



Second Language Learning and Identity: Cracking Metaphors in Ideological and Poetic Discourse in the Third Space

Mika Yoshimoto

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This book is largely about second language learning and identity construction. It is based on a unique hybrid design of case study and autoethnography. In addition, diary study plays an important role in allowing the participants to express themselves in a self-reflective way. The author examines and discusses with the participants of her research, the everyday struggles of Japanese women in Canada who are trying to learn English. Of particular interest to this study was the role of metaphor in language which constructs our conceptual framework in a manner consistent with sociocultural theory and critical theory. Also, Foucault's discourse theory plays a prominent role, particularly with regards to diary, interviews and group meetings, in that it sees identity and discourse as being profoundly interrelated and inseparable. Thus, by examining discourse we can become more aware of changes in identity. With regards to the context of this study with respect to other research, the author believes that there is a significant connection to Bonny Norton's notion of investment rather than motivation with regards to how invested a second language learner feels in his or her studies. Also, Hongyu Wang, who writes extensively in the style of autoethnography, has helped me come to understand my journey that generates feelings of exclusion, repression, and alienation. Bakhtin's notion of multiple voices was also very important to the author as she discussed identity as constantly shifting, layered voices in multiple contexts. In second-language learning research, there is very little attention paid to the perspective of the learner with regards to how they feel, and their identity. Most other research in this area looks at particular linguistic functions such as syntax, morphology, etc. This research is also a documentation of the author's personal journey as she was a participant in her own research. The importance of narratives is also something that the author found was largely ignored in second-language research. For this reason, the author ensured that it was central to her work. When the author first began this research, her aim was to help Japanese women who were studying English understand the changes in identity that they were experiencing. However, as her research progressed, she saw that this research would benefit all students pursuing a second language, all teachers of second languages, as well as researchers in SLA and curriculum theorists. The use of haiku throughout the thesis is a particularly unique reflection of poetic discourse. Autoethnography has also recently grown in popularity in terms of its use in research, and is used extensively throughout this work. The use of the liminal space, doubling space, in-between space, Third Space notion in the exploration of identity and its transformation in this work is also quite interesting. Through this research, the author has uncovered a profound connection between language and identity. For Japanese women, learning English is both liberating and unsettling. This beautifully written work will be an important book for all involved in second-language learning, curriculum theorists, as well as researchers concerned with connections between language and identity, poetic inquiry and discourse, narrative theory, and autoethnography.

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