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Voice and Identity: Authoring the Self through Language Exchange

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ABSTRACT --*The proliferation of digital technology and the internet have afforded people from multiple spatial locations and cultural boundaries the opportunity to interact and share ideas, life stories and practices. This article reports on an online journey of a 19-yearl-old EFL university student, Nadia, who engaged in a community of practice of language learners mediated through an online platform called mylanguageexchange.com. The data were collected through a connective ethnography approach involving the use of WhatsApp chats, emails and unstructured informal interviews via mobile phone call. Drawing on Bakhtinian perspective of dialogism, the data analysis revealed the extent to which Nadia was able to (re) author her voices and enact identity L2 user through his participation in the community of practice. Nadia's accounts also bear a palpable sense of internal struggle with a variety of competing discourses, rendering her utterances heteroglossic. In view of learning, the data analysis revealed the role of participation in a community of practice as a mediational tool to facilitate the transfer of linguistic knowledge and skills from the social plane to the individual through inter-mental and intra-mental process. The article concludes with recommendations to look at out of school literacy practice and digital space as a rich site for self-authoring and L2 identity formation and to adopt a third space pedagogy which disrupts the binary categorization of L2 user as 'good' vs 'poor' or 'legitimate' vs 'illegitimate'.*

Key words-- *Authoring, voice, identity, EFL,*

I. INTRODUCTION

The emergence of the internet and digital media technology has created an alternative space for multi directional social interaction involving people of different cultures and from multiple spatial locations. In particular, young people today are known to represent a larger portion of population who utilize digital space for a variety of purposes. Over the past decade and across the globe, digital media have become an integral part of their everyday lives (Buckingham & Willet, 2006; Ito et al., 2008). Alongside this development, there is a question of how young people today are acquiring knowledge and skills in informal settings rather than through classroom-based instruction. For example, a number of ethnographic studies have been conducted to examine how learning happens in informal settings, as a side effect of everyday life and social activity, rather than in an explicit instructional agenda (Ito et al., 2010). Hull & Schultz (2002) and Gee (2003, 2008), for instance, report that youth's learning of literacy is developed through peer-based interaction. These informal interactions, (Gee, 2008) argues, "Come for free [and] develop naturally as the learner solves problems and achieve goals."

A great deal of attention has also been directed toward the affordances of digital technologies in providing young people alternative pathways to participate in meaningful interaction, and to learn in the context of that

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participation (Crystal, 2001; Warner, 2004). In particular, some studies have focused on how L2 learners can benefit from participation in digitally mediated communities. For example, Lam (2000) provides evidence of how an ELL was able to communicate in English with his transnational communities despite feeling frustrated over his insufficient English skills after formally learning it in school for five years. McGinnis et al., (2007) also show through their study that many ELLs today learn to read and write in English outside of schools by creating and sharing digital texts around local, national, and global issues that are important to them. Most of the previous studies on digital affordances, however, were conducted in the context of English as a Second Language whereas not much has been researched with regards to how English learners in EFL context capitalize on the affordances of digital media and the Internet. Hence, this research study was designed to fill such a gap so as to provide different perspectives on the role of digital media technology and the internet in mediating learners' participation in a community of practice.

Rationale

The rationale for this study stems from both personal and practical concerns. On a personal level, I was somewhat perplexed by the common categorization of English learners as 'deficient' or 'poor' solely on the ground of their performance on standardized tests. Such a view of literacy skills tends to be narrow and reductionist in which learning is understood simply as the accumulation and restructuring of knowledge in a discrete cognitive space (Long, 1997), and thereby "knowledge is to be squirreled away in the mind and then tested" (D. Atkinson, 2014). In this respect, I have come to concur with a social view of literacy which conceptualizes literacy not as a skill set, but as an array of social and cultural activities that are shaped and shape the context within which they take place. I align with Street (1984) ideological model of literacy which recognizes literacy as a social practice laden with ideological meanings (Street, 2003).

On a practical level, Indonesia rank fifth globally in terms of the number of internet users (Internet World Stats, 2018) and third after Saudi Arabia and India in annual growth of social media users (Insights, 2018). This emerging digital landscape has compelled us to raise a question as to how young people incorporate digital media technology into their everyday lives to mediate their social interaction where English literacy skills have a role. Of equal importance, we might ask ourselves as educators what it means to be literate or 'competent' in L2 in the era of digital technology and perhaps utilize our renewed understanding of literacy to adopt a more democratic approach to pedagogy.

In light of the above arguments, this study seeks to investigate how a 19-year old EFL university student navigate through digital space in terms of authorship in L2. My overarching research question is: How does the research participant make sense of participation in an online community practice of language learners mediated through the online platform language.exchange.com?

II. Literature review

Defining language exchange

Language-exchange partnership refers to 'a setting where language learners regularly meet a native speaker of their target language who mutually supports language and cultural learning' (Nishioka, 2009). In the field of language education, language-exchange partnerships are known by various terms, such as conversation exchange

Voller & Pickard (1996) or tandem learning (Kennedy & Furlong, 2014). Although the original form of language-exchange partnerships is face-to-face, in recent years, the development of new communication technologies (e.g. online chatrooms, videoconferencing) has given rise to tele collaboration, which unites learners living in two different countries to participate in computer-mediated communication (Darhower, 2008; Menard-Warwick, 2009; Tian & Wang, 2010). The goal of language exchange is to improve language and intercultural skills through social interaction and collaboration with a more capable peer who speaks one's L2 as a native language (Brammerts & Calvert, 2003). Learning through language exchange can be an 'important supplement to classroom teaching' because 'it takes part of the learning outside the classroom and into the real world' (Tian & Wang, 2010). It provides its participants with a valuable means of regular interaction with a native speaker in authentic contexts.

Language-exchange learning has two basic principles: the principle of learner autonomy and the principle of reciprocity (Little & Brammerts, 1996). The autonomy principle puts learners in charge of their own learning. Learners are responsible for creating opportunities for their own learning and confronting challenges they may not have encountered in their previous language-learning experiences (USHIODA, 2000). The reciprocity principle requires learners to take responsibility for each other's learning and to attempt to provide equal support. In doing so, they must be 'good language models and pay attention to the learning needs of their partners' (Darhower, 2008). This reciprocity in teaching and learning contributes to their ongoing collaborative relationship with their partners (Chung, Yang-Gyun & Graves, Barbara & Wesche, Mari & Barfurth, 2005).

In language.exchange.com, participants can learn different languages from fellow members by selecting from the menu on the website. They can initiate a conversation by leaving a message in the message box and send it to the person whom they wish to learn a new language from. In some cases, despite its status as lingua franca, English is not always the preferred choice to learn. Participants from non-English speaking countries may opt for languages other than English. Thus, a Korean or Indonesian participant may choose Indonesian or Korean in language exchange. However, English often serves as a mediational tool when communication between the two fails in such an exchange.

Dialogism

I turn to Bakhtinian dialogism as major conceptual tools to provide me with a powerful insight into the social nature of human language from a much more micro-interactional perspective. Bakhtin (1981, 1986) concept of "dialogue" relies on an understanding of language, which assumes any form of speech or writing as always a dialogue and always a struggle for meaning. Dialogue consists of three elements: a speaker, a listener/ respondent, and a relation between the two. Bakhtin (1981) viewed all language as social language, as a "hybrid construction." Each utterance, from single words to novel, is composed of the speaking voice and the other voices figured by the speaker's social milieu. In this way, language is "dialogic."

Some key terms in understanding Bakhtin (1981) dialogic theory are voice, authoring and identity, which are discussed below:

Voice

Voice refers to the speaking consciousness of individuals, which can be understood only in their specific socio-historical and cultural situations in which a particular discourse are embedded. From a Bakhtinian perspective, voice appears in a spoken or written utterance with in a social milieu that reflects a particular way of viewing the world. Bakhtinian 'multivoicedness' refers to the simultaneous existence of different individual voices

as well as the simultaneous existence of an individual voice and the voices of a group. The multi- voicedness of the mind is, in a way, a product of the heteroglossia of the society that is, a variety of genres, styles, registers and discourses that Bakhtin (1986) sees characteristic of all language use. Thus, multi-voicedness can be understood as a metaphor that describes the presence of different perspectives, or voices in one's inner reality and which may also be seen as constitutive of our identities. According to Bakhtin, one's sense of identity is shaped by these voices and the generic structures humans have created to adapt them for communicative purposes. 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. Some linguistic anthropologists think of voice as a linguistically constructed persona (Duranti, 1997). The concept of voice is thus closely related to that of identity.

Bakhtin's notion of "speech genres" seems to parallel with the term 'discourses' in modern socio-psychological and linguistic sciences. For example, Gee (1991) uses the term 'discourse' to emphasize particular ways of specific groups of people' s behaving, interacting, valuing, thinking, believing, speaking, reading and writing that are accepted as instantiations of particular roles by the members of particular groups. When the term, 'discourse' is used as a count noun, it means "a culturally recognized way of representing a particular aspect of reality from a particular ideological perspective and thereby, can be viewed as a sort of "identity kit" (Gee, 1991).

Self-authoring and identity formation

The concept of voice is also intimately associated, for Bakhtin (1986), with the concept of authorship; he speaks, for example of a search "for one's own (authorial) voice." Since the notion of the author connotes personhood and creativity, "authoring the self' is the meaning we make of ourselves as we organize, categorize, and orchestrate others' voices and turn our orchestrated discourse toward ourselves. According to Bakhtin, our "striving to understand," to make meaning of what is said around and to us informs our world through others. Through both the act of being addressed and the act of responding, our world is informed by and through others.

Bakhtin (1986) especially stresses the significance of the other in linguistic consciousness and discourse. "Our speech is full of other's words," He describes the significance of the other for identity formation in terms of "human consciousness" and "personality." He links 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" (Bakhtin, 1986).

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." This process is related to the interaction between the authoritative and internally persuasive discourses. An 'authoritative discourse' is an official language coming from outside our consciousness. It implies the use of religious, political, and moral appropriation of words including the words of parents, leaders, and teachers. On the other hand, 'internally persuasive discourse' is an unofficial language coming from within our consciousness. It is assimilated forms of both official and unofficial language, as Bakhtin describes as "half-ours and half-someone else." (Bakhtin, 1986).

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" (Bakhtin, 1986). 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" (Bakhtin, 1984). Arguably, the self that one finds during one's participation in mylanguageechange.com by definition emerges and exists precisely on the boundary between at least two languages and at least two cultures.

Learning transformation through participation

Vygotsky' socio cultural theory of learning provides a bridge between SLA and Bakhtin's philosophy of language. They both view dialogue as the key factor in the formation of the self. 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, whereas in Bakhtinian term, the self is always unfinalized and in dialogue with others. At its core, Vygotsky (1978) theory suggests that social forms of mediation occur within the learners' Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which is determined or negotiated between two individuals (Wertsch, 1985) as it unfolds during interaction. According to Vygotsky, this is what development is about -the appropriation by individuals (and groups) of the mediational means made available by others (past or present) in their environment in order to improve control over their own mental activity (see Newman et al., 1989; Van Lier, 1996; Well, 1999). In this sense, 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). In the context of learning second language, this internalization process assumes that mental capacities associated with learning a second language appear twice for the individual (Lantolf, 2000). First, it appears on a social plane between people 'intermentally' before it gets processed on a psychological plane within the individual's mind 'intramentally', or known as higher mental processing.

Building on Vygotsky's ideas, Rogoff (1995) claims that since intellectual growth and the development of a sense of identity are interconnected with one's sociocultural context and its available cultural tools, learning occurs through participation in sociocultural activities of one's community and transformation of that participation over time. Learning as the "transformation of participation" involves collaboration among community members and is a function of shifting roles, habits, and relationships that move us along a trajectory from novice to expert in an activity (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Rogoff, 1995). It is within this notion that this study also attempts to investigate the extent to which the participant's engagement in the community practice of language learners engenders literacy development.

III. Research Method

This study adopted an ethnographic perspective within a case study design. The ethnographic perspective was required as this research sought to provide a thick description of cultural practice of an individual within a situated specific context (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1998). Although the participant's primary goal was to learn English through language exchange, it was assumed that such engagement also gave rise to social interaction in which social relations, meanings and purposes were interwoven. In terms of data collection tools, this research might not be considered as a full-fledged ethnography as it did not involve the researcher occupying a participant-observer

role. Instead, the data was collected through digital media technology such as WhatsApp, emails and mobile phone communication. As Cazden (2000) suggests, an ethnographic of culture need not to be confined to a singular location. Rather, ethnography can be expanded to the investigation of cultural practices across multiple spaces. This method of enquiry is known as connective ethnography (Leander, 2008). Whereas the case study was chosen as this research attempted to present an in-depth analysis of a particular case within a bounded system. Case studies are useful for 'learning more about a little known or poorly understood situation' and where 'the phenomenon under study is not readily distinguishable from its context' (Yin, 2003, as cited in O'Toole & Beckett D., 2010).

3.1 Research setting and participant

The main research site of this study was an online-based platform called mylanguageexchange.com. The participant, Nadia (pseudonym), was a 19-year-old second semester student from a private university located in Yogyakarta, Central Java, Indonesia. I came to know Nadia through a general sharing session back in 2016 during which I shared my learning experience with around 250 students of Pharmacy Department. She was one of the few students who came to me after the session and asked for my contact number as she said she was interested in my learning stories.

3.2 Data collection process

A year after our last meeting, I revisited Nadia via WhatsApp chats to ask about her learning experience. She said that she had joined mylanguageexchange.com ever since. I found this revelation very interesting and immediately asked her if I could do research into her online activities. To my request, she agreed to volunteer as my research participant. Over a period of three months, we kept in touch via WhatsApp chats. She sent me snapshots of her interaction in mylanguageechange.com both via WhatsApp and emails, including WhatsApp chats with other members of the community with whom she had made friends and communicated through WhatsApp. At a later stage of the data collection process, I interviewed her via mobile phone call to gauge her consistency in her statements and to probe into some issues related to the previous data.

3.3 Data Analysis

In this research, I focused on utterance as the unit of analysis. This approach allowed me to tap into the individual voices as it is in the utterance that different voices materialize. At the same time, using utterance, rather than words, as a point of departure provides a link between voice and discourse. As suggested by Bakhtin (1981), "all words have the 'taste' of a profession, a genre, a tendency, a party, a particular work, a particular person, a generation, an age group, the day and hour. Each word tastes of life; all words and forms are populated by intentions."

I found Discourse analysis to be compatible with the line of inquiry here as language is understood as a culturally recognized way of representing a particular aspect of reality from a particular ideological perspective (Gee, 1991). I applied micro-genetic analysis (Lantolf, 2000; Wertsch, 1991) by examining the moment-by-moment snippets of the participant's social interaction on mylanguageexchange.com. I analyzed both the snippets emerging from the participant's interaction in her own situated social context and those that she revealed through

WhatsApp chats and the ways she spoke of them through mobile phone interview. The following section highlights the findings which centre around the issue of heteroglossia and learning transformation.

IV. Findings

The data collected for this study have pointed to the mediational role of digital space in providing L2 learners channels for authorship in L2. Through the dialogic interaction with other members of mylanguageexchange.com, Nadia was able to author her voice and establish her authorial presence in the ongoing discursive event she participated in. It is also apparent that Nadia's utterances were characterized with multivoicedness, which suggests her struggle to assimilate various competing discourses encircling her life. Along the same line, such authorship emerged as she occupied different subject positions in response to each unfolding discursive event.

Heteroglossia

The multitude of voices in a dialogue creates an interplay of discursive forces that (Bakhtin, 1981) called heteroglossia. The following excerpt features a snapshot of Nadia's interaction with a British girl named Hannah (Pseudonym) on my languageexchange.com:

Nadia:

Thank you for your message….. you say 'saya tidak makan daging' not 'saya bukan makan daging' he he he .. I give you example. I don't like watch tv = saya tidak suka nonton tv . but you say 'Yogya is not in Sulawesi" = Yogya bukan di Sulawesi. Ok? You ask about why I wanna learn English. Yes because I wanna travel around the world. I like watch travel vlog in youtube. Like hijab traveller (you know hijab right?) . it is a program from tv station in Indonesia. I really like it. Someday I wanna make my youtube channel also maybe about travel but I confused coz so many travel channel already there in youtube. So it is strong competition to get 'likes' from viewers. Maybe I will to start with local tourism. Anyway I am not sure it just my wish. I have many wish lists ha ha . Oya where are you in England? What is it look like there? Do you wanna come to Indonesia? I make you confident you will like it. Indonesian people very friendly and helpful. Come to Yogya my city. We can go to famous temple like Borobudur and Prambanan. Also Gunung kidul beach. Also delicious kuliner. Please let me know. (please correct my grammar if you are not busy)

Hannah:

Hi Nadia selamat malam di sini. Thanks for your message. Very helpful feedback. So I reckon I can say 'Kamu bukan saudara perempuan aku' and 'Aku tidak rokok' . hope got it right! You should say 'I don't like watching TV'. You add 'ing' to the verb. Also 'I can assure you' instead of 'I make you confident', and 'I am confused' But no worries. Keep going.. your English is quite good

I am from Leeds in the Northern part of UK. Glad to hear about your dream to travel around the world. You should while you are still young. You will make it. Finger crossed! I like your idea of running YouTube channel. I've got a friend who is doing similar stuff and she enjoys it a lot. (Dia suka sekali?) Perhaps you could pick up something unique to get viewers. I've heard of those places and the Indonesian people's hospitality. Hope to travel to Indonesia soon. Sampai bertemu lagi nanti

The above exchange illustrates the dialogic interaction between Nadia and Hannah where the two engaged in tandem learning. Nadia provided feedback for Hannah on the use of the word 'tidak' and 'bukan'. Conversely, Hannah also corrected Nadia's grammatical inaccuracy in regard to the use of the verb 'like' and the word 'confident'. In the above example, the act of responding and being responded to forms the basis for a dialogue through which both Nadia and Hannah were able to author their voice as second language learners. In Bakhtinan terms, this dialogic process of identity formation entails both addressivity and answerability as the foundation for a dialogue where meaning is located. While addrresivity refers to how each utterance is addressed to someone, answerability pertains to the response or reaction to the utterance. More importantly, however, such a process provides a strikingly Bakhtinian definition of dialogue (see Bakhtin, 1986) as an inherently ethical activity where one assumes responsibility both for one's own words and for one's interlocutor. This means that answerability in a dialogue is not enough, it requires ethical and moral responsibility. In the above excerpt, It is obvious that both Nadia and Hannah infused their responses (answerability) with a strong sense of ethical responsibility, as reflected from the level of caution in their respective remarks such as 'please correct my grammar if you are not busy', 'No worries' and 'keep going .. your English is quite good'.

Nadia's remarks also speak volumes of the variety of competing discourses which might have figured into her voices. In accounting for her motivation to learn English through her remark 'because I wanna travel around the world', we can see how Nadia seems to have appropriated the authoritative discourse of English into her internally persuasive discourse by invoking a close association between the ability to communicate in English and her dream to travel around the world. In this sense, learning English is seen as part of her investment in the form of 'linguistic capital' (Bourdieu, 1991). This capital would give her leverage in her pursuit of not only her dream to travel around the world but also other symbolic and material resources. From Ivanic (1998) identity work perspective, Nadia's identity in this case is tied to the possibility for selfhood (a world traveller) which she envisioned in the future.

Nadia's speaking consciousness might have also been drawn from her interaction with the discourse of YouTuber or Vlogger. Indeed, this research was conducted at a time when video blogging was a massive phenomenon on You Tube Channel. Vloggers or You Tubers (the designer of the video/You Tube- as they are called) are known to benefit from blogging as they could earn money through the number of 'clicks' on the ads embedded to their videos.

Many of these bloggers produce video contents about their holidays adventures, sharing holiday tips and information on places of interests around the world. Similarly, among Indonesian people and university students in particular, there has been a growing awareness of the need to engage in entrepreneurship as part of the solution to unemployment issues in Indonesia. Such awareness has been encouraged by authoritative bodies and educational institutions including universities through faculty programs, courses and workshops. Social media especially You Tube, radio stations and TV in Indonesia have also consistently produced contents and programs promoting the idea of engaging in entrepreneurship.

As Nadia revealed, she wanted to run her own YouTube channel which features her travelling experience. Almost simultaneously, she also spoke of 'tight competition', and related this to the type of 'business /marketing strategy' she would adopt to get 'as many viewers as possible' and in turn (although implicitly) to 'generate income/revenue'. All of these ideas reflect ideological ingredients of the dominant discourse of neoliberal economy

so pervading around the globe nowadays. Hence, Nadia's voices echo her conscious and active awareness of the surrounding discourses and how she attempted to appropriate them into her discursive repertoire.

In conclusion, Nadia's authorship through mylanguageexchange.com bears witness to the simultaneous presence of various discourses, resulting in her utterance being heteroglossics (Bakhtin, 1981). The tension between different stratified discourses was visible in her voices when she said 'Maybe I will start with local tourism but I am not sure it just my wish. I have many wish list ha ha'. In other words, Nadia's dialogic process of identity formation through authorship in L2 can be understood as far from being smooth and linear. Rather, it involves the 'unfinalized self' struggling to develop one's own discourse in the process of ideologically becoming (Bakhtin, 1981). Thus, the findings and discussion strongly suggest that individuals' actions, words, or thoughts at certain times are often an internal compromise among several different voices and discourses and hence, identity is constantly changing and negotiated across time and space (Ivanic, 1998).

Learning Transformation through intermental and intramental process.

The above dialogue between Nadia and Hanna demonstrates the extent to which participation in a community practice allows for a meaningful engagement with language while offering the possibility for the transfer of linguistic knowledge and skills through guided participation mechanism (Rogoff, 1995). Each of the pair engaged in novice-expert interaction where the boundary between learning and using language as social practice becomes blurred. As the excerpt shows, in terms of learning, the novice-expert interaction came to the fore as a result of both parties trying to establish social cohesion and maintain social relations. For example, Nadia's authorship was triggered by her sense of responsibility to respond to Hanna's question regarding her motivation to learn English. Through her remark "You ask about why I wanna learn English. Yes because I wanna travel around the world. I like watch travel vlog in youtube…", she was able to author her voice and enact her identity as someone with a strong passion for traveling. Here, the need to assert her sense of self along with her answerability was perceived to be greater than her need to learn English. On noticing a grammatical mistake in Nadia's message, Hanna, assuming the role of an expert or the more knowledgeable, offered a correction to the mistake such as "You add 'ing' to the verb", "I can assure you instead of "I make you confident", and "I am confused" instead of "I confused". Nadia's response was equally social in the sense that her decision to provide feedback was partly directed toward maintaining the social relation with Nadia.

The learning process arising from the dialogic interaction between Nadia and Hanna perfectly portrays. Vygotsky (1986) notion of the socially mediated nature of mind where learning involves mediational process between at least two individuals. It is likely that upon receiving this feedback, Nadia might develop an awareness of what and how to appropriately use the expression in question. Here, learning first occurs intermentally through the presence of the Other, Hannah, who assumes the role as the expert in a guided participation (Rogoff, 1995). As Vygotsky argues (in Wertsch, 1991), higher mental functioning of the individuals derives from social life. Therefore, acquisition and development of cognitive skills –including language- is a result of social experiences with other humans –that is, the interaction between their own minds and the minds of other (intermentally). The locus of learning subsequently shifts into the individual's mind (intramentally) where Nadia processes Hanna's feedback into new knowledge through what Vygotsky terms as 'higher mental processing' involving thinking, planning, voluntary attention, logical thought, problem solving, as well as learning (Lantolf, 2000; Wertsch, 1985, 1991).

To take the argument further, Nadia's higher mental functioning leads to her ability to improvise with her new knowledge. During an interview via mobile phone call, I asked Nadia what she remembered most about her interaction with Hanna in terms of learning English. She said "hmm I still remember some good words like hunky dory and gobsmack". When I asked further "Why do you still remember them?", she responded "because it is very useful and I just like the sound. very funny. Sometime I use it with my friends like 'is everything hunky dory" he he .. it mean 'everything ok? 'like that. About gobsmack its mean 'very surprise' 'like I am gobsmack". I found Nadia's answer theoretically significant and interesting as it offers further understanding of Vygotsky's higher mental processing. Her remark "Sometime I use it with my friends like 'is everything hunky dory?" shows the extent to which she was able to expand her new knowledge to include different contexts. Rogoff (1995) refers to this newly acquired mental capability as appropriation, defined as "the personal process by which and through engagement in an activity, individuals change and handle a later situation in ways prepared by their own participation in the previous situation."

V. Discussion

The findings have provided textual evidence of how the participation in a community of practice provided a springboard for Nadia's dialogic interaction with Hanna where she found meaningful engagement with language. Through dialogue, Nadia was able to self-author her voices in ways that retain the very essence of language as a means of communication. As Bakhtin (1981) notes, dialogue creates the possibility of language; language emerges from dialogue and is, conversely, the essential medium of dialogue. Nadia's dialogue with Hanna exemplifies that "language lives only in dialogic interaction of those who make use of it" (Bakhtin, 1984).

Nadia's authorship through dialogue also bears witness to the multiplicity of voices in one's utterances, highlighting the inseparability of language use from its social context. The findings show how Nadia's voices were laden with socially-charged meanings, linking her voices to various discourses encircling her life. In her authorship, she voiced her interest in becoming a YouTuber and spoke of getting the most viewers for her YouTube channel, highlighting her affiliation with the discourse of neoliberal economy which accentuates the importance of competition, efficiency and maximization of profits. Nadia's voices also echo how the authoritative discourse of English, with its unifying and totalizing force, has been appropriated and naturalized into Nadia's internally persuasive discourse so as to automatically invoke a close association between her ability to communicate in English and the fulfilment of her dream to travel around the world. These examples describe how through an utterance, one's voice is linked to the social context of language. As 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."

The findings also point to the fact that through the participation in the community of practice, Nadia felt a meaningful sense of the learning Self as she was fully immersed in the dialogic interaction with Hannah. As the findings show, the expert-novice guided participation not only allow for learning to occur through social interaction, but also promotes a more democratic, egalitarian relationship between the self and the other. Although the notion of expert-novice guided participation presupposes power relationship, the example vindicated that both

Nadia and Hanna was able to maintain the kind of relationship where the other was perceived as no subordinate to the self and vice versa. This equality was made possible as the emerging feedback during the dialogue (answerability) was infused with a sense of ethical responsibility (Bakhtin, 1986). During my interview with Nadia over the phone, I asked about her general feelings and perception about her engagement in mylangageexchange.com. She said that "I feel freedom… not afraid to make mistakes like that "sir." and also "interesting because I can make friend like now I have one friend from England, one friend from Korea, and one friend from Russia. I often chat use my WhatsApp sir". These remarks attest to Hana's invention of third space (Bhabha, 2004) where she felt a sense of liberation as a language learner.

VI. Conclusion

The findings of this research should remind us of how important it is to be mindful and cognizant of learners' diverse voices and to acknowledge these voices by providing spaces for authorship through a more compassionate approach to pedagogy. As shown throughout the findings and discussion, Bakhtin (1981) notion of dialogism could be useful in terms of how we should view L2 user. The traditional approach to the study of foreign languages have long tended to view L2 user as "the other", i.e. the voiceless object of investigation, and the point of departure is the point of view of the native speaker. This view often gives rise to such categorization of L2 learners as 'deficient', 'illegitimate' or 'poor'. In Bakhtinian terms, however, such framing is completely removed through the dialogic notion of language where the self is always in dialogue with the other with each equally contributing to the construction of meanings. In SLA, this means that we need to start looking at the study of foreign language from the point of view of L2 user as a point of departure. It is through this shifting of perspective that we may help cultivate learners' diverse voices and cultural wealth and accordingly create a 'third space' where learners would feel liberated and empowered.

The findings should also attest to the paramount role of participation in a community of practice as a mediational tool for learning. Here, learning involves meaningful social interaction mediated in and through language. In this sense, language learning is understood as learning to function in social interaction. This is in stark contrast to the traditional approach to SLA where learning is seen as an accumulation of knowledge of discrete rules and lexical items devoid of social context. In conclusion, this article recommends a shift toward a more compassionate approach to second language pedagogy which not only requires empathy for and awareness of learners' unique contexts, but also a third space pedagogy which disrupts the long established binary categorization of L2 user as 'good' vs 'poor, or 'legitimate' vs 'illegitimate'.

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