read an academic paper in English for his class, when he finished reading it, he would debrief the paper imaging himself a graduate student in class. Yong further explained:

I want to work harder because I know I am going to compete with that group of top-tier students later in graduate school, or later, if I get a chance to work in a good company, I will definitely be working with those students as well. I want to prepare myself to be good at English so I can have a greater advantage.

Additionally, to let himself be more familiar with business English, Yong also watched the American TV show *Shark Tank* on YouTube with great passion. Yong enjoyed watching how the contestants delivering effective pitches and relentlessly negotiating with the judges.

As for Len, his imagined community not only shaped his English learning, but also further guided him in terms of who he wanted to be. Len started playing basketball when he was a child. Originally, Len wanted to study in a junior high school that owned a basketball team with a good nation-wide reputation. However, Len's parents wanted him to enter a more academic-oriented school. Even so, Len's passion for basketball did not dwindle. Len viewed Nikola Jokic, the Serbian basketball player in the National Basketball Association, as his idol. In order to follow Jokic and understand the ways he played, Len watched sport games and put effort into learning English for the field of sports. He paid particular attention to the highlights and post-game analyses and he trained himself in listening by watching the highlights and analyses repeatedly. Len also watched many interviews on YouTube featuring Jokic, no matter those interviews had English subtitles or not. He tirelessly looked up the vocabulary related to basketball English. To practice the words he had just learned, Len would sometimes act as a commentator and give a play-by-play of a game in English or in a mixture of Mandarin and English as he watched. Len considered his English ability made huge strides because of his efforts.

Len further indicated that seeing Jokic playing helped him imagine that it was himself playing in the field. This imagination, Len indicated, pushed him to work harder as a student. 'If I encountered some troubles when I studied, I often encouraged myself to

work harder, to ask for help, and to not give up, just like Jokic.' Asked why he idolized Jokic so much, Len explained:

Jokic was not the kind of NBA player who owned a perfect body; he was kind of oversized. Many people called him "big man." However, Jokic worked very hard and slowly earned his recognition in the NBA.

Compared to his peers, especially his basketball teammates, Len considered himself 'fat,' in his own words. This did not discourage Len because he thought he could 'exercise and be active and healthy.' In addition to Jokic's body image, Len also related that Jokic liked to joke around and this often put people around him at ease. Inspired by this personality trait, Len also joked around with his peers and wanted to be seen as an easygoing person by his friends.

Like the imagined communities of Yong and Len, Yu's imagined community guided and shaped her language learning. Her imagined community further guided and directed her future career choice. As mentioned previously, Yu was inspired to learn English well. During the summer vacation before entering college, she googled the phrase 'self-learning English,' hoping to find some online English learning resources. She first found a website called VoiceTube, which is an English-learning website that contains movie clips or YouTube videos covering various topics. She started visited this website a lot and also liked its special features for learning, such as its dictionary for vocabulary look up and its quizzes. She continuously visited the website during college and recommended it to her friends. She also found an English-learning podcast, each episode of which is only fifteen minutes long. Yu liked the podcast because she could easily finish it without feeling too overwhelmed and she listened to it weekly. When she learned some useful or interesting phrases, she kept notes in hopes of one day using those phrases.

It was during that search of 'self-learning English' that Yu found a YouTuber's channel, which was mostly about the YouTuber's strategies to learn English and Japanese on her own. Yu mentioned that, in addition to getting a high score on the TOEIC exam through self-study, the YouTuber had moved on to learn Japanese, working very hard at it, sleeping only two to three hours a day and putting the rest of her day into studying Japanese. The YouTuber eventually passed the Japanese language examination within a short period of time. The YouTuber later got a chance to work in a Japanese company based in Taiwan and many of her latest YouTube videos were about how she got the job and her working life in the company. Yu was highly inspired by the YouTuber and decided to self-learn Japanese. Yu stated that acquiring Japanese, plus her English ability, would help her find a good job in the business field in the future. Yu hoped that one day she would be able to work in a company where she could apply both her English and Japanese language skills, just like the company in which the YouTuber worked. Watching the YouTuber's working videos also helped Yu imagine what it would be like if she worked in that company. Furthermore, while many of Yu's peers were busy with their part-time jobs or extracurricular activities, Yu focused on learning Japanese and sharpening English because she knew the linguistic capital would be highly valued in her envisioned professional community.

Discussion

The study shows that the imagined communities of Yong and Yu represented their dreams for the future after college, and their imagined communities played a vital role in shaping the participants' engagement with language learning. Yong envisioned a graduate school community and Yu imagined herself working in a business company in Taiwan. Yong's imagined community shaped his endeavors into becoming a graduate student: translating, organizing, and analyzing acquired knowledge from his English textbooks and academic papers. The images of Yu's favorite YouTuber also played a vital role in her deciding and taking action in studying Japanese. Acknowledging the efforts of the YouTuber self-taught in Japanese, Yu was inspired to learn Japanese on her own and closely followed the language learning strategies suggested by the YouTuber.

In addition to the impact on the students' language practices and engagement with languages, the results of this study also reveal that imagined communities further inspired and guided the students in terms of the kind of people they wanted to be. For example, because of his passion in basketball, Len's imagination helped him connect with people beyond his immediate social networks (Pavlenko & Norton, 2007) and he found a way to closely connect with his basketball idol, Jokic. The images of Jokic significantly affected not only Len's investment in learning sports English, but also the ways he faced difficulties and how he treated people around him. Len was inspired to do things with persistence and put the people around him at ease.

Previously, I underscored how imagined communities made an impact on the students' investment in language and actions (Kanno & Norton, 2003). However, as Norton (2001, p. 164) stated, imagination 'does not necessarily result in the coordination of action.' Drawing on the work of Sewell (1992) and Mercer (2011), I argue that the students were highly aware of the resources associated with their target language(s), and knowing how valuable those resources would be in their future communities, the students employed their agency to gain that capital. Yong reckoned the linguistic capital of English would be a valuable asset in his envisioned academic community, and therefore he exercised agency in working hard to enhance that linguistic capital. Yu acknowledged that the linguistic capital of English and Japanese would be highly valued in her future professional community, and thus she was determined to acquire that capital.

Furthermore, I would like to shed light on the students' remarkable agency. Yong was able to assign relevance and significance to the academic trainings he self-initiated (Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2001, p. 143). The students also optimized their learning conditions (Larson-Freeman, 2019) by utilizing varying online resources to achieve intended goals or desired outcomes. While online learning resources are available to everyone via the Internet, it is the seeking out of learning opportunities in which the learning that takes place is self-motivated (Duff & Doherty, 2015) that is essentially the learners' agency. For example, Yu exerted great agency by acting purposefully and responsively in managing her own learning. She initiated googling the phrase 'self-learning English' and then diligently listened to episode after episode of an English-learning podcast and kept notes of what she learned. Besides, she followed a YouTuber's advice to self-learn Japanese. Having acknowledged the importance of the linguistic capital of English and Japanese in her future professional community, Yu worked hard to gain the capital.

Conclusion and Implications

Through the lens of imagined communities, this study focuses on three EFL business students' perspectives on English and their actions dedicated to language learning beyond classroom context. The study also takes the students' personal histories and aspirations into consideration and it demonstrates that the imagined communities of Yong, Len, and Yu were significantly powerful in ways that inspired, directed, and shaped their language learning trajectories. Furthermore, the study shows that the students' imagination made an impact on their identification and future affiliations (Kanno & Norton, 2003). Yong envisioned himself as a graduate student studying with other hard-working students and Yu imagined herself applying both her English and Japanese skills in a business company in the future. Len aspired to being a person like his basketball idol who does things with persistence and puts people around him at ease. The study also finds that technology as a site for agentive language learning beyond the classroom. The participants made good use of the online resources that not only tailored to their needs but also benefited and motivated their learning.

In considering the significance of imagination in the learners' lives, language teachers could draw on stories or real-life examples from people students might feel interested in as in-class materials to inspire their learners and further encourage them to achieve their learning goals. Teachers could further encourage students to use their imagination in thinking of themselves as living in multiple communities (Norton, 2001). In this way, teachers not only expand students' vision, but also enhance students' ability to visualize and thus increase opportunities to find their own future identification and affiliations. Language classrooms ultimately could be a place that helps learners to reimagine themselves and that offers learners the inspiration of positive possibilities for their futures.

References

Benson, P. (2011). *Teaching and researching autonomy*. London, UK: Pearson Education.

Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In J. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education* (pp. 241-258). New York, NY: Greenwood.

Bourdieu, P. (1991). *Language and symbolic power*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Chang, Y. J. (2015). Being a part of the globalized world? Globalization, English, and world membership from students. *English Teaching & Learning, 39*(1), 69–97.

Chang, Y. J., & Kanno, Y. (2010). NNES Doctoral Students in English-Speaking Academe: The Nexus between Language and Discipline. *Applied Linguistics, 31*, 671-692.

Darvin, R., & Norton, B. (2015). Identity and a model of investment in applied linguistics. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics, 35*, 36–56.

De Costa, P. I. (2016). *The power of identity and ideology in language learning: Designer immigrants learning English in Singapore*. Dordrecht, the Netherlands: Springer.

Duff, P. & Doherty, L. (2015). Examining agency in (second) language socialization

research. In P. Deters, X. Gao, E. Miller, & G. Vitanova (eds.), *Interdisciplinary approaches to theorizing and analyzing agency and second language learning* (pp. 54–72). Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Giddens, A. (1979). *Central problems in social theory: Action, structure and contradiction in social analysis.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Inden, R. (1990). *Imagining India*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Kanno, Y. (2003). Negotiating bilingual and bicultural identities: Japanese returnees betwixt two worlds. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Kanno, Y., & Norton, B. (2003). Imagined communities and educational possibilities: Introduction. *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education, 2*(4), 241–249.

Lantolf, J. P., & Pavlenko, A. (2001). (S)econd (L)anguage (A)ctivity theory: Understanding second language learners as people. In M. P. Breen (Ed.), *Learner contributions to language learning: New directions in research* (pp. 141-158). Essex, England: Pearson Education.

Lantolf, J. P., & Thorne, S. L. (2006). *Sociocultural theory and the genesis of second language development*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Larsen-Freeman, D. (2019). On language learner agency: A complex dynamic systems theory perspective. *Modern Language Journal, 103*, 61–79.

Author. (2019). Understanding EFL learner agency in collaborative activities: A case study in a Taiwanese English course. *The Journal of Asia TEFL*, *16*(3), 768-782.

Liggett, T. (2011). Critical multicultural education and teacher sense of agency. *Teaching Education, 22*, 185–197.

Lin, A. (1999). Doing-English-lessons in the reproduction or transformation of social worlds? *TESOL Quarterly, 33*, 393-412.

Little, D., Dam, L., & Legenhausen, L. (2017). *Language learner autonomy: Theory, practice and research*. Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Mercer, S. (2011). Understanding learner agency as a complex dynamic system. *System, 39*(4), 427–436.

Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Murray, G. (2009). Narrative inquiry. In J. Heigham, & R. A. Croker (Eds.), *Qualitative research in applied linguistics: A practical introduction* (pp. 45-65). Basingstoke, England: Palgrave Macmillan.

Norton, B. (2001) Non-participation, imagined communities and the language classroom. In M. P. Breen, (Ed.), *Learner contributions to language learning (159–171).* Harlow: Longman.

Norton, B., & Pavlenko, A. (2019). Imagined communities, identity, and English language learning in a multilingual world. In X. Gao (Ed.), *Second handbook of English language teaching* (pp. 1-16. Cham, Switzerland: Springer.

Oropeza, M. V., Varghese, M. M., & Kanno, Y. (2010). Linguistic minority students in higher education: Using, resisting, and negotiating multiple labels. *Equity and Excellence in Education, 43*, 216-231.

Pavlenko A., Norton B. (2007). Imagined communities, identity, and English language learning. In: J. Cummins, & C. Davison (Eds.), *International*

handbook of English language teaching (pp. 669-680). New York: Springer..

Sewell, W. (1992). A theory of structure: Duality, agency and transformation. *American Journal of Sociology*, *98*, 1-29.

Tsai, S.-L. (2010). Language skills and status attainment in Taiwan. *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education, 9*, 222–249.

Van Lier, L. (2008). Agency in the classroom. In J. P. Lantolf, & M. E. Poehmer (Eds.), *Sociocultural theory and the teaching of second languages* (pp. 163-186). London: Equinox.

Willett, J. (1995). Becoming first graders in an L2: An ethnographic study of L2 socialisation. *TESOL Quarterly, 29 (3)*, 473-503.

Yim, S. Y. (2016). EFL young learners: Their imagined communities and language learning. *ELT Journal, 70 (1)*, 57–66.

Yin, R. K. (2006). Case study methods. In J. L. Green, G. Camilli, & P. B. Elmore (Eds.), *Handbook of complementary methods in education research* (pp. 111-122). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.