

abstract re:

Murray, B., Hae, R., &
Lamb, T. (2011). Identity,
Motivation & Autonomy in
Language Learning. Bristol:
Multilingual Matters.

Chapter 2

Motivating Learners to Speak as Themselves

EMA USHIODA

Introduction

For over a dozen years now, I have been interested in the twin areas of motivation and autonomy in language learning and their interactions. By interactions, I mean interactions in a *practical* sense, in terms of how motivation and autonomy interact in learner behaviours and classroom practices; and I also mean interactions in a *conceptual* sense, in terms of how these two constructs of motivation and autonomy have been theorised and developed in somewhat different traditions of inquiry, reflecting different literature bases, philosophies and research paradigms, and yet clearly these constructs share much in common. To put it simply, we might say that motivation theory has broadly developed in a positivist cognitive paradigm, which is characterised by psychometric measurement and the development of abstract computational models of mental processes and learning outcomes and behaviours. This is true for both mainstream motivational psychology as well as the specific field of language learning motivation research. Autonomy theory, on the other hand, originated in the very different domain of political and moral philosophy; and autonomy theory in language education has broadly developed in a constructivist paradigm, grounded in specific contexts of practice and the needs and concerns of particular learners.

Within the language learning motivation field, which has a rich history of over 40 years of research, I am regarded as representing something of an 'alternative' perspective, since I bring to the analysis of motivation a particularised, contextually grounded and qualitative angle of inquiry, influenced in no small measure by my engagement with the autonomy literature. This 'alternative' perspective goes against the grain of much mainstream language learning motivation theory to date, which has been concerned more with the general than the particular, with statistical averages and relations rather than rich descriptive analysis. As

I will argue in this chapter, if our pedagogical concern is to engage the motivation of particular (rather than generalised) learners, then we need a theoretical perspective that addresses its uniquely personal and contextually grounded nature. In this regard, I will further argue that insights from autonomy theory and practice can usefully inform our analysis of motivation, and in particular, I will discuss how processes of engaging, constructing and negotiating identities are central to this analysis.

Motivation Theory and Practice: Abstract Models, not People

Motivation has traditionally been characterised as an individual difference (ID) variable that is implicated in learning success, alongside other ID variables such as aptitude, personality, anxiety or cognitive style (for a recent overview of ID research in second language acquisition (SLA), see Ellis, 2008: 643–723). Dörnyei (2005: 4) describes ID constructs as ‘dimensions of enduring personal characteristics that are assumed to apply to everybody and on which people differ by degree’. Ironically, however, despite its theoretical focus on how people ‘differ’ from one another or from some kind of normative standard, ID research concerns itself not with the unique characteristics of particular individuals, but with the shared characteristics of particular types of individuals. Anchored in psychometric approaches to the measurement of personal traits, ID research deploys measurement techniques and statistical procedures that make certain assumptions about the normal distribution of particular traits in a given population. As I have argued elsewhere (Ushioda, 2009: 215–216), one might say that ID research focuses not on differences between individuals, but on averages and aggregates that lump together people who share certain characteristics such as high intrinsic motivation or low self-efficacy. In pursuing rule-governed patterns linking cognition, motivation and behaviour, such research depersonalises learners, who are treated simply as abstract bundles of variables so that, as Bandura (2001: 2) wryly notes, ‘it is not people but their componentized subpersonal parts that are orchestrating courses of action’.

Thus, in Ushioda (2009), I have argued instead for what I call a ‘person-in-context relational view’ of motivation. By this, I mean a focus on real persons, rather than on learners as theoretical abstractions; a focus on the agency of the individual person as a thinking, feeling human being, with an identity, a personality, a unique history and background, with

goals, motives and intentions; a focus on the interaction between this self-reflective agent, and the fluid and complex web of social relations, activities, experiences and multiple micro- and macro-contexts in which the person is embedded, moves and is inherently part of. My argument is that we need to take a relational (rather than linear) view of these multiple contextual elements, and see motivation as an organic process that emerges through the complex system of interrelations.

This focus on the individuality of the person and on the contextually grounded and relational nature of motivation does not reflect a purely theoretical interest in how we conceptualise motivation. As I indicated in the Introduction, if our pedagogical concern is to engage the motivation of particular (rather than generalised) learners, then we need a theoretical perspective that addresses its uniquely personal and contextually grounded nature. A problem with the traditional computational models of motivation that have dominated the field is that they seek to make generalisable predictions about what kinds of motivation might lead to what kinds of learning behaviour in what kinds of context, and thus to identify what kinds of pedagogical intervention might be needed to change maladaptive patterns of motivation and so improve learning behaviours and outcomes (Ushioda, 2009: 218). Translated into classroom practice, such models thus promote a view of motivation as essentially controlled by the teacher through various techniques and strategies, rather than as actively shaped through personal meaning-making, intentionality and reflexivity. Moreover, such models focus teachers’ attention on generalised types of learner behaviour and attitude and how to deal with them, rather than on how to engage with the complex and uniquely individual people in their classrooms: people who bring particular identities, histories, goals and motives; people for whom learning a language is just one small part of their lives; people who are not just ‘language learners’ and who perhaps do not see themselves in these terms.

Autonomy Theory and Practice: People, not Abstract Models

In contrast to the literature on language learning motivation, as Riley (2003: 239) observes, a key characteristic of writing on autonomy is its concern with the learner as a fully rounded person, with a social identity, situated in a particular context. In language classrooms that seek to promote autonomous learning, it seems that this concern is translated into pedagogical practices that encourage students to develop and express their own identities through the language they are learning – that is, to be

and to become themselves, so that as Little (2004: 106) puts it, 'what they learn becomes part of what they are'.

This is vividly demonstrated in Legenhausen's (1999) comparative analysis of English conversation practice among 12-year-old German and Danish children learning English in different kinds of classroom environment. Socialised in traditional textbook-based classroom classrooms in Gymnasium and comprehensive schools, the German children seem somehow unable or unwilling 'to speak as themselves' (Legenhausen, 1999: 181) when invited to converse in English with one another in pairs. Invariably, they fall back instead on memorised routines and content from textbook dialogues, such as asking one another how old they are, where they live and what their favourite subjects are at school, and thus engage in a kind of pseudo-communication where the emphasis is on practising language rather than expressing personal meanings and identities (see Example 1).

Example 1

- S: Ehm, how old is your father?
 I: My father is forty years old. And how old is your father?
 S: Fifteen years old. How old is your mother?
 I: My mother is thirty-nine years old.
 S: How old are you?
 I: I'm twelve. How old are you?
 S: I'm eleven. What are your foreign languages?
 I: My foreign languages are *Sport*, *Textil*. What are your foreign languages?
 S: My foreign languages are *Biologie*, *Textil* and German.
 I: Ehm.
 S: Oh, ah how ah how *ne*, what is the name of your father?
 I: The name of my father is Felix. And what is the name of your father?
 S: Ehm, the name of my father is ah Bernd, ah.
 I: What's the name of your mother?
 S: Ehm, ah, my mother's name is Maria. And your mother's name? (Legenhausen, 1999: 166–167)

On the other hand, the Danish children have been exposed to a different kind of classroom culture that promotes autonomous learning, where they pursue activities of their own choice and according to their own needs and interests, and 'do not construe a contrast between authentic and didactic tasks' (Legenhausen, 1999: 181). Thus, when asked

to talk in pairs, they engage their own motivations, identities and personal interests in their conversations, since this is how they have been socialised to use and think of English, i.e. as a means of developing and expressing their own identities and engaging with the world. Their conversations also proceed in a far more natural and organic fashion and exhibit the interactional features of authentic communication (see Example 2).

Example 2

- L: What should we talk about, Claus?
 C: I don't know, we could talk about our music group 'Big Engine'.
 L: Yeah, that's a good idea --
 C: I think it's fun. Now we have to play, ah, record our tape.
 L: Yeah, the first time.
 C: Yeah, it's very exciting. I have made a cover to our tape at home.
 L: That one you showed me?
 C: Yes.
 L: The only thing it's beautiful.
 C: Beautiful?
 L: Yes.
 C: It's lovely. (Laughing)
 L: I think it's good, too.
 C: Yes.
 (Legenhausen, 1999: 167)

Analysing the contrasts between the German and Danish children's conversations, Legenhausen draws attention to the critical relationship between the language classroom and the world of the children's lives outside the classroom. As he argues, whether the classroom is seen as an integrative constituent part of the life surrounding it, or is seen as separate from real life, will have a major impact on the kinds of target language communication that take place in the classroom, and on the degree to which those learning the language are enabled to 'speak as themselves' instead of merely behaving as 'language learners' practising language (Legenhausen, 1999: 171).

Speaking as Themselves: Motivation and Transportable Identities

What happens then to *motivation* when students are encouraged to 'speak as themselves' and to express and engage their identities through the language they are learning? I will refer here to another interesting

analysis of conversations in the language classroom that, though not explicitly focused on motivation, certainly sheds light on the motivational dimension.

Richards (2006) sets out to explore whether 'real conversations' are possible in the institutionalised setting of the language classroom, particularly in the context of teacher-student interaction in whole-class teaching, where teacher-controlled patterns of initiation-response-follow-up (IRF) invariably dominate. He argues that in order to understand whether and how 'real conversations' may occasionally permeate teacher-student classroom talk, the analytical lens needs to focus on aspects of identity as these are dynamically constructed in the developing discourse. Adopting Zimmerman's (1998) model of discursive and social identities, Richards makes a distinction between three aspects of identity:

- Firstly, there are *situated identities*, which are explicitly conferred by the particular context of communication, such as doctor-patient identities in the context of a health clinic, or teacher-student identities in the context of a classroom.
- Secondly, there are associated *discourse identities*, as participants orient themselves to particular discourse roles in the moment-by-moment organisation of the interaction (e.g. initiator, listener, questioner, challenger).
- Thirdly, and most importantly, there are *transportable identities*, which are latent or implicit but can be invoked during the interaction for particular reasons. For example, during an English lesson, a teacher might allude to the fact that she is a mother of two, a keen tennis player or an avid science fiction fan.

It is this notion of transportable identities, and students' transportable identities in particular, which seems key to the analysis of motivation. In his paper, Richards analyses samples of classroom talk between teachers and students in different language classrooms. Through a careful line-by-line analysis of interactional moves in these samples, he shows very convincingly the powerful motivational impact of invoking and orienting to students' own transportable identities in the classroom talk. Engaging students' transportable identities (e.g. as football fan, amateur photographer, art lover, film buff) can stimulate a much higher level of personal involvement, effort and investment from them than traditional teacher-student talk, where students are invariably positioned as language learners who are merely practising or demonstrating

knowledge of the language, rather than expressing their identities and speaking as themselves through the language.

The notion of transportable identities connects strongly with Legenhansen's (1999) emphasis on bridging the worlds inside and outside the classroom, since transportable identities by definition extend beyond the physical boundaries of the classroom and beyond teacher-student roles and relationships. However, an important critical issue raised by Richards (2006: 72) towards the end of his paper is that engaging students' (and teachers') transportable identities in the language classroom will necessarily involve an investment of self, with all the emotional, relational and moral considerations that this entails. One can imagine classroom contexts where such an investment of self may be perceived or experienced as uncomfortable or threatening, and where students may prefer not to invoke particular transportable identities in their talk. Here too, I would argue that insights from autonomy theory and practice are relevant: essentially, a key pedagogical principle in this regard is one of enabling students to exercise autonomy or choice in terms of which aspects of their identity they wish to engage and are motivated to express.

By contrast, the motivational consequences of *not orienting* to students' transportable identities when they try to give expression to these seem potentially rather detrimental, as is implicit in this telling example of teacher feedback and error correction from Scrivener (1994: 19):

Student: I am feeling bad. My grandfather he die last week and I am ...
Teacher: No – not die – say died because it's in the past.

In short, to the extent that we as teachers invoke and orient to students' transportable identities in the classroom and engage with them as 'people' rather than as simply 'language learners', to the extent that we encourage and create opportunities for them to 'speak as themselves' and engage and express their own preferred meanings, interests and identities through the medium of the target language, the more likely that students will feel involved and motivated to communicate and thus to engage themselves in the process of learning and using the language.

Of course, the argument I am developing will hardly seem new to many classroom practitioners. The notion of engaging our students' identities is something that many experienced language teachers have intuitively recognised as important, and is a principle that has often found its way into the language teacher training literature in the shape of buzzwords like *learner-centred teaching*, *authentic communication*, *personalisation* and so on. In fact, without wishing to sound too provocative, I believe that this is very much a case where practice leads and where

motivation theory has rather lagged behind. In other words, it is only now that motivation theory is catching up with what many effective teachers have long been doing in their classrooms, and finding ways of analysing and theorising this practice. As I argued earlier, a basic limitation of language learning motivation theory to date is that it has been primarily concerned with abstract models and with learners as theoretical bundles of variables, and not with language learners as people who bring uniquely individual identities, histories, goals and intentions and who inhabit complex dynamic social realities.

Current Perspectives: Towards Motivation as Value-based and Identity-oriented

However, perhaps it is not surprising that language learning motivation theory is only now beginning to look beyond traditional abstract frameworks and models and take a more contextually grounded and identity-oriented perspective, since it is only within the last decade that such perspectives have begun to inform motivation theory in education in general (e.g. Volet & Järvelä, 2001). Broadly speaking, much of the history of motivation in educational psychology over the past 40 years has revolved around the central notion of 'achievement', building on the early classic model of achievement motivation developed by John Atkinson in 1964, and the associated concepts of need for achievement, achievement orientation, expectancy of success or fear of failure. Of course, motivation researchers in education have also recognised the importance of non-achievement-related personal goals in the classroom, such as need for (e.g. Wentzel, 2000, 2007). However, theories of motivation in education have struggled to accommodate the idea of goal multiplicity, and have inevitably tended to focus attention primarily on achievement-related goals and on motivation behaviours and cognitions revolving around, for example, success or failure, mastery or performance orientations, competence, self-efficacy (see, e.g. Elliot & Dweck, 2007; Pintrich & Schunk, 2002).

But there are signs that things are now changing, and that theories of motivation in education are beginning to shift away from achievement-oriented frameworks, as reflected in a recent special issue of the journal *Educational Psychologist* edited by Kaplan and Flum (2009), which focuses on motivation and identity. As Brophy (2009) argues in his commentary paper in this special issue, many of the key constructs defined as *achievement based* (i.e. focused on success) in achievement motivation

theories are, in fact, *value based* and *identity oriented*. Of course, at a very general level, it seems a rather obvious thing to say that motivation and identity are linked in this way, i.e. that there is an intimate connection between our goal-directed behaviours and the identities we pursue; between the activities we engage in and the social groups we want to identify with; between what we do and the kind of person we see ourselves as or want to become. However, as Kaplan and Flum (2009) point out, it is only fairly recently that motivation researchers have really begun to explore these connections and to re-theorise motivation in education in terms of socially grounded value-based and identity-oriented frameworks, and to reframe existing motivational theories such as self-determination theory (La Guardia, 2009) and expectancy-value theory (Eccles, 2009) in relation to constructs of identity.

In the language education field too, we have begun to re-theorise motivation in relation to concepts of self and identity, particularly in terms of one's aspirations towards certain kinds of linguistic or cultural identity, or towards valued personal or professional identities that are defined, in part, by proficiency in particular languages (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009). This push to re-theorise language learning motivation in relation to self and identity has not just been prompted by developments in the mainstream motivational literature in education. It has also been shaped by growing critical debates within the SLA field about the relevance of Gardner's (1985) notion of integrative motivation in the modern globalised world, particularly where the learning of English as the target language is concerned, given the status of English as an international language and, increasingly, as a basic educational skill in many curricula (e.g. Ushioda, 2006), and given the complex sociolinguistic realities of language use and identity in postcolonial world Englishes contexts (Coetzee-Van Rooy, 2006).

This re-theorising of language motivation in relation to self and identity has been spearheaded in particular by Dörnyei, who conducted a large-scale longitudinal survey of Hungarian teenagers' language learning attitudes and motivation (Dörnyei & Csizér, 2002; Dörnyei *et al.*, 2006), spanning the period from 1993 (just after the fall of Communism) to 2004 (on the eve of Hungary's membership of the European Union) and comprising data from over 13,000 learners. Although an integrative motivation factor emerged consistently strongly in the longitudinal analysis, this factor was underpinned by both practical instrumental motivation as well as positive attitudes to target language speakers. This composite finding led Dörnyei and Csizér (2002) to speculate that the process of identification theorised to define integrative motivation

might be better conceived as an *internal process* of identification *within the person's self concept*, rather than identification with an external reference group.

Dörnyei (2005, 2009) subsequently develops this speculation further by drawing on the psychological theory of *possible selves*. According to Markus and Nurius (1986), possible selves represent individuals' ideas of what they might become, what they would like to become and what they are afraid of becoming, and so provide an important conceptual link between the self-concept and motivation. Building on this theory, Dörnyei (2005, 2009) has developed a new conceptualisation of language motivation, which he calls the 'L2 Motivational Self System'. The central concept in the L2 Motivational Self System is the *ideal self*. This refers to the attributes that we would ideally like to possess, i.e. our personal hopes, aspirations or wishes. A complementary concept is the *ought-to self*. This refers to the attributes that we believe we ought to possess, i.e. social pressures). A basic assumption in Dörnyei's theory is that if proficiency in the target language is part and parcel of one's ideal or ought-to self, this will serve as a powerful motivator to learn the language because of our psychological desire to reduce the discrepancy between our current self and possible future selves.

Autonomy, Identity and Personal Motivational Trajectories

As Dörnyei (2009) argues, these future self-states can have strong psychological reality in the *current* imaginative experiences of learners, as they try to envision themselves projected into the future as competent second language (L2) users. In other words, these future self representations are entirely continuous with their current selves. Thus, to the extent that language learners engage (or are enabled to engage) their current selves in their L2 interactions in the classroom now and to 'speak as themselves' with their 'transportable identities', one can argue that they are also enabled to engage directly with their future possible selves as users of the target language, but within the scope and security of their current communicative abilities.

This integral connection between current and future motivational self-states is one that has been similarly highlighted in the shift towards value-based and identity-oriented frameworks in motivation in education. While achievement motivation theories have focused primarily on proximal short-term outcomes of choice, engagement and performance,

as Kaplan and Flum (2009) explain, by linking motivation with identity goals and identity formation, we bring into focus more long-term developmental processes and personal trajectories that contribute to and are shaped by current situated motivational processes. Students' engagement in school, their choices, struggles and negotiations are clearly affected by and in turn influence who they think they are, who they think they want to be and who they actually become (Kaplan & Flum, 2009: 76). Moreover, as McCaslin (2009) explains, who I am or want to be is also defined in terms of who I am not or do not want to become.

As Brophy (2009) emphasises, this perspective on the developmental trajectories of motivation and identity underlines the critical importance of socialisation in promoting motivation towards adaptive values and identities, and away from those that are less desirable. Identities grow and change, partly in response to encouragement and pressure from the culture at large, or from socialisers, peers and significant others within one's social circle; and these emerging motivational dispositions and identities can solidify and develop into core values and more long-term stable identities (Brophy, 2009: 155).

In this connection, involving students in making relevant choices and decisions about their learning may facilitate this process of alignment towards culturally valued adaptive values and identities (Ryan *et al.*, 1992; Ushioda, 2003). However, as McCaslin (2009: 138) points out, in many educational settings, involving students in making meaningful choices is not always a possibility and opportunities for learning to make choices are not equitably distributed. Nor is *choice* necessarily the prime expression of individual motivation and identity. McCaslin suggests that *struggle* and *negotiation* may also guide the emerging dispositions and identities of students, since struggle and negotiation promote particular response patterns (e.g. striving, compliance, resistance, adaptation), which express and inform motivation and identity. When students are enabled to voice opinions, preferences and values, align themselves with those of others, engage in discussion, struggle, resist, negotiate, compromise or adapt, their motivational dispositions and identities evolve and are given expression. As McCaslin (2009: 139) argues, these motivations and identities are shaped, in part, by the social relationships that support and validate them; or as she writes: 'What we do and in connection with whom inform who we might become' (McCaslin, 2009: 137–138). Thus, she regards *participation* in opportunity and interpersonal validation as crucially important in the development, socialisation and *co-regulation* of students' motivation and identities. In other words, it is through social participation in opportunities, negotiations and activities

that people's motivations and identities develop and emerge as dynamically co-constructed processes.

The identity perspective on motivation thus brings into sharp relief the socially mediated nature of motivation as emergent through complex interactions among social, individual and contextual processes (Ushioda, 2009). It also brings into sharp relief the intimate connections between motivation and autonomy, particularly those between connections between what Little (2007) calls *language learner autonomy*, as opposed to learner autonomy in general. By this, I mean that the identity perspective highlights a psychological dimension of student motivation that is concerned not just with personal agency or self-determination, which can apply equally to autonomy and learning in any subject or skill domain (e.g. Deci & Ryan, 2002). The identity perspective also highlights a dimension of student motivation that is specifically concerned with *self-expression*, which has unique relevance, of course, when the object of learning is a language. By enabling students to 'speak as themselves' in the target language with their preferred 'transportable identities', as they negotiate, struggle, participate, share ideas and experiences and evaluate these, classroom practices that promote autonomy are likely to contribute to socialising and consolidating adaptive values, identities and motivational trajectories in terms of how students relate to the target language and use it to develop and express themselves. Such classroom practices contrast sharply with those that seek to regulate students' language learning and language use behaviours in a controlled way.

Thus, by promoting autonomy and motivating learners to speak as themselves now, we may enable them to fulfil their potential to be the persons they want to become or grow to value, and to use the language to do the things they want or grow to value, in a healthy and adaptive way that is internally consistent with their own motivation and sense of self.

References

- Atkinson, J.W. (1964) *An Introduction to Motivation*. Princeton, NJ: Van Nostrand.
- Bandura, A. (2001) Social cognitive theory: An agentic perspective. *Annual Review of Psychology* 52, 1–26.
- Brophy, J. (2009) Connecting with the big picture. *Educational Psychologist* 44 (2), 147–157.
- Coetzee-Van Rooy, S. (2006) Integrativeness: Untenable for world Englishes learners? *World Englishes* 25 (3/4), 437–450.
- Dei, E.L. and Ryan, R.M. (eds) (2002) *Handbook of Self-Determination Research*. Rochester, NY: The University of Rochester Press.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2005) *The Psychology of the Language Learner: Individual Differences in Second Language Acquisition*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2009) The L2 Motivational Self System. In Z. Dörnyei and E. Ushioda (eds) *Motivation, Language Identity and the L2 Self* (pp. 9–42). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Dörnyei, Z. and Csizér, K. (2002) Some dynamics of language attitudes and motivation: Results of a longitudinal nationwide survey. *Applied Linguistics* 23, 421–462.
- Dörnyei, Z., Csizér, K. and Németh, N. (2006) *Motivation, Language Attitudes and Globalisation: A Hungarian Perspective*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Dörnyei, Z. and Ushioda, E. (eds) (2009) *Motivation, Language Identity and the L2 Self*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Eccles, J. (2009) Who am I and what am I going to do with my life? Personal and collective identities as motivators of action. *Educational Psychologist* 44 (2), 78–89.
- Elliott, A.J. and Dweck, C.S. (eds) (2007) *Handbook of Competence and Motivation*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Ellis, R. (2008) *The Study of Second Language Acquisition* (2nd edn). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gardner, R.C. (1985) *Social Psychology and Second Language Learning: The Role of Attitudes and Motivation*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Kaplan, A. and Plumm, H. (2009) Motivation and identity: The relations of action and development in educational contexts – An introduction to the special issue. *Educational Psychologist* 44 (2), 73–77.
- La Guardia, J.G. (2009) Developing who I am: A self-determination theory approach to the establishment of healthy identities. *Educational Psychologist* 44 (2), 90–104.
- Legenhausen, L. (1999) Autonomous and traditional learners compared: The impact of classroom culture on attitudes and communicative behaviour. In C. Edelfloft and R. Westkamp (eds) *Autonomie Fremdsprachlernern* (pp. 166–182). Ismaning: Hueber.
- Little, D. (2004) Democracy, discourse and learner autonomy in the foreign language classroom. *Utbildning & Demokrati* 13 (3), 106–126.
- Little, D. (2007) Language learner autonomy: Some fundamental considerations revisited. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching* 1 (1), 14–29.
- Markus, H. and Nurius, P. (1986) Possible selves. *American Psychologist* 41, 954–969.
- McCaslin, M. (2009) Co-regulation of student motivation and emergent identity. *Educational Psychologist* 44 (2), 137–146.
- Pintrich, P.R. and Schunk, D.H. (2002) *Motivation in Education: Theory, Research, and Applications* (2nd edn). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Richards, K. (2006) 'Being the teacher': Identity and classroom conversation. *Applied Linguistics* 27 (1), 51–77.
- Riley, P. (2003) Drawing the threads together. In D. Little, J. Ridley and E. Ushioda (eds) *Learner Autonomy in the Foreign Language Classroom: Teacher, Learner, Curriculum and Assessment* (pp. 237–252). Dublin: Authentik.
- Ryan, R.M., Connell, J.P. and Grohnick, W.S. (1992) When achievement is not intrinsically motivated: A theory of internalization and self-regulation in school. In A. Boggs and T.S. Pittman (eds) *Achievement and Motivation: A Social-Developmental Perspective* (pp. 167–188). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Scrivener, J. (1994) *Learning Teaching*. Oxford: Heinemann.

- Ushioda, E. (2003) Motivation as a socially mediated process. In D. Little, J. Ridley and E. Ushioda (eds) *Learner Autonomy in the Foreign Language Classroom: Teacher, Learner, Curriculum and Assessment* (pp. 90–102). Dublin: Authentik.
- Ushioda, E. (2006) Language motivation in a reconfigured Europe: Access, identity and autonomy. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 27 (2), 148–161.
- Ushioda, E. (2009) A person-in-context relational view of emergent motivation, self and identity. In Z. Dörnyei and E. Ushioda (eds) *Motivation, Language Identity and the L2 Self* (pp. 215–228). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Volei, S. and Jarvelä, S. (2001) *Motivation in Learning Contexts: Theoretical Advances and Methodological Implications*. Amsterdam: Pergamon-Elsevier.
- Wentzel, K.R. (2000) What is it that I'm trying to achieve? Classroom goals from a content perspective. *Contemporary Educational Psychology* 25, 105–115.
- Wentzel, K.R. (2007) Peer relationships, motivation, and academic performance at school. In A.J. Elliot and C.S. Dweck (eds) *Handbook of Competence and Motivation* (pp. 279–296). New York/London: The Guilford Press.
- Zimmerman, D.H. (1998) Discoursal identities and social identities. In C. Antaki and S. Widdicombe (eds) *Identities in Talk* (pp. 87–106). London: Sage.

Chapter 3

Joining Forces for Synergy: Agency and Metacognition as Interrelated Theoretical Perspectives on Learner Autonomy

XUESONG GAO and LAWRENCE JUN ZHANG

Introduction

In the last two decades, the emergence of sociocultural perspectives on language learning has challenged the domination of cognitive theories in language learning research (Block, 2003; Sealey & Carter, 2004; Zuengler & Miller, 2006). Researchers endorsing sociocultural perspectives contend that language learning is also a social act related to learners' identity formation in addition to the cognitive process taking place in the learner's mind (Donato & McCormick, 1994; Norton & Toohey, 2001; Zuengler & Miller, 2006). In such research, context or real-world situations are considered 'fundamental, not ancillary, to learning' (Zuengler & Miller, 2006: 37), while in research endorsing cognitive perspectives, context may be treated as a variable modifying the internal acquisition process occurring in individual minds.

Due to the increasing popularity of sociocultural perspectives, the current debate on autonomy in the field has begun to expand its research horizon by incorporating these new perspectives and new concepts, such as identity and agency (Palfreyman, 2003; Ushioda, 2009). As indicated by Zungler and Miller (2006), there is some rising tension among researchers as to whether or not the two paradigms, namely, socio-cultural and cognitive, should be regarded as two worlds parallel or complementary to each other. Likewise, in learner autonomy research, agency as a sociological/sociocultural construct and metacognition as a cognitive construct have often been viewed as two worlds apart. In a debate between Palfreyman (2003) and Wenden (2002), Wenden's (2002)