INTERPRETING DIALOGUE:
BAKHTIN'S THEORY AND SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING

DISSERTATION

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By

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ABSTRACT

This study seeks to establish the relevance of Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of
dialogue to second language acquisition (SLA) theory and research. Recently, scholars
have begun to use Bakhtin's ideas in the debate on various aspects of second and foreign
language and literacy learning. These applications of Bakhtin's thought remain,
however, fragmentary and often rely on secondary sources. This study is the first
consistent and relatively extensive introduction of Bakhtin's theory of dialogue to SLA.
As the foundation of Bakhtin's theories of language, culture, and identity, the theory of
dialogue has been chosen out of Bakhtin's legacy because it explains interpersonal and
intercultural communication. All these themes are subject of current concern and of an
on-going debate among SLA researchers.

Employing the hermeneutic method, the study demonstrates that the theory of
dialogue elaborated by Bakhtin can be fruitfully explored in second language theory and
research. Grounded in a philosophical aspiration for dialogic polyphony, it can help us
see the relations among languages, cultures, and individuals in a new light. The novelty
of Bakhtin's approach consists in the dialogic understanding of language, culture, and the
self. His theory supplements many existing second language learning perspectives and
allows us to develop an approach to language, culture, and identity as emerging in
interactive discursive and intercultural practices. The key underlying idea of Bakhtin's
view of social interaction and social relations is that they are inherently dialogic. This
view is based, in turn, on Bakhtin's understanding of language as dialogic at the most
basic level. This is the most significant contribution to SLA theory that we can derive
from Bakhtin's legacy. Bakhtin's ideas are also important for the discussion of the role
of language in the formation of personal identity. Through inner conceptual affinities

Vygotsky's pedagogical insights are used to give a pedagogical dimension to Bakhtin's philosophical and literary construal of dialogue. In all three chosen areas, language, culture, and identity, the predominant theme of their dialogic nature is brought out as a common thread. By emphasizing parallels and interconnections among them, a theoretical framework is finalized and brought into focus.

To Vladimir, Maria, and Darya

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

"Bakhtin means to offer not just a set of detachable terms, nor even a new set of techniques, but a fundamentally different approach to both language and literary discourse in their entirety."
(Morson and Emerson, 1990, p. 20)

Background of the topic

This study seeks to establish the relevance of Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of dialogue to second language acquisition (SLA) theory and research. Over the past three decades, studies of Mikhail Bakhtin's (1895-1975) work have had a widespread impact on scholarship in a number of academic disciplines. Recently, scholars have begun to use Bakhtin's ideas in the debate on various aspects of second and foreign language and literacy learning. These applications of Bakhtin's thought remain, however, fragmentary and often rely on secondary sources. Although there is a growing sense that Bakhtin is relevant to our field, no comprehensive and systematic exploration of his legacy has been undertaken so far to assess the extent of this relevance. This study is the first consistent and relatively extensive introduction of Bakhtin's theory of dialogue into the field of SLA. Bakhtin's theory of dialogue has been chosen out of his many-faceted legacy because, first, it deals with the issue of interpersonal communication that is central to our field and, second, it forms the foundation of Bakhtin's theories of language, culture, and identity. All these themes are subject of current concern and of an on-going debate among SLA researchers. Thus, the conceptual/theoretical orientation of my research,

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which is based on the interpretation and critical analysis of theoretical texts, is required by the goals that I pursue. This dissertation does not pursue empirical goals, although I hope that eventually its theoretical results will be used in empirical studies and have practical applications in our field.

In the course of this study, I shall demonstrate that the theory of dialogue elaborated by Mikhail Bakhtin can be fruitfully explored in second language theory and research. Bakhtin's theory focuses on cultural and interpersonal dimensions of language and examines discourses that are formed by multiple voices. Grounded in a philosophical aspiration for dialogic polyphony, it can help us see the relations among languages, cultures, and people in a different light from the traditional approaches in SLA scholarship.

My aim is to resituate theoretically Bakhtin's philosophy of language among the existing approaches in SLA. Bakhtin proposes a new approach to language that is fundamentally different from traditional linguistics and is based on his theory of dialogue. In order to appreciate more clearly the place that Bakhtin's ideas may occupy in SLA research, one needs to view it in the context of the history of traditional approaches. These traditional approaches emerged at the time of the Chomskian revolution in linguistics in the 1960s, simultaneously with the transition in psychology from behavioral to cognitivist theories. SLA research in its early phase was likewise interested in the linguistic properties of learner language, that is, many researchers were preoccupied with the acquisition of second language grammar. The traditional interest of linguistics has always been concentrated on the universal properties, grammatical structures, and modeling at the level of an individual sentence. Accordingly, the traditional linguistic approach in SLA seeks to describe the language that learners acquire and to explain its structure. Psycholinguistics, by contrast, focuses on *how* a new language is acquired and attempts to explore the internal processes that the learner undergoes and the strategies he or she uses in acquiring the new language. The SLA

researchers who came from the psycholinguistic perspective from the beginning were interested in describing and analyzing such phenomena as interlanguage, a transitional phase between L1 and L2 in the process of other language learning, and the mental processes associated with its functioning (Corder, 1967; Selinker, 1972). In both linguistic and psycholinguistic approaches, the social, cultural, and interactional contexts in which language learning takes place are not acknowledged as important factors, even though they may be recognized as potential variables that can either help or hinder the development of a purely internal knowledge of language by an individual.

The focus on the individual learner was first challenged by proponents of the sociolinguistic approach. The emergence of the sociolinguistic perspective in SLA research was the result of global sociopolitical and economic changes. However, the ideas about language that inspired sociolinguists in the 1960s and 1970s had already been formulated earlier in the twentieth century by such scientists as Franz Boas (1911, 1928), Edward Sapir (1921, 1933, 1949), Georg Herbert Mead (1934), Benjamin Lee Whorf (1956), Lev Vygotsky (1978, 1986, 1987), and Mikhail Bakhtin (1981, 1984a, 1984b, 1990, 1993). The basic tenet of these scholars' views is that language is always immersed in a social and cultural context, and its central function is to serve as a medium of communication. As the influence of this view grew, scholarly interest began to shift from the individual learner and his or her internal mental activities to interaction and communication among learners. Language increasingly came to be viewed as inextricably linked to relations of power and to their change in society. Thus the 1990s were characterized by an emergence of new approaches, such as critical (Atkinson, 1997; Pennycook, 1990, 2001), ideological (Pennycook, 1994; Phillipson, 1992; Rampton, 1995; Tollefson, 1991, 1995), sociocultural (Lantolf, 1994, 2000; Lantolf & Appel, 1994), ecological (Kramsch, 2002; van Lier, 1996, 2000, 2002), and identity studies (McKay & Wong, 1996; Norton, 1997, 2000; Peirce, 1995). Despite the fact that social and interactional studies are a rapidly growing area in SLA research, many observers are

convinced that there is still tension between acknowledging the role of social and discursive components of language use and learning, on the one hand, and the predominant focus on individual cognition in research, on the other hand (Firth & Wagner, 1997, 1998; Hall, 1995, 1997, 1999; Rampton, 1995, 1997).

In the polemic launched by *The Modern Language Journal*, Firth and Wagner (1997) proposed "a reconceptualization" of second language acquisition research to "enlarge the ontological and empirical parameters of the field" (p. 285). They called for a "significantly enhanced awareness of the contextual and interactional dimensions of language use" (p. 285) and for understanding language "not only [as] a cognitive phenomenon, the product of the individual's brain" but also as "fundamentally a social phenomenon, acquired and used interactively, in a variety of contexts for myriad practical purposes" (p. 296). In response to this appeal, I believe that Bakhtin's ideas can expand the conceptual basis of SLA. Bakhtin's theories allow us to address the problems of language, culture, and self on a fundamental philosophical level, which is what "enlarging the ontological and empirical parameters of the field" presumably means. At the same time, the discussion of these theories in the context of SLA concerns hardly needs to be purely philosophical. Rather, the basic concepts of Bakhtin's philosophy should be interpreted in such a light that it becomes clear how they are relevant to our field.

This study is inspired by the idea of applying Bakhtin's conception of dialogic relations in communication to the understanding of the processes of an additional language learning and use. It also links Bakhtin's theory of dialogue to Vygotsky's theory of cognitive development. The analysis of Bakhtin's concepts performed below leads up to a theoretical framework of second language learning that takes into account the dialogic nature of consciousness, cultural interactions, and identity formation. The following main considerations stimulate my interest in exploring this issue.

I hope to show that Bakhtin's theory of dialogue is a useful theoretical resource for SLA in general and sociocultural SLA in particular. It is precisely in sociocultural/sociohistoric approaches to various aspects of human experience that the key concepts of Bakhtin's theoretical output have played an especially important part (Holquist, 1986a, 1990, 1997a, 1997b; Todorov, 1984; Tulvister, 1991; Wells, 1999a, 2002; Wertsch, 1985, 1990a, 1990b, 1991, 1995, 1997). Sociocultural perspectives interpret phenomena as socially constructed, dynamic, and situated in multiple interdependent contexts (Wertsch, 1991, 1997). The founders of this approach, Lev Vygotsky and his followers, considered cognitive development and higher order psychological functions as socially and culturally determined (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986, 1987). This idea underlines the importance of intersubjective interaction in learning. It may be useful, therefore, to elucidate Bakhtin's ideas by drawing parallels with their cognates in Vygotsky's thought. Bakhtin's own life-long goal was to create an interdisciplinary approach to the study of sociocultural life as it occurs in interactive contexts. Inspired by Bakhtin's thought, Wertsch (1990a) proposed the term "dialogicality" as a key concept of a sociocultural approach to human development that seeks to explicate how mental functioning "reflects and shapes the cultural, historical, and institutional settings in which it occurs" (pp. 62-63; see also Wertsch, 1991, pp. 53-54). The dialogic aspect of Bakhtin's thought may be fruitfully juxtaposed with Vygotsky's.

Further, as someone who learns and teaches other languages, I find much that appeals to me in Bakhtin's ideas on dialogue, and can usefully relate them to my own experiences. My life largely consists of dialogues between languages and between cultures. There are two languages and two cultures living within me, Russian and English. Their coexistence does not dichotomize my identity, however, but rather enriches it. I like to think of my teaching and learning contexts as dialogic because I constantly deal with multicultural issues on professional, academic, and personal levels.

Difficult as these issues are, I know that the languages and cultures that I live in help me understand the world better and make my dialogue with other people more meaningful. Reflecting on my teaching languages both in Russia and the U.S., I see it as an example of dialogic practices. As a foreign and second language learner and educator, I always find myself on cultural boundaries. This position gives me an opportunity to be at once an insider and outsider, and thus enlarges my outlook and gives me a better perspective on languages and cultures.

Problem description

The main problem that this study addresses is how Bakhtin's theory of dialogue can be useful in SLA. In conjunction with the recent rise of new approaches in applied linguistics, sociolinguistics, second language acquisition theory and pedagogy, and in particular with the emergence of the sociocultural school of thought, there is a need for new theoretical resources to address the key categories that are used in these fields. Among such categories one can point out (additional) language, culture, and self as those that have attracted a great deal of attention. These concepts, however, are subject of much controversy and there is little agreement among participants in the debate about their meaning.

Speaking of language learning, for example, the field is a scene of a vigorous proliferation of theories. These include the theories that have traditionally concentrated and continue to concentrate on the individual's cognitive development, as well as those that made initial attempts to understand the social factors affecting language learning. The former seek to disclose internal or cognitive processes and strategies of learning a new language and are exemplified by such contributions as Selinker's (1972) Interlanguage Theory; Kraschen's (1981, 1982) Monitor Theory; Bialystok's (1978) Theory of L2 Learning; Givon's (1979) Functional-Typological Theory; Ellis' (1984) Variable Competence Model; and Meisel, Clachsen, and Pienemann's (1981)

Multidimensional Model. The second group of theories, by contrast, attempt to explain the impact of social factors on L2 acquisition and include such proposals as Schumann's (1978) Acculturation Model; Giles and Byrne's (1982) Accommodation Model; and Gardner's (1985) Socio-Educational Model. While they made a valuable contribution, these approaches no longer satisfy SLA theorists and practitioners who are interested in the social and communicative aspects of language learning and use today. Many recognize that a good comprehensive theory should encompass both psycholinguistic, sociolinguistic, and more recent sociohistorical and poststructuralist approaches. At the same time it is widely acknowledged that, while the field has been productive, it has not yet generated a unified and comprehensive view of how an L2 is learned, and the mutliplicity of theories in SLA gives rise to debate and controversy (Beretta, 1993; Ellis, 1995; Kramsch, 2002; Lantolf, 1996; Lantolf & Ahmed, 1989; Larsen-Freeman, 2002; Mitchell & Miles, 1998; Thorne, 2000; van Lier, 1994, 2000, 2002).

The more recent approaches have been focused on such concepts as culture (Atkinson, 1999; Byram, 1989, 1991, 1993; Kramsch, 1991, 1993, 1998; Lantolf, 1999) and identity (Kramsch, 2000, 2003; MacKay & Wong, 1996; Norton, 1997, 2000; Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000; Peirce, 1995). There is a need for a theory in our field that would bring together these three concepts, i.e. language, culture, and self, and elucidate their individual meanings, as well as their mutual relations to one another. One cannot fail to notice that precisely these concepts are the foci of Bakhtin's thought and that they are linked together in his theory of dialogue. Moreover, his theory can serve as a bridge between the existing cognitivist and sociocultural approaches and provide a unified platform for research that would do justice to both individual and social aspects of language learning. This is why Bakhtin's theory is particularly relevant to SLA research and deserves to be explored as a theoretical resource for addressing vitally important and controversial issues in our discussion.

The question of applying Bakhtin's concepts to SLA entails the problem of translating his philosophical ideas into the language of pedagogy. It is worthwhile, therefore, to use some of the terms of Vygotsky's theories of psychological development for such a translation. Vygotsky is a particularly well-suited author for this task for two main reasons. First, there is a deep philosophical affinity between Bakhtin's and Vygotsky's respective insights into these issues. Working in different areas—literary and cultural theory and developmental psychology, respectively—the two scholars shared many basic intuitions and developed parallel approaches to language and culture. Their theories appear to be mutually complementary and together give a broader and more complete conception of human interaction in learning. Furthermore, for both scholars dialogue is the main factor in the formation of the self. Second, Vygotsky's ideas have become influential in education (Bruner, 1986; Chaiklin, 2001; Cole, 1988, 1990, 1995, 1996; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Lee & Smagorinsky, 2000; Newman, Griffin, & Cole, 1989; Rogoff, 1990; Tomasello, 1999; Wells, 1999, 2002; Wertsch, 1985, 1990a, 1990b, 1991, 1995, 1997; Zinchenko, 1985, 1995, among others) and have already been adopted by second language researchers (Lantolf 1994, 2000; Lantolf and Appel, 1994). Explaining where the ideas of the two scholars intersect will help place Bakhtin's theories in the context of SLA discourse.

Objectives and research questions

The main goal pursued in this study is to examine how Bakhtin's theory of dialogue can be applied to SLA theory and research. The following questions determine my approach to interpreting Bakhtin and applying his theory of dialogue to second and foreign language studies:

1. In what ways can Bakhtin's theory of dialogue help us understand the contexts, conditions, and processes of second language learning and use?

2. How can Bakhtin's theory illuminate the cultural aspect of second language learning?

3. What are the ways of constructing the "self" according to Bakhtin and to what extent can Bakhtin's theory be useful in understanding the impact of learning another language and culture on personal identity?

Significance of the study

This dissertation addresses an acknowledged need in SLA theory for new approaches in the study of language, culture, and personal identity. It demonstrates the relevance of Bakhtin's theory of dialogue for the study of language learning in multilingual and multicultural contexts. No detailed and concentrated attempt has yet been made to introduce Bakhtin's ideas into the field of SLA and this dissertation aims to provide such an introduction. Bakhtin's theory of dialogue has an important contribution to make in SLA research. The novelty of his approach consists in the dialogical understanding of language, culture, and the self. His theory supplements many existing second language learning perspectives and allows us to develop an approach to language, culture, and identity as emerging in interactive discursive and intercultural practices. Even though the interindividual aspect of communication is increasingly acknowledged in our field, the communicative act itself is still viewed largely from an individualistic point of view. By contrast, the key underlying idea of Bakhtin's view of social interaction and social relations is that they are inherently dialogic. This view is based, in turn, on Bakhtin's understanding of language as dialogic at the most basic level. This is the most significant contribution to SLA theory that we can derive from Bakhtin's legacy. Further, Bakhtin's view of communicative interaction opens new possibilities for exploring it from the L2 user and learner perspective. The need for such a new perspective is acknowledged in the field today (Cook, 1999, 2002; Firth & Wagner, 1997; Kubota, 2002; Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2001; Pavlenko, 2002; Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000).

Bakhtin's ideas are also important for the discussion of the role of language in the formation of personal identity. Bakhtin provides an in-depth analysis of the individual's "coming to ideological consciousness" (1981, p. 348) in the process of authoring by which language and culture contribute to the formation of the self and thus his ideas on this subject can be a valuable addition to the on-going discussion in second and foreign language studies. In addition to explaining how Bakhtin's theories are relevant to the needs of SLA, this study also has an applied dimension. I include in the discussion some specific teaching and learning situations to demonstrate how Bakhtin's thought can be used to generate new and better ways of addressing those situations.

This study reflects a growing interest in Bakhtin's theory in all areas of scholarship related to language, literacy, and culture. His work has already attracted the attention of SLA researchers who suggest that the use of Bakhtin's ideas should be our next step in SLA theory (Hall, Vitanova, & Marchenkova, 2005; Johnson, 2004). The implications of the Bakhtinian approach to SLA represent a new and rapidly expanding area of scholarly interest. I shall examine Bakhtin's key concepts in order to show their implications for second language learning. While the sociocultural (Lantolf, 1994, 2000; Lantolf & Appel, 1994), ecological (Kramsch, 2002; van Lier, 1996, 2000, 2002), and poststructuralist (for the summary, see Pavlenko, 2002) approaches have already begun to impact our field, the introduction of Bakhtin's ideas may give them a new impetus and, hopefully, help raise them to a new theoretical level. This author's ability to deal with primary and secondary sources in Bakhtin studies in both Russian and English helps grasp Bakhtin's ideas in a more adequate manner. The study's conceptual significance consists not only in interpreting Bakhtin's ideas to adapt them to SLA theory in general, but also in using them to reinforce the sociocultural theoretical framework of language learning, intercultural interactions, and identity formation. The practical significance relies on this framework's potential for developing effective research and teaching methods and practices for linguistically and culturally diverse student populations.

A note on terminology

The meaning of Bakhtin's key concepts will be discussed in detail in the main text of the study. There I shall explain what is meant by such terms as *dialogue, dialogism, monologism, silencing, utterance, addressivity, voice, double-voicedness, outsideness, authoritative and internally-persuasive discourses, ideological becoming, heteroglossia, polyphony, centripetal* and *centrifugal forces, answerability, emotional-volitional tone,* and *genre*. Complexity and ambiguity of these terms are noted by many authors (Emerson, 1997; Gogotishvili, 1992; Makhlin, 1993). Moreover, Bakhtin's concepts often acquire an additional and specific meaning depending on the context of use. To define their specific connotations in the context of SLA is one of the task of this study.

Aside from Bakhtin's own, unique terms, his specific understanding of such universally used concepts as language, language use, culture, ideology, identity, self, authorship, context, and discourse will also be discussed. This dissertation also addresses the differences between Bakhtin's own and post-Bakhtinian explications of such groups of concepts as

- dialogue–dialogicality-dialogism;
- language use–discourse–communication; and
- identity–self–subjectivity–voice.

Preliminary remarks on methodology

The research questions stated above call for philosophical hermeneutics as a methodological approach. Hermeneutics is the science of interpreting and explaining texts. Its name is derived from Hermes, the ancient Greek messenger god, who served as an intermediary between the divine and human worlds. The method used in this study is informed primarily by Hans-Georg Gadamer's seminal work *Truth and Method* (1975/1998). I also took into account the commentaries on Gadamer's theory by a

number of scholars, who work in general hermeneutics studies (Schmidt, 1992; Weinsheimer, 1985) and in hermeneutic research in human sciences (Gallagher, 1992; Schwand, 1994, 2000). Hermeneutics is a particularly suitable method for examining Bakhtin's work because Bakhtin himself belongs to the philosophical tradition that adopted and elaborated it in the twentieth century. Furthermore, he made his own contribution to the development of hermeneutics in a variety of works (Bakhtin, 1975, 1981, 1984, 1986). And last but not least, Bakhtin's concept of understanding, itself grounded in hermeneutics, is the centerpiece of his theory of dialogue.

The hermeneutic component provides a lens for an initial reading of Bakhtin's texts. The key concepts of his theory of dialogue are critically analyzed, with a view to uncovering the affinities between Bakhtin's and Vygotsky's ideas.

The results of analyses are brought together in constructing a theoretical framework of second language learning. This framework is informed by Bakhtin's views on language, culture, and identity. The key concept in its construction is dialogue and it is intended to give a consistent and multifaceted picture of the dialogic nature of language learning, intercultural communication, and formation of multilingual, mutlicultural identity.

Limitations of the study

The study is limited in the following main three ways. First, the international field of Bakhtin studies is extremely diverse and still evolving. Many key issues, from authorship to the condition of texts to interpretation, remain controversial and unresolved. There is a marked division, for example, between Western and Russian interpretations of Bakhtin's legacy (Emerson, forthcoming; Makhlin, 1993). In this dissertation, I try to take into account both sides of the debate, but I cannot claim that I have resolved any of the outstanding issues. This is not a work in Bakhtin studies; my task is to interpret his ideas for our particular field.

Second, the goals of this dissertation are purely theoretical; it includes neither empirical research data collection nor analysis. Before such empirical research can be conducted in conjunction with Bakhtin's theories and their findings tested in the actual classroom or other contexts, these theories must be made available to the SLA community. Precisely this is what this study aims to facilitate.

And, finally, it is impossible to predict at this stage what specific outcomes the application of Bakhtin's ideas will produce in SLA theory, research, and practice. This dissertation is only an introduction of Bakhtin's ideas into the field and much further elaboration, discussion, and analysis will be needed to derive concrete results from these ideas.

Summary of the study

Chapter 1

The discussion in this introductory chapter provides the background for this study, states the main problem that this dissertation addresses, articulates research questions and objectives, defines its basic terms, describes its significance, as well as its limitations, and provides some preliminary remarks on the methodology adopted for answering research questions.

Chapter 2

The literature review in this chapter discusses the need for new theoretical approaches in SLA and focuses on the writings of those authors who have used Bakhtin's ideas in second and foreign language studies. The chapter also identifies the group of concepts from Bakhtin's works that have been most frequently used in the field.

Chapter 3

        Chapter 3 provides a detailed explanation of the methodology used in this dissertation. The method consists in philosophical hermeneutics. Hermeneutics includes a critical analysis of both primary and secondary sources and culminates in the application of concepts from one field of knowledge to another. The chapter also explains the selection of both primary and secondary texts and addresses the issues of translation and interpretation, as well as the trustworthiness of the chosen method.

Chapter 4

        This chapter explains the relevance of Bakhtin's theory of dialogue and its key concepts to SLA scholarship. Three main areas are selected for analysis: language, culture, and identity. Bakhtin's understanding of these phenomena in light of his theory of dialogue is discussed in relation to the use of these terms in SLA. The main thrust of Bakhtin's view is that language, culture, and personal identity all possess a dialogic structure, and that dialogue is crucial to the formation and functioning of all three. This chapter also builds a link between Bakhtin's and Vygotsky's ideas and main concepts in an attempt to translate Bakhtin's concepts into a language that would make them more easily graspable for pedagogical purposes. Through inner conceptual affinities Vygotsky's pedagogical insights are used to give a pedagogical dimension to Bakhtin's philosophical and literary construal of dialogue. Further, the mutual interconnectedness and similarity of underlying dynamics of Bakhtin's concepts form the basis for arranging them into a theoretical framework for SLA. Their relevance to SLA, I argue, consists in their ability to enable the researcher to view the corresponding issues in the field through a new perspective.   Several critical issues in SLA scholarship are brought together through Bakhtin's approach.

Chapter 5

  The chapter summarizes the overall argument with a view to emphasize the significance of Bakhtin's ideas for SLA. In all three chosen areas, language, culture, and identity, the predominant theme of their dialogic nature is brought out as a common thread. By emphasizing parallels and the trilateral interconnections among them, the proposed theoretical framework is finalized and brought into focus. Simultaneously the implications of this theoretical framework are discussed for the current areas of concern in SLA. In all three areas Bakhtin's theory illuminates with especial force their dynamic and fundamentally communicative nature. Its particular value may be seen in the reversal of perspective from the currently predominant, native-speaker-oriented one to a new one in which the non-native-speaker's position becomes the point of departure. Further, it highlights the ethical and creative dimensions of language, culture, and self. It posits mutual understanding as the ultimate goal of language learning, intercultural communication, and formation of multilingual-multicultural identity. In conclusion, it outlines possible future avenues for research inspired by Bakhtin's theory of dialogue.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Rationale for the review

The goal of this chapter is to show that there is a recognition in SLA studies of the need for new theoretical approaches. The discussion then addresses the growing interest of SLA scholars and researchers in Bakhtin's work and the growing scope of application of Bakhtin's concepts in S/FL studies and pedagogical practice. The literature review is guided by the following questions: (1) What is the general situation with theoretical approaches in SLA? (2) How the need for new theoretical approaches has manifested itself? (3) What concepts and ideas derived from Bakhtin are attracting SLA scholars' attention? (4) In what contexts and for what purposes do these scholars use Bakhtin's theories? Answers to these questions should make it clearer in what areas of SLA research Bakhtin's ideas are likely to be used most productively.

As the review shows, Bakhtin's ideas are frequently evoked alongside those of Vygotsky. These two names are already conjoined in education scholarship as representing views that are parallel in many respects. At the same time, such a close conjunction tends, at times, to erase the substantial differences between their respective positions. This emphasizes the need for a systematic comparison between the two scholars' approaches. An attempt to provide such a comparison will be made in Chapter 4.

The need for new theoretical resources in SLA

This dissertation attempts to demonstrate how Bakhtin's approach may lend support to those new trends in SLA that strive to get away from the "monologic" paradigm of traditional linguistics and psycholinguistics. Some scholars continue to argue for this latter view of language as an abstract unity residing in the individual. Gass (1998) maintains, for example, that "there are parts of what we know about language (e.g. what is grammatical and what is ungrammatical) that cannot come from social interaction" (p. 88). Others, by contrast, insist that "theories of linguistics have often ignored [the ways we use language every day], but there is no reason for language teaching and language learning to be based on decontextualized or prescriptive grammars" (van Lier, 2002, p. 160). It would be worthwhile to canvass here, briefly, the relevant aspects of various approaches in SLA.

In what is commonly accepted as the most comprehensive survey of SLA research to date (Lowie & Sauter, 1996), Ellis (1994) describes one of the major developments in the field that have occurred over the years as "the increasing attention paid by SLA research to linguistic theory" and the increasingly symbiotic nature of their relationship (p. 1). Linguists have traditionally viewed language as a system that must be analyzed under the rubrics of phonology, lexis, morphology, and syntax. Chomsky's ideas revolutionized linguistics and changed the primary interest of this science from language teaching to language learning by adopting a mentalist approach. Challenging behaviorists' understanding of language acquisition as a product of habit formation, Chomsky (1965) proposed to look at it as a product of rule formation. The concept of linguistic competence proposed by Chomsky (1957, 1965) is used to describe the learner's mental knowledge of grammatical rules of language. Furthermore, according to Chomsky, this knowledge is innate, and language acquisition occurs thanks to the "language acquisition device" located within the brain. Responding to de Saussure's contrast between *langue* and *parole*, Chomsky also drew a distinction between

competence as abstract knowledge possessed by an ideal speaker-listener, on the one hand, and performance as language in use, on the other. He also insisted on the priority of the former over the latter. As a result, Chomsky's theories contributed to the development of psycholinguistics; however, their shortcoming was that they failed to recognize the communicative properties of language (Searle, 1974).

Chomsky's influence is felt in such seminal studies in SLA as Corder's (1967) research on learners' errors, Selinker's (1972) research on interlanguage, and Dulay, Burt, and Krashen's (1982) model of speech processing. The linguistic research inspired by Chomsky's Universal Grammar Theory continues to be active today. In recent years, however, SLA researchers' engrossment in universal properties of language has come under criticism primarily due to the lack of interest in communication and language use (Ellis, 1995; Pennycook, 1994; Phillipson, 1991, 1992; Rampton, 1995, 1997; Scollon & Scollon, 1995). And yet, despite challenges and criticisms and despite the proliferation of various theories and theoretical models that give rise to debate and controversy (Beretta, 1993; Lantolf, 1996; Larsen-Freeman, 2002; Mitchell & Miles, 1998; van Lier, 1994), linguistic theories remain the dominant force in SLA research.

The rise of interest toward the nature of language in communication brought about a characteristic move on the part of sociolinguistics toward communicative competence. A notable development occurred when Hymes (1972) proposed to broaden the notion of linguistic competence by introducing communicative competence, which included—in addition to grammatical knowledge—also knowledge of social and cultural rules of language use. Concurrently with Hymes, Halliday (1973) was arguing for studying language in action and as action. Further work on the concept of competence included the SLA's own communicative competence model (Canale, 1983; Canale & Swain, 1980) that contained four components: grammatical, strategic, sociolinguistic, and discourse competencies.

In a parallel development, Cummins (1981, 1988) elaborated the concept of sociolinguistic competence that included, on his analysis, basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS)—in addition to cognitive/academic language proficiency (CALP). His proposal emphasized the importance of developing not only linguistic but also communicative competence. It should be noted, however, that alongside these new ideas the traditional view was also upheld that the native speaker's competence should be kept as a necessary point of reference for the second language learner's competence (Stern, 1983). In recent years, new competencies were added to the list of those mentioned above, such as intercultural/transcultural communicative competence (Byram 1989, 1997; Meyer, 1991), multicompetence (Cook, 1991, 1992, 1995, 1996), pragmatic competence (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1993), and interactional competence (Hall, 1999; Young, 1999). The most comprehensive model of communicative competence (Celce-Murcia, Zoltan, & Thurrell, 1995) includes five interrelated areas of knowledge essential for effective communication in the second and foreign language: discourse competence, linguistic competence, actional/rhetorical competence, sociocultural competence, and strategic competence. In the current understanding of communicative competence, "the communication is defined by the capacity of individuals of different cultures to interact" (Brumfit, 2001, p. 120). The emphasis here is on the individual's capacity, without sufficient acknowledgment of the presence of the other in the process of communication.

There is a group of authors in SLA who argue that the field needs new theoretical approaches. An example of discussion where this need was openly recognized was the debate published in the 1997 issue of *The Modern Language Journal*. The issue included the article by Alan Firth and Johannes Wagner and six articles that responded to it. The article by Firth and Wagner that provoked a lively discussion in the international scholarly community is, as its authors indicate, "a reaction to recent discussion on theoretical issues within the field" (p. 285). In their article Firth and Wagner discuss the

failure of SLA research "to account in a satisfactory way for interactional and socio-linguistic dimensions of language (p. 285). In their examination of fundamental concepts in SLA research, such as nonnative speaker (NNS), learner, and interlanguage, the authors focus on the following research practices: discourse and communication, communication strategies, and input modification studies. They argue that the research on discourse and communication is strongly influenced by the view of NNS as "a defective communicator, limited by an underdeveloped communicative competence" and "striving to reach the 'target' competence of an idealized NS" (pp. 285-286). According to Firth and Wagner, the prevailing etic (analyst-relevant) over emic (participant-relevant) view of a learner draws attention of SLA research to "linguistic deficiencies and communicative problems" (p. 288). They, on the other hand, propose to study not only failures, but successes the learners achieve in communication. Firth and Wagner also disagree with the solutions that the cognitive SLA research offers for the issues of interlanguage and fossilization. Consequently, they argue for SLA "as a more theoretically and methodologically balanced enterprise" (p. 286), not biased in favor of the cognitive explanation of universal linguistic phenomena that are manipulated in experimental settings (p. 288). Their call for the reconceptualization of SLA research is convincingly supported by the authors' understanding of language as "not only a cognitive phenomenon, the product of the individual's brain," but also as "fundamentally a social phenomenon, acquired and used interactively, in a variety of contexts for myriad practical purposes" (p. 296).

In her response to Firth and Wagner, Joan Kelly Hall not only agrees that there is a need to reconceptualize SLA research, but proposes sociocultural approach as an alternative to the existing theoretical models. The applications of sociocultural theory for S/FL learning and use form a new and growing area of scholarly interest. Consequently, it is marked by competition among many rival opinions and views. Thus, Hall's paper, summarizing Vygotsky's ideas as they already have been applied in a number of studies

on SLA and language pedagogy, presents an example of a new mindset that the author calls for. Hall's discussion of Vygotsky is of especial value for this dissertation because it provides a bridge between SLA and Bakhtin. Hall elucidates Vygotsky's main concepts and how they can explain the nature and development of competence as well as the study of human development. Vygotsky's *genetic method*, Hall proposes, opens opportunities for using sociocultural theory in SLA studies. The genetic method is based on the premiss that human cognitive and psychological development is accomplished through the assimilation of cultural and social patterns. This assimilation occurs in the process of teaching and upbringing (Vygotsky, 1991). Drawing on the sociocultural perspective, Hall further examines how some key SLA concepts are reconfigured in its light in comparison with the mainstream SLA. These concepts include the nature of language and language acquisition, the language learner, and the language classroom. "From the sociocultural perspective," writes Hall, "the process of acquisition is turned on its head and it is posited, instead, that the process originates in our socially constituted communicative practices. The varied ways in which the symbolic tools of these events are used define not only what gets learned by an individual but the very process of learning itself" (p. 333). Hence, according to Hall, the research interests also should be changed as they address communicative practices as fundamental sources of learning, communicative competence, and individual development (p. 304).

Firth and Wagner's view is also supported by Anthony Liddicoat who draws attention to "a concomitant reanalysis of the research methods used to collect the data" (p. 316) for SLA research. The application of these new research methods should involve, according to Liddicoat, (1) a better "distinction between elicited and naturally occurring data" (ibid.); (2) the use of both quantitative and qualitative approaches to the study of interaction; and (3) a better understanding of interaction. Since the issues of interaction are salient for the collection and analysis of data, Liddicoat argues for the following shifts of the main foci in SLA research: from the subject as a learner of a grammatical system

to the subject as an L2 user; from the processes that are involved in learning to the actual language *use*; from participants who are unknown to each other to the people who have some preexisting relationships; from institutional roles to everyday conversations; and from constrained to spontaneous data (p. 314). Analyzing the transcription of the typical data collected during the interaction between NS and NNS, the author questions the validity of explanation of the NS-NNS interaction, further illustrating the deficiency of the current SLA research (p. 316).

In contrast to Hall and Liddicoat who agree with Firth and Wagner's call for new theoretical approaches, the issue also includes responses of authors who criticize this call and even completely reject it. Nanda Poulisse, for example, does not share Firth and Wagner's desire "to attend to, explicate, and explore, in more equal measures and, where possible, in integrated ways, both the *social* and *cognitive* dimensions of S/FL use and acquisition" (Firth & Wagner, p. 286). Poulisse defends, on the contrary, the psycholinguistic method as the most valid method in SLA research. Another critic, Michael Long strongly argues for the purely cognitive nature of SLA processes and refers to their social aspect as the "setting" (p. 319) for their occurrence. Long accuses Firth and Wagner of misunderstanding L2 acquisition and reducing it to its "interactional and sociolinguistic dimensions" (p. 318), the relevance of which to acquisition, according to Long, is questionable. Reflecting on, as he puts it "the very nature of the SLA beast" (p. 319), Long recognizes only internal/mental processes as relevant to its study, arguing that the social aspect of these processes plays the same role as in all other "internal" processes, such as "learning, thinking, remembering, sexual arousal, digestion" (p. 319). Long believes that social factors have only a minor effect on the mental process of L2 acquisition and argues that social mechanisms related to language, language acquisition, and especially second language acquisition are not equal in importance to their internal counterparts. As a corollary, Long maintains that these social mechanisms do not merit equal scholarly attention. Long's position reflects the cognitivist bias in SLA theory and

research that significantly limited the scope of sociolinguistic research. The sociolinguistic research has focused until recently predominantly on linguistic interaction in the process of L2 acquisition and on variability of learner language (Ellis, 1994; Gass & Selinker, 1994; Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991). From the mid-1990s a number of scholars began to argue for broadening the sociolinguistic approach in SLA in order to emphasize the social dimensions of language learning (Firth & Wagner, 1997; McKay &Wong, 1996; Peirce, 1995; Rampton, 1995).

The debate in *The Modern Language Journal* clearly showed that there is a need, recognized by a group of theorists, for exploring new theoretical resources that can be applied in SLA research. It is also noteworthy that the proposals that these authors made point in the direction of Bakhtin—even though they do not mention his work. The foci on interaction, communication, language use, L2 learner (emic or participant-relevant) perspective, and sociocultural context have notable parallels in Bakhtin's theory of dialogue. Instead of Bakhtin, Vygotsky's name figures prominently in this discussion. This is not surprising because Vygotsky's theory had already been successfully applied in SLA research by the time when the discussion took place. At the same time, several authors noted that Vygotsky's ideas do not fully explain some salient aspects of language learning and can be fruitfully supplemented by notions derived from Bakhtin's theoretical work. In his 1991 book *Voices of the mind*, Wertsch includes a chapter titled "Beyond Vygotsky: Bakhtin's contribution." "Vygotsky's analysis of higher mental functioning," writes Wertsch, "provides a foundation for a sociocultural approach for mediated action. . . . Yet, in certain essential respects, he did not succeed in providing a genuinely sociocultural approach to mind. In particular, he did little to spell out how specific historical, cultural, and institutional settings are tied to various forms of mediated action" (p. 46). Wertsch argues that a more adequate sociocultural approach can be developed by complementing Vygotsky's theories with Bakhtin's insights. In a similar vein, Hall (2002), who had previously explored Vygotsky's educational psychology, continued her

work on developing a new sociocultural approach by advocating the use of Bakhtin's theories. She specifically notes that Bakhtin's notion of dialogicality is useful for grasping "the dialogic relationship between the historical and the present, between the social and the individual" (p. 12). Another argument for the relevance of Bakhtin's ideas for second language learning is presented in a recently published collection of essays edited by Hall, Vitanova, and Marchenkova (2005). The editors point out the insufficiency of traditional formalist perspective on language, typical of earlier research, that views language as a "stable and autonomous system" (p. 2). Following the lead of Firth and Wagner (1997) and Hall (1993, 1995), the authors call for "explorations into other disciplinary territories in search of new ways to conceptualize the field" (Hall, et al., 2005, p. 2).

In her review of sociopsychological and poststructuralist attempts to theorize social aspects of L2 learning and use, Aneta Pavlenko also argues for expanding the study of social dimensions of L2 learning. "While syntactic and psycholinguistic aspects of second language learning and use are the subject of many competing theories," Pavlenko remarks, "up until recently social aspects of L2 learning and use have been both under-represented and under-theorised in the literature of SLA" (2002, p. 277). Some authors, working in a poststructuralist paradigm, adopt Bakhtin's concepts of heteroglossia and appropriation to argue that L2 learning should be understood, to use Pavlenko's words, "not only as a process of creative construction of interlanguage, but also as a process of internalisation of others' voices and of 'bending' of these voices to the speakers' own purposes (ibid., p. 290).

In general terms, one can distinguish in SLA four main theoretical perspectives that determine the object, the goals, and the methods or research. From the linguistic perspective, SLA research may serve as a source of information supporting one or another general linguistic theory. This perspective contributes to a more general understanding of the nature of language. From the psycholinguistic perspective, the

primary interest of research is to learn about the cognitive mechanisms and strategies of language learning. These studies expand the understanding of learning processes and mechanisms within individual consciousness. The sociolinguistic perspective sees its goals in helping L2 learners to adapt to functioning in target language communities and second language culture. It is also interested in a better understanding of intercultural communication. And, finally, the educational perspective is interested in improving language pedagogy, that is in supplying teachers with the knowledge of conditions and behaviors that facilitate S/FL learning. There is a general consensus that SLA is an enormously complex phenomenon that does not lend itself to explanation from a single point of view. There are attempts to bridge the gaps between these different perspectives but much work still needs to be done before one can speak of their collaboration with one another. One obstacle is lack of agreement among scholars as to whether a unifying theory is needed at all. Some theorists argue that pluralism in research methods is more beneficial than the quest for a single comprehensive point of view (Lantolf, 1996; Spolsky, 1990). Whether Bakhtin's thought can provide the basis for such a comprehensive view is unclear; at the same time there is clearly an impulse toward pluralism in his outlook. At the very least, the introduction of Bakhtin to SLA contributes to the variety of theoretical approaches and, potentially, new research methods and is valuable in this respect.

The number of studies inspired by Bakhtin's thought is growing but his presence in the field of SLA still remains marginal. The key concepts of Bakhtin's philosophy of language are frequently evoked in the current debate on various issues in such disciplines as philosophy, literary theory, critical theory, anthropology, folklore studies, and aesthetics. Bakhtin's ideas on language have also had a wide-spread impact on education, psychology, sociology, literacy, rhetoric, and language studies in general, i.e., the disciplines that traditionally contribute to second and foreign language research. Books and essays inspired by Bakhtin's theory have appeared in the following areas:

1) Sociocultural/Sociohistorical Studies:

Holquist (1986a, 1990, 1997a, 1997b); Todorov (1984); Tulvister (1991); Wells (1999, 2002); Wertsch (1985, 1990a, 1990b, 1991; 1995, 1997);

2) Education, Psychology, and Sociology:

Bell & Gardiner ((1998); Erickson (1997); Lensmire (1994); Matusov, Pleasants, & Smith (2003); Sidorkin (1999); Skidmore (2000);

3) Linguistic Anthropology:

Briggs & Bauman (1992); Duranti (1997);

4) Literacy and Critical Discourse:

Bazerman (2004), Bell & Freedman (2004); Dyson (1995); Gee (1996, 2004); Heath (1993, 1997), Hicks (1996, 2000); Macovski (1997); Tannen (1987, 1997);

5) Rhetoric/Composition:

Ewald (1993); Farmer (1995, 1998); Halasek (1990, 1999); Phelps (1990); Schuster(1985, 1992); Ward (1994);

6) Discourse Analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis:

Cook (1994b); Gunthner (1999); Luke (2002);

7) Linguistics:

Dore (1995); Linell (1998).

SL studies, however, have until recently approached the theories of language developed by Bakhtin and his colleagues with considerable caution. There were several reasons for this reserve. First, SL research and pedagogy have traditionally leaned toward individualistic cognitivism. Only recently did sociocultural studies, that use a social rather than individualistic approach, begin to gain a prominent place in the field. This process has been initiated by the understanding of language as an inherently and fundamentally social phenomenon. Second, the postmodern and poststructuralist conceptions that have made use of Bakhtin's theories were at odds with the traditional

structuralism of applied linguistics and SLA. Third, the notion of philosophy of language—and Bakhtin's theories of language amount to a distinct philosophy—has not been widely acknowledged as relevant in the field. And last but not least, the fact that Bakhtin's ideas were developed in a different disciplinary context, i.e., in literary theory, aesthetics, and theory of culture, has also hampered their broad acceptance in SLA studies. The last factor is especially important for this dissertation because showing the relevance of Bakhtin's ideas to our area of knowledge requires overcoming disciplinary boundaries.

For all these reasons, there has not yet been an extensive discussion of Bakhtin's theory of dialogue in SLA literature. Judging by the debate in *The Modern Language Journal*, one can predict that the introduction of Bakhtin to SLA will meet with both approval and criticism. But before a meaningful discussion can take place Bakhtin's ideas must be explicated in an adequate manner to the SLA scholarly community. The purpose of this dissertation is precisely to provide a ground for such a debate.

Bakhtin in SLA literature

Even though Bakhtin's ideas have not yet received broad recognition in SLA, they have begun to appear in various second language studies. Among second language researchers Bakhtin's theory of dialogue first attracted serious attention over a decade ago. They have been used in a variety of contexts and for a variety of purposes. Multi-functional in nature and universal in scope, they allow for a wide range of uses and interpretations. Although in general sympathetic, the reception of Bakhtin's ideas has been in many cases superficial. Some scholars who evoke Bakhtin rely on second-hand interpretations, using works from other disciplines. The task of this dissertation is to provide a link between Bakhtin's original texts and SLA theory in the interests of a deeper, more comprehensive, and adequate engagement with his ideas. A thorough engagement with a theory inevitably results in critical responses to it, among others. One

sign of the insufficient acquaintance with Bakhtin's is that there has not yet been a significant criticism of his approach in SLA.

As examples of texts that refer to Bakhtin's ideas as a useful aid in thinking about current issues in second and foreign language studies one can point to the following books and articles: Canagarajah (1999); Dufva (1998, 2003); Edlund (1988); Johns (1997); Kramsch & Lam (1999); Kramsch & McConnnell-Ginet (1992); Mandelsdorf, Roen, & Taylor (1990); and Medgyes (2004).

Another group of studies that pursue a closer engagement with Bakhtin's thought as applied to SLA include Brumfit (2001); Cazden (1989, 1992, 1993); Hall (1993, 1995, 1999, 2002); Hall, Vitanova, & Marchenkova (2005); Johnson (2004); Kramsch **(**1993, 2000, 2003**);** Maguire & Graves (2001); Moraes (1996); Morgan & Cain (2000); Pavlenko & Lantolf (2000); Prior (1998, 2001); Pennycook (1994, 1996, 1998); Toohey (2000); van Lier, (1996, 2000, 2002); Valdes (2004), and Wong (forthcoming). These books and essays will be discussed in more detail below.

Courtney Cazden's 1989 article "Contributions of the Bakhtin Circle to 'communicative competence'" introduced Bakhtin to language education in this country (Kramsch & McConnell-Ginet, 1992, p. 12). She evoked Bakhtin in her discussion of language as social practice that she viewed as dialogic in nature. Cazden (1992) is particularly drawn to Bakhtin's notion of heteroglossia, as she explores the ways in which "human beings construct language for themselves" performatively using "resources provided by their culture" (p. 67). She offers an alternative perspective on expository texts in the FL classroom, i.e., that of scripting texts and performing them orally in more than one voice. This readers' theater technique corresponds to Bakhtin's analysis of text as double-voiced or multi-voiced. In her 1993 article "Vygotsky, Hymes, and Bakhtin: From word to utterance and voice," Cazden proposes Bakhtin's concept of voice as an analytic tool in research on social interaction. She provides of using this concept for the analysis of interpersonal relations in the classroom.

In her book *Context and culture in language teaching*, Claire Kramsch (1993) draws, among other theoretical frameworks, upon Bakhtin's dialogic-dialectic theory. By examining "the shaping of context through dialogue," Kramsch argues for "teaching the interdependence of language and culture" (pp. 235-236). Kramsch's particular contribution to the discussion about the role of culture in the study of language is the concept of the "third place." "Third place" reflects the idea that the student should develop a perspective on both their native and acquired culture, such that this perspective would not be reducible to either of these cultures. "The only way to start building a more complete and less partial understanding of both C1 and C2," argues Kramsch, "is to develop a third perspective, that would enable learners to take both an insider's and an outsider's view on C1 and C2. It is precisely that third place that cross-cultural education should seek to establish" (p. 210). In her book, Kramsch sketches a dialogic framework of cross-cultural understanding that, in some of its aspects, shows significant parallels to Bakhtin's concept of outsideness.

Kramsch also discusses the formation of personal identity in a more recent essay (2000) where she draws on Bakhtin's and Vygotsky's ideas. "Bakhtin's concept of dialogism," observes Kramsch, "offered a way of thinking about oneself and the world not as two separate entities in interaction with each other but as two sides of the same coin, relative to and constitutive of each other" (p. 139).

Joan Kelly Hall (1995, 1999, 2002) is a strong proponent of incorporating into S/FL theory a sociocultural/sociohistorical perspective of interaction grounded in Vygotsky's and Bakhtin's ideas. She finds Bakhtin particularly helpful in discussing the development of L2 interactional competence that she calls "a prosaics of interaction" (1999, p. 137):

> In proposing the study of interactive practices, the prosaics of interaction, I am making the same case as Bakhtin, namely, that by standing outside of interactive practices that are of significance to the group(s) whose language is being learned,

and analyzing the conventional ways that linguistic resources get used, the movement that occurs between their conventional meanings and their individual uses, and the consequences that are engendered by the various uses, we can develop a far greater understanding both of ourselves and of those in whose practices we aspire to become participants. (1999, p. 144)

Another parallel to Bakhtin's ideas about language as a fundamental factor in the formation of our worldviews is Hall's (1995) argument that, "from a sociohistorical perspective, our language and our uses of language" are regarded as recreating "our social worlds, our relationships with others and our ideologies" (p. 207). Hall discusses social identity in terms similar to Bakhtin's theory of the self. She also proposes several directions for research on oral language use and suggests that similar directions will be appropriate for research on reading and writing. This, too, echoes Bakhtin's concern with language in use that will be discussed in a subsequent chapter. In her latest book, *Teaching and Researching Language and Culture* (2002), Hall uses Bakhtin's concepts of dialogue and single- and double-voiced utterances in her discussion of language as a sociocultural resource (pp. 11-17).

Marcia Moraes' (1996) *Bilingual education* provides a critical discussion of the policies and curricular design in bilingual education, including the debate on English-only versus English-plus instruction. For her analyses, Moraes uses the ideas of Bakhtin and Voloshinov. In summarizing the work of the Bakhtin Circle, she emphasizes the writings of Voloshinov, specifically his books, *Marxism and the philosophy of language* (1973) and *Freudianism: A Marxist critique* (1976). Voloshinov's socio-political orientation in discussion of language and consciousness grounded in Marxism is particularly suitable for Moraes' purposes. Moraes proposes to reexamine approaches to bilingual education through the lens of the Bakhtin-Voloshinov dialogic theory, as well as through the dialogic pedagogy of Paolo Freire (1993).

In her 2004 book *Philosophy of second language acquisition*, Marysia Johnson proposes a dialogic model of SLA based on Vygotsky's and Bakhtin's theories. She puts the main emphasis on Vygotsky's thought. Among Bakhtin's concepts, she particularly focuses on such characteristics of utterance as its heteroglossic quality and relation to genre. Johnson's work is in many respects parallel to what this dissertation aims to accomplish. She uses Bakhtin's ideas, particularly his analysis of speech genre, to complement Vygotsky's ideas. " Although Vygotsky stresses the importance of speech for human cognitive growth," she points out, "his SCT does not examine its characteristics, the characteristics of speech in a given sociocultural context. This gap is filled by Bakhtin's work" (p. 127). The difference between Johnson's work and mine consists in the fact that this dissertation uses Vygotsky to complement Bakhtin rather than the other way around. Further, the focus is on Bakhtin's entire theory of dialogue, rather than a few components of it. Johnson's task is to create a dialogic model of SLA, whereas this dissertation attempts to provide a comprehensive discussion of Bakhtin's theory of dialogue as it may find application in several key areas of SLA research and pedagogy.

In his book *Interaction in the language curriculum: Awareness, autonomy, and authenticity*, Leo van Lier (1996), draws on Vygotsky and Bakhtin among other theorists to argue that language education must include emphasis on moral values, as well as intellectual knowledge and practical skills. In his latest essays (van Lier, 2000, 2002) he turns to Vygotsky and Bakhtin as resources for building his own, so-called "ecological," approach to language learning. According to van Lier (2000), "an ecological approach asserts that the perceptual and social activity of the learner, and particularly and the verbal and non-verbal interaction in which the learner engages, are central to an understanding of learning" (p. 246).

Alastair Pennycook's uses of Bakhtin's ideas underscore the latter's comprehensive reach. In *The cultural politics of English as an international language*,

Pennycook (1994) draws support from Bakhtin and Voloshinov for his argument against the view of language as an abstract and isolated system (p. 30).   His proposition to study "language as constant change" and to understand it in terms of difference, everyday use, as well as social, cultural, and political acts (p. 29) is inspired, among others, by the work of Bakhtin Circle writers. Pennycook emphasizes the relevance of Bakhtin's and Voloshinov's ideas for the discussion of global English:

> The importance of these ideas for an understanding of the worldliness of English is that it is now possible to consider language and meaning not in terms of a language system (English as an International Language) and its varieties (the New Englishes) but rather in terms of the social, cultural, and ideological positions in which people use language. (p. 31)

The concepts that Pennycook employs include dialogue, unitary language vs. heteroglossia, multivocality vs. language as a ready-made artefact, and dialogic vs. monologic meaning (p. 31). In his essay, " Borrowing others' words: Text, ownership, memory, and plagiarism," Pennycook (1996) applies Bakhtin's ideas to the issues of textual borrowing or plagiarism as they are understood within the Western academic tradition.   He views this problem through the prism of the dialogic nature of language that presupposes that it "carries histories of its former uses with it " (p. 274).

Paul Prior (2001) is interested in voice as the key concept in discourse acquisition and use, and specifically literate activity. He investigates this concept with the help of Voloshinov's and Bakhtin's theories. Prior rejects both individualistic and social views of voice and argues instead that voice is "simultaneously social and personal . . . [and] language is neither inside nor outside, but *between* people" (p. 95). Prior is convinced that Bakhtin's and Voloshinov's theoretical contribution allows to develop an alternative to structuralist theories of language and discourse. In *Writing/disciplinarity: A sociohistoric account of literate activity in the academy*, Prior (1998) employs Bakhtin's notions of authoritative and internally persuasive discourse to explore the negotiation

over knowledge, identity, and community between graduate students and professors in academic writing tasks.

Carol Morgan & Albane Cain's (2000) book *Foreign language and culture learning from a dialogic perspective* is an examination of a dialogic interaction project between school children in England and France that is based on a theoretical framework derived from Bakhtin's and Vygotsky's work. The authors seek to demonstrate the crucial role of dialogue in cognitive development and meaning-making during the intercultural activities when students create and reflect on the textual materials for exchange with their peers from other culture.

Mary H. Maguire & Barbara Graves (2001) adopt Bakhtin's concept of speaking personality to examine how identities of three bilingual children are constructed in L2 journal writing activities. They also evoke Vygotsky to address the sociocultural aspects of identity formation. The significance of Bakhtin's ideas for these investigations is underscored in the authors' conclusion that the existing approaches to teaching and learning should be more attentive to the role of discourse in the formation of learners' personal identity (p. 590).

Aneta Pavlenko & James P. Lantolf (2000) evoke the concepts of inner speech and private dialogue from Vygotsky and Bakhtin, respectively, to analyze first-person narratives of people making a transition from one culture to another. Authors' findings confirm Bakhtin's insight about the critical role of the appropriation of the voices of others in transformations of personal identity. They further stress that border-crossing involves a struggle to reconstruct one's self—also an idea resonating with Bakhtin's thought.

Kelleen Toohey (2000) describes her ethnographic study of elementary school children learning English in a Canadian school in which she draws, among others, on the work of Vygotsky and Bakhtin. In particular, she is interested in how children "struggle to come to voice" (p. 13). "If learners struggle to appropriate others' voices," she

observes, "and to 'bend' these to their own purposes, if learners' and their interlocutors' past, present, and future social positioning crucially affect how they manage that appropriation, and if by participating in language or coming to voice learners find answering words for others' words, attention to those others' and to the learners' social contexts is crucially important" (p. 14).

Guadalupe Valdes' (2004) article "The teaching of academic language to minority second language learners" brings Bakhtin's concept of voice into a discussion of how learners study English in an academic setting, as well as in communities. Valdes examines how the "voices" of individual learners are informed, and in turn inform, the social contexts in both learning situations. She argues for a Bakhtinian broadening of "the types and range of experiences" (p. 75) available to learners in the process of instruction. A considerable dimension of Valdes' discussion has to do with the issues of standard English and the debate on English-only policies.

In the collection of essays *Dialogue with Bakhtin on Second and Foreign Language Learning* (Hall, Vitanova, & Marchenkova, Eds., 2005), the first book-length publication devoted specifically to the use of Bakhtin in second and foreign language learning, the authors draw on various aspects of Bakhtin's theory to address theoretical and practical concerns with second and foreign language learning and teaching. Karen Braxley's chapter on "Mastering academic English: International graduate students' use of dialogue and speech and genres to meet the writing demands of graduate school" examines how Bakhtin's concepts of dialogue and speech genres help investigate the process of learning academic writing in English at a graduate level. She views both dialogue and genre as critical components of this process and draws significant pedagogical implications from her findings.

In their chapter on "Multimodal representations of self and meaning for second language learners in English-dominant classrooms," Chris Iddings, John Haught, and Ruth Devlin use Bakhtin's and Vygotsky's theories of meaning-making to explore

interactive processes of meaning-making among elementary school students. Based on Bakhtin's concept of dialogism, the authors conclude that the main factor in language learning with the help of semiotic tools (journal drawings, dramatic play, ornate design) is the relationship between the two interactants.

In their chapter on "Local creativity in the face of global domination: Insights of Bakhtin for teaching English for dialogic communication," Angel Lin and Jasmine Luk rely on Bakhtin's theory of carnival laughter as a liberating force. Their focus is on English in post- and neo-colonialist contexts. They argue that laughter can become a powerful teaching tool to help students become more confident as learners and help teachers to become more aware of their students' cultural and personal identities.

The chapter on "Metalinguistic awareness in dialogue: Bakhtinian considerations" by Hannele Dufva and Riika Alanen evokes both Bakhtin and Vygotsky, as it explores the concept of metalinguistic awareness. Using Bakhtin's notions of dialogicality, polyphony, and heteroglossia, the authors argue that metalinguistic awareness is both socially and cognitively constructed, and emerges in socialization practices. The resulting awareness is not a unified, they conclude, but a multi-voiced construct whose complexity requires a rethinking of the existing approaches to it.

Elizabeth Platt's chapter on "'Uh uh no hapana': Intersubjectivity, meaning and the self" is an examination of how students learning Swahili as a foreign language engaged in a problem-solving, information gap activity. The author's key analytic tool is Bakhtin and Voloshinov's conception of dialogism.

In her chapter on "Authoring the self in a non-native language: A dialogic approach to agency and subjectivity," Gergana Vitanova relies on Bakhtin's concepts of language, self, and authoring to explore the issues of identity in the case of language learners immersed in a different culture. She emphasizes the learner's active and creative contribution to their own identity formation, using Bakhtin's interpretation of subjectivity in which the notion of answerability plays a particularly prominent part.

In Alex Kostogriz's chapter on "Dialogical imagination of (inter)cultural spaces: Rethinking the semiotic ecology of second language and literacy learning," the emphasis is on Bakhtin's concepts of dialogue, culture, and the other in the context of multicultural classrooms. Kostogriz views Bakhtin's theory as a critical and ideological tool for research in ESL education. He interprets dialogue as a unit of intra- and inter-cultural communication and argues for a Thirdspace pedagogy of ESL literacy, i.e., an approach that recognizes multiple perspectives on knowledge, as well as issues of power and ideological struggles.

Finally, in the chapter on "Language, culture and self: The Bakhtin-Vygotsky encounter," Ludmila Marchenkova draws a parallel between Bakhtin and Vygotsky to argue that these two scholars' theories complement each other in the areas of language, culture, and identity. Their similarities form a bridge between Bakhtin's literary theory and Vygotsky's theory of cognitive development, which in turn prepares the ground for interpreting Bakhtin's concepts in pedagogical key.

In her forthcoming book *Dialogic approaches to Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages: Where the Gingko tree grows*, Shelley Wong traces the roots of dialogic pedagogy in both Eastern and Western ancient philosophies and modern pedagogies of liberation, including the dialogic perspective of Bakhtin, to argue for integrating anti-racist, feminist, and critical approaches in TESOL. Bakhtin's theory plays a particularly important part in this project because of its emphasis on the active role of the user of language. "Bakhtin's theory suggests," Wong points out, "that we have an active role to play in our use of language; our 'doing' language is transformative not only of ourselves but also of the language itself."

Conclusions

The above literature review demonstrates that there is an acknowledged need for new theoretical resources in SLA and that a significant number of scholars have already

found Bakhtin's ideas relevant and applicable to their research goals in SLA. Some of the concepts from Bakhtin's theory of dialogue are already being used in a wide range of discussions involving language, culture, and self. Bakhtin's name is frequently mentioned in conjunction with Vygotsky and Voloshinov. Many authors indicate that Bakhtin's thought holds a great potential for second and foreign language studies and that it should be studied further for this purpose. Acquaintance with Bakhtin began about twenty years ago but interest in his theories has intensified over the past few years, especially with the beginning of the twenty-first century. This confirms Emerson's prediction that Bakhtin's ideas would become particularly relevant to educational theory and practice in the new century (1997, pp. 274-276).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

"My word remains in the continuing dialogue, where it will be heard,
answered, and reinterpreted" (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 300)

Method

The methodology of this study is determined by the needs of textual and
intertextual interpretation and analysis, and is based on the hermeneutic method. The use
of this method is dictated by my research questions, the material that I study, and the
nature of conclusions that I seek to demonstrate. The main research question is about the
relevance of Bakhtin's ideas to SLA research and theory. In order to answer this question
I must examine a group of texts that constitute the material of the study. This material
consists of Bakhtin's own theoretical texts and those of commentators on his writings and
ideas. Very importantly, it also includes texts from second and foreign language studies
where Bakhtin's concepts have already been used and referred to. The conclusions that I
hope to derive from this material are theoretical in nature. The theoretical orientation of
my work precludes the use of any empirical method of research. I do hope, however, that
my theoretical conclusions will eventually be used for empirical research in our field, but
before this can happen Bakhtin's ideas must become familiar to researchers in SLA
Familiarizing SLA researchers with these ideas is the purpose of the present work.

My dissertation is thus an example of qualitative inquiry. According to the
Handbook on Qualitative Research (2000, 2nd edition), the three main approaches

available to a qualitative researcher include interpretivism, philosophical hermeneutics, and social constructionism (Swandt, 2000, pp. 189-213). In contrast to natural sciences that seek causal explanations of natural phenomena, social and human sciences attempt to understand human action and texts; for this they rely on interpretation. All three methods involve interpretation, but they differ in the position and the role of the interpreter. Interpretevism is a methodology that is based on the objectivist and detached position of the interpreter with regard to the texts and phenomena that he or she attempts to understand (ibid., p. 194). The main objective is to understand the text, phenomenon, or action in question. While my research does involve an attempt to understand Bakhtin's texts, it aims also to bring the meaning of these texts closer to the concerns of SLA, which makes interpretivism too limiting for my tasks. Social constructionism is likewise an unsuitable method for me because it is primarily interested in exposing the political, ideological, and power-related underpinnings of texts and social activities. It is further interested in using scholarship to promote social and political change. Thus if interpretivism tends to make the interpreter a passive recipient of the text's "objective" meaning, social constructionism, by contrast, tends to turn the text into an instrument used by the interpreter for social, political, or cultural action. While Bakhtin's ideas can be studied in this vein, and they are in fact broadly used by social constructionists (deconstructionists, critical theorists, and feminist theorists), I am interested in the theoretical and philosophical rather than ideological and political potential of Bakhtin's thought for SLA research. Among these three methods, philosophical hermeneutics best suits my research questions and goals. It occupies the middle position between interpretivism and social constructionism. It recognizes the need for understanding the text itself but at the same time sees the interpreter as an active participant in such an understanding. The general concept of interpretation has been described as follows:

> An interpreter is someone who helps another understand the meaning of
> something. What is to be understood is already there, but it is unable to speak for

itself. Its message needs mediation through the interpreter's special knowledge and skill. In Latin, the word *interpres* refers to a negotiator, mediator, or messenger, as well as to an expounder or explainer. . . . [*H*]*ermeneutics* comes from a Greek word meaning variously to translate, to put into words, or to explain. (Marshall, 1992, p. 159)

My role is an active one because I act as a mediator between two different fields, Bakhtin studies and SLA theory. On the one hand, Bakhtin's theory of dialogue is "already there"; on the other hand, it is not sufficiently familiar to SLA researchers. Further, Bakhtin and SLA speak largely different conceptual languages. Thus my role is to translate Bakhtin's ideas into a language that would be more readily understood by my colleagues in SLA. This involves explaining Bakhtin's ideas in such a way that one can see their relevance to SLA concerns. The concepts of Lev Vygotsky's theory of cognitive development are useful in these explanations because they have parallels to Bakhtin's thought and have already found recognition and are widely used in our field. I use my special skills for interpreting Bakhtin, which include knowledge of Bakhtin's writings, as well as of Bakhtin studies, and my background in SLA theory. This allows me to become a mediator and negotiator between these two areas. My knowledge of the historical context in which Bakhtin developed his ideas, as well as of the cultural and intellectual tradition to which he belonged, also constitutes the special skills that I bring to the task. And, last but not least, my knowledge of the Russian language is helpful in understanding the meaning and connotations of Bakhtin's ideas.

The method is derived from the writings of Hans-Georg Gadamer, predominantly his seminal study *Truth and Method* (1975/1998) and *Kleine Schriften* (1977, Russian translation 1991). Hermeneutic analysis is used in this study for inquiry into Bakhtin's texts, as well as the works by the commentators on Bakhtin's writings. Gadamer's hermeneutics is particularly well suited to dealing with Bakhtin's writings because both the Russian and the German thinker belonged to the same philosophical tradition.

Moreover, Gadamer had a deep and abiding interest in the concept of dialogue (Schmidt, 1997; Weinsheimer, 1985). His understanding of dialogue was in fact close to that of Bakhtin. In the preface to the Russian edition of his *Kleine Schriften* Gadamer (1991) wrote, for example: "The fundamental truth of hermeneutics is this: the truth cannot be cognized or communicated by any single individual. To encourage dialogue, to let the dissenter speak his word, and to be able to assimilate what he says—this is the soul of hermeneutics" (p. 8, my translation).

According to Gadamer (1975/1998), "the task of hermeneutics [is] first and foremost the understanding of texts" (p. 392). The meaning of a text emerges as a result of the interpreter's negotiation with it. "The understanding of something written," explains Gadamer, "is not a repetition of something past but the sharing of a present meaning" (p. 392). This meaning is not something "objective" that exists apart from such a negotiation; interpretation is a necessary condition for its existence. Or, to put it in Gadamer's words, "Understanding occurs in interpreting" (p. 389). An interpreter always brings along a certain perspective and particular interest. Rather than hindrances, these are indispensable for our dealing with texts. This is a point that Gadamer emphasized:

> To try to escape from one's own concepts in interpretation is not only impossible but manifestly absurd. To interpret means precisely to bring one's own preconceptions into play so that the text's meaning can really be made to speak to us. (p. 397)

Gadamer's approach justifies my reading of Bakhtin from the point of view of a second and foreign language researcher and educator. My presence as a researcher and teacher in my reading of Bakhtin, according to Gadamer's principles, is not an extraneous factor that impedes my understanding of him but, on the contrary, is a necessary condition for such an understanding. Further, a particular strength of Gadamer's method is that it takes seriously the cultural-historical context in which the analysed text is created. Gadamer (1975/1998) consistently argued that "understanding, as it occurs in the human sciences,

is essentially historical . . . in them a text is understood only if it is understood in a different way as the occasion requires" (p. 309). The text's context is not something that obscures its otherwise "pure" significance; on the contrary, it imbues the text with its concrete, distinct meaning. This is particularly useful in dealing with Bakhtin because many of his ideas can only be understood with his cultural-historical context in mind. In the chapters that follow I shall have ample opportunity to illustrate this point.

Perhaps the most important feature of Gadamer's hermeneutical method for this study is that this method includes the notion of application. Application, according to Gadamer, is a process by which the interpreter adapts the abstract meaning of a text to fit a specific situation and context. Bakhtin formulated a number of theories of universal scope and these need to be focussed to address the specific concerns of SLA. Such a "narrowing," Gadamer points out, is not a distortion, but an indispensable part of our engagement with any text that we try to understand (p. 392). The abstract aspect of the text constitutes only its partial meaning; a fuller meaning can only arise, Gadamer argues, as a result of adjusting this meaning to the reader's specific situation (p. 308).

To repeat, in order to be understood, texts should be applied to the interpreter's present situation. In my case, hermeneutic application consists in transferring what Bakhtin wrote in one context—or rather multiple contexts (literature, philosophy, literary theory, and theory of culture)—to my own "present situation" as a second language researcher and educator. Thus, this study involves an interaction between "two contexts: the original context of the textual 'utterance' and the new context of its reader/addressee" (Roberts, 1989, p. 124).

The meanings of Bakhtin's texts are not, however, completely determined by one's interpretation of them but possess a content of their own. In order to grasp this content, one must engage in a critical analysis of his writings. Such an analysis constitutes part of the hermeneutical method. It is particularly necessary in dealing with Bakhtin for the following reasons. First, there are multiple "layers" of interpretation

already imposed on Bakhtin's texts by several generations of scholars from a variety of fields. In order to get to Bakhtin's own understanding of his key concepts one must go to the original texts. Second, Bakhtin's own texts must be approached in a critical spirit as well because many of them were not finished or prepared for public consumption by the author himself, often jotted down as Bakhtin's brief notes to himself, frequently lacking in scholarly apparatus, and even doubtful as to their authorship.

Thus the methodological procedure in this study is comprised of the following steps. Since there is no single text in which Bakhtin provides a comprehensive account of his theory of dialogue, the first step consisted in (1) searching Bakhtin's writings for relevant statements that address the key concepts of his theory. Many such statements were made, however, by Bakhtin in different contexts and at different times throughout his life. This made it necessary to study the entire corpus of available Bakhtin's texts. No such work has been undertaken so far in our field. Furthermore, the amount of textual information that had to be sifted through was doubled by virtue of the fact that both Russian originals and English translations had to be consulted. Given the heterogeneous nature of Bakhtin's statements, the next step was to (2) analyse selected texts for consistency and variation. In addition to Bakhtin's own writings, this work also involved studying the extensive commentaries on his ideas in a variety of disciplines, including, most prominently, Bakhtin studies, sociocultural studies, culture studies, literary theory, education, sociology, psychology, and rhetoric—to mention just a few. In each of these fields Bakhtin's concepts have received different hues of interpretive meaning and therefore this part of the procedure included (4) intertextual analysis. In addition, over decades Bakhtin studies in the West and in Russia developed their own, distinct approaches to his legacy. My work with commentaries on Bakhtin, therefore, also included (5) a comparative analysis of the western and Russian approaches, respectively. Perhaps the most difficult and the most important part of the process was (6) to examine Bakhtin's theory of dialogue in light of three interrelated concepts: language, culture, and

identity. No such work has been undertaken so far in Bakhtin studies and this part of my analysis was my most creative contribution to the discussion of Bakhtin's theoretical legacy in general. And, finally, the last phase of this procedure consisted in (7) pointing out the potential significance of Bakhtin's ideas to the field of SLA. This work involved reviewing all literature in SLA studies where Bakhtin's ideas have been evoked so far. Further, there is a body of literature in SLA, which also had to be reviewed and analysed, where Bakhtin has not been referred to but can be potentially useful in discussing relevant issues.

Trustworthiness

In my investigations, I have relied on three main principles of trustworthiness in qualitative research (Altheide & Johnson, 1994). The most important principle has to do with the logical consistency of my interpretations, analyses, and constructions. I strive for a clear, non-contradictory comprehension of concepts and for their consistent use. The second principle has to do with prior literature by leading scholars in both Bakhtin studies and SLA. Whenever possible, I try to operate within a consensus regarding the interpretation of Bakhtin's theories and concepts. As was indicated above, however, these theories and concepts are often subject of controversy, and it is not always possible to rely on a consensus even among the most respected authors. In such cases, I have recourse to the first principle, i.e., I adhere to the interpretation that seems the most logical, reasonable, and adequate. The third way to check my preliminary conclusions was to present my interpretations of Bakhtin in relation to SLA at professional conferences and invited lectures. These presentations invariably gave me positive feedback, as well as useful suggestions and comments. In addition, an excerpt of this dissertation was published in a collection of essays, which I also co-edited, on applications of Bakhtin to S/FL learning—the first such volume in our field. And the fourth principle of trustworthiness consists in the fact that I filter Bakhtin's ideas through

my own professional and biographical experience. Over many years, I have accumulated first-hand knowledge of the process of SLA both from the teacher's and from the learner's perspective. In addition, I also have first-hand personal experience as someone who constantly find themselves on the boundary between two (or more) cultures. One of the reasons why Bakhtin has become so important to me is because I find in his legacy answers to the questions that arise before me as a result of these experiences. I find reinforcement of my own thinking in Gadamer's idea, resonating in turn with Bakhtin's opinion, that understanding "is not an isolated activity of human beings but a basic structure of our experience of life" (qtd. in Gallagher, 1992, p. 43). My research grows out of my desire to understand what happens to people like me in situations similar to mine. If Bakhtin's ideas seem to illuminate what I experience as a second and foreign language learner, immersed in another culture, I take it as a sign of their trustworthiness.

I realize that there is an irreducible element of subjective judgment in my method and that is why the first two principles are so important. In all cases, I adhere to the principles of scholarly ethics and try to be as objective, impartial, and consistent as possible. The problem of the subjective element in hermeneutical research is well recognized (Altheide & Johnson, 1994; Gallagher, 1992; Howard, 1982; Schwandt, 2000). Gadamer (1975/1998) himself replied to his critics as follows:

> There is undoubtedly no understanding that is free of all prejudices, however much the will of our knowledge must be directed toward escaping their thrall. . . . [T]he certainty achieved by using scientific methods does not suffice to guarantee truth. This especially applies to the human sciences, but it does not mean that they are less scientific; on the contrary, it justifies the claim to special humane significance that they have always made. The fact that in such knowledge the knower's own being comes into play certainly shows the limits of method, but not of science. Rather, what the tool of method does not achieve must—and really

can—be achieved by a discipline of questioning and inquiring, a discipline that guarantees truth. (pp. 490-491)

Textual issues

1. The main sources of information for this study are Bakhtin's original texts and their translations, supplemented by the writings of the members of the Bakhtin Circle, i.e., Valentin Voloshinov and Pavel Medvedev. The secondary sources include two groups of texts. The first one consists of Russian and Western commentaries on the writings of Bakhtin and the authors of his circle. And the second group comprises relevant SLA literature.

While I attempt to review all suitable primary sources, the most extensive use in the analyses below is made of the following works by Bakhtin.

Books:

1) *Problems of Dostoevsky's poetics*, first published in 1929, second edition published in 1963, English translation published in 1984;

2) *Rabelais and his world*, written in the late 1930s, first published in Russian in 1965, in English in 1968;

Essays:

1) "Discourse in the Novel," written in 1934-35, first published in 1975 in the volume of essays prepared for publication by Bakhtin himself, in English published in *The Dialogic imagination: Four essays by M. M. Bakhtin*, 1981;

2) "The problem of speech genres," written in 1952-53, first partially published in 1978, in English published in *Speech genres and other late essays,* 1986;

3) "The problem of the text in linguistics, philology, and the human sciences," written in 1959-61, published in 1979, in English published in *Speech genres and other late essays*, 1986;

4) "The problem of content, material, and form in verbal art," written in 1924, first published in 1976, published in English in *Art and answerability*, 1990;

5) "From the notes made in 1970-71," published in Russian in 1979, in English in *Speech genres and other late essays*, 1986;

6) "Toward a philosophical foundation of the human sciences," written in the end of the 1930s–beginning of the 1940s, in English published in 1978;

7) "Toward a methodology for the human sciences," written during the last years of his life, approximately in 1979, published in English in *Speech genres and other late essays*, 1986;

8) "Toward a reworking of the Dostoevsky book," written in Russian in 1961, first published in 1976, reprinted in 1979, in English published in *Problems of Dostoevsky's poetics*, 1984;

9) "Response to a question from the *Novy Mir* editorial staff," written and published in Russian in 1970, in English in *Speech genres and other late essays*, 1986;

10) "Voprosy stilistiki na urokakh russkogo yazyka v srednei shkole [Stylistics in teaching the Russian language in secondary school], first published in 1994, reprinted in 1996, in English first published on-line in 2004 under the title "Dialogic origin and dialogic pedagogy of grammar: Stylistics as part of Russian language instruction in secondary school" as part of E. Matusov's article " Bakhtin's debut in education research: Dialogic pedagogy";

11) "Author and hero in aesthetic activity," written in 1920-23, first published in 1986, in English published in *Art and answerability: Early philosophical essays by M. M. Bakhtin*, 1990;

12) "Toward a philosophy of the act," written in 1920-24, first published in 1991, in English published in *Toward a philosophy of the act*, 1993;

13) "Forms of time and of the chronotope in the novel," published in Russian in 1975, in English in *The Dialogic imagination*, 1981;

14) "From the prehistory of novelistic discourse," written in 1965-67, published in 1975, in English published in *The Dialogic imagination*, 1981.

The issues of language and dialogue are also discussed in Voloshinov's *Marxism and the philosophy of language*, published in Russian in 1929, in English in 1973; and *Freidianism*, published in Russian in 1927, in English in 1976; and in Medvedev's *The formal method in literary scholarship*, published in both languages in 1928 and 1978/1985, respectively.

2. In this study, I use both Bakhtin's works and those written by Voloshinov and Medvedev. The dispute on the authorship of the texts signed by Bakhtin's colleagues but believed by some to have been written by Bakhtin himself has not yet been finalized (for the summary of this discussion, see Steinglass, 1998). Positions on this issue vary among scholars both in Russia and in the West. Without trying to adjudicate the issue, I rely on the opinion of those who believe that the disputed texts were written by the authors of the Bakhtin Circle other than Bakhtin himself. One can name Emerson (1994, 1997), Morson & Emerson (1990), Matejka & Titunik (1986), Brandist (2002), Brandist, Shepherd, and Tihanov (2004) among those Western scholars who argue in this vein. Emerson succinctly summarized this opinion (1994): "Regardless of degree of influence or coauthorship. . . a good case could be made for leaving the signatories where they are, for the differences between Bakhtin's texts and the Marxist texts signed by his friends are significant. Voloshinov, for example, gives priority to 'productive relations' and "class struggle" in a society, whereas Bakhtin nowhere singles out economic forces as of determining importance" (p. 224n43). The opposite view is held, for example, by

Clark & Holquist (1984, see also Holquist, 1990) who believe that Bakhtin is indeed the author of the books *Marxism and the philosophy of language* (1929/1973), and *The formal method in literary scholarship* (1928/1978) signed by his colleagues Voloshinov and Medvedev, respectively.

3. The use of both Russian and Western commentaries is crucial for my argument. It presents, however, significant difficulties not only because of a large amount of commentary on Bakhtin, but also because commentators disagree widely with one another. In many respects the meaning and implications of Bakhtin's concepts still remain subject of dispute (for discussion of this, see Adlam, et al., 1997; Cook, 1994a). There is a notable division, for example, in the reception of Bakhtin's ideas between Western and Russian scholars. Whereas in the West Bakhtin's insights were absorbed most eagerly by the poststructuralist and postmodernist trends, in Russia his most remarkable contribution is largely seen in the personalistic and humanistic thrust of his legacy (Alexandrova, 1999; Bonetskaya, 1993; Davydova, 1992; Gogotishvili, 1992; Makhlin, 1990, 1992, 1993). To argue for one or another interpretation of Bakhtin would be a subject of a separate large study. In this dissertation I approach Bakhtin as a thinker who provides an alternative to both positivism and postmodernism. My focus is on the humanistic and personalistic dimensions of his theory of dialogue. This approach can also be found among Western scholars, most notably in Emerson's (1986, 1997, 2000, 2004) seminal writings on Bakhtin.

4. In this study, I use my translating skills in three different groups of texts that I use. 1) Some of Bakhtin's texts have not yet been translated into English, and I shall therefore have to provide my own translations of relevant excerpts. 2) There is also a large body of Russian literature on Bakhtin and related to my discussion issues that is not available to the English reader that I intend to bring into my discussion. 3) And the third

group of texts related to the main discussion consists of those written in languages other than English and translated into Russian which allows my access to them. When I refer to these texts, I either translate them into English when I quote or provide paraphrasing and/or summary of the ideas. Full references to the following texts are given in the Reference list provided in the end of this dissertation.

Bakhtin's texts (not available in English translation):

1) "Mnogoyazychie, kak predposylka razvitiya romannogo slova [Multilanguagedeness as the condition of the development of novelistic discourse]," first published in *Sobranie sochinenii v semi tomakh, tom 5* [Collected works in seven volumes, v. 5], 1996;

2) "Iz arkhivnykh zapisei k rabote 'Problemy rechevykh zhanrov': Dialog; Dialog I. Problema dialogicheskoi rechi; Dialog II [From the archive notes for 'The problems of speech genres': Dialogue; Dialogue I. The problems of dialogic speech; Dialogue II]," most of these notes were written in 1950s and most of them published in 1996.

Books and essays by Russian authors on Bakhtin and related issues:

1) Alexandrova, R. I. (1991). Kategorii "bytiya" i "soznaniya" v nravstvennoi filosofii M. Bakhtina [The concepts of "being" and "consciousness" in M. Bakhtin's moral philosophy];

2) Alexandrova, R. I. (1999). Bakhtin, Mikhail Mikhailovich;

3) Batishchev, G. S. (1992). Dialog ili polifoniya? (Antitetika v filosofskom nasledii Bakhtina) [Dialogim or polyphonism? (Antithetics in philosophical legacy of Bakhtin)];

4) Bogatyreva, E. A. (1993). M. M. Bakhtin: Aeticheskaya ontologiya i filosofiya yasyka [M. M. Bakhtin: Ethical ontology and philosophy of language];

5) Bogatyreva, E. A. (1996). *Dramy dialogizma: M. M. Bakhtin i khudozhestvennaya kul'tura XX veka* [The drama of dialogism: M. M. Bakhtin and literary culture of the 20th century];

6) Bonetskaya, N. K. (1993). M. M. Bakhtin i traditsii russkoi filosofii [M. M. Bakhtin and traditions of Russian philosophy];

7) Davydova, G. A. (1992). Kontseptsiya tvorchestva v rabotakh M. M. Bakhtina [The concept of creativity in M. M. Bakhtin's work];

8) Gogotishvili, L. A. (1984). *Opyt postroeniya teorii upotrebleniya yazyka (na osnove obshchefilologicheskoy kontseptsii M. M. Bakhtina)* [Constructing a theory of language use (based on M. M. Bakhtin's general philological theory)];

9) Gogotishvili, L. A. (1985). Khronotopicheskii aspect smysla vyskazyvaniya [The chronotopic aspect of the utterance's meaning];

10) Gogotishvili, L. A. (1992). Filosofiya yazika Bakhtina i problema tsennostnogo relativizma [Bakhtin's philosophy of language and the problem of axiological relativism];

11) Gurevich, P. S. (1992). Problema "Drugogo" v filosofskoi antropologii Bakhtina [The problem of "Other" in Bakhtin's philosophical anthropology];

12) Lotman, Y. (1992). *Kul'tura i vzryv* [Culture and explosion].

13) Makhlin, V. L. (1990). "Dialogizm" M. M. Bakhtina kak problema gumanitarnoy kul'tury [M. M. Bakhtin's "Dialogizm" as the problem of humanitarian culture];

14) Makhlin, V. L. (1992). Nasledie M. M. Bakhtina v kontekste zapadnogo postmodernizma [M. M. Bakhtin's legacy in the context of western postmodernism];

15) Makhlin, V. L. (1993). Bakhtin i Zapad [Bakhtin and the West];

16) Medvedev, V. I. (1991). Problema konteksta u M. Bakhtina v zapadnoi filosofii yazyka [The problem of M. Bakhtin's context in Western philosophy of language]

17) Naumova, T. N. (1985). L. S. Vygotsky i lingvistika XIX-nachala XX vekov [L. S. Vygotsky and linguistics of the XIX-beginning of the XX centuries];

18) Palazhchenko, P. (2004). Dialog kul'tur v yazykovom prostranstve mira [The dialogue of cultures in the linguistic reality of the world];

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23) Solomadin, I. M. (2000). "Ya" i "drugoi" v kontseptsii Bakhtina i neklassicheskoi psikhologii Vygotskogo ["I" and "the other" in the theory of Bakhtin and nonclassical psychology of Vygotsky];

Other texts translated into Russian (not available in English translation):

1) Gadamer, H-G. (1991). *Aktual'nost' prekrasnogo* [The actuality of the beautiful]. (Original work, *Kleine Schriften*, published in 1977);

2) Jauss, G.-R. (1997). K probleme dialogicheskogo ponimaniya [Toward the problem of dialogical understanding]. (Original work was published in *Dialogizitat,* Hrsg. von Renate Lachman, Munchen, 1982).

CHAPTER 4

BAKHTIN'S THEORY OF DIALOGUE AND

SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING AND USE

"We must deal with the life and behavior of discourse in
a contradictory and multi-languaged world"
(Bakhtin, 1981, p. 275)

Introduction

Overview

The goal of this chapter is to argue for the relevance of Bakhtin's theory of

dialogue to SLA scholarship. The main research questions of this dissertation will be

addressed here. Three areas of research in SLA are taken into consideration: language,

culture, and identity. To address these areas, three particular themes in Bakhtin's thought

will be discussed: (a) language, (b) culture, and (c) the formation of the self.

The main difficulty of applying Bakhtin's categories to these areas of SLA stems

from the fact that this theory is philosophical in nature. Bakhtin's thought reaches far

beyond questions of communication, pragmatics, stylistics, and discourse analysis. Its

most basic issue was the formation of "an individual's coming to ideological

consciousness" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 348) in language and culture. The task below thus

consists in a reading of Bakhtin with an especial focus on a group of concepts that have

potential benefit for SLA. Such concepts include—but are not limited to—*dialogue,*

utterance, *addressivity*, *voice*, *double-voicedness*, *outsideness*, *heteroglossia*, *polyphony*,

answerability, and *genre*. As their meaning in Bakhtin's theory of dialogue is discussed, these concepts will also be interpreted in the light of problems and concerns that preoccupy current SLA theory.

Prior to the main discussion, I provide a justification for using Bakhtin's theory in SLA research and practice, based on Bakhtin's own remarks about dialogue and foreign language. The section on language will address Bakhtin's notion of metalingustics and a number of concepts that form the core of his theory of dialogue. The subsequent sections will be devoted to Bakhtin's theories of culture, personal identity, and understanding, respectively. For Bakhtin, understanding among human beings is the culminating moment for the sake of which dialogue exists, with all elements of its complex and dynamic structure. The common thread that runs through these themes consists in Bakhtin's analyses of dialogic relations between cultures, individuals, and within individual consciousness.

Parallel to the discussion of Bakhtin's theory of dialogue, Vygotsky's psychological theory will also be touched upon in order to show how Vygotsky can be used to bring Bakhtin's ideas closer to SLA. I juxtapose Bakhtin's and Vygotsky's ideas on language and examine how they applied the dialogic principle to language use, conceived intercultural understanding, and viewed the formation of the self. In seeking ways to apply Bakhtin's concepts to language pedagogy one must realize that pedagogical concerns were not a part of his academic and intellectual interests and that Bakhtin didn't leave behind an explicit theory of learning.   His theory of language and literature is not by itself a pedagogy, but it can doubtless be useful for articulating a theory of learning language and culture.   It needs to be linked with pedagogical concerns, and Vygotsky's (1978, 1986, 1987) theory of cognitive development can provide such a link. The ways in which Bakhtin's concepts appear to be relevant to the second language context are pointed out in the course of the discussion. At the end of the chapter a diagram will be provided, representing Bakhtin's view of dialogue.

Bakhtin on Foreign Language

The possibility of applying his theory to both spoken and written discourse in a foreign and second language was both directly and indirectly acknowledged by Bakhtin himself. So far his statements on this topic have remained unnoticed in Bakhtin studies literature. The most telling remark of this sort can be found in his essay "From notes made in 1970-71," written in the last years of Bakhtin's life. "I understand the other's word (utterance, speech work)," he wrote, "to mean any word of any other person that is spoken or written *in his own (i.e., my own native) or in any other language* [italics added], that is, any word that is *not mine*" (Bakhtin, 1986b, p. 143). This means that, for Bakhtin, the phrase "the other's word (language)" referred equally to a person's native and foreign language. Bakhtin himself knew five foreign languages: Greek, Latin, German, English, and French (Alexandrova, 1999). Since he was equally fluent in Russian and German, it was easy for him to think of the other's word as spoken either in one's native or a foreign language. Bakhtin's major essay on philosophy of language, "Discourse in the novel," may be recognized as his account of an individual's ideological becoming in the process of the assimilation of others' discourse. Speaking of authoritative discourse (the notion that will be explained below), Bakhtin again points out the use of foreign language as the word of the other. "Often the authoritative word," he notes, "is in fact a word spoken by another in a foreign language" (1981, p. 343n).

Generally speaking, Bakhtin often referred to foreign cultures in his theory of dialogue, which he understood as relevant to what we now call intercultural communication. In the late 1960s-1970s, the time of the Cold war, for example, he was particularly interested in "the relation between one's own society and other cultures that are foreign to it in space or time" (Holquist, 1986b, p. xii). And, finally, as will be shown below, Bakhtin's analyses of novelistic discourse can also serve as a framework for the discussion of multilingual and multicultural communication. The gist of Bakhtin's

attitude is summarized in the following statement: "We must deal with the life and behavior of discourse in a contradictory and multi-languaged world" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 275). Further, Bakhtin viewed the knowledge of other languages as a factor that enriches both the first and additional language and culture, and personal identity. "For multilingual consciousness," he wrote in his essay on heteroglossia, "language attains a new quality, becomes something quite different than what it was for a deaf monolingual consciousness" (Bakhtin, 1996, v. 5, p. 157, my translation).

One must admit, however, that, suggestive as they are, Bakhtin's own allusions to foreign languages are in most cases indirect. The historical context in which Bakhtin lived did not include the notion of a 'second' language as it is understood in the discussions of SLA. Any language and culture, other than native, were foreign for him and his countrymen. However, V. N. Voloshinov (1973) explicitly wrote about what he called the "problem of alien or foreign discourse" in his essay *Marxism and the philosophy of language* (pp. 73-76). He believed that, while it had been ignored in linguistics, foreign language discourse had an enormous part in language consciousness.

Research Question 1: *In what ways can Bakhtin's theory of dialogue help us understand the contexts, conditions, and processes of second language learning and use?*

Language and language use; linguistics and metalinguistics

According to Christopher Brumfit (2001), over the past fifty years, there has been a shift in language teaching and more specifically the teaching of English. The focus moved from literature to speech and communication and eventually to the notion of communicative competence. As part of this process Brumfit (2001) singles out three major changes: the rise of linguistics and sociolinguistics as academic disciplines; global economic developments of the 1970s that encouraged a strong interest in learning English; and, finally, "the impact of a philosophical tradition which originates mainly in

the non-English speaking world. . . and has roots in a variety of sources including major writers such as Bakhtin and Vygotsky in the first decades of the Soviet Union, and the structuralist programme of Saussure" (p. 119). This dissertation addresses the third factor identified by Brumfit. The parallels and contrasts among the three key figures that he mentions will be part of the discussion in this chapter.

As was mentioned in the first two chapters, the predominant approach to language in SLA is derived from traditional linguistics, rooted in the ideas of de Saussure (1916/1974). Attempts have been made in recent decades to move away from this paradigm, among which sociolinguistics, pragmatics, conversational analysis, critical discourse analysis, and sociocultural studies are particularly visible. Bakhtin's view of language anticipates and lends support to such attempts.

Bakhtin scholars have noted that his philosophy of language offers an approach conceptually different from two major European approaches to language: the German "individualistic subjectivism," founded by Wilhelm von Humboldt, and the French "abstract objectivism," deriving from the Cartesian tradition and elaborated by Ferdinand de Saussure (Makhlin, 1993). It is worth noting that Bakhtin's contemporaries, the so-called "Russian Formalists" of the 1920s, among them Roman Jakobson, Vladimir Propp, Viktor Shklovsky, Boris Tomashevsky, and Iurii Tynianov, worked within the framework of the latter tradition. Formalists thought of language as "a stock of linguistic resources, i.e. expressions with associated semantic representations (abstract or decontextualized meanings) which are integrated within systems" (Linell, 1998, pp. 3-4). In contrast to Bakhtin for whom language use was primary, they regarded discourse as secondary (ibid.). Later American linguists, like Noam Chomsky, also found their inspiration in Saussure's thought. Bakhtin's approach challenges the most basic assumptions of these schools, Humboldt's, Saussure's, or Formalist alike.

There are several key features in Bakhtin's discussion of language that distinguish his view from these approaches. The most important among them is that language is an

intrinsically social, "interindividual" phenomenon (Bakhtin, 1986a, p. 121). For Bakhtin, language emerges in the self's communication with the other. As a consequence, he views language not through the prism of form and meaning, but as inclusive of speech practice. He frequently uses such notions as "speech life of peoples" (e.g., 1986a, p. 166), "live speech" (e.g., 1986a, p. 147), "living word" (e.g., 1981, p. 276), and "the concrete life of the word" (e.g., 1984a, p. 181). Thus, it is important to remember that the object of Bakhtin's linguistic analysis is speech in the context of living communication, i.e. language in practice.

In addition, in Bakhtin's philosophy of language, the concept of dialogue plays the most fundamental part. Dialogue, he believed, creates the possibility of language; language emerges from dialogue and is, conversely, the essential medium of dialogue. Closely related with this idea is Bakhtin's conviction that the multiplicity of voices, which he called heteroglossia, belongs to language at the most basic level, down to a single word. And finally, language is also, according to Bakhtin, paramount for the formation of one's worldview and personal identity. In sum, for Bakhtin, language is dynamic, multivoiced, and contextual.

Morson and Emerson (1990) note that "Bakhtin means to offer not just a set of detachable terms, nor even a new set of techniques, but a fundamentally different approach to both language and literary discourse in their entirety " (p. 20). In other words, Bakhtin believed that the study of language requires an examination of questions that go beyond the usual scope of linguistics and encompass the philosophical, cultural, and historical aspects of "language in its concrete living totality" (1984a, p. 181). He insisted on an intimate connection between language and the living reality of a person's existence. "Every utterance makes a claim to justice, sincerity, beauty, and truthfulness (a model utterance), and so forth," he wrote. "And these values of utterances are defined not by their relation to the language (as a purely linguistic system), but by various forms of relation to reality, to the speaking subject and to other (alien) utterances (particularly

to those that evaluate them as sincere, beautiful, and so forth)" (Bakhtin, 1986a, p. 123).
This is the import of the study that he proposed to call *metalinguistics*. Later authors
changed this term to *translinguistics* (Clark & Holquist, 1984; Holquist, 1986; Todorov,
1984; Wertsch, 1991). Bakhtin (1984a) described the nature of this discipline as follows:

> Metalinguistics [is] the study of those aspects in the life of the word. . . that
> exceed—and do so completely legitimately—the boundaries of linguistics. Of
> course, metalinguistic research cannot ignore linguistics and must make use of its
> results. Linguistics and metalinguistics study one and the same concrete, highly
> complex, and multi-faceted phenomenon, namely, the word—but they study it
> from different sides and different points of view. They must complement one
> another, but they must not be confused. (pp. 181-82)

Bakhtin (1984a) then defines the subject-matter of metalinguistics as "dialogic
relationships" in language because "language lives only in dialogic interaction of those
who make use of it" (pp. 182-83). He and the authors of the Bakhtin circle insist on the
relevance of the concrete, localized, situational, and historically bounded uses of
language. Summing up his objections to the Saussurian view, Voloshinov (1973)
emphasizes, for example, the social and contextual nature of the origins and evolution of
language:

> Language acquires life and historically evolves precisely here, in concrete verbal
> communication, and not in the abstract linguistic system of language forms, nor in
> the individual psyche of speakers. (p. 95)

Such an approach brings Bakhtin into conflict with later trends that evolved from
the Saussurian theories, such as structuralism and semiotics. Structural linguistics and
semiotics, he believes, limit themselves "with the transmission of ready-made
communication using a ready-made code. But in live speech . . , communication is first
created in the process of transmission, and there is, in essence, no code" (Bakhtin, 1986a,
p. 147).

Bakhtin's differences with structuralism stem from his basic disagreement with the objectivist, scientistic approach to language. He argues against viewing language as an indifferent and fixed object governed by abstract laws. Structuralism, he charges, transforms language into concepts and thus turns it into an abstraction. For Bakhtin, such a view of language is incorrect because it fails to reflect its underlying dialogic relations. "In language as the object of linguistics," he argued, "there are not and cannot be any dialogic relationships: they are impossible both among elements in a system of language (for example, among words in a dictionary, among morphemes, and so forth), and among elements of 'text' when approached in a strictly linguistic way" (Bakhtin, 1984a, p. 182). He sought to overcome this limitation by including within the scope of investigation the context of the concrete use of language by the human individual among other individuals. "Contextual meaning," Bakhtin insisted, "is personalistic; it always includes a question, an address, and the anticipation of a response, it always includes two speakers (as a dialogic minimum)" (1986a, p. 170). It is not surprising, then, that Bakhtin regarded the object of linguistics as monologic, in contrast to his own understanding of the word as dialogic.

The trend toward exploring the concepts of discourse and speech communication is precisely the area within SLA where some scholars have found Bakhtin's ideas useful. The number of studies inspired by Bakhtin's thought is growing (for detailed discussion see Chapter 2). Given the importance of dialogic relations in Bakhtin's philosophy of language, it will be worthwhile now to take a closer look at the key concepts of his theory of dialogue.

Dialogue

The discussion in this section aims to explain what makes Bakhtin's theory of dialogue especially relevant for multilingual and multicultural contexts where the difference between the self and the other is not only a matter of individual idiosyncrasies

but is also complicated by the linguistic and cultural divide.

Bakhtin's theory of dialogue is the common thread that runs through his views on language, culture, and personhood. Bakhtin's main philosophical theme is the dialogic relations between persons, between cultures, and between a person and culture. Morson and Emerson (1990) observe, for example, that, contrary to a widespread misconception, dialogue for Bakhtin is not simply a verbal act of interaction (p. 49). Rather, Bakhtin understood it as universal communication, which is the basic principle of both culture and individual human existence (Gurevich, 1992). Emerson (1997) thus comments on its meaning in Bakhtin's work:

> By dialogue, Bakhtin means more than mere talk. What interested him was not so much the social fact of several people exchanging words with one another in a room as it was the idea that each word contains within itself diverse, discriminating, often contradictory "talking" components. The more often a word is used in speech acts, the more contexts it accumulates and the more its meanings proliferate. . . . Understood in this way, dialogue becomes a model of the creative process. It assumes that the healthy growth of any consciousness depends on its continual interaction with other voices, or worldviews. (p. 36)

Thus, in addition to communication in the narrow sense, Bakhtin's conception of dialogue also embraces creativity and the formation of personal identity. Further, dialogue is a truth-generating process: "Truth is not born nor is it to be found inside the head of an individual person, it is born *between people* collectively searching for truth, in the process of their dialogic interaction" (Bakhtin, 1984a, p. 110).

Dialogue: Utterance and addressivity

Bakhtin examined dialogic relations as applicable to a variety of contexts. He described dialogue in the usual sense of the word as external compositional dialogue. External dialogue is a verbal exchange in which interlocutors take turns to deliver their utterances and responses. This type of dialogue, according to Bakhtin (1981), "is studied merely as a compositional form in the structuring of speech, but the internal dialogism of the word, the dialogism that permeates its entire structure, all its semantic and expressive layers, is almost entirely ignored" (p. 279).

"Internal dialogism of the word," also called "internal dialogue" or "microdialogue" (e.g., 1984, p. 184), was of paramount interest to Bakhtin. For him, any utterance, whether spoken or written, that people use in communication with each other is internally dialogic because of its "dialogic orientations" (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 92). First and foremost, Bakhtin (1986a) insisted on viewing *utterance* [*vyskazyvanie*] as always directed toward the other utterance or toward the responsive utterance of the rejoinder in dialogue, and hence his concept of *addressivity* [*obrashchennoct'*], which he understood as utterance's being addressed to someone, i.e. "the quality of [the speaker's] turning to someone else" (p. 99). This quality constitutes, according to Bakhtin, a necessary condition for an utterance, which must be addressed to someone and seek response from someone. Bakhtin draws a contrast between an utterance and such units of linguistic analysis as words and sentences. As they are usually viewed in linguistics, he points out, these units

> belong to nobody and are addressed to nobody. Moreover, they in themselves are
> devoid of any kind of relation to the other's utterance, the other's word. If an
> individual word or sentence is directed at someone, addressed to someone, then
> we have a completed utterance that consists of one word or one sentence, and
> addressivity is inherent not in the unit of language, but in the utterance. (Bakhtin,
> 1986a, p. 99)

Closely related to such an understanding of utterance is Voloshinov's perception of it.

Voloshinov (1973) wrote, for example:

> To understand another person's utterance means to orient oneself with respect to it, to find the proper place for it in the corresponding context. For each word of the utterance that we are in process of understanding, we, as it were, lay down a set of our own answering words. The greater their number and weight, the deeper and more substantial our understanding will be. (p. 102)

I understand this as a statement about the listener's active role in a dialogue, that is the idea that the listener's participation shapes the dialogue along with the speaker's contribution. The same can be said about the dialogue between the reader and the writer, and meaning construction from the text. This seems to be simply another way of saying that, through their perspective, outlook, and "conceptual horizons," the listener and the reader also have a voice in a dialogue, even when they are silent. A communication is thus always a multivoiced process. Voloshinov's (1973) elaboration on this is marked by its own peculiar overtones:

> Orientation of the word toward the addressee has an extremely high significance. In point of fact, *word is a two-sided act*. It is determined equally by *whose* word it is and *for whom* it is meant. As word, it is precisely *the product of the reciprocal relationship between speaker and listener, addresser and addressee*. Each and every word expresses the "one" in relation to the "other." I give myself verbal shape from another's point of view, ultimately, from the point of view of the community to which I belong. A word is a bridge thrown between me and another. If one end of the bridge depends on me, then the other depends on my addressee. A word is a territory shared by both addresser and addressee, by the speaker and his interlocutor. (p. 86)

> Thus, according to their shared approach, utterance or, as they also put it, "word" intrinsically possesses an internal orientation toward an addressee. But there is also

another aspect of utterance in which both authors discerned dialogic relations. This aspect can be understood as socio-historical, although neither Bakhtin nor Voloshinov used this term themselves. Bakhtin (1984a) described this aspect of utterance as follows:

> [The word] never gravitates toward a single consciousness or a single voice. The life of the word is contained in its transfer from one mouth to another, from one context to another context, from one social collective to another, from one generation to another generation. In this process the word does not forget its own path and cannot completely free itself from the power of these concrete contexts into which it has entered. (p. 202)

By saying this Bakhtin emphasizes that as speakers and writers we do not create our own words out of nothing. We use and reuse what others have brought to us, what has been already known and said—now shaping those words differently, reflecting on them, evaluating them, and sending them further in our communication with others. The socio-historical aspect of internal dialogue is characterized by the presence of the others' words in one's utterance, by the words that have "already [been] spoken" (Bakhtin, 1981, pp. 279-280), the so-called "preceding links in the chain [of speech communication]" (Bakhtin, 1986a, p. 93). In Bakhtin's (1986a) own words, "our speech, that is, all our utterances [are] . . . filled with the words of our others" (p. 89). Bakhtin (1981) described the dialogic structure of an utterance in the following terms:

> In the makeup of almost every utterance spoken by a social person—from a brief response in a casual dialogue to major verbal-ideological works (literary, scholarly and others)—a significant number of words can be identified that are implicitly or explicitly admitted as someone else's, and that are transmitted by a variety of different means. Within the arena of almost every utterance an intense interaction and struggle between one's own and another's word is being waged, a process in which they oppose or dialogically interanimate each other. (p. 354)

This "intense interaction and struggle between one's own and another's word"

within an utterance makes possible the creation of one's own voice, that is becoming the author of one's own discourse. (The detailed mechanism of this process will be discussed below in the subsection on "Authoritative and internally persuasive discourse.")

Bakhtin (1986a) proposed an elaborate phenomenology of utterance as "the real unit of speech communication" (p. 71) but this phenomenology did not receive a systematic consideration in his own writings. Summarizing what Bakhtin wrote on various occasions, one can point to the following key characteristics of utterance:

1) "The boundaries of each concrete utterance. . . are defined by a *change of speaking subjects*" (1986a, p. 71).

2) Corresponding to this external limit, is the internal one that Bakhtin called "finalization." Every utterance is finalized, he believed, and "the first and foremost criterion of the finalization of the utterance is *the possibility of responding to it* or, more precisely and broadly, of assuming a responsive attitude toward it" (1986a, p. 76). "The finalized wholeness of the utterance, guaranteeing the possibility of a response (or of responsive understanding)," he further argued, "is determined by three aspects (or factors) that are inseparably linked to the organic whole of the utterance: (1) semantic exhaustiveness of the utterance; (2) the speaker's plan or speech will; and (3) typical compositional and generic forms of finalization, i.e. *the choice of a particular speech genre*" (ibid., pp. 76-78).

3) Along with anticipating response, every utterance itself, Bakhtin pointed out, "must be regarded primarily as a *response* to preceding utterances of the given sphere." "Each utterance refutes, affirms, supplements, and relies," Bakhtin believes, "on the others, presupposes them to be known, and somehow takes them into account" (1986a, p. 91). This is true not only of oral utterances, but also of texts. Voloshinov (1973) spoke, for example, of the responsiveness of "a verbal performance in print." A text (such as a

book) anticipates discussion or response in the form of "actual, real-life dialogue," or "printed reaction" in the form of book reviews or critical surveys. At the same time it responds to previous texts and thus engages "in ideological colloquy of large scale: it responds to something, objects to something, affirms something, anticipates possible responses and objections, seeks support, and so on" (p. 95).

4) An utterance has a primary author—"a creator of the utterance whose position it expresses" (1984a, p. 184). Following Bakhtin's own logic, however, one could also say that every utterance has a secondary, implicit author, namely the addressee, whose anticipated response contributes to the utterance's semantic and syntactic characteristics. The presence of such multiple authors has been described by Bakhtin as "double-voicedness" (or "double-voicing").

5) Utterance should be viewed as "a link in the chain of speech communication of a particular sphere" (1986a, p. 94). This feature is the result of utterance's socio-historical nature that was mentioned above: an utterance, in other words, is not merely an individual unit but also carries the historical contexts of its own uses. It is shaped by its past and anticipates its own future. Such a view of utterance brings Bakhtin close to the phenomenological-hermeneutic approach to language. In addition to the features noted by Bakhtin, one could also adduce Voloshinov's (1973) observation that "the immediate social situation and the broader social milieu wholly determine—and determine from within, so to speak—the structure of an utterance" (p. 86).

6) An utterance also has an ethical dimension in the sense that it always contains an emotional-volitional orientation. The response that an utterance anticipates is not neutral but carries with it a sense of evaluation. Furthermore, an utterance itself must be seen, Bakhtin insists, as a moral act (1990, pp. 103-105; 1986a, pp. 166-167).

7) And, finally, an utterance should also be viewed, according to Bakhtin, as a creative act which raises the issues of authorship or the creating individual (1986a, pp. 119-20). These last two features of an utterance will be discussed in more depth further.

In sum, Bakhtin understood utterance as being limited by the compositional structure of a dialogue; finalized as a semantic whole requiring a response; implying responsive reactions to other utterances; formed by at least two voices; occupying a place in a socio-historical discursive tradition; and responding to a concrete social situation. To abbreviate even further, an utterance is finalized, responsive, historical, and situation.

It should be noted that Bakhtin used, interchangeably, the terms "utterance" and "word" to describe what nowadays scholars call "discourse." This terminological circumstance was pointed out by the Russian scholar V. L. Makhlin (1993) who believes that Bakhtin intended these terms to refer to a discursive act of speech consciousness that includes both uniquely expressive-subjective and social-objective characteristics.

Bakhtin's concept of utterance and, more broadly, dialogue, is in contrast with the communication model that has until recently been prevalent in SLA. Although the social context of communication was an important element in the early research on interaction in the 1960s, SLA later, in the 1970s and 1980s, came to draw upon the assumptions and attitudes inherent in the following three doctrines. Information-processing theory proposes the sender-receiver model (Ellis, 1999) that assumes that language is used for information exchange and, therefore, consists of inputs and outputs. Kramsch (2002) links such views of interaction with what she calls "the prevalence of the machine metaphor," i.e. "viewing the acquisition of a language as an information-processing activity where what gets negotiated is not contextual meaning, but input and output" (p. 1). The other two theories were the speech act theory (Searle, 1968, 1975) and functional theory (Halliday, 1973) with their assumption that linguistic function is primary to linguistic form (van Lier, 2002, pp. 142 & 157). Recently, however, the prevalence of these theories has been challenged by the re-emergence of new contextualist approaches. "The 1990s brought back the importance of context," comments Kramsch, "on a much larger cultural scale and, with it, a need to rethink the relation of language and other meaning-making practices in everyday life" (2002, pp. 3-4). Dialogic views of

communication are still struggling to establish themselves; they have found refuge, for the most part, in socio-cultural theory (Lantolf, 1994, 2000b; Hall, 1995, 1997, 1999) and in the newly emerging ecological perspective on language learning and teaching (Kramsch, 2002; van Lier, 1996, 2002). The ecological-semiotic perspective on language "focuses on the ways individuals relate to the world and to each other by means of linguistic and other sign systems "(van Lier, 2002, p. 147) and thus comes close to Bakhtin's understanding of communication.

Dialogue: Voice and double-voiced discourse

Utterance, according to Bakhtin, becomes possible only through the use of *voice* [*golos*], which he understood as both spoken and written channels of communication. But he also found dialogic relationships within an utterance, which he understood as a collision of two voices (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 184). Internal dialogic relations between these voices result in double-voicing or double-voiced discourse. According to Bakhtin (1971),

> someone else's words introduced into our speech inevitably assume a new (our own) intention, that is, they become double-voiced. . . . Our everyday speech is full of other people's words: with some of them our voice is completely merged, and we forget whose words they were; we use others that have authority, in our view, to substantiate our own words; and in yet others we implant our different, even antagonistic intention. (p. 187)

This means that the other voices are absorbed into our speech with the words and utterances of our others, either as anticipated responses of the listeners or as already pronounced and filled with their own intentions and meanings through the channels of linguistic and cultural traditions. This is another way by which Bakhtin describes how through an utterance one's voice is linked to the social context of language. As James Wertsch (1991) observes, for Bakhtin, "there is no such thing as a voice that exists in

total isolation from other voices. . . . He insisted that meaning can come into existence only when two or more voices come into contact: when the voice of a listener responds to a voice of a speaker" (p. 52).

However, Bakhtin reminds us time and again that the co-existence of voices in our consciousness is not always a peaceful process, but is sometimes a struggle or compromise. It is crucial to recognize that for Bakhtin voice was not merely an analytic concept but a moral category. In his discussion of Dostoevsky's novelistic poetics, for example, he established a distinction between an authentic and fictive voices within consciousness. The authentic voice is the one that connects the individual with the human community. The fictive voice, on the contrary, obscures this connection. In order for the authentic voice to manifest itself, it needs to overcome the fictive voices that push it into a monologue and prevent it from unfolding its own dialogic nature (Bakhtin, 1984a, p. 249).

Wertsch (1991) remarks that, according to Bakhtin, voice is a manifestation of the speaker's or the writer's overall perspective, worldview, conceptual horizon, intentions, and values (p. 51). Some linguistic anthropologists think of voice as a linguistically constructed persona (Duranti, 1997, p. 75). The concept of voice is thus closely related to that of identity. There is no clear distinction in literature between these two concepts. In Bakhtin's understanding, the major difference seems to be that voice is a representational means, a bridge between the author and the audience, something individual and unique for others to recognize and define as such. In other words, in voice the focus is on the author's self-expression for the readers to recognize and distinguish this particular author. There is no need to construct voice only for oneself.

The concept of voice was also intimately associated, for Bakhtin (1986a), with the concept of authorship; he spoke, for example of a search "for one's own (authorial) voice" (p. 91). Since the notion of the author connotes personhood and creativity, Bakhtin's "voice" had a personalistic creative dimension. "With a creative attitude

toward language," he insisted, "there are no voiceless words that belong to no one" (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 124). Thus, voice in his understanding is both a social and individual phenomenon. The concept of voice has proven to have a special appeal for authors working in L2 academic writing (Hirvela & Belcher, 2001; Ivanic & Camps, 2001; Ramanathan & Atkinson, 1999; Ramanathan & Kaplan, 1996). It has generated significant discussion and in recent years some authors in the question of identity have turned to Bakhtin for further insight (Cazden, 1993; Kramsch, 1993, 2003; Prior, 1998, 2001; Thesen, 1997).

And, finally, Bakhtin used the concept of voice to stress the differences between metalinguistics and structural linguistics. "I hear voices," he wrote, "in everything and dialogic relations among them" (1986a, p. 169). As was pointed out above, structural linguistics, according to Bakhtin, does not deal with dialogic relations and, hence, with voices in its units of analysis.

Dialogue: The other/otherness

Bakhtin's view of the role of the other in communication is of especial interest to SLA today. Although the concept of the other is finding increasing recognition in the field, its uses still remain limited and lack theoretical basis. At the same time the entire field of second and foreign language studies has to do, on the most fundamental level, with relations between one language and another, one culture and another, and one self and another self. The processes of language learning, cultural interaction, and self-formation are all based on the learner's relation to another language, another culture, and another self. The relation between the self and the other is therefore a basic condition of the learner. Thus the problem of the other is an indispensable part of any attempt to understand these processes. The existing theories do not give a sufficient account of the other in language learning and cultural communication. In Bakhtin's thought, by contrast, the concept of the other is richly elaborated and intimately linked to the rest of

his theory of dialogue. Bakhtin especially stresses the significance of the other in linguistic consciousness and discourse. "Our speech is full of other's words," he writes. He also notes that traditional linguistic approaches are incapable of accommodating the concept of the other in their models of human interaction. "The other's word," he remarks, "is an irrational concept from the point of view syntax and grammar," i.e. from the point of view of structural linguistics (Bakhtin, 1986a)

An especially important concept for Bakhtin was the *word* of the other. He spoke of three different types of words in discourse: neutral, belonging to the other, and one's own (Bakhtin, 1986a, p. 88). The mechanism of the relation between one's own and the other's word is described by both Bakhtin and Voloshinov with some detail. Bakhtin viewed the work of this mechanism as assimilation of the other's word into one's own. He spoke of understanding "as the transformation of the other's into one's own [word]" (Bakhtin, 1986a, p. 168). Further, Bakhtin also addressed the significance of the other for identity formation, which he also described in terms of "human consciousness" and "personality" (ibid., p. 143). He linked together thought, personhood, and language in one single vision: "After all, our thought itself—philosophical, scientific, and artistic—is born and shaped in the process of interaction and struggle with others' thought, and this cannot but be reflected in the forms that verbally express our thought as well" (ibid., p. 92).

It is important to recognize that in Bakhtin's theory of dialogue the other occupies a different position in comparison with how postmodernist discourse has defined it. The latter understands the other as marginalized, disenfranchised, non-western, and disempowered. This other is invariably opposed by the powerful, hegemonic, and monologic center. The struggle and resistance of such an other against the center's leveling power is the main theme of postmodern discourse on language and culture. This view is currently making inroads into SLA, especially in the study of identity and non-native-speaker issues (for the summary see Pavlenko, 2002). Poststructuralists, for whom

the question of reclaiming identity and finding "voice" is a major concern, find inspiration in Bakhtin's theories. Bakhtin's notion of the authority of the other, however, is different from the postmodernist model of power relations. In most general terms, Bakhtin's other is somebody who is not me, anyone other than I. But in many cases Bakhtin describes the other as the authoritative side in discourse. These others are defined historically, culturally, and contextually. The other's word, for Bakhtin, is the words of parents, teachers, religious authority, and cultural-historical tradition (1981, p. 324). Further, Bakhtin viewed the self's relation to the other not merely in terms of resistance and rejection, but in terms of appropriating the other's authority by the self—a process through which the self shapes itself. This process does not end, for Bakhtin, with the complete dissolution of the other; the other always remains part of the formula that defines the self.

In reading Bakhtin's statements about the relation between the self and the other one must always bear in mind the Russian thinker's historical context. The self opposes the authoritative other in the same manner that Bakhtin resisted the ideological authority of the Soviet regime. He was himself a marginalised self, a person who was crippled physically, exiled by the government to a remote territory, and silenced by censorship. Bakhtin's ideological other was the oppressive political regime that rejected any heteroglossia and polyphony of opinion. At the same time Bakhtin managed not to view the relations between the self and the other as catastrophically antagonistic. He rather advocated the model in which they were necessary for each other and in which the marginalized self gradually appropriated the authority and power of its other. In addition, one must bear in mind that the ultimate source for Bakhtin's model of dialogic relations between the self and the other was the "I and Thou" of the Marburg School, where "Thou" stands for God.

It is difficult to judge at the moment how exactly Bakhtin's understanding of the relation between the self and the other will impact the scholarly discourse in SLA. These

relations are a much disputed problem in Bakhtin studies and a matter of controversy with regard to the interpretations of Bakhtin in postmodernist theory. However, Bakhtin introduces an alternative view to the one currently being adopted by SLA and may open new possibilities for grappling with this difficult issue.

Bakhtin could, for example, be a useful ally to those SLA scholars who are beginning to approach the study of foreign languages from the point of view of L2 user. This is in contrast to the traditional approach where L2 user is "the other," i.e. the voiceless object of investigation, and the point of departure is the point of view of the native speaker. Scholars like Cook (2002), for example, are trying on the contrary to make the L2 user's perspective the point of departure for understanding second language learning processes.

There has also been in recent years an increase of interest in nonnative English speakers (NNS) issues.   One of the main questions in the debate is the problem of the empowerment of NNSs. The sources of their powerlessness are found in the established practice of unfavorable comparisons between NSs (native speakers) and NNSs. Many researchers perceive and describe NNS as handicapped, defective communicators and deficient native speakers who will never reach the level of genuine native speakers' language competence (cf. criticisms of such views in Varonis and Gass, 1985; Romaine, 1989; Blyth, 1995; Firth and Wagner, 1997; Hall 1997; Rampton, 1997; Cook, 1999, 2002).   Such an understanding of NNS position is also expressed and perpetuated through a dominant monologic academic discourse (Kachru, 1992, 1996; Kubota, 2001, 2002) that views language learning goals from the NS perspective and does not give room for NNS peculiar concerns.   The tendency to conceptualize NNSs in these terms disempower NNSs and hamper their learning process.   Their effect is also detrimental for NNESTs (nonnative-English-speaking-teachers) (Brain, 1999; Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 1999, 2001; Medgyes, 1994, 1999; Samimy & Brutt-Griffler, 1999; Samimy & Kurihara, forthcoming; Seidlhofer, 1999; Widdowson, 1994).   Some scholars argue that

models alternative to the native speaker models need to be formulated and used in pedagogical practices (Samimy & Kurihara, forthcoming).

The NS vs. NNS dichotomy may be of paramount significance in the Inner Circle countries, but, according to some scholars, it does not play such an important role in the countries of the Outer Circle and Expanding Circle. Thus, the concept of 'native speaker' is not always a valid yardstick for those who teach EFL (Kachru, 1988, 1992). Some believe that the NS/NNS issues have resulted from the spread of English as a world language (Canagarajah, 1999; Pennycook, 1994, 1998; Phillipson, 1992). Bakhtin's view on self–other positioning and relations may help both learners and teachers resist the disempowering effect of this approach and its rhetoric and recognize the shortcomings and limitations of the mainstream approach, in which NS competence is the ultimate standard for the knowledge of language.

Dialogue: Outsideness

A dialogue for Bakhtin (1986a) presupposes the concept of *outsideness* [*vnenakhodimost'*] (p. 7), i.e. the idea that in order to engage in a meaningful communication with one's "other" one needs to remain distinct from this "other" and in a manner of speaking "outside" of him or her. As Morson and Emerson (1990) observe, "outsideness creates the possibility of dialogue" (p. 55). If there is no such difference, then the interlocutors are simply identical with each other and dialogue collapses into monologue. Each of the participants in a dialogue, says Bakhtin, must retain his or her unique "self" and remain different from his or her counterpart(s). It is this state of the interlocutors' remaining different and unique with regard to one another that Bakhtin calls "outsideness."

This is an extremely important and valuable idea for understanding contemporary multilingual and multicultural processes. One needs to maintain one's own identity precisely in order to be able to speak to others and understand them. With regard to

language, when one studies a foreign or second language the task consists not in forgetting one's native or first language, but in learning the other language in contrast to it. "The dialogic contrast of *languages* . . ," writes Bakhtin, "delineates the boundaries of languages, creates a feeling for these boundaries, compels one to sense physically the plastic forms of different languages" (1981, p. 364). Outsideness is also a key category in the discussion of culture below.

Dialogue: Authoritative and internally-persuasive discourse

According to Bakhtin, one's own words are always partially the words of others. The word of the other can be authoritative, monologic, and admitting of no transformation by the interlocutor. In this case Bakhtin refers to it as authoritative discourse. When one reproduces this discourse, one speaks in inverted commas, as it were. Bakhtin calls such speech "quoted." Dialogue breaks down in such cases and communication does not happen. The same word, however, can become one's own, Bakhtin argues. He sees "an infinite gradation in the degree of foreignness (or assimilation) of words, their various distances from the speaker" (Bakhtin, 1986a, pp. 120-121). Thus the words of others can also be assimilated by the interlocutor and transformed into "indirect speech," as it were. In these cases, the words of others become partially one's own, and Bakhtin calls such speech "internally persuasive discourse."

Clearly, behind this distinction is Bakhtin's own historical context and experience. The Russian language in the twentieth century existed as a double-voiced discourse, consisting of the authoritative, official language of government and political authorities—dry, repetitious, and conventional, i.e. alien—and the unofficial, rebellious, rich, and colorful discourse, i.e. the language of the common people (Makhlin, 1993, p. 145). At the worst times, such as the years of the Stalinist repressions, the latter became a silenced language. However, the significance of Bakhtin's categories of authoritative and internally persuasive discourses cannot be limited to a particular historical context.

As Holquist notes, they are applicable to the growth of human consciousness in general. "Human coming-to-consciousness, in Bakhtin's view, is a constant struggle between these two types of discourse: an attempt to assimilate more into one's own system, and the simultaneous freeing of one's own discourse from the authoritative word, or from previous earlier persuasive words that have ceased to mean" (Holquist,1981, pp. 424-425).

Bakhtin (1981) viewed the relation between authoritative and internally persuasive discourses as a dynamic process in which one gradually makes the other's words one's own:

> As a living socio-linguistic concrete thing, as heteroglot opinion, language, for the individual consciousness, lies on the borderline between oneself and the other. The word in language is half someone else's. It becomes "one's own" only when the speaker populates it with his own intention, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention (pp. 293-294). . . . One's own discourse is gradually and slowly wrought out of others' words that have been acknowledged and assimilated, and the boundaries between the two are at first scarcely perceptible. (p. 345)

This process has, for Bakhtin, a pronounced ethical dimension. He sees one's own internally persuasive discourse in terms of "an intense interaction, a *struggle* with other internally persuasive discourses." "Our ideological development," continues Bakhtin, "is just such an intense struggle within us for hegemony among various available verbal and ideological points of view, approaches, directions, and values" (1981, pp. 345-346). In addition, Bakhtin views the word of internally persuasive discourse in aesthetic, creative terms.

> Its creativity and productiveness consist precisely in the fact that such a word awakens new and independent words, that it organizes masses of our words from within, and does not remain in an isolated and static condition. It is not so much

interpreted by us as it is further, that is, freely developed, applied to new material, new conditions; it enters into interanimating relationships with new contexts. (ibid.)

An interesting and effective example of the interplay of authoritative and internally-persuasive discourses is presented in Prior's (1998, 2001) study on mediated authorship. Prior views Bakhtin's categories as a framework for describing how language learning is linked to the formation of a person. He emphasizes the dialogic and dynamic nature of internally persuasive discourse through which "'others' words, practices, and worlds are slowly and selectively reaccentuated and interwoven into the evolving formation of a particular personal consciousness" (Prior, 1998, pp. 216-218).

Further, what Bakhtin has to say about the aesthetic or creative aspects of the transformation of authoritative into an internally persuasive discourse seems to be applicable also to language learning. "The effort to relate the individual to the social," comments Brumfit (2001), for example, "seeing the relationship between creative interpretation and social convention as the central content of learning, is compatible with what we know of language learning in natural circumstances" (p. 31). These examples demonstrate that Bakhtin's concepts have a potential for SLA research.

Dialogue: Value-laden nature of language

In Bakhtin's understanding of language a prominent place belongs to the idea that no utterance is value-neutral. Our entire discourse, according to Bakhtin, is saturated with ethical and aesthetic meanings. This is true of utterances within political, artistic, and even scientific contexts. Bakhtin (1990) insists that utterances come alive only insofar as they are "true or false, beautiful or ugly, sincere or deceitful, frank, cynical, authoritative, etc." (p. 292). He is quite aware of the fact that such a view of language is at odds with the traditional linguistic approach in which language is assumed to be value-

neutral and to consist of abstract, schematic rules. By contrast Bakhtin (1986a) maintains

that an utterance is not defined in merely formal terms, but is possesses what he calls

"contextual meaning" or, as he explains, "integrated meaning that relates to value—to

truth, beauty, and so forth—and requires a *responsive* understanding, one that includes

evaluation" (p. 125). Bakhtin also linked the value-laden nature of discourse to its

emotional charge (pp. 166-167).

Furthermore, in Bakhtin's view dialogue in general has an intrinsic ethical

dimension. When one engages in a dialogue with another person, Bakhtin believes, one

inherently assumes responsibility for what one says to that person and for that person

herself. It is not unusual for Bakhtin to speak of love as the main motivating force behind

dialogue. The ethical and humanistic import of Bakhtin's theory has been noted by

Holquist (1990): "Each time we talk, we literally enact values in our speech through the

process of scripting our place and that of our listener in a culturally specific social

scenario" (p. 63).

Dialogue: Creativity and authorship

Bakhtin understood one's involvement in a dialogue as a creative process.

"An utterance is never just a reflection or an expression of something already existing

outside it that is given and final," he maintained. "It always creates something that never

existed before, something absolutely new and unrepeatable . . ." The creative element in

a dialogue is set in counterpoint to the *given* nature of the language in which this creative

power is manifested. This given language is changed by one's participation in a

dialogue. "What is given is completely transformed in what is created" (Bakhtin, 1986a,

pp. 119-120). Bakhtin (1986a) understands "given" as "*past* meanings" which "can

never be stable (finalized, ended once and for all) – they will always change (be renewed)

in the process of subsequent, future development of the dialogue" (p. 170). Being

changed and renewed means being put in a new context, filled with new intentions—with

new "dialogic overtones" (p. 92). In learning either language or culture (whether alien or one's own), the given is linguistic and cultural resources that we find available to us, the material that is already there and already finalized for us (Morson & Emerson, 1990, pp. 170-171). It takes our creative force, evaluation, motivation, sense of purpose, investment, and agency to make them our own. Only in this creative act can we become the authors of our own discourse. Both American and Russian commentators have noted this aspect of Bakhtin's teaching (Alexandrova, 1999, p. 89; Emerson, 1997, 2000).

Dialogue: Heteroglossia and polyphony

Another important dimension of Bakhtin's theory is the idea of multiple dialogues constituting an act of communication. As we engage in a dialogue we bring to it a multiplicity of dialogues among cultures, historical backgrounds, social groups, genders, age groups, various levels of literacy, etc. The multitude of voices in a dialogue creates an interplay of discursive forces that Bakhtin (1981) called *heteroglossia* [*raznorechie, raznorechivost'*] (p. 270). Heteroglossia means that a single utterance may be shaped by a variety of simultaneously speaking voices that are not merged into a single voice, but "sing" their respective "melodies" independently within the context of the utterance. Holquist (1990) thus explains this concept:

> Heteroglossia is a situation of a subject surrounded by the myriad responses he or she might make at any particular point, but any one of which must be framed in a specific discourse selected from the teeming thousands available. Heteroglossia is a way of conceiving the world as made up of a roiling mass of languages, each of which has its own distinct formal markers. (p. 69)

Further, Bakhtin (1981) spoke of the processes that shape any discourse in terms of the interaction of *centripetal* (or "official") and *centrifugal* (or "unofficial") forces. By the former, he meant the forces that aspire toward a norm, standard, and fixed order,

whereas by the latter he meant those forces that resist systematic order, lead toward chaos, and result in constant change (pp. 270-271). Bakhtin (1981) understood language not as a homogeneous unity, but a simultaneous co-existence of many languages—those of social groups, "professional" and "generic," literary languages, languages of generations, etc. (p. 272). Duranti (1997) connects the concept of heteroglossia with the historical process of the formation of unified national languages. He notes that sociolinguists have found use for Bakhtin's concepts and evidence of the phenomena and processes that they describe. He further links heteroglossia to the question of identity formation (pp. 75-76).

The co-existence of languages is far from always peaceful but is rather marked by conflict and multiple struggles among these languages. This is typical not only of communication among individuals speaking one language, but also of communication that involves different (national) languages. This insight is especially relevant with regard to an emergent conflict that has been brought about by the proliferation of English as a world language and the related significant changes in indigenous languages, down to the question of their very existence. Closely related to these, are the questions of standard English and various local variants of the English languages.

This is the area of an on-going debate in second language studies. In her thought-provoking article "Arts of the Contact Zone," Pratt (1998) makes, for example, a passionate call for better ways to negotiate different processes of meaning-making, world views, literacies, and use of language(s), i.e. all ingredients of human existence in a world that is not homogeneous in its very nature. Pratt uses the term "contact zone" (p. 173) to characterize the concept, space, and outcomes of the real-world interactions among cultures and languages. This space may often be physically real and these outcomes both real and imaginable. Pratt's ideas of "contact zones," "imagined communities," and "safe houses" (p. 184) mirror the broader contexts of language use, such as World Englishes, English as an International Language (EIL), and cross-world/transcultural literacies.

Pennycook's (1994) book *The Cultural Politics of English as an International Language* is another contribution to this debate. In a way that parallels Pratt's allusions to "print capitalism" (1998, p. 180), Pennycook considers the term "linguistic imperialism" (promoted by Phillipson in his renowned 1992 book) most appropriate in the present English world community. Pennycook (1994) observes, for example, that in this community the use of EIL is no longer an issue of the users' deviating from the norms of standard and central English, "but rather how those acts of language use always imply a position within a social order, a cultural politics, a struggle over different representations of the self and other" (p. 34). Bakhtin would probably speak of these processes in terms of "centripetal" and "centrifugal" forces. Morson and Emerson (1990) observe, however, that "Bakhtin's admirers, especially Marxists . . . misinterpret centrifugal forces as a unified opposition." They note that Bakhtin himself viewed those forces as "messy and disorganized" (p. 30). This caution is addressed to theorists who, like Pennycook, have adopted neo-Marxism as a platform for the opposition to the linguistic imperialism of the English language (Pennycook, 1994, pp. 46-55).

Bakhtin's ideal is not mere heteroglossia, but polyphony, i.e., he sees the desired outcome of dialogue not simply as unrestrained play of centrifugal tendencies, but diversity brought under unity. By *polyphony* Bakhtin means a multiplicity of languages that is brought together under a single organizing principle. He calls the resulting unity of several languages "the *universum* of mutually illuminating languages" (Bakhtin, 1981, pp. 367-368). Necessary for such an harmonious arrangement of different languages, according to Bakhtin, "is a fundamental intersecting of languages *in a single given consciousness* [italics added], one that participates equally in several languages" (ibid.). The centrifugal forces of heteroglossia, in other words, must be balanced by the centripetal impulse of a single consciousness in order for polyphony to subsist.

Parallels with Vygotsky on language and dialogue

There seems to be a common conceptual ground between Bakhtin's and Vygotsky's respective views of language. They were both, for example, deeply interested in the social context of speech, explored language *in use*, and Bakhtin's (1981, 1984a, 1984b, 1986a, 1990, 1993) interest in dialogue was matched by Vygotsky's (1978, 1986) interest in language as an inherently social process mediating among persons during their shared activity.

While insisting on this conceptual parallelism, one must clearly see the differences between the two theories. Bakhtin's point of departure and field of inquiry is primarily literature and literary text, whereas Vygotsky's is developmental psychology, especially as it relates to education. Further, for Bakhtin's discussion of dialogue, it is more characteristic to address verbal texts in both written and oral forms, whereas Vygotsky is interested in interactive activity between real interlocutors, usually in dyads or small groups. Moreover, in contrast to Bakhtin's view, Vygotsky understood oral communication as dialogic and written communication as primarily monologic. "Written speech and inner speech," he wrote, "represent the monologue; oral speech, in most cases, the dialogue" (Vygotsky, 1986, p. 240). These similarities and differences should be remembered as one draws parallels between Bakhtin's and Vygotsky's ideas.

To recall the main points discussed in the previous sections, Bakhtin's main theme is the dialogic relations between persons, between cultures, and between a person and culture. Bakhtin's concept of dialogue embraces at once many levels of human experience and links together the themes of consciousness, history, worldview, language, and communication. These relations are based, in turn, on the concepts of identity and difference, of the self and the other. For all these ideas, one can find analogous ideas in Vygotsky's theory of learning.

Vygotsky is considered the founder of the cultural-historical approach to human development. He argued that cognitive development and higher order psychological functions are socially and culturally determined (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986). This idea underlines the importance of intersubjective interaction in learning. Among "higher order" psychological functions Vygotsky considered, for example, logical memory, selective attention, decision making, problem solving, acts of will, and comprehension of language. These functions are contrasted with "lower," natural mental functions, such as elementary perception, memory, and attention. Vygotsky attributed to language the major role in the development of higher psychological functions. Like Bakhtin, Vygotsky eschewed cognitivist (positivist) explanations of human personhood and insisted instead on interpersonal interaction and communication as instrumental for the development of consciousness. According to the Russian scholar Vladimir Ageyev (2003),

> one of the most consistent ideas of Vygotsky's work is his rejection of any attempt to use either individualistic or biological reductionism to explain the genesis and functioning of the human mind. Whatever simple or complex psychological processes were in question, Vygotsky had a real gift for demonstrating that the most interesting part, or component, of it is not inherited biologically, but caused by and originated in a special set of social interactions. (p. 434)

As a developmental psychologist, Vygotsky argues in *Thought and Language* (1934/1986) that language is a highly individual and at the same time social phenomenon. The child, Vygotsky observes, internalizes social language and makes it personal. Thinking and speech are viewed as originally two separate processes that are joined together at a later stage, when "thought becomes verbal and speech rational" (1986, p. 83). The relation between them, however, does not remain constant, but changes from one stage of child's development to another. Echoing Bakhtin's view of the role of

language in the formation of individual consciousness, Vygotsky indicates that speech and consciousness evolve in a constant interaction with each other, and this interaction determines their mutual evolution to a greater extent than their independent growth. "Their development depends not so much on the changes within these two functions," argues Vygotsky, "but rather on changes in the primary relations between them" (1986, p. Vygotsky (1978) understood language as a sign-and-symbol system that embodies culture and thus determines consciousness and personality. "Thought development," he believed, "is determined by language, i.e., by the linguistic tools of thought and by the sociocultural experience of the child. . . . The child's intellectual growth is contingent on his mastering the social means of thought, that is, language" (Vygotsky, 1986, p. 94). Thus one finds in Vygotsky a strong argument against both one-sided individualism and one-sided sociocultural approach. Individual consciousness, according to Vygotsky, develops in sociocultural interactions but it cannot be reduced to the latter. Rather, the latter contribute to the formation of an individual consciousness but do not supplant it. This is in full accord with Bakhtin's understanding of this process. As was noted in the previous chapter, Bakhtin provides an alternative both to positivist individualism and to the reduction of the individual to sociocultural factors. Both Vygotsky and Bakhtin thus provide support for the argument in favor of an equal relationship and interdependence between psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic processes in language acquisition and use.

The child's zone of proximal development was defined by Vygotsky (1978) as follows:

> The distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers. (p. 86)

The ZPD thus reflects the student's potential for further cognitive development with the help of an adult or a more capable peer. The interaction between the student and her

peers and instructors is viewed as the most important single factor and a necessary condition for the realization of this potential. According to Vygotsky (1981), "relations among higher mental functions were at some earlier point actual relations among people . . . . [d]evelopment does not proceed toward socialization but toward the conversion of social relations into mental functions" (pp. 158, 165). The knowledge a learner gains passes from the intermental to intramental plane, i.e. from other-regulation (reliance on the tutor) to self-regulation (reliance on the self). The concept of the ZPD includes, along with the social context of learning, the notion of process, as contrasted with the end result (Vygotsky, 1978). Each potential developmental level becomes the next actual developmental level *through learning* that "presupposes a specific social nature and a process by which children grow into the intellectual life of those around them" (ibid., p. 88). Thus, according to Vygotsky, learning is always one step ahead of development. For the learner to move from one stage of development to another she must make an effort, assume responsibility, take risks, and engage in problem-solving and self-analysis.

This view does not represent a contrast with Bakhtin's, even though their terminology and frames of reference may be different. Vygotsky viewed language as an intrinsically social phenomenon — but this means that it functions only on an interpersonal level. It is to this that Bakhtin's emphasis on the dialogic nature of all communication corresponds. The difference consists in the fact that, for Bakhtin (1984a), dialogue is an ontological category ("To be," he wrote, "means to communicate" [p. 287]), whereas Vygotsky sees communication primarily in light of his theory of psychological development and learning.

To sum up this section, Bakhtin's metalinguistics that comprises the concepts discussed above presents an alternative, dialogic approach to the study of language. The main thrust of this approach is that language is dialogic in its intrinsic nature. It is this idea that Bakhtin strove to express and elaborate through such notions as utterance, heteroglossia, addressivity, voice, otherness, and outsideness. The idea of language as

dialogic in nature is of especial import for SLA because it suggests a mechanism of the learner's assimilation and appropriation of an other language into their own linguistic system. Another important idea is the value-laden character of language. And, finally, Bakhtin's theory of language displays significant parallels with Vygotsky's view of it, making it easier to transfer Bakhtin's ideas to the field of SLA.

Research Question 2: *How can Bakhtin's theory illuminate the cultural aspect of second language learning?*

Culture

Having broad interests in many areas of knowledge, Bakhtin had an overarching theme that preoccupied him his whole life: the existence of a person in culture. Like that of language, his view of culture is thoroughly dialogic. Culture and language are, in fact, in Bakhtin's view so closely interwoven with each other that it is difficult at times to distinguish between them. Most of the concepts that form Bakhtin's dialogic theory of language—such as heteroglossia, polyphony, outsideness, voice, ethical and aesthetic factors in dialogue, and others—are also applied by Bakhtin to the concept of culture. And, finally, culture is, according to Bakhtin, as indispensable to the formation of personhood as language. All of these themes are of utmost importance to the field of SLA.

The dialogic nature of culture, for Bakhtin, constitutes the foundation for culture's very existence. Dialogic relations permeate the body of culture as such on the most fundamental level. This means that any culture acquires shape only in its dialogue with another culture. For Bakhtin (1986a) this is linked with the basic process of meaning-formation in general.

In the realm of culture, outsideness is a most powerful factor in understanding.

. . . A meaning only reveals its depth once it has encountered . . . another foreign

meaning . . . . We raise new questions for a foreign culture, ones that it did not

raise itself; we seek answers to our questions in it; the foreign culture responds to

us by revealing to us its new aspects and new semantic depths. (p. 7)

Interaction between cultures as a vital condition of their existence means, in turn, that the

concept of boundaries acquires an enormous importance. "Every cultural act," Bakhtin

holds, "lives essentially on the boundaries, and it derives its seriousness and significance

from this fact. Separated by abstraction from these boundaries, it loses the ground of its

being and becomes vacuous, arrogant; it degenerates and dies" (1990, p. 274; also in

1984a, p. 301n7).

When one attempts to understand this idea, however, one must be careful not to

think in spatial metaphors. By "boundary" Bakhtin does not refer to anything like a

spatial phenomenon. A culture's whole body, as it were, consists of dialogic boundaries

with other cultures.

The realm of culture has no internal territory: it is entirely distributed along the

boundaries, boundaries pass everywhere, through its every aspect, the systematic

unity of culture extends into the very atoms of cultural life, it reflects like the sun

in each drop of that life. (Bakhtin, 1990, p. 274)

Thus, in a multilateral dialogue of cultures, each of them ensures the existence of

other cultures, just as its own existence is ensured by them. Further, as they interact

cultures in such multilateral dialogue mutually enrich one another. According to Bakhtin

(1986a), "a dialogic encounter of two cultures does not result in merging and mixing.

Each retains his own unity and *open* totality, but they are mutually enriched" (p. 7). The

dialogue, he wrote, "transcends the enclosed and one-sided nature of the cultures'

respective meanings" (Bakhtin, 1986a, p. 508). A single culture may not notice certain

things about itself, as Bakhtin pointed out, and needs another culture to underscore its peculiarities. In his view, the knowledge of the one is inseparable from the knowledge of the other. It is essential for Bakhtin (1986a) that none of the cultures involved in a multilateral dialogue with one another be obliterated, and that when a person learns a foreign culture they do not abandon their own:

> There exists a very strong, but one-sided and thus untrustworthy, idea that in order to better understand a foreign culture, one must enter into it, forgetting one's own, and view the world through the eyes of this foreign culture. . . . Of course, a certain entry as a living being into a foreign culture, the possibility of seeing the world through its eyes, is a necessary part of the process of understanding it; but if this were the only aspect of this understanding, it would merely be duplication and would not entail anything new or enriching. . . . In order to understand, it is immensely important for the person who understands to be *located outside* the object of his or her creative understanding—in time, in space, in culture. (p. 6)

In other words, Bakhtin viewed intercultural understanding as simultaneously entering another culture and remaining outside it. The concept of outsideness allowed him to consider intercultural dialogue in such a way that it did not threaten the identities of participating cultures. Moreover, Bakhtin saw outsideness not as a limitation, but as an incentive toward the broadening of one's own perspective. This is how Emerson (1997) commented on this aspect of Bakhtin's insight:

> Bakhtin . . . would recommend that I not seek out people *just like myself* for the sake of security or identity. It narrows my scope and thus is too much of a risk; should I change or the environment change, I might become extinct. . . . Any instinctive clustering of like threatens to reduce my "I" and its potential languages to a miserable dot. Those who surround themselves with "insiders"— in heritage,

experience, appearance, tastes, attitudes toward the world—are on a rigidifying and impoverishing road. In contrast, the personality that welcomes provisional finalization by a huge and diversified array of "authors" will command optimal literacy. It feels at home in a variety of zones; it has many languages at its disposal and can learn new ones without trauma. From its perspective, the world appears an invitingly open, flexible, unthreatening, and unfinalized place. (pp. 223-224)

By boundaries Bakhtin means a line that separates one thing from another and thus belongs to both inside and outside of the two things in question. A person who speaks two or more languages is a bearer of two or more cultures. Such a person taps on several cultures at once, and can compare them, thus getting a deeper insight into each of them. When I learn about American culture I do become, to a certain extent, an American. This helps me to see myself, in turn, as a Russian from an American perspective. I realize things about myself that I have not realized before. I become "more Russian" through this process, "more myself," and, therefore, paradoxically, even more "outside" American culture. This strange process has an intricate dialectic and may be hard to grasp in exact terms, but it is a process of enrichment and evolution rather than impoverishment and degradation of one's own cultural identity.

Bakhtin's views have a direct bearing on the discussion of culture in SLA. The purpose of teaching second and foreign languages is to make communication among people and cultures possible. While we usually remember about the first type of communication, i.e. that among people, we tend to forget about the second type, i.e. about communication among cultures. In his survey article on the concept of culture in TESOL, Dwight Atkinson notes, for example, that the topic of culture in SLA is insufficiently addressed and needs further elaboration and theoretical clarification (1999, p. 626). He argues that the field is currently dominated by two main views of culture. He calls them the received and nonstandard views, respectively. The received view is

uncritical and relies on "common sense." It sees cultures "as geographically (and quite often nationally) distinct entities, as relatively unchanging and homogeneous, and as all-encompassing systems of rules or norms that substantially determine personal behavior" (p. 626). The nonstandard view, on the other hand, criticizes the received view and promotes an understanding of culture that emphasizes disunity, "fissures, inequalities, disagreements, and cross-cutting influences that exist in and around all cultural scenes" (p. 627). This latter, postmodernist view, rejects culture as a monolithic entity. Atkinson finds both these views unbalanced and one-sided. In order to correct their respective deficiencies he evokes Bakhtin's doctrine of centrifugal and centripetal cultural forces. Bakhtin's approach, Atkinson thinks, will allow SLA to develop the "middle-ground approach to culture" because Bakhtin "recognized both homogeneity and heterogeneity [as] . . . fundamental properties of social groups and social practices" (p. 636).

A similar quest for a middle-ground has been articulated by a number of other researchers (Erickson, 1997; Hall, 2002; Kramsch, 1993; Pennycook, 2001; Wells, 1999). Kramsch's (1993) argument is distinct from Atkinson's (1999) by virtue of focusing on the learner's position with regard to their native culture (C1) and their target culture (C2). "In the interstices of the native and the target cultures," writes Kramsch, "they (learners) are constantly engaged in creating a culture of the third kind through the give and take of classroom dialogue" (1993, p. 23). Like Atkinson, Kramsch believes that the current understanding of these processes is inadequate and one-sided. "The only way to start building a more complete and less partial understanding of both C1 and C2," she proposes, "is to develop a third perspective, that would enable learners to take both an insider's and an outsider's view on C1 and C2. It is precisely that third place that cross-cultural education should seek to establish" (Kramsch, 1993, p. 210). Kramsch, too, invokes Bakhtin as a possible theoretical source for constructing such a "third place." Hall (2002) argues similarly that "to locate culture one must look not in individual mind, as an accumulated body of unchanging knowledge, but in the dialogue, the embodied

actions. . . between individuals in particular sociocultural contexts at particular moments of time" (p. 19).

Parallels with Vygotsky on culture

For Vygotsky the concept of culture was one of central concerns. He called his theory of human psychological development cultural-historical because he considered higher psychological functions as products of processes that take place in culture and history. He viewed culture from the developmental standpoint as the goal of learning: a learner's task is to make cultural values his or her own. A cultured mind, in Vygotsky's view, is one equipped with the appropriate intellectual tools, first and foremost language.

There are significant parallels between Bakhtin and Vygotsky's respective conceptions of culture. For both of them the themes of culture, language, and personal identity were intimately intertwined with one another. According to Vasily Davydov (1995), a student of Luria and a follower of Vygotsky, the main import of Vygotsky's theory is expressed in the idea that speech (rather than language) is an instrument for carrying out action. In addition, as a sign and symbol system that embodies culture, speech also determines consciousness and personality. Vygotsky understood culture as "the product of human social life and social activity of human beings" (1987, vol. 3, p. 145). He wrote, for example, that "every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, *between* people . . , and then, *inside* the child" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 57).

The earlier discussion shows that, in Bakhtin's view, language is permeated with dialogic relations on all its levels. An especially important aspect of these relations is the idea that interaction among participants in a dialogue is made possible by their mutual difference. A major methodological discovery of Bakhtin that describes the differences

between participants in a dialogue is his concept of outsideness (1986, p. 7).

One finds a fundamental link between the Bakhtinian outsideness, on the one hand, and the Vygotskian zone of proximal development (ZPD), on the other, in their shared conceptual structure. This conceptual structure can be explained as follows. According to Vygotsky, interaction and cooperation are essential features of the ZPD (p. 90). Thus ZPD is the developmental space where learning is dialogical. Taking the Vygotskian perspective, Smagorinsky (1995) writes, for example, "The ZPD has an inherently developmental and semiotic character that is instrumentally affected by the learner's appropriation and implementation of a culture's psychological tools" (p. 192).

Both outsideness and ZPD involve (at least) two participants connected with each other by a process of communication or interaction. Bakhtin's dialogue presupposes a difference between the interlocutors, i.e., a certain distance between them. If there is no such difference, then the interlocutors are simply identical with each other and dialogue collapses into monologue. It is this state of the interlocutors' remaining different and unique with regard to one another that Bakhtin (1986a) called outsideness. Similarly, participants in the learning process as described by Vygotsky's ZPD stand in the same relation to one another, i.e., for learning to occur there must be a difference between them. ZPD can exist only when the interlocutors are unequal: the expert must know more (about the subject of interaction) than the learner or novice.

Here it is appropriate to emphasize one important difference between the two thinkers. In Bakhtin's case, dialogue is a concept describing communication of equals in the sense that both or all participants have equally important things to share with one another, whereas Vygotsky spoke explicitly about the interaction between the student and the teacher who cannot be seen as equal contributors to their mutual communication. At the same time, one cannot help noticing that the difference marked by Bakhtin's outsideness also implies a certain inequality between interlocutors: there is no point in communicating if they are identical in what they can share with each other. This means,

in turn, that their respective levels of knowledge in the area that the dialogue addresses must be different, and in this sense unequal. Be that as it may, the main thrust of Bakhtin's dialogue is toward the equality of its participants while the indispensable condition of ZPD is inequality between the expert and the novice.

Thus, just as with language, Bakhtin's key idea about culture is that it is also intrinsically dialogic. This means that the concepts that Bakhtin uses to describe language are also applicable to cultural processes. Such parallelism forms the basis of a close affinity between language and culture. Of particular interest to SLA is Bakhtin's conviction that culture exists only on its boundaries, i.e., in contact with other cultures. A comparison of Bakhtin's view with that of Vygotsky helps elucidate the peculiarities of Bakhtin's approach to culture.

Research Question 3: *What are the ways of constructing the "self" according to Bakhtin and to what extent can Bakhtin's theory be useful in understanding the impact of learning another language and culture on personal identity?*

Identity

In the course of his life, Bakhtin developed three models of the self. The first model, formulated in his early period (1919-1924), was focused on the self's ethical and creative aspects. It is developed mostly in Bakhtin's essay *Art and Answerability* (1990), in which the self is markedly unfinalized and nondirectional; its "real centre of gravity," he writes, "lies in the future" (p. 111). The second model is variously called by commentators *dialogic*, *novelistic*, or *polyphonic*. It was created in Bakhtin's second period (1924-1930), predominantly in his work on Dostoevsky and in the essay *Toward a Philosophy of the Act* (1993), where he created a model of the self that is both nonsystemic and interpersonal. The third model appeared at the time when Bakhtin was

working on Rabelais (1930-1950) and is referred to as the *carnival* model. Here the unfinalized and open nature of the self reaches its apogee (Bakhtin, 1984b; Emerson, 2000; Morson & Emerson, 1990). Summarizing these models, one could say that Bakhtin is interested in how the self emerges in a moral and creative act; how it manifests itself in a dialogic relation with other, equal selves; and how it rebels against the constraints imposed on it by official social and cultural hierarchies. The formation of identity is thoroughly permeated by language. Emerson (2000) notes, for example, that "[Bakhtin] acknowledge[s] language as our most efficient socializing agent and repository of personality" (p. 29).

At the core of Bakhtin's (1986a, 1986b) view is the tripartite scheme of the self: (a) "I-for-myself," where the *I* is never finished, never closed, and never has a final evaluation; (b) "I-for-other," that is, the *I* as known by the other; and (c) "the other-for-me," that is, the other as known by the *I*. Such a dynamic structure of the self makes it inherently dialogic in nature. Bakhtin (1984a) insisted on such an understanding of personhood:

> The very being of man (both external and internal) is the *deepest communion. To be* means *to communicate*. Absolute death (non-being) is the state of being unheard, unrecognized, unremembered. To be means to be for another, and through the other, for oneself. (p. 287)

Using Dostoevsky's characters as examples, Bakhtin strived to show how "separation, dissociation, and enclosure within the self [is] the main reason for the loss of one's self" (ibid.). Thus dialogue is the ontological principle for the existence of a human person. According to Bakhtin, a person does not merely express herself in dialogue, but actually arises in her dialogue with others, both for these others and for herself. "To be," says Bakhtin, "means to communicate dialogically" (1984a, p. 252). Other members of the Bakhtin circle also developed the theme of the self's necessary connection with its others.

A slightly different meaning of self-other relations may be found in Voloshinov (1976), for example, who emphasizes the class aspect of personhood:

In becoming aware of myself, I attempt to look at myself, as it were, through the eyes of another person, another representative of my social group, my class. Thus, self-consciousness, in the final analysis leads us to class consciousness, the reflection and specification of which it is in all its fundamental and essential respects. (p. 87)

The concrete mechanism of identity formation in one's dialogue with others consists, as Bakhtin (1981) points out, in "the process of selectively assimilating the words of others" (p. 341). This process is related to the interaction between the authoritative and internally persuasive discourses that were discussed above. Dialogue presupposes the dialogue of consciousnesses where "a person's consciousness awakens wrapped in another consciousness" (p. 339). Bakhtin (1984a) defines "*dialogicality* [italics added] as a special form of interaction among autonomous and equally signifying consciousnesses " (p. 284). Bakhtin takes care to note that the emergence of one's identity from a dialogue with one's other must not be viewed in subjectivist terms. The other is never absorbed into and subsumed under the subject. "Personalization is never subjectivization," Bakhtin holds. "The limit here is not *I* but *I* in interrelationship with other personalities, that is, *I* and *other*, *I* and *thou*" (1986, p. 167).

Bakhtin found in the musical concept of polyphony a model for the simultaneous uniqueness and equality of selves. Polyphony consists of combining different simultaneous melodies of equal interest in one composition. "Each individual 'voice' is uniquely valued and indispensable," writes a commentator, " and as such is needed to the chorus" (Batischev, 1992, p. 125). On the other hand, however, the equality of these voices cannot be carried too far: there must be an overriding unity within a polyphonic composition. This is what Gogotishvili (1992) has in mind when she observes that absolute polyphony is impossible: "Polyphony can be realized," she remarks, "only

through the monologic voice that holds it together, no matter how much this monologic voice may be weakened by other voices in the utterance" (p. 152). Furthermore, the expressly nonhierarchical relation of the selves in Bakhtin's dialogue gave rise to some relativistic interpretations of it. Bakhtin himself, however, was anything but a relativist; he wholeheartedly embraced universal humanistic values (Gogotishvili, 1992). Moreover, his reluctance to admit hierarchy and inequality into dialogue was a form of protest against the evil of Stalinism. Bakhtin was surrounded by a society that was ruled by an ideological hierarchy. Communism was the leading ideology; the Communist Party was the leading force in society and enjoyed the ultimate authority. Bakhtin understood only too well the danger of admitting hierarchical inequality in the relation between communicating selves. "A word, discourse, language or culture," he wrote, "undergoes 'dialogization' when it becomes relativized, de-privileged. . . . Undialogized language is authoritative or absolute" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 427). This is why he strove to block the entrance of hierarchy into dialogue. It may weaken the theoretical possibilities of his model, but at the same time it testifies to the civic courage of the theorist.

Further, along with language, culture has a key part in identity formation. The emergence of a person occurs as the emergence of her world view and has an intrinsic historical dimension. One's personal identity, says Bakhtin, "emerges *along with the world* and . . . reflects the historical emergence of the world itself" (1986a, p. 23). The combined ideas of culture and dialogue as powerful forces that shape our personhood are also reflected in Bakhtin's vision of the human being as constantly living on boundaries. Just as cultures exist, as he maintains, only on boundaries between them, so does a human person. There is no inner core in our personhood, according to Bakhtin, that is not constituted by dialogic relations with our others. "A person has no internal sovereign territory," holds Bakhtin, "he is wholly and always on the boundary" (1984a, p. 287).

Just as every utterance in a dialogue, according to Bakhtin, has an intrinsic ethical quality, so does the process of identity formation. Bakhtin's understanding of equality of the participants in a dialogue is an ethical category. In fact, the dialectic of simultaneous equality and difference of the participants in a dialogue is the inner spring of Bakhtin's entire theory of dialogue. Equality and negotiation of difference are by their very nature ethical concepts. It is understandable, therefore, that the dialogic process of identity formation involves the notion of one's answerability (responsibility) to the other as well as the responsibility of the other to oneself. And, finally, Bakhtin (1981) sees this process as potentially emancipating:

> The importance of struggling with another's discourse, its influence in the history of an individual's coming to ideological consciousness, is enormous. One's own discourse and one's own voice, although born of another or dynamically stimulated by another, will sooner or later begin to liberate themselves from the authority of the other's discourse. (p. 348)

Bakhtin believes in the unique place of a person in this world and that this place defines her duty to acknowledge this uniqueness and realize it by her actions (Bogatyreva, 1993, p. 52).

The themes of culture and identity have become inextricably linked with each other in the current SLA debate. Atkinson even remarks that some authors replace discussion of culture with the discussion of identity (1999, p. 629). In reaction to cognitivism, some poststructuralist authors argue for a decentred understanding of personhood. In fact, many prefer to speak of subjectivity rather than identity. Identity is an unwelcome category for the poststructuralist approach because it signifies unity and constancy. Subjectivity, by contrast, is called upon to convey the sense that personhood is constructed by socially, culturally, and historically defined forces. As such subjectivity is constantly changing and devoid of any unifying core (Pavlenko, 2002).

Bakhtin's dialogic view of personal identity offers an alternative to both the strictly individualist cognitivism and decentred poststructuralism. "A given work can be the product of a collective effort," he remarks, "it can be created by the successive efforts of generations, and so forth—but in all cases we hear in it a unified creative will, a definite position, to which it is possible to react dialogically" (Bakhtin, 1984a, p. 184). Thus communication, according to Bakhtin, is brought into being both by social and cultural-historical forces and by the individual human person's creative agency.

The self that one finds in a second language classroom by definition emerges and exists precisely on the boundary between at least two languages and at least two cultures. If this boundary vanishes, the self becomes monolingual and monocultural and thus no longer a second language learner. The second language teacher is likewise a self produced by the boundary between languages and cultures. The value of Bakhtin's theory of the dialogic self consists in the fact that it accurately describes the realities of a language classroom.

Interest in the question of identity of non-native speakers and writers has been growing in SLA over the recent years. Especial attention has been paid to the identity of the learner, in particular to the question about how the learner's identity is informed in the course of learning an additional language. As an second and foreign lnaguage researcher and practitioner, I am particularly interested in using Bakhtin's theory to understand how this process occurs in an academic writing classroom. This interest is motivated by three reasons: (1) over the past few years I have taught in such a program and have had first-hand experience with learners in this context; (2) I consider myself a learner of this type because I have had to learn a great deal about the peculiarities of English academic writing; and (3) outside the United States learners of English are not taught the skills of academic writing, and I would like to contribute to the development of academic English writing programs in Russian universities.

In conjunction with this, it may be worthwhile to consider how Bakhtin's ideas could be used to outline the conception of a dialogic academic writing classroom that would create optimal conditions for the second language learner's identity formation. One of the dimensions of such a classroom may be the critical writing approach (Belcher, 1995). It will help students—especially those who come from educational backgrounds in which students are trained to absorb knowledge from their teachers and texts and not to critically analyze it—acquire skills to approach texts critically and will acquaint them with methods of argumentation that challenge textual authority rather than depend on it. The students will learn to evaluate critically the ideas and assumptions comprised in the texts that they study. They will not only learn to write critically, but they will also learn to critically evaluate the authority of these texts. Further, critical writing approach includes learning how to express one's own point of view and how to defend it against criticism. Bakhtin provides a description of the mechanism by which a participant in a dialogue appropriates authoritative discourse and turns it into an internally persuasive discourse. This mechanism is directly related to the development of critical skills by the learner. Blanton (1998) notes the need to teach students to agree or disagree with the texts they study, in light of their own experience, and also to interpret their own experience in light of these texts. This enhances the students' ability of independent judgment and their sense of value of their own background and experience. The strengthened sense of the value of their self is also a source of empowerment for them.

One of the purposes of such a classroom would be the development of self-awareness and self-reflection on the part of the students. These aspects of learning are crucial for the construction of one's L2 identity (Kramsch and Lam, 1999; Mellix, 1998). The assignments in the program would include the possibility for the students to engage in self-reflection. Personal narrative or literacy/professional autobiography are examples of such assignments. There are a few wonderfully written narratives that may serve as texts for in-class discussion, written analysis, and critique before students start working

on their own assignments.   It would be interesting, for example, to focus small-group or on-line discussions on Li's (1999) eloquent expression: "To honor one's own voice is both liberating and challenging." Another such narrative is Lu's (1998) account where she tells how being between two conflicting worlds helped her develop as a reader and writer. Following these examples, students would write their own autobiographical narratives. Bakhtin's (1981, 1986a) theory of dialogue contains an eloquent explanation of self-expression as a crucial means of building self-awareness and thus serves as a theoretical validation of this type of practice.

The classroom should become "the world in miniature," as it were, an example of what Pratt (1998) calls "the contact zone," characterized by a Bakhtinian emphasis on dialogic openness. It should be viewed as a unique opportunity for the students to share their own perspectives, rather than to set the goal of assimilating and appropriating a single universal idea. The teacher in such a classroom should have knowledge of alternative, culturally determined rhetorical styles. As early as 1966, Robert Kaplan began the discussion of how cultural factors affect the acquisition of L2 literacy of those foreign students who were newcomers to the American academic environment. He drew his colleagues' attention to the differences between the writing of ESL and native speaking students, which he regarded not as deficiencies, but rather as a reflection of culturally determined differences in thinking. Kaplan's ideas remain relevant to-day because the view of those differences as deficiencies is still prevalent among many educators.

The classroom must be a place for a community of learners rather than for individual learners. Dialogue must be encouraged in the classroom, through Internet, in small group discussions, and in teacher-student conferences. The students should be allowed to use their native languages in the classroom if this helps them to better understand the questions and problems that are being discussed (Cook, 1999). Collaboration among students in the form of group research projects, group presentations,

and collaborative writing assignments should be part of their learning process.

Academic discourse in such a classroom would be orientated to successful L2 learners, not deficient L1 users. In such a discourse, "otherness" would be regarded as an asset rather than a liability (Li, 1999). For this to happen, the teacher should have a positive image of L2 writers and speakers as multicompetent and multiliterate (Carson, 1992; Cook, 1999; Delpit, 1988; Johns, 1997; Kutz, 1998).

Parallels with Vygotsky on the self and the other

For both Bakhtin and Vygotsky, dialogue is the key factor in the formation of the self. They both view the self in dynamic terms. In Bakhtin's work, the self is a changing entity, engaged in a dialogue. In Vygotsky's writings, the self participates in a learning process and is transformed by it. For both, the self is thus immersed in a communicative context. One slight difference is perhaps that Bakhtin's dialogue is a universal form of human communication, while Vygotsky's learning process is a particular case of dialogue. In both cases, however, communication between two or more selves is the medium that forms and transforms the self. As a consequence, Bakhtin and Vygotsky view the self as open to other selves. Moreover, these other selves are active participants in the emergence of one's own self. "The role of these others," emphasized Bakhtin (1986a), "for whom my thought becomes actual thought for the first time (and thus also for my own self as well) is not that of passive listeners, but of active participants in speech communication" (p. 94). In Vygotsky's model, the expert plays an even more pronounced role in the novice's formation and the interaction between the two is the defining factor of the ZPD. Closely bound up with this interaction is the interest in how language participates in building people's identities. "Language arises initially," Vygotsky claimed, "as a means of communication between the child and the people in his environment. . . . [S]ubsequently, upon conversion to internal speech, it comes to

organize the child's thought, that is, becomes an internal mental function" (1978, p. 89). Bakhtin fully shared the idea of the mutual relatedness of language and consciousness, expressed by Vygotsky (1986) in the climactic conclusion of his major work, *Thought and Language*:

> If language is as old as consciousness itself, and if language is a practical
> consciousness-for-others and, consequently, consciousness-for-myself, then not
> only one particular thought but all consciousness is connected with the
> development of the word. The word is a thing in our consciousness . . . that is
> absolutely impossible for one person, but that becomes a reality for two. . . .
> Consciousness is reflected in a word as the sun in a drop of water. . . . A word
> is a microcosm of human consciousness. (p. 256)

There are, however, certain differences between Bakhtin and Vygotsky in how they formulated their ideas and how they understood the relations between the self and the other.

As was noted above, Bakhtin's (1990, 1993) understanding of the self is markedly unfinalized and nondirectional. Vygotsky, on the other hand, theorized the self in a systematic way and saw it as evolving in a linear progression from one stage of maturation to another (Emerson, 2000, p. 23). Furthermore, what was said earlier, in the discussion of outsideness, about the identity and difference between participants in a dialogue, applies in this context as well. Bakhtin viewed the selves engaged in a dialogue as equal to each other. For Vygotsky, by contrast, the selves that are engaged in a learning process are marked by difference: one possesses more knowledge than the other. Thus, the difference between the selves in Vygotsky's view assumes the form of unequal levels of knowledge, whereas in Bakhtin's view it is conveyed through the concept of cultural and historical difference (outsideness).

Likewise, there are both similarities and differences between the ways in which the self emerges in Bakhtin's and Vygotsky's respective models. Bakhtin's tripartite

scheme of the self ("I-for-myself," "I-for-other," and "the other-for-me") is closely

paralleled by Vygotsky's Hegelian model of the self which includes the *I* "in oneself," *I*

"for others," and *I* "for oneself" (Vygotsky, 1986; Emerson, 2000).   The contrast with

Bakhtin consists in the fact that Vygotsky viewed the self as evolving in a progressive

fashion and was primarily interested in the learning self.   Nonetheless, as a particular

case of dialogue, the communication that occurs in Vygotsky's ZPD necessarily

presupposes a common ground, some form of identity, between its participants.   In this,

his model of the emergence of the self implicitly coincides with Bakhtin's emphasis on

the equality of the self and the other in dialogue. Conversely, Bakhtin's outsideness

marks a difference between the self and the other in dialogue and thus implicitly

coincides with Vygotsky's view.

  The main contrast between the respective ways in which Bakhtin and Vygotsky

interpreted the formation of the self can be described as follows. For Vygotsky, the

individual self is formed through the internalization of its sociocultural environment.

"The true direction of the development of thinking," he claimed, "is not from the

individual to the social, but from the social to the individual" (Vygotsky, 1986, p. 36).

Commenting on this aspect of Vygotsky's theory, Solomadin (2000) emphasized that "in

Vygotsky's understanding, 'inner speech,' or individual(ized) verbal thought - in other

words, 'speech for oneself,' does not include 'the inner other'" (p. 33). Bakhtin's view is

directly opposite to this idea: *"*The very being of man (both external and internal) is the

deepest communion. To be means to communicate" (Bakhtin, 1984a, p. 287).

  An important parallel between the two scholars is their shared interest in the

creative aspects of individual consciousness. Language pedagogy theory today tends to

emphasize learning forms, structures, and functions, while creativity, play, and

imagination are largely neglected. Imagination and creativity are researched in various

branches of education theory, but, unfortunately, they are rarely discussed in language

and literacy studies literature. Both in Russia and in the West, Vygotsky's contribution to

the study of imagination, creativity, and emotion has largely remained in the background (for an exceptions, see Mahn & John-Steiner, 2002). This can be explained perhaps by the fact that he did not sufficiently develop this theme in his research (he died in 1934, at the age of 37). On the other hand, because of certain ideological tendencies in Soviet psychology of the time, commentators were mostly interested in emphasizing the role of the social environment in the development of the child, i.e. in the influence of the collective on the individual. Imagination, affective, and emotional factors are highly individualistic, even though they are not free of social influences. Given the political situation in the USSR in the 1930s, one has to appreciate Vygotsky's courage in bringing forth his ideas that implicitly contradicted the official view that the collective totally defines the individual. The interest in imagination and creativity under those conditions is yet another parallel between Vygotsky and Bakhtin. Both scholars' work was a form of resistance to the totalitarian collectivizing thrust of Soviet ideology.

Though he did not explicitly argue for the role of the affective domain in the developmental processes, Vygotsky always included it in the context of his scientific thought. His unfinished work about psychophysiology of emotions, *The Theory of Emotions*, shows an attempt to formulate a new theory of psychological development of a person as a whole human being. Vygotsky's (1966) discussion in one of his last essays, "Play and its role in the mental development of the child," can be viewed as a further argument in favor of his concept of the ZPD. Vygotsky defined play as a determining factor of a child's development, as the factor that "creates the zone of proximal development", and thus, is a leading activity (ibid., p. 65). As he indicates, through play the child "always behaves beyond its average age, above its daily behavior; in play it is as though the child is a head taller than itself" (1966, p. 75; also 1978, p. 98). Two important conditions are necessary for change to occur in the ZPD, i.e. for the transition from the actual (present) to potential (future) levels. The first condition is the child's capacity for imagination and play. The second is the child's use of help from adults and

peers. The significance of creativity, according to Vygotsky, is that "it allows the child, while exercising his creative aspirations and skills, to master human speech, this finest and most complex instrument of forming and communicating human thought, human emotion, and human inner world" (1966, pp. 59-60).

Further, Vygotsky (1986) argued for the importance of the emotional plane in understanding one's others:

> Behind every thought there is an affective-volitional tendency, which holds the answer to the last "why" in the analysis of thinking. A true and full understanding of another's thought is possible only when we understand its affective-volitional basis. . . . To understand another's speech, it is not sufficient to understand his words–we must understand his thought. But even that is not enough–we must know his motivation. No psychological analysis of an utterance is complete until this plane is reached. (pp. 252-253).

Bakhtin's and Vygotsky's models of the formation of the self share a partially explicit and partially implicit common content. They differ largely in the ways in which the two scholars placed emphases in their respective models within the common conceptual structure. From the point of view of language pedagogy, this common framework allows us to combine the two groups of concepts and supplement Vygotsky's pedagogical insights with the multicultural possibilities of Bakhtin's approach. At the same time, Bakhtin's ideas about dialogue as a literary phenomenon and a philosophical concept can be given a pedagogical dimension using Vygotsky's language.

To sum up this section, as with language and culture, Bakhtin's view of personal identity is dialogic and relational. The discussion in this section emphasizes the fact that, for Bakhtin, all three concepts are inextricably linked together. Identity, according to Bakhtin, can only be formed in interaction with one's other. The distinguishing feature of Bakhtin's understanding of identity consists in seeing it as formed by the dialectic of equality and difference between the participants in a dialogue. This idea is of great

importance for the current debate on identity issues in SLA. For Vygotsky, too, identity is formed in a dialogue – even though his vision of interaction between participants is different from Bakhtin's.

Understanding

All the concepts associated with Bakhtin's theory of dialogue serve the purpose of elucidating the mechanism of understanding. "As Bakhtin perceives the world," remarked Emerson (1996), "outsideness, boundaries, noncoincidence, and a love for difference are the first prerequisites for creatively understanding another person or another culture, and for being creatively understood by them" (p. 110). Such a creative mutual understanding, for Bakhtin, was, in turn, an instrument of self-transformation. "The person who understands must not reject the possibility of changing or even abandoning his already prepared viewpoints and positions," he observed. "In the act of understanding, a struggle occurs that results in mutual change and enrichment" (Bakhtin, 1986a, p. 142). The term *creative understanding* emphasizes the active role of a participant in a dialogue.

> Primacy belongs to the response . . . it prepares the ground for an active and engaged understanding. . . . Understanding and response are dialectically merged and mutually condition each other; one is impossible without the other. (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 282)

The concept of understanding gathers in itself language, culture, and the self, all of which are linked by the idea of dialogue. All these concepts turn out to be inextricably interconnected, and their unity culminates in understanding. For Bakhtin, understanding merges in itself cognitive, ethical, communicative, and creative aspects. It involves the mutual understanding of individuals, languages, and cultures. The motivating force for our desire to understand other human beings is love of humanity.

In a second language classroom we deal with oral speech and written texts, students strive to master language and ideas of a different culture, and all this is undertaken for the sake of interpersonal and intercultural understanding. The concept of understanding is discussed by some SLA scholars in a vein that is reminiscent of Bakhtin's ideas. "The development of shared understanding," writes Brumfit, "rather than shared linguistic systems, will become a much more important object of study, and the emphasis will have to be on knowledge as process rather than as a body of static information" (2001, p. 31).

Schematic Representation of Dialogue

It may be helpful to illustrate Bakhtin's view of dialogic communication by a diagram. Traditionally we understand interaction as presented in Figure 1, where a two-headed arrow represents communication between two "selves," each depicted by a circle.
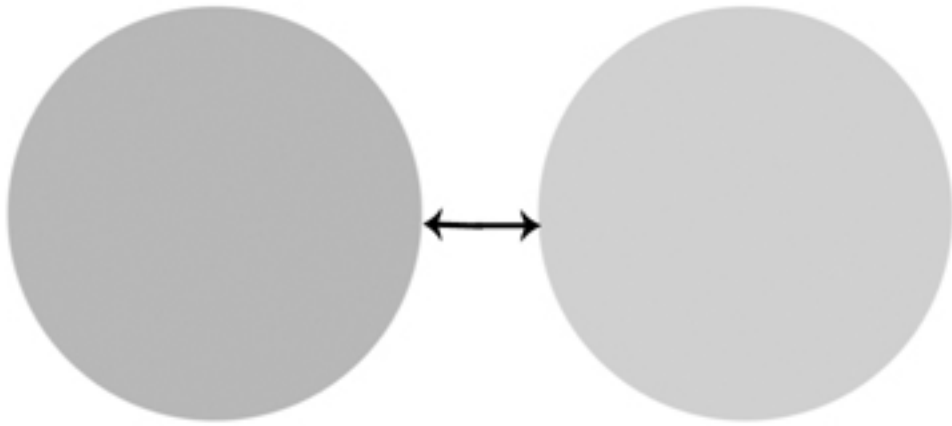
Figure 1. The traditional schematic representation of communication.

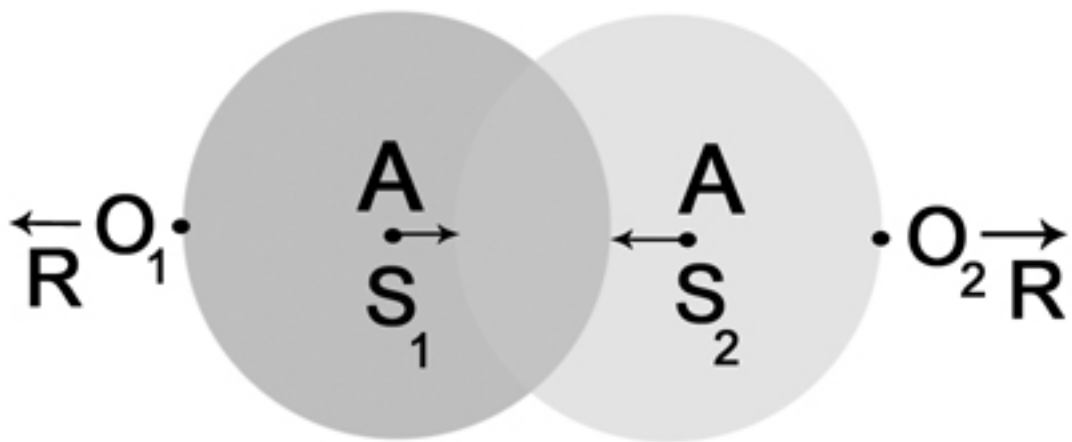Dialogue in Bakhtin's sense can be represented by overlapping circles (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Schematic representation of dialogue according to Bakhtin's theory.

S1 and *S2* are the selves that participate in the dialogue. They are simultaneously others with regard to each other. Within the space of the dialogue (mutually overlapping portions of the circles) the participants transform each other without displacing each other. In other words, both "selves" are always simultaneously inside and outside each other's domain. By *O1* and *O2* are marked the extreme points of the circles that represent mutual outsideness of the two selves. Outsideness is marked in this manner to show that it constitutes a basic necessary condition for dialogue. These extreme points can be drawn into the opposite circles only if the circles overlap completely and thus form a single circle. But in this case there will be no dialogue, for the two participants would become identical to each other, i.e., a single self, and the dialogue between them would collapse into a monologue. Arrows *A* and *R* represent the mutual forces of attraction and repulsion (centripetal and centrifugal), respectively. The two selves are drawn toward each other by their wish for mutual understanding. But at the same time they are mutually repelled from one another by the condition of their mutual outsideness and difference. Dialogue is made possible by both these forces.

The diagram in Figure 2 also corresponds to Holquist's observation about the nature of dialogue in Bakhtin. "Dialogue is not, as it sometimes thought, a dyadic, much less a binary phenomenon," notes Holquist. "Dialogue is a manifold phenomenon, but for schematic purposes it can be reduced to a minimum of three elements having a structure very much like the triadic construction of the linguistic sign: A dialogue is composed of an utterance, a reply, and a relation between the two. *It is the relation that is most important of the three, for without it the other two would have no meaning*" (1990, p. 38). Holquist's insight brings together the themes of dialogue, language, and the self. The identity of participants in a dialogue, Holquist remarks, is defined by their mutual interaction. Otherwise, he points out, "[t]hey would be isolated, and the most primary of Bakhtinian a prioris is that nothing is anything in itself" (ibid.).

A similar diagram, consisting of two overlapping circles, was proposed by the well-known Russian semiotician Iurii Lotman to describe the process of linguistic communication. Lotman (1992) explains that a dialogue requires an overlap between what he calls "the linguistic space of the speaker and the space of the listener" (p. 14). He further points out that dialogue involves "an overlap of two mutually opposed tendencies: the tendency toward making understanding easier, which always attempts to broaden the overlap, as well as the tendency toward increasing the value of communication, which is tied to the tendency to increase as much as possible the difference between" the speaker and the listener (p. 14). The diagram in Figure 2 was originally developed independently of Lotman's analysis. The similarity between the two diagrams was first pointed out to me by Caryl Emerson (2002, personal e-mail communication). In another work, Lotman (1990) speaks about similar relations also with regard to intercultural communication. Thus the diagram is applicable to all three domains: language, culture, and identity.

In view of the discussion in this chapter it should be clear that the diagram of dialogic communication in Figure 2 applies equally to dialogue between individuals and cultures. In both cases identities of participants must remain at once connected with and distinct from each other. This principle is graphically shown as partial overlap of joined circles.

Conclusion

Bakhtin's ideas are highly relevant to the current discussion in SLA. In some cases, they are already acknowledged and even being used by SLA scholars, although this chapter demonstrates that there is much potential for greater and more substantial engagement with Bakhtin in our field. The theory of dialogue can illuminate many areas and aspects of additional language and culture learning. At the same time, it is not my intention to argue that Bakhtin's theories and ideas provide final answers to the

fundamental questions of our research. They provide a viable alternative to the existing opinions on several important matters for which SLA scholars are seeking theoretical solutions. Most importantly, as this chapter demonstrates, Bakhtin's insights may contribute to further exploration of language, culture, and identity.

Vygotsky's model is of especial value in adapting Bakhtin's ideas to the concern of language pedagogy. To achieve a genuinely creative mutual understanding, individuals who wish to participate in the Bakhtinian dialogue must go through the process of learning and maturation that will make them equal to the task. Both Vygotsky and Bakhtin acknowledged the need for such evolution, which Bakhtin (1986) called "the initial mastery of speech" (p. 143). Bakhtin's model may be viewed in today's context as the goal toward which Vygotsky's model provides a path. Without this path, the Bakhtinian dialogue may forever remain a utopia. This is the sense in which the theories of the two scholars are mutually complementary and can be fruitfully combined for discussions of SLA.

CHAPTER 5

A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

OF SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING AND USE

"Overcoming the monological model of the world"
(Bakhtin, 1984a, p. 292)

Summing up the analyses conducted in previous chapters, in this chapter a

theoretical framework is proposed, formed by a series of mutually related concepts of

Bakhtin's theory of dialogue. The discussion below will focus on three key areas:

language, culture, and personal identity. It is argued that Bakhtin's concepts provide a

new framework for illuminating these areas as they are of concern to SLA. It should be

noted that precisely these areas, i.e. language, culture, and identity are of particular

interest in the current debates in SLA theory. I call the group of concepts discussed in

this chapter a "theoretical framework" because they are not isolated entities, but are

mutually interrelated and form a coherent whole. Further, when viewed as a theoretical

framework this group of concepts affords a comprehensive grasp of basic theoretical

problems and issues that inspire today a particularly lively discussion in second and

foreign language studies. The construction of the theoretical framework is undertaken in

the hope that it would show how a more adequate approach can be achieved to the

understanding of the realities of language learning and use and, consequently, of

language teaching.

Building on preceding discussion, this chapter revisits the main research questions

of this dissertation in explicating Bakhtin's theory of dialogue. Further, possible

applications of Bakhtin's ideas are discussed in the course of the argument. The chapter closes with a hypothetical conception of a dialogic L2 classroom as an example of implementing Bakhtin's theory in SL pedagogy, followed by recommendations for future research.

1. Language

a. Bakhtin views language in dialogic terms and hence language for him is an inherently social phenomenon. For Bakhtin, language is characterized not by structure and form, but is primarily "the immediate reality of living speech" (Holquist, 1986b, p. xvi), i.e. speech practice. Further, in contrast to the theorists who understand the social in socioeconomic or socio-political terms, Bakhtin understands society in terms of interpersonal relations. This makes the practice of language, from the Bakhtinian perspective, not a matter of individual activity, but an activity that necessarily comprises communication between two or more individuals. Bakhtin's perspective is useful to us because, even though the interindividual aspect of communication is increasingly acknowledged in our field, the communicative act itself is still viewed largely from an individualistic point of view. By contrast, Bakhtin's basic point of departure is not an individual speaker, but *dialogue* between two or more speakers. "The word is interindividual," Bakhtin never tired of emphasizing. "Everything that is said, expressed, is located outside the 'soul' of the speaker and does not belong only to him. The word cannot be assigned to a single speaker" (1986a, p. 121). On a more fundamental level, this idea is based on Bakhtin's dialogic view of individual consciousness that will be discussed presently.

b. It is particularly significant for SLA that Bakhtin regards language from the learner's point of view. He understands and describes the study of an alien (foreign) language as the learner's reaccentuation and assimilation of it to her or his own "word"

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(language) (Bakhtin, 1981, 1986a, 1986b), i.e., as a process of language learners' keying a foreign language into their own socio-cultural reality and thus engaging with it, appropriating it, and making it their own (Widdowson, 2002, pp. 77-78). The role of such a perspective in understanding of the learner's own transformation and empowering will be discussed in the section on identity.

Bakhtin's approach can be applied on both micro- and macro-level, i.e. not only to the discursive situation of an individual learner, but also to the transcultural and multilingual context. Viewed from this angle, the problem of the non-native-speaker's (learner's) perspective reaches far beyond the SL classroom. Given the global spread of English, this perspective represents the position of a great number of learners with regard to the English language in today's world. Further, given the fact that the dialectic of equality and difference constitutes the driving force in Bakhtin's theory of dialogue, one cannot fail to note that it is precisely the same dialectic that is at the heart of the current discussion on the problem of World English. The hotly debated questions in this discussion are how the different variants of English have historically evolved as a result of British colonialist policies and how they are related to the "standard" English language (Brutt-Griffler, 2002; Canagarajah, 1999). It is hard to tell at the moment how Bakhtin's "reversed" perspective may affect specific approaches in SLA. This question will require further careful study and elaboration. But one cannot fail to recognize that it represents a significant change in comparison with the currently predominant paradigm.

c. Another crucially important idea is that, for Bakhtin, culture is an indispensable part of language learning. As was mentioned earlier, SLA discourse has traditionally tended to view language in isolation from culture. This situation has begun to change and Bakhtin's ideas represent a rich source in support of this new tendency. According to Bakhtin, when one learns a language one does not merely acquire technical communication skills but immerses oneself in that language's culture and the entire world

view that the language gives expression to. This attitude is rooted in Bakhtin's ontological view of language, according to which language is intimately associated with a person's or a culture's very existence or being. Thus by learning a language one gains access to, and simultaneously acquires, understanding of culture. And conversely, the learning of language is enhanced and facilitated by the learning of the culture that this language represents.

d. Bakhtin's dialogic view emphasizes the learning of language as the process of forming one's personal identity. Both culture and language, according to Bakhtin, participate in the dynamics of identity growth. He stresses that the assimilation of new languages and new cultures results in the emergence of a new person (1986a, p. 23). In the current context, one can speak of this "new person" as an agent in a transcultural and multilingual world.

e. Another significant facet of Bakhtin's view of language is that participation in communication is regarded as an ethical and aesthetic act. Bakhtin understood expressing oneself in words as moral struggle. This idea goes back to Bakhtin's argument that language is not a technical means of communication isolated from life, but forms the very fabric of life. Bakhtin broadens the understanding of a moral act to include one's thoughts and utterances. "Our *thought* and our (communicative) *practice*," he points out, "[are] not technical but *moral* (that is our responsible deeds)" (1986a, p. 168). When one engages in a dialogue one enters into a moral relation with one's other. Thus, by participating in a dialogue one assumes responsibility both for one's own words and for one's interlocutor. (The Russian word *otvetstvennost'*, I should remind the reader, ought to be translated not only as "answerability," but also as "responsibility.") Dialogue is an inherently ethical activity.

The aesthetic aspect of language use can be traced back to Bakhtin's view of language as a creative medium and of utterance as always a potentially creative contribution to discourse. Although Bakhtin was primarily concerned with literary creativity, his ideas about the creative nature of utterance lend support to regarding the learning of language in general as a creative process. SLA research in this area is only in its beginning stages and Bakhtin's approach provides an additional impetus for recognizing the significance of this dimension of language learning. Further, Bakhtin insists on the close connection between the cognitive, ethical, and aesthetic aspects of language use. He sees them as forming an integral whole.

With regard to the ethical and aesthetic aspects of SLA issues, Bakhtin's contrast between authoritative and internally persuasive discourse may be of great use. The process by which a learner transcends the limits imposed on her or him by the authoritative discourse of the language that they study and use, and gradually makes this authoritative discourse her/his own internally persuasive one—this process acquires from these contrasting categories an ethical and aesthetic character. (Their significance for identity formation will be discussed presently.) The ethical aspect of this process consists in the learner's transformation of her or his dependent position into one where they are in fuller command of their situation. The aesthetic aspect consists in a similar transformation of the learner's activity from mere repetition of prior discourse into a creative revoicing of others' words and ultimately into independent authorship.

f. Bakhtin believed that people who learn foreign languages change their very conception of language in the process. "For multilingual consciousness," he wrote in his essay on heteroglossia, "language attains a new quality, becomes something quite different from what it is for a deaf, monolingual consciousness" (Bakhtin, 1996, v. 5, p. 157, my translation). By the "deafness" of monolingual consciousness Bakhtin means a finalized, autonomous, abstract view of language that is disconnected from the reality and

context of use. Bakhtin's emphasis, especially in his literary theory, is on the heteroglossia within one national language. However, the concept itself of the study of an additional language as a transformation of consciousness is highly relevant to the L2 learning context.

g. With regard to L2 learning, one of the key ideas that can be derived from Bakhtin is that language is learned through the process of appropriating and reaccentuating the words of others. Bakhtin (1981) viewed this process in terms "expropriating [language], forcing it to submit to one's own intentions and accents" (p. 294). According to Bakhtin, even a single language contains both given and new elements that are in mutual tension with each other. The tension between the given and the new is further exacerbated in the case of learning a foreign language by virtue of the fact that the learner must master a new linguistic system, in addition to that of their own native language. The tension between the given and the new elements of one language is supplemented in this case by yet another dimension, i.e., by the tension between the "given" native language and the new foreign one.

h. And, finally, Bakhtin forcefully advocates the view that language learning is undertaken for the sake of understanding other people and cultures. The concept of understanding is the culminating point of his theory of dialogue. Understanding is the goal of dialogue; dialogue exists for understanding. The purpose of teaching second and foreign languages is likewise to enable communication among people and cultures. As teachers we are privileged to participate in creating global understanding. Our classes are miniature copies of the contemporary world. In fact, they are more than reflections of this world and its multilingual and multicultural relations; they are a part of this real world and therefore, as teachers, we do not merely prepare our students for functioning in real world situations but already live and function in a real world situation every class

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session. One could even say that these classrooms *are* one of the places where this multilingual and multicultural world is created. A Bakhtinian vision of such a world would include understanding as its fundamental element.

It should also be noted that Bakhtin speaks of understanding as happening on several levels. It occurs on the level of a dialogue between individuals and cultures, but Bakhtin is also interested in elaborating understanding as universal methodology for the human sciences (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 351).

2. Culture

a. Similarly to language, Bakhtin views culture in dialogic terms. Culture exists, according to Bakhtin, only on the boundaries with other cultures and in dialogue with them. The wide-spread notion of culture as a self-enclosed and self-sufficient entity is thus completely fictitious. In the context of SLA this means that the learner's situation is not anomalous within a culture but is, on the contrary, a concentrated manifestation of the way culture exists in the real world. The learner is positioned precisely on the boundary between two cultures, his or her own on the one side and the culture of the language he or she studies on the other. Language learners thus find themselves directly immersed in the "space" where cultures are continuously formed through dialogue. If one were to modify in a Bakhtinian spirit the currently widely-acknowledged notion of "crossing boundaries or borders," i.e. assimilation into another culture, then one would speak of "living on the boundaries (or boarders)" between cultures. In accordance with Bakhtin's view, the learner carries in him- or herself the boundary between their languages and cultures.

Such a view entails that the learning or acquisition of another culture does not require the obliteration of one's own. On the contrary, by learning another culture the learner simultaneously enriches his or her own and at the same time his or her own culture is an indispensable factor in assimilating another culture.

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b. The dialogic character of culture in Bakhtin also makes the latter dynamic. The unceasing dialogue among cultures drives their continuous transformations; no culture is static. The notion of a constantly evolving culture is of great significance for SLA. Neither a learner's own culture nor the culture that they study are frozen entities. On the contrary, they are open-ended, flexible, and unfinalizable. By changing themselves, these cultures do not violate their essence, but, on the contrary, fulfill what their inner nature demands. "Russianness" is not a frozen category and the Russian student who learns English does not diminish the essence of his or her culture, but contributes to its transformation into something new—a process that is driven by the very nature of this culture.

c. Further, Bakhtin views culture as a critical factor in learning another language and in the formation of personal identity. Just as the study of language is inextricably linked to the study of the culture of that language, conversely, the assimilation of cultural knowledge is an integral part of learning a language. From providing subject-matter for language use by learners to getting to know the intellectual, spiritual, and artistic values that the language gives expression to, culture is a constant source and context for language learning.

d. Finally, as with language, the purpose of intercultural communication, according to Bakhtin, consists in promoting understanding among people of different cultures. Given the presence of culture at all levels of language learning, as educators we promote not only linguistic but also intercultural interactions among people of different languages and cultures. The ultimate goal of these interactions is not intercultural communication for its own sake, but a growing mutual understanding among both individuals and nations.

3. Identity

a. Bakhtin's dialogic theories of language and culture culminate in his dialogic view of personal identity. A person is formed through her dialogue with another person. This dialogue actually constitutes the existential basis of personhood. But Bakhtin also stressed the importance of the multiplicity of languages for individual consciousness. A person's identity is enhanced and strengthened by the many languages that she knows. The languages and cultures that a person has made her own enrich this identity and make it sensitive to those of others. For Bakhtin a monolingual consciousness is "deaf," i.e. closed to communication with its linguistic and cultural others (1996, v. 5, p. 157). This idea has a direct bearing on SLA. It provides an existential justification for the study of foreign languages. Such a study, in Bakhtin's view, is not merely an extraneous, purely pragmatic addition to one's skills, but a transformation and opening-up of personal identity, to include other voices and world views that expand the person's horizons and thereby change the person herself on a most fundamental level. Dialogue is central to the formation of such personal identity. "An independent, responsible and active discourse," insisted Bakhtin, "is *the* fundamental indicator of an ethical, legal and political human being" (1981, p. 350).

b. Bakhtin's dialogic concept of identity was neither positivist nor relativist. Emerson (2004) summed up this facet of Bakhtin's theory in the following way: "We are neither predetermined, nor are we accidental. And that unique quality that keeps me from being accidental, that is, the consistency in my reactions over time, Bakhtin would call my 'idea.'" Personal identity thus included, in Bakhtin's view, what he called "idea-person." "I do not 'carry' or 'hold' this idea: I *am* the idea," Emerson explains (2004, p. 109). This "idea" is, as Emerson notes, the consistency of the person's reactions in her dialogue with others, reactions that are morally-inflected and guided by active love and universal answerability. This is one of the key tenets in Bakhtin's moral philosophy.

The dialogic nature of identity formation therefore means that, for Bakhtin, this process has not only a linguistic and cultural but also an ethical and creative aspects. Bakhtin's view can be described as personalistic humanism, i.e. the view that a human being cannot be reduced to natural phenomena, on the one hand, or to cultural-historical conditions, on the other. Bakhtin affirms a changing but nonetheless whole and real personhood. As such Bakhtin's approach provides an alternative to both the cognitivist and postmodernist models of the learner that are current in SLA.

c. In Bakhtin's theory of dialogue the point of departure is the self that communicates with its other, where the other represents the authoritative side in communication. In other words, Bakhtin works within an approach where the power relations between the self and the other are reversed in comparison with the way that second language studies usually look at power relations between them. The Bakhtinian self is in a marginal position, whereas the Bakhtinian other is in the dominant position. Bakhtin was eminently concerned with the marginalised self's resistance to and, ultimately, liberation from the authoritative other largely for historical reasons. He was himself such a resisting individual who sought to retain his own uniqueness in the face of a levelling ideological pressure that confronted him as his other. For SLA, the Bakhtinian reversal of perspective means that the other is cast in active and agentive rather than passive terms. Instead of passively suffering the authority of the dominant culture and discourse, the other is viewed as a self that empowers itself through interaction with this culture.

To sum up, for Bakhtin dialogue is a universal, dynamic, and pervasive concept. As such it plays the crucial part in the functioning of language, intercultural relations, and formation of personal identity. All these three phenomena exist on the boundary created by the mutual communication of participants in dialogue. A Bakhtinian understanding of

trilateral relations among language, culture, and personal identity can serve as a basis for interdisciplinary collaboration as well as for collaboration among various trends within the field of SLA. Bakhtin's theory of dialogue answers the current concerns in the following areas: (1) the social nature of language; (2) language use and language user; (3) L2 learner's/user's perspective; (4) the role of the other's word in the formation of individual consciousness; (5) language learning as the process of appropriating the words of others; (6) the axiological (ethical and aesthetic) aspect of communication; (7) the trilateral connections among language, culture, and the self.

The concept of a dialogic classroom

If one were to conceive of an L2 classroom that would be based on the interpretation of Bakhtin's theory of dialogue, then one would probably envision it in the following general terms.

First of all, a classroom like this will be based on the dialogic model, in contrast to the traditional, predominantly monologic and teacher-centered classrooms where students mostly work individually with authoritative texts. A monologic class is characterized by the mutual isolation of the cultures that students represent, that is, the students do not communicate among themselves as part of their classroom experience. The dialogic model, on the other hand, will encourage participation of all students in a general exchange and will exploit the students' unique horizons, values, and world views.

No dialogue is possible without individual voices that take part in it. This means that a dialogic classroom will be built on respect for the individual "voices" of the students, as well as on drawing upon all possible aspects of these "voices." Our students already possess their unique voices when they come to our classes. The task of a dialogic class will be not to suppress these voices, but to help further develop them. As frequently happens, many students lose their sense of identity once they enter an alien culture and experience this as a troubling loss. This, in turn, often results in their prolonged silence

in the classroom: they have lost their old voice and have not found their new one. Identity is always dialogic, and the students' participation in a dialogue will help them strengthen their identities because they are accomplishing with others something that each of them cannot accomplish alone.

A voice cannot exist in isolation and appears only when there is someone who can listen to it or another voice that can answer it. In other words, self-identity manifests itself only when there are other identities to which one's voice is addressed. Bakhtin, as we remember, called this quality addressivity.

One could hardly expect, though, that dialogue in such a classroom would be something clean and tidy. Rather, it is natural that it be accompanied by the chaotic "noise" of the simultaneously sounding voices that Bakhtin called heteroglossia. Up to a certain extent, heteroglossia should not be feared but accepted as an inevitable part of a dynamic process. On the other hand, it must not be excessive because otherwise the noise will drown out the voices and no dialogue will be possible. The task of the teacher is to make sure that voices strike a polyphonic balance between dynamic exchange and a sense of fixed order.

One of the most appropriate concepts that describe a dialogic classroom that encourages intercultural understanding is outsideness. In the classroom, it means that diversity must be celebrated and viewed as an advantage, a necessary condition for creativity. Outsideness means that a student is at one and the same time within her own culture, as well as in her alien one, i.e, she is at once an insider and outsider for both. According to Bakhtin, such a position of the learner enables her understanding of both cultures. Foreignness is a natural state of our students and it must be efficiently exploited as their advantage rather than disadvantage. Furthermore, outsideness is a condition for creativity on the part of each participant in the dialogue.

From what has been described, the dialogic classroom emerges as a flexible balance of centrifugal and centripetal forces. The centripetal factor is provided by the

teacher and by the syllabus, curriculum, and standard language forms. The centrifugal

impetus comes from the students' mismatches in communicative practices,

nonengagement, nonresponsiveness, negative stereotypes, and resistance. It is the

dynamic balance of these factors that constitutes dialogue in a classroom.

The above is clearly only the most general outline of a dialogic classroom.

Further work is needed to translate these principles into specific teaching methods and

practices. It is beyond doubt, nonetheless, that an approach based on Bakhtin's theory of

dialogue at once enhances recent new tendencies in SLA and opens a new perspective on

many issues. This means that a theoretical framework derived from Bakhtin's thought

can be fruitfully applied in the field of second language research and pedagogy.

Recommendations for future research

This dissertation is an invitation to continue our conversation about Bakhtin. It

has pursued theoretical goals in the hope that its conclusions will stimulate further

pedagogical research and classroom practice. The immediate next task in terms of

incorporating Bakhtin's legacy in SLA theory and research is to use a Bakhtinian lens to

examine the existing practices in teaching and learning second and foreign languages.

The themes of language, culture, and identity in second language studies can be the key

areas where Bakhtin's ideas can be applied. With regard to language, the following

directions of research appear to be promising. Bakhtin's theory of dialogue may be used

in the elaboration of a fully interactive conception of language. It can also make a

contribution to studying language in use or language praxis *vis-à-vis* language as system

or structure. Bakhtin's insights into the dialogic quality of language can be useful in

examining the use of language on three different levels: individual, interindividual, and

intercultural/global. The study of the communicative nature of language can be explored

in both oral and written contexts. These areas of research encompass a very broad

spectrum from the individual learner to the problem of global English. Bakhtin's ideas

on the axiological character of communication can be used to advance research in both language and identity studies.

Likewise, Bakhtin's theory of culture is applicable to SLA research on a broad range of issues. It can be used to investigate the cultural evolution of the individual learner, intercultural dynamics in an L2 classroom, and intercultural processes in the contemporary world at large. The theory is likely to be especially productive in the investigations undertaken from the sociocultural perspective, especially when this perspective is combined with a critical theory approach. The role of ideology and ideological struggles as they pertain to the study of second and foreign languages and cultures can be fruitfully analysed with the help of Bakhtin's concepts. These issues have an individual dimension as they impact the development of the L2 learner, and in this regard Bakhtin's thought has much to offer to the SLA researcher.

Bakhtin's thought can be used to enhance the study of the role of the other in SL learning process. This also includes the problem of developing a new perspective on the L2 learner and L2 user, as well as strengthening the emic perspective vs. the predominant etic perspective in SLA. Bakhtin will be especially helpful in the study of the issue of voice and authorship and the learner's self-empowerment through assimilating the authoritative discourses in the culture of their other language.

Final remarks

Bakhtin's theory deeply resonates with the concerns of second and foreign language research and pedagogy. The desire for universal equality of participants in a dialogue speaks to the problems of the coexistence of languages and cultures in today's global context. The idea of intercultural dialogue has become a reality of second language classrooms. The theme of the formation of the self on the boundary between languages and between cultures increasingly permeates SL learning and teaching. Second language classrooms have today become the place where intercultural

understanding is built on the dynamic equilibrium of intersecting worldviews and values and where outsideness is a condition of creative understanding on the part of each participant in the dialogue.

But no matter how significant Bakhtin's purely theoretical contribution to our field may be, the most valuable lesson that one derives from an encounter with him is the lesson of his entire personality that includes both his writings *and* his life. Despite harsh conditions, both physical and political, Bakhtin managed to preserve and found means to convey to his fellow human beings his irrepressible optimism, love of humanity, and love of culture—of all creations of human spirit that encourage our empathy for the concrete human person immersed in "the concrete living totality" of her existence.

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