Listening to Contextualization Cues: Co-constructed Power, Identity, and Learning Between a NNEST and Adult Immigrant Learners

Bingjie Zheng

University of Wisconsin-Madison

In the United States, the immigrant population explosion has been calling for increasing attention to English instruction for immigrant learners. In comparison with prolific literature on immigrant English language learners (ELLs) in K–12 educational settings, literature on English instruction for adult immigrant learners at non-profit organizations, especially through microanalysis of classroom interaction, is scarce. Using a microethnographic method, this study explores how a nonnative English speaking student teacher picks up classroom *contextualization cues* (Gumperz, 1977) to understand how adult immigrant learners negotiate their learning needs and how their classroom *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1977a) embodies the social forces outside of class. Drawing on poststructuralist identity theories, this paper discusses how adult learners' conflicts in language learning and socialization are manifested in classroom contextualization cues, and how a non-native English speaking teacher (NNEST) and adult immigrant students discursively and socially co-constructed identity and power dynamics throughout the learning/teaching process. I argue that listening to these contextualization cues has meaningful implications for teachers, who should listen for classroom details and reflectively examine their positionality in the discourse of teaching adult immigrant populations. This paper also urges rejection of stereotyped deficit views toward immigrant learners and NNESTs in the field of language teaching.

Amidst the social context of large waves of immigration and globalization, emerging literature on English language teaching for adult immigrant learners has either focused on social structure (e.g., Gibson & Ogbu, 1991) or learner trajectories (e.g., De Costa, 2010; Miller, 2014; Roberge, 2002) grounded in ethnographic or interview data. Few microethnographic studies have been done to closely examine classroom interaction and discourse in order to understand how adult immigrant learners learn English in micro and local contexts, and how learners' language uses in classroom discourses index their marginalized status due to a lack of linguistic capital in American society. Similarly, compared to the rich literature exploring teacher education for working with K–12 immigrant English Language Learners (ELLs), not many studies shed light on teacher training for English as a Second Language (ESL) courses in non-profit organizations, working with adult learners.

Scholars have been calling for attention to improve teachers' skills in teaching immigrant adult learners and have been advocating for a non-native

English speaking teacher (NNEST) movement to highlight the advantages of NNESTs and to question native speaker ideologies (Aneja, 2016). Rymes (2002) provides a field-based adult ESOL method to engage pre-service teachers with the community of immigrant adults. During the 15-week ESOL class, fifteen pre-service teachers taught at the homes of a Spanish-speaking community of mainly Mexican immigrants. Throughout the course, pre-service teachers followed up on an issue about which they were curious, and used their community-based teaching experiences to critically examine the issue and to reflectively learn for their teaching. By innovatively working on their teaching portfolio, pre-service teachers expressed their transformations in pedagogical values and an increased awareness of linguistic diversity in teaching. For example, they critically reflected on the effectiveness of their teaching, and became aware of the role of students' use of Spanish in learning. International pre-service teachers were also actively engaged and enpowered, mentioning that the English language teaching is not a "cultural privilege of U.S. citizens" but "belongs to all those who use it" (p. 450). Similarly, Schultz (2004) promotes the idea of "listening to teach," which requires a teacher to "become an active inquirer into her own pedagogy" (p. 9). Aneja (2016) highlights the importance of teachers', especially NNESTs', self-awareness of multiple and context-based identities and suggests mini-autoethnographies as a way to understand identity changes in their teaching practices.

In this study, I use discourse analysis to examine my own classroom as a nonnative English-speaking student teacher in a non-profit organization located in a large city in the Northeastern United States. I elaborate on how my teaching philosophies developed through my six-month practitioner inquiry project, and how my students and I discursively co-constructed power and identity. From the start of the ESL session, I noticed that my adult immigrant learners rarely showed their opinions through explict (e.g., verbal) expressions in the class. Sometimes, they hid their identities by withdrawing or faking some utterances. In such circumstances, socio-cultural and emotional factors embedded in classroom activities should be taken up by teachers. When adult learners are not willing to explicitly talk about their ideas, teachers might fail to notice some messages conveyed by the learners. Natural production of contextualization cues, nevertheless, serves as reliable information for teachers to understand students' classroom behaviors and learning needs.

By critically examining my own classroom practices using the tool of discourse analysis, I highlight the significance of contextualization cues in revealing students' underlying identities and in promoting positive changes for ESL pedagogical practices. Research questions for this paper include: (1) how did classroom contextualization cues help me, as a teacher, understand my adult immigrant students' identity negotiation and resistance to the taken-for-granted assumptions in my teaching practices; and (2) how could attention to contextualization cues promote co-constructed learning between pre-service teachers and adult immigrant learners in classroom discourse?

Identity, Authenticity, and Resistance

Theories regarding identity have been introduced and incorporated into the field of second language learning and teaching in the past two decades

(Morgan & Clarke, 2011; Norton & McKinney, 2011; Norton & Toohey, 2002). According to Norton (2000), identity refers to how "a person understands his or her relationship with the world and how that relationship is constructed through time and space" (p. 5). Poststructuralist theorists of identity believe that identity is "multiple," "non-unitary," "changing over time," and "a site of struggle" (Norton & Mckinney, 2011, p. 74). According to this perspective, identity is constructed in response to power dynamics, different time, space, audience, and communities during interaction. Similarly, Gee (2001) categorizes identities into *natural-identity*, *institution-identity*, *discourse-identity*, and *affinity-identity*, arguing that "what is at issue, is always how and by whom a particular identity is to be *recognized*" (p. 109). Scholars have also examined negotiation, conflicts, and power dynamics in identity issues in second language acquisition (SLA). For example, Bucholtz and Hall (2004) look at how identity is negotiated through interaction and promote the notion of *tactics of intersubjectivity*—"the relations that are created through identity work" (p. 382). They introduce three pairs of processes to account for meaning negotiation: the first pair—*adequation* and *distinction*—refers to "socially recognized sameness" (p. 383) or distinctions; the second pair—*authentication* and *denaturalization*—is about whether the identity is constructed as credible or not, as a result of agentic processes; the third pair—*authorization* and *illegitimation*—is relevant to how a particular type of identity is legitimated because of power dynamics created by institutional and structural power. Lin (2008) reviews the theory of identity in different disciplines and argues that the term *identity* needs to be problematized, rather than taken for granted, in order for educators to understand how social inequality is reproduced through identity fixing and essentialization.

While much of the identity work on immigrant learners in the field of language teaching examines practices in American postsecondary settings (e.g., Morita, 2004; Seloni, 2008) or K–12 settings (e.g., Duff, 2002; Hawkins, 2005; Li, 2008), not many scholars have focused on adult immigrant populations who received little formal education or received education in non-academic settings. Scholars in SLA have collected interview and narrative data to understand immigrant learners' English language learning needs and realities. Block (2007) discusses five case studies on identity in adult migrant contexts in Europe and America and claims that immigrants are often expected by others to be responsible for achieving mutual understanding and for maintaining the flow of their conversation. Once immigrant learners are unable to monitor the conversation, all parties will be frustrated, and immigrant learners are usually the ones to blame. De Fina (2003) uses a narrative approach to understand how immigrant identity is reflected, negotiated, and constituted to argue against stereotyped ideas, prejudices, and ignorance toward them. She attended to discursive features in the analysis of immigrants' narrative resources, their presentation of social roles, and their negotiation of membership into different communities. Similarly, Pavlenko (2004) uses immigrant autobiographies to understand how immigrants negotiate their multilingual identities and how their narratives show the interrelation between consent and dissent in the process of "the making of an American" (p. 34). Using feminist poststructuralist theory, Miller (2014) also focuses on interviews with immigrant business owners to understand how agency discursively constitutes their ideologically defined spaces.

Identity negotiation is usually produced through discursive practices (Young, 2009), and the ESL classroom becomes a space where immigrant learners present, negotiate, and resist imposed identities. As Norton (2010) points out, "classroom practices might position learners in an undesirable way," and therefore students may experience a form of resistance to unfavorable identities imposed on them (p. 359), and students might have different ways to show this resistance, such as through lack of participation or less production of verbal language. Despite the scarcity of literature on discursive practices in adult literacy classes, many studies have been conducted in K–12 educational settings. These studies illustrate that learners have multiple identities based on different situated discourses and hold highly heterogeneous interpretations of their identity and schooling, despite similar racial, ethnic, or cultural backgrounds. Learners reject the perspective of viewing identity as homogeneous, rigid, and static (e.g., Flores, Kleyn, & Menken, 2015; McKay & Wong, 1996). These studies also reflect the ways in which students resist identities or participation and show how students' resistance to classroom participation could reexamine teachers' assumptions about how mainstream practices "garner implicit legitimation when we fail to foster critical awareness of their taken-for-granted hegemony along with access" (Miller & Zuengler, 2011, p. 145). Realizing students' agency in negotiating their identity through classroom discourses (e.g., contextualization cues) can help teachers better understand their students' needs, modify their classroom instructions, and avoid the "rigid, stereotypic identity categories" in teaching (Lin, 2008, p. 215).

Studies on Contextualization Cues in Classroom Discourses

In order to understand the effectiveness of teacher instruction and student participation, a lot of work has been done to analyze classroom interaction by examining grammatical features and verbal communication, such as corrective feedback (e.g., Fujii & Mackey, 2009), participation frameworks (e.g., Goffman, 1981), and turn-taking patterns (e.g., Mehan, 1985). However, many functions in classroom discourse are achieved through subtle contextualization cues, and misunderstandings could easily occur because of differences in contextualization cues (Rymes, 2009).

According to Gumperz (1977), *contextualization* refers to the "identification of specific conversational exchanges as representative of socio-culturally familiar activities" (p. 199), which Gumperz (1992) further elaborates as:

> speakers' and listeners' use of verbal and nonverbal signs to relate what is said at any one time and in any one place to knowledge acquired through past experience, in order to retrieve the presuppositions they must rely on to maintain conversational involvement and assess what is intended. (p. 91)

Contextualization relies on cues at various levels of speech production (Gumperz, 1992), and Gumperz (1977) terms these cues "contextualization cues"—"aspects of the surface structure of the message for people to evaluate message meaning and sequencing patterns" (p. 199). According to Bloome, Carter, Christian, Otto, and Shuart-Faris (2005), contextualization cues can be categorized into *common cues* and *systematic clusters of cues*. Common cues in the classroom include

nonverbal cues (e.g., gesture, facial expression, shift of eye contact, style of body movement) and paralinguistic prosodic cues (e.g., volume shift, tone shift, stress, intonation patterns). Systematic clusters of cues include register shifts (e.g., formal to informal) and variety shifts (e.g., Appalachian English to Standard English). Rymes (2009) claims that contextualization cues can be combined with other features such as clothing, skin color, or cultural tools to affect language features; different combinations can convey different identities and serve different functions. These contextualization cues in the classroom can have important implications when teachers look at "conversational inference rather than referential meanings" (Gumperz, 1977, p. 198), and classroom discourse is always about attention to details (Blommaert, 2005). Many empirical studies in the 1980s were done to explore the role of these contextualization cues in classroom discourse, such as their function in classroom control (e.g., Bremme & Erickson, 1977; Green & Weade, 1985), as well as the level of participation and student-student/teacher-student (mis)communication (e.g., Bloome & Golden, 1982).

Early literature examined contextualization cues in classroom discourse to understand teachers' control of classroom activities and structure. Bremme and Erickson (1977) explored the non-verbal and verbal classroom behaviors during a circle time in a kindergarten/first-grade classroom near Boston. They found that teachers relied on students' non-verbal behavior (e.g., movement of arms/legs), together with their utterances, to decide whether students conducted troublesome behaviors in the specific classroom context. Teachers attended to these non-verbal movements to define more specifically—"in terms of students' situational behaviors and the rules—what students are doing 'wrong'" (p. 159). Dorr-Bremme (1990) further studied the social meaning and functions of markers during circle time. He found that the teacher used three main types of circle markers—formulations, paralinguistic shifts, and framing words. Formulations involve telling students "more or less explicitly what is about to happen" (p. 388); paralinguistic shifts are a marked increase or decrease in the rate and loudness of the teacher's speech; and framing words (e.g., "okay," "all right") serve to frame the teacher's utterance. In particular, Dorr-Bremme examined how primary students attended to teachers' presence and absence of contextualization cues in circle talks to predict teachers' expectations. The main social function of markers, according to Dorr-Bremme, is to restore classroom order and to help teachers hold the floor. Similarly, Green and Weade (1985) argue that non-verbal languages and signals serve as social cues for class organization. The examples in this study show that teachers in a kindergarten classroom adopted nonverbal signals, including paralinguistic cues and the timing and rhythm of message delivery, to indicate transition time. Student interviews illustrated that learners could easily understand the teachers' intention, partly because these cues were consistent throughout the school year.

Other studies focused on how contextualization cues are indications of student involvement and student-student/student-teacher power relations; contextualization cues are also affected by power relations of the interlocutors. Hellermann (2005) examined the role of sound production in heightening tension in quiz game talk in the classroom. For example, he discovered that the pitch level of student answers contrasted with that in other student-teacher question–answer talk in the classroom, which illustrated issues such as the excitement in participation and the stress of performance in front of peers and teachers. Similarly,

Archakis and Papazachariou's (2008) study illustrates that voice intensity is tied to involvement as well as power negotiation among Greek females. They argue that a louder voice is preferred in in-group talk as a high involvement style between intimate young peers, whereas lower intensity is used when females talked with out-group authority figures as a means of reducing the authority of their adult voice. In comparison, Bloome and Golden's (1982) microanalysis also shows that features of contextualization cues can be developed and shaped by teachers' instruction styles. This study explored the nature of literacy learning practices in two desegregated classrooms in Boston and specifically attended to non-verbal behavior of Black students. They found that these cues revealed great similarities in terms of students' monitoring of each other's behaviors (e.g., postural configuration) in the classroom. The study also found that these features of contextualization cues partly resulted from the instructor's differential classroom teaching styles in English class and social studies class, such as the level of teacher control and gatekeeping mechanisms.

These studies have looked at the function of contextualization cues, and most of them have focused on how contextualization cues are supplementary information to reinforce the verbal behaviors produced in the classroom. However, a scarcity of literature has looked at how contextualization cues may also contradict verbal behavior and how the difference could reveal information in situated contexts for educators to understand aspects of their students' identities that were previously unknown. In my study, contextualization cues become crucial elements for instructors to understand the hidden messages conveyed by students.

Setting and Focal Participants

The data for this paper come from an ESL class I taught in a non-profit organization located in a large city in the Northeastern United States while I was a master's student in Teaching English to Students of Other Languages (TESOL). This organization serves a large population of immigrants and refugees, providing services such as legal advice, translation and interpretation, ESL classes, and citizenship classes.

In terms of the ESL classes, the adult ELLs come from all over the world with highly heterogeneous linguistic, religious, and cultural backgrounds. The ESL instructors are all volunteers from various disciplines. Roughly two-thirds of the instructors are considered native English-speaking teachers (NEST) but very few of them have been trained as ESL teachers. Another one third of the ESL instructors are non-native English-speaking teachers (NNEST) who are students in TESOL or ESL programs at local universities. This organization explicitly states an English-only policy and emphasizes that the use of students' first languages is strictly forbidden in the classroom. This organization also has a strict rule of placing NNESTs in only beginner and literacy classes, reasoning that they lack sufficient skills to teach advanced students accurately, especially pronunciation. Before each session, this organization hosts a mandatory training workshop for all new volunteer teachers which focuses on accuracy in second language (L2) speaking and writing and task-based language teaching. The workshop, however, addresses little regarding the cultural, religious, and linguistic resources which students could potentially bring into class; neither does it address any advantages NNESTs have in teaching practices.

When the data were collected, I had just started teaching a new session on ESL literacy as an international student and NNEST, and I knew little about teaching literacy and teaching immigrant/refugee populations in the United States. I videotaped three 150-minute classes and conducted informal interviews with three focal students—Jabari, Emmanuel, and Nia—after these three classes.[1] I took field notes for three months. Emmanuel was in his thirties and had come from Chad five years before. He worked in a construction factory and lived with his wife and two sons in the western part of the city, where most African immigrants resided. He attended the same class in the previous session, which was taught by another instructor, and he had much higher literacy skills than the other two focal students. He liked to speak a lot in class and with his classmates he sometimes used their shared African languages to communicate. Jabari was in his fifties and had come from Mali about ten years before. His whole family was still in Mali, so he went back to Mali every two years. He worked two jobs seven days a week and twelve hours a day. Despite the heavy workload, he managed to attend each class during the three-month session. He did not learn to read or write, and he did not read or write during his ten-year stay in the United States. Nia was a new immigrant from Niger and had come to the United States six months before the class started. She was in her twenties, and her brother who lived in the United States introduced her into our classroom. She knew very little English and was occasionally absent from the class.

Listening to Voices: Co-Constructed Power, Identity, and Learning Between a NNEST and Immigrant Learners

Schultz (2004) points out the necessity for teachers to "listen to teach"— "focusing on what to teach for and how to listen" (p. 9). Listening, based on her interpretation, consists of elements such as understanding both language and gestures to make sense of students; listening also requires teachers to be committed to a constant state of learning where they develop meta-awareness of their changes in pedagogical values and practices. As an inexperienced NNEST in the U.S. context teaching immigrants and refugees, I had been learning to understand the discursive practices in the class. The following excerpts will discuss how "listen[ing] to teach," especially listening to contextualization cues, could help teachers, especially pre-service teachers, to understand these relationships and to support changes in an unfamiliar teaching environment. These excerpts also illustrate how institutional power and social forces are embedded and embodied in discursive practices and classroom interaction.

Listening to Adult Immigrant Learners' Voices: Authority and "Official" Knowledge

In general, there is a traditional power dynamic within schools where teachers might hold more power. Gee (2001) labels these identities as "institution-identities," where authorities are "allowed by laws, rules, tradition in the institution" (p. 102) to gain superior positions and the rights and responsibilities that go with these positions.

---

[1] All students' names are pseudonyms.

Interestingly, my position as an inexperienced, young international student teacher with expertise in English language teaching versus my adult immigrant students' position as long-term residents in the United States with rich life knowledge but lack of official literacy skills made this classroom a place that could allow for more possibilities for conflicts, negotiation, and agency. Power, authority, and identity seem to be discursively, socially, and historically constructed and negotiated.

Excerpts in this section come from the first two weeks of this class, where we focused on vocabulary related to appearance and body parts. However, since I had not taught ESL literacy before and did not know much about the students' background, I imposed some pre-determined assumptions. The following examples illustrate how contextualization cues conveyed hidden messages of my students' identities (i.e., institution-identity and affinity-identity) and show how adult immigrant learners asserted their agency to challenge my assumptions or the identity implicitly imposed on them. Even though students followed my instructions according to their expected institution-identities, subtle contextualization cues revealed that they tried to challenge this institution-identity by emphasizing my role as teacher.

Because all of my students were adult learners with their own judgment and varying proficiency levels, I allowed for more student autonomy in the selection of learning materials. However, the students seemed resistant to this type of teacher instruction. Excerpt 1 involves Emmanuel, who usually read and wrote much faster than the other students.[2] In this session, since he interrupted the other students while they were speaking, I asked whether he wanted to do some extra exercises. He lowered his voice and said "You are the teacher::" (line 2). I thought he had said this because he might need to stick to his institution-identity and show respect to me. That was what my previous students from Asia usually had done based on my own previous teaching experience. So I suggested he could take a break, if he preferred to. This time, he repeated this sentence with a higher pitch and greater volume: "=You ar::e the teacher::! I am student. I listen to YOU!" (line 7). Also, in the sentence, "teacher" was stressed. When these contextualization cues were involved, this sentence was no longer a demonstration of a student following my authority as a teacher. Instead, the student showed his impatience, and the implied message seemed to be that I should have given instructions and taught Emanuel instead of asking him what he wanted to do.

Here, contextualization cues served to challenge my institution-identity as a teacher, even though the utterance itself was polite. This illustrative example indicates that my students wanted me to act as a teacher and exercise my authority by giving orders. When being trained by my program as a pre-service teacher to give learner-centered instruction, I was trying to be friendly and to give students more freedom in learning. Therefore, I was puzzled by the fact that students resisted my efforts to build friendly relationships with them through classroom discourse. Student interviews helped me solve this puzzle: Both Jabari and Emmanuel told me that they never went to school before, and that they cherished this chance to receive a formal learning experience. Apparently, these students wanted to be guided by a teacher whom they perceived to have expertise in official knowledge in English language teaching. However, being trained to value learners' rich multicultural

---

[2] Transcription conventions for this and all following excerpts can be found in Appendix A.

knowledge and skills, I failed to recognize the individual needs of the learners in this local context and the appropriate strategies to meet their expectations.

Excerpt 1

1	Emmanuel:	No:: No:: Nia. Sli::m. ((Looking at Nia's paper and pointing at the word))=
2	Me:	=Oh, Emmanuel, have you finished everything?
3	Emmanuel:	Yeah ((looking around absentmindedly))
4	Me:	Do you want to do some extra work in the other textbook?
5	Emmanuel:	(0.3) I don't mind. You are the teacher:: ((Lowering his voice))
6	Me:	(1.0) Oh, I mean if you are tired, then have a break.
7	Emmanuel:	=You ar::e the teacher::! I am student. I listen to YOU!

In addition, contextualization cues in my class also conveyed students' negotiation of their institution-identity by challenging my predetermined assumptions and taken-for-granted teaching strategies. Teachers might be unaware of the challenges in using certain teaching strategies because of the fast flow of details occurring simultaneously in the classroom. Even though students might not directly point out the weaknesses of the teacher's instruction, contextualization cues can show subtle changes in students' attitude toward teachers' strategies. In Excerpt 2, when I suggested to Jabari that he write down the alternative word of "wrinkle" in some of his first languages, he remained silent and stared at me. This was a strategy I had used a lot in my previous teaching practices when teaching youth in China, and I made assumptions based on my previous teaching experiences. In this circumstance, I thought the silence meant that he hadn't understood my explanations because of his lower proficiency. However, when I explained it again, he still remained silent and looked towards Emmanuel (see line 8). Later I realized that Jabari was not able to read or write in his first languages either. In this circumstance, Jabari did not explain and chose to remain in his institution-identity as a student who didn't directly disagree with the teacher. However, his non-verbal behavior such as eye gaze revealed his act of asking for help from Emmanuel. Realizing Jabari's signal, Emmanuel said "He NEVER go to schoo::l!" (line 10) with a salient rising intonation and stress on "never." As Gumperz (1977) claimed, "a shift to high level generally calls special attention to the segments so marked" while shift to low level often implies that certain information is known (p. 201). With rising intonation and stress, this sentence appeared more of a challenge or disagreement than a simple statement of fact.

Both Emmanuel and Jabari's contextualization cues showed their agency to challenge my pre-assumption that people could always read and write in their first languages. This example demonstrated that there were multiple ways to interpret silence. I would argue that my teaching strategy in this classroom was also my *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1977a) as a long-term EFL teacher in the Chinese context who had only been very recently exposed to teaching concepts such as multiculturalism and learner-centered strategies. When trying to apply such concepts in my

teaching practices, however, I failed to recognize the underlying heterogeneity of learners' needs and the appropriateness of my pedagogy for these individuals in different contexts. Moreover, I believe that power dynamics in this classroom were not what is usually presumed in the traditional classroom where "teachers in the schooling system occupy functional roles that are imbued with authorities" (Lin, 2008, p. 215). In this class, factors such as age, race, years of residence in the United States, and knowledge in both official and unofficial domains intersect and affect the classroom space for learners to negotiate and renegotiate their identities.

Excerpt 2

1	Me:	Good question. Anyone knows what wrinkle i[s?
2	Me:	Jabari. Look at me. Wrinkle is the line here ((pointing at eye areas))
3	Jabari:	(.) Hum:: I kn::ow. I don't know the word::=
4	Emmanuel:	=He means he can hear the word bu::t don't know the word on book.
5	Me:	Oh in that case. You can write down the name of the word in your native language next to the word. Then you can remember.
6	Jabari:	(4.0) ((Staring at me))
7	Me:	For example:: I wrote some Chinese words when learning English words.
8	Jabari:	((staring at me and shaking his head, then looks at Emmanuel)).
9	Me:	=We[ll
10	Emmanuel:	[He NEVER go to schoo::l! ((raising his voice))

In addition to challenging teachers' predetermined assumptions and showing students' agency within institutional discourses, contextualization cues convey students' self-perception of their everyday lives, even though they may not elaborate this fully in their speech. These are crucial details for teachers to detect and to constantly adjust their assumptions of teaching socially marginalized groups. In the following example (see Excerpt 3), Jabari's non-verbal behavior transformed my views on immigrant learners' expectations of their living status in the United States and rejected my uncritical perception of immigrant learners' identity as a homogeneous group of adult immigrants. In this excerpt, students were complaining about a terrible snow storm, and I started the warm-up activities by encouraging them to tell their life stories. Since Jabari always wore the same old coat throughout the course, I supposed he must lead a very hard life when he told me that he worked seven days a week from 8:00AM to 6:00PM (line 6). Just as Rymes (2009) argues, when combined with different features such as race, gender, clothing, and so forth, identity can be depicted quite differently. Similarly, Young and Astarita (2013) claim that the "human body can materially signify social power" in the ESL classroom (p. 182). For me, coming from a different social and cultural background, I assumed Jabari's workload must be a burden for him. In order to

show that I understood his situation and cared about his life, I said "Wow. That's a lo::t of work" (line 7). However, to my great surprise, Jabari responded, "I like it" (line 8). In some circumstances, this "I like it" could be interpreted as a cover for Jabari's self-esteem because Jabari might not want to show his stigmatized status as an immigrant. Just as Young and Astarita (2013) found from their study, working-class language learners in ESL classes are aware of how their *habitus*—"systems of durable, transposable dispositions/structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures" (Bourdieu, 1977a, p. 72)—such as grey hair, pregnancy, posture, speech, and dress are illustrations of their social class in the English language learning process. Based on the fact that the other male student Emmanuel often explicitly explained that his family, especially his children, were treated unequally in American society, I assumed that Jabari haved might said "I like it" to fake his satisfaction despite hardship in the United States. However, subtle contextualization cues, such as Jabari's satsfied smile and his sincere eye contact, revealed that he truly liked to work more because he could earn more money. Jabari's non-verbal cues negotiated his affinity-identity and challenged my pre-assumption that immigrant workers from African countries all felt socially marginalized or led unsatisfactory lives. After the class, I talked with Jabari again about his job. Our communication reinforced the idea that he was satisfied with his current jobs because he earned much more by working in the United States. He told me that the salary in the United States was almost five times as high as that in his home country, and he supported his whole family by working hard in the United States.

Excerpt 3

1	Me:	[Oh. Hope he is getting better (.) Did you work yesterday Jabar[i?
2	Emmanuel:	[He is
3	Jabari:	Yeah. I work:: (.) in the building:: I work everyday.
4	Emmanuel:	=He work inside a buildin[g ((wanting to say more)).
5	Me:	[Oh that's better. But every day? Se::ven days?
6	Jabari:	Yeah. From 8 to 6. Monday to Sunday.
7	Me:	Wow. That's a lo::t of work.
8	Jabari:	(.) I like it ((smiling, looking directly into my eyes)).

All these examples illustrate that my immigrant students and I constantly negotiated and renegotiated our identities in the class. Despite the fact that I gained some authority in this local context, my own *habitus*, which was deposited through years of teaching and training in different contexts with different students, made me unaware of these immigrant students' needs in this local context. Contextualization cues produced by these learners became the subtle and crucial classroom details that I could rely on to critically reflect on my own teaching strategies and to effectively figure out the dynamics in this local discourse. These cues also demonstrate the need for researchers to move beyond the "one-time event" (p. 174) to understand the indexicality of these cues through longer spans of time (Blommaert, 2005).

Listening to Adult Immigrant Learners' Multilingual Self: Symbolic Violence and Conflicts

Bourdieu (1977b) used the notion of *symbolic capital* to discuss how power is enacted through language. According to Bourdieu (1977a), the accumulation of symbolic capital, such as linguistic capital, will lead to *symbolic violence*—"the gentle, hidden form which violence takes when overt violence is impossible"(p. 196). This is usually through the process of "legitimacy-giving redistribution" and by the creation of "miscognition" via the means of social norms and policies (p. 196). Education, as Apple (1995) claims, is the political and social construction to sustain these miscognition. In the non-profit organization where I taught, students' first languages were strictly forbidden in the classroom, and the organization emphasized learning as much English as possible in the class. This aligns with Miller's (2014) argument that countries' legislative policies and decisions regarding language uses in public and institutional domains are never neutral. My students lived in this non-neutral and unequal reality, where they struggled between learning a privileged language, which allowed them to achieve labor success, and their ability to use multiple linguistic resources for their own personal benefits. In this part, I will elaborate on how contextualization cues served as clues to reveal students' self-perceived identity. From the transcripts, I noticed that some contextualization cues revealed adult immigrant learners' contradictory identities as confident multilinguals who speak many languages, but also as insecure immigrant learners who are lacking in the English proficiency to read or write in English-speaking contexts. The following two excerpts show moments in which Nia wrote English and Arabic words during class. In Excerpt 4, I showed some pictures of holidays in different countries. Nia identified one of them as the holiday some people celebrated in her country. She wrote down one Arabic word used frequently during this holiday, but she later told me that she was not in this religous group and knew a very limited number of Arabic vocabulary. In Excerpt 5, Nia was practicing English vocabulary for different body parts at class.

When these two excerpts are looked at together, contextualization cues embedded in these two interactions naturally reflect Nia's contradictory identity in the classroom, even though there was not a lot of talking going on. Though none of my students had printed literacy or received formal education before, I was surprised that they were comfortable with their limited writing skills in their first language. In Excerpt 4, Nia happily showed her Arabic handwriting and took great pride in it, even though she only knew a few words. When I gave compliments on her writing, she cherished her writing so much and replied with "yeah," giggling to herself (lines 6 & 8). After my compliment, Nia became excited and started to talk more about the religion in her country. Similar to Nia, Emmanuel also referred to some religious practices in his home country and showed that he had the ability to read some Arabic texts, though he confessed that this literacy ability was very limited. However, when it came to English, my students were quite embarrassed by the fact that they could not read or write in English. In Excerpt 5, I tried to give Nia compliments, but she didn't accept the praise. She lowered her voice and looked at the floor (line 4). Even though she said "En.. Yeah::" (line 4) when I repeated

my praise, the contextualization cues, such as the lowered voices and the avoidance of eye contact showed that she implicitly rejected my compliments. This "En.. Yeah::" was different from the previous "yeah" when I complimented her on her writing of Arabic—it was not an agreement due to the contrasting prosodic features (e.g., volumes, pitches, and eye contact) accompanied by them. During my interview with Nia, she kept saying that she was learning English and her English was poor, despite the fact that she used English when texting her brother. Similarly, Jabari told me that he needed to learn English, particularly the skill of writing, because he wanted to change his job. The contrasting responses and attitudes between using their native languages and English showed that there was a contradictory identity for these immigrant multilingual students though the students didn't directly express their lack of confidence in learning English. It also demonstrated how they attributed their failure to their own lack of agency or skills, and tried to use this classroom learning to gain more social capital. Miller (2014) criticizes ideology of agency and argues that it is true that many immigrants find that their lives are easier with more opportunities when they learn English, but "such factual phenomena did not erase the ideological sense driving these actions, and their ideological bias become more apparent when we consider who is affected or unaffected by such 'common sense'" (p. 129, emphasis in original).

Excerpt 4

1	Me:	What's that?
2	Nia:	It's (0.2) my holiday::.
3	Me:	Cool. What's it about?
4	Nia:	((Writing down something and smiling)) I will sho::w you=
5	Me:	=Cool! Is it Arabic? ((Pointing at the word she just wrote))=
6	Nia:	=Yeah! ((Looking at the word carefully and talked to herself))
7	Me:	It's really good.
8	Nia:	Yeah::! ((Giggling)).

Excerpt 5:

1	Me:	Very great job, Nia!
2	Nia:	No:: ((shaking her head and looking down the floor))
3	Me:	Look at your handwriting! so:: pretty.
4	Nia:	(0.5) En. Yeah:: ((Lowering her voice and looking away from me))

Students' conflicted multilingual identities—confident multilinguals but unconfident English language learners—in this local and situated context indexes social forces outside of the classroom. I argue that listening to these classroom cues gives insights for classroom teachers to start exploring the question of why students form their identities in specific ways.

Listening for Classroom Changes: Socially Co-constructed Language and Literacy Learning Between a NNEST and Adult Immigrant Learners

Teachers as Microethnographers

Microethnography explores the "local and situated ecology among participants in face-to-face interactional engagements constituting societal and historical experiences" (Garcez, 2008, p. 257). It has been widely used in educational research to understand teacher-student and student-student interactions. Similar to Heath's (1983) proposal that teachers could be ethnographers, I argue that classroom teachers, especially pre-service teachers with little teaching experience, could be microethnographers seeking ways to improve their teaching pedagogies by attending to classroom details. Listening to subtle contextualization cues is congruent with Schultz's (2004) suggestion of "listening to the rhythm and balance to gain a sense of the whole group" (p. 45) and Sullivan's idea of "aesthetic vision"—"to listen to the nuances below the surface and the way students build and contradict with teachers" (Sullivan, 2000, cited in Schultz, 2004, p. 46). I argue that listening to these cues will lay the foundation for teachers to make changes in their own pedagogy. The examples illustrate that subtle contextualization cues function as tools to both show and raise the teacher's awareness of who their students are and why students think in this way, instead of allowing teachers to perceive students as a homogeneous social group whose identity is static. Furthermore, paying attention to the relationship between contextualization cues and students' negotiation of identity helps teachers to relate students' social and cultural backgrounds with classroom learning. Norton (2010) argues that students' contradictory identities might be closely related with the languages used outside of the classroom, affective factors, and the communities they are engaged with. Getting to know students' voices better through these cues can have a great impact on teachers' agency to make adjustments to their instructions in class and to resolve misunderstandings. For example, Rymes (2009) suggests that teachers could incorporate explicit activities and discussions about contextualization resources in the classroom so that "students and teachers alike make their assumptions about language and identity clear" (p. 154). Similarly, Kramsch (2009) calls for an ecologically printed pedagogy that is "linked to speakers' position in space and history, and to his or her struggle for the control of social power and cultural memory" (p. 190).

Classroom as a Collaborative Space in Learning

This study was grounded in my own reflection of my teaching practices. As was previously mentioned, my teaching background had been limited to a certain student population, and I had little knowledge or experience teaching adult immigrant learners in the United States. However, this micro-analysis of my own classroom interaction provided some critical insights and questions for me to evaluate the effectiveness and appropriateness of certain teaching strategies. It is interesting to note that both the students and the teacher in this study belong to a minority population in the U.S. context; my students do not have printed literacy and suffered symbolic violence, while I am considered a

NNEST in this organization and thus marginalized and perceived as not qualified to teach higher-level ESL classes. However, I would argue that the minority status of both parties could be a productive space for learning collaboratively. In many circumstances, my students became the source of learning because they possessed the resources in which I was lacking (e.g., students' rich experiences of living in the United States, their familiarity with life-relevant English slang, their older age and life experiences, etc.). Similarly, I had expertise in teaching content and printed literacy skills through which I could guide students in learning English, including literacy. This sheds insight on teacher training for adult ESL programs in non-profit organizations. It also further raises questions: Who has knowledge? Whose knowledge is legitimated and whose is not? Is accuracy in English all that immigrant adults need in these organizations? How can we effectively incorporate diversity, multilingualism, and proficiency in teaching adult immigrants?

Conclusion

This study built on my own practitioner inquiry to elaborate on a case of a NNEST's exploration of classroom discourse and interaction by attending to adult immigrant students' natural production of contextualization cues. The paper demonstrated that contextualization cues can convey many messages related to students' negotiated and hidden identities in the classroom. In the first three examples (Excerpts 1–3), these contextualization cues implicitly conveyed students' inner voices which were different from what was uttered verbally. In the final examples (Excerpts 4–5), students' unnoticed identity was exposed through contextualization cues. To return to the purpose of this paper, I used these excerpts to emphasize that teachers should pick up on these contextualization cues to find students' inner voices in the specific interactions. As Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz (1982) claim, contextualization cues help to illustrate "what activity is being signaled" (p. 18) for participants to predict and achieve potential communicative goals and outcomes. Looking at contextualization cues helps teachers decode what was said and desired instead of relying on only the verbal expressions produced by the students. These contextualization cues are particularly critical in classrooms where pre-service teachers have little prior experiences with certain groups of students, especially adult immigrant learners whose cultural, linguistic, and religious features may be unfamiliar to many ESL instructors.

This paper also sheds light on how students' classroom negotiation and resistance embodies their struggles and the conflicts embedded in their out-of-class everyday lives. Instead of using a deficit point of view to examine adult immigrant learners' English language learning processes, this study illustrates the resources that adult immigrant learners exhibit in their learning processes. They expressed rich social and cultural knowledge, such as their own cultural traditions or perspectives on sociopolitical issues. This study encourages teachers to value these resources that adult immigrant learners exhibit in their learning processes. Instead of asking teachers to teach perfect grammar or cultural knowledge in English-speaking contexts, this paper highlights the necessity for teachers to critically and carefully examine discursive practices, and the importance of viewing the classroom as a collaborative learning space for teachers

and students. Looking at contextualization cues raises teachers' awareness to help them understand students' opinions and to figure out how authority and identity are socially and discursively constructed; it encourages teachers to value the rich resources immigrant learners bring to the ESL classroom; it also motivates teachers to critically examine the appropriateness of their pedagogy and to critically reflect on what effective teaching is.

Bingjie Zheng (bingjie@wisc.edu) received a Master's degree in TESOL from the University of Pennsylvania, and she is a second-year doctoral student in second language acquisition, minoring in curriculum and instruction at University of Wisconsin-Madison. Her research interests include linguistic anthropology, critical discourse analysis, translanguaging, multiliteracies, and multimodality.

References

Apple, M. W. (1995). *Education and power*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Aneja, G. A. (2016). (Non)native speakered: Rethinking (non)nativeness and teacher identity in TESOL teacher education. *TESOL Quarterly*, *50*, 572–596.

Archakis, A., & Papazachariou, D. (2008). Prosodic cues of identity construction: Intensity in Greek young women's conversational narratives. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, *12*(5), 627–647.

Block, D. (2007). *Second language identities.* London, United Kingdom: Continuum.

Blommaert, J. (2005). *Discourse: A critical introduction.* Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.

Bloome, D., & Golden, C. (1982). Literacy learning, classroom processes, and race: A microanalytic study of two desegregated classrooms. *Journal of Black Studies*, *13*(2), 207–226.

Bloome, D., Carter, S. P., Christian, B., Otto, S., & Shuart-Faris, N. (2005). *Discourse analysis and the study of classroom language and literacy events: A microethnographic perspective.* Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Bourdieu, P. (1977a). *Outline of a theory of practice*. (R. Nice, Trans.) Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1977b). The economics of linguistic exchanges. *Social Science Information*, *16*(6), 645–668.

Bremme, D. W., & Erickson, F. (1977). Relationships among verbal and nonverbal classroom behaviours. *Theory into Practice*, *16*(3), 153–161.

Bucholtz, M., & Hall, K. (2004*).* Language and identity. In A. Duranti (Ed.), *A companion to linguistic anthropology* (pp. 369–394). Malden, MA: Blackwell.

De Costa, P. I. (2010). From refugee to transformer: A Bourdieusian take on a Hmong learner's trajectory. *TESOL Quarterly*, *44*(3)*,* 517–541.

De Fina, A. (2003). *Identity in narrative: A study of immigrant discourse.* Amsterdam, Netherlands: John Benjamins.

Dorr-Bremme, D. W. (1990). Contextualization cues in the classroom: Discourse regulation and social control functions. *Language in Society*, *19*(3), 379–402.

Duff, P. (2002). The discursive co-construction of knowledge, identity, and difference: An ethnography of communication in the high school mainstream. *Applied Linguistics, 23,* 289–322.

Flores, N., Kleyn, T., & Menken, K. (2015). Looking holistically in a climate of partiality: Identities of students labeled 'long-term English language learners'. *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education*, *14,* 113–132.

Fujii, A., & Mackey, A. (2009). Interactional feedback in learner-learner interactions in a task-based EFL classroom. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, *47*, 267–301.

Garcez, P. M. (2008). Microethnography in the classroom. In K. A. King & N. H. Hornberger (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of language and education*: *Research methods in language and education* (2nd ed., Vol. 10, pp. 257–272). New York, NY: Springer.

Gee, J. P. (2001). Identity as an analytic lens for research in education. *Review of Research in Education, 25*, 99–125.

Gibson, M. A. & Ogbu, J. U. (1991). *Minority status and schooling: A comparative study of immigrant and involuntary minorities.* New York, NY: Garland.

Goffman, E. (1981). *Forms of talk.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Green, J., & Weade, R. (1985). Reading between the words: Social cues to lesson participation. *Theory into Practice, 24*(1), 14–21.

Gumperz, J. J. (1977). Sociocultural knowledge in conversational inference. In M. Saville-Troike (Ed.), *Linguistics and anthropology: Georgetown University round table on languages and linguistics* (pp. 191–210). Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.

Gumperz, J. J. (1992). Contextualization and understanding. In A. Duranti & C. Goodwin (Eds.), *Rethinking context* (pp. 229–252). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Gumperz, J. J., & Cook-Gumperz, J. (1982). Introduction: Language and the communication of social identity. In J. J. Gumperz (Ed.), *Language and social identity* (pp. 1–21). Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.

Hawkins, M. R. (2005). Becoming a student: Identity work and academic literacies in early schooling. *TESOL Quarterly*, *39*(1), 59–82.

Heath, S. B. (1983). *Ways with words: Language, life, and work in communities and classrooms.* Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.

Hellermann, J. (2005). The sequential and prosodic co-construction of a "quiz game" activity in classroom talk. *Journal of Pragmatics*, *38*(6), 919–944.

Kramsch, C. (2009). *The multilingual subject: What foreign language learners say about their experience and why it matters.* Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press.

Li, G. (2008). Introduction: America's "rainbow underclass" and inner city schooling. In G. Li (Ed.), *Culturally contested literacies: America's "rainbow underclass" and urban schools* (pp. 1–26). New York, NY: Routledge.

Lin, A. M. Y. (2008). Modernity, postmodernity, and the future of "identity": Implications for educators. In A. M. Y. Lin (Ed.), *Problematizing identity: Everyday struggles in language, culture, and education* (pp. 199–219). New York, NY: Routledge.

McKay, S. L., & Wong, S. C. (1996). Multiple discourses, multiple identities: Investment and agency in second language learning among Chinese adolescent immigrant students. *Harvard Educational Review*, *66*(3), 557–608.

McKay, S. L., & Wong, S. C. (2000*). New immigrants in the United States*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Mehan, H. (1985). The structure of classroom discourse. In T. van Dijk (Ed.), *Handbook of discourse analysis: Discourse and dialogue* (Vol. 3, pp. 119–131). London, United Kingdom: Academic Press.

Miller, E. R. (2014). *The language of adult immigrants: Agency in the making*. Bristol, United Kingdom: Multilingual Matters.

Miller, E. R., & Zuengler, J. (2011). Negotiating access to learning through resistance to classroom practice. *Modern Language Journal*, *95*, 130–147.

Morgan, B., & Clarke, M. (2011). Identity in second language teaching and learning. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning* (Vol. 2, pp. 817–836). New York, NY: Routledge.

Morita, N. (2004). Negotiating participation and identity in second language academic communities. *TESOL Quarterly*, *38*, 573–603.

Norton, B. (2000). *Identity and language learning: Gender, ethnicity and educational change*. Harlow, United Kingdom: Pearson Education.

Norton, B. (2010). Language and identity. In N. H. Hornberger & S. L. McKay (Eds.), *Sociolinguistics and language education* (pp. 349–369). Bristol, United Kingdom: Multilingual Matters.

Norton, B., & McKinney, C. (2011). An identity approach to second language acquisition. In D. Atkinson (Ed.), *Alternative approaches to second language acquisition* (pp. 73–94). New York, NY: Routledge.

Norton, B., & Toohey, K. (2002). Identity and language learning. In R. B. Kaplan (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of applied linguistics* (pp. 115–123). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Pavlenko, A. (2004). "The making of an American": Negotiation of identities at the turn of the twentieth century. In A. Pavlenko & A. Blackledge (Eds.), *Negotiation of identities in multilingual contexts* (pp. 34–67). Clevedon, United Kingdom: Multilingual Matters.

Roberge, M. M. (2002). California's generation 1.5 immigrants: What experiences, characteristics, and needs do they bring to our English classes. *The CATESOL Journal 14*(1), 107–127.

Rymes, B. (2002). Language in development in the United States: Supervising adult ESOL pre-service teachers in an immigrant community. *TESOL Quarterly*, *36*(3), 431–452.

Rymes, B. (2009). *Classroom discourse analysis: A tool for critical reflection.* Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.

Schultz, K. (2004). *Listening: A framework for teaching across differences*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Seloni, L. (2008). *Reconceptualization of academic literacy socialization in an intercultural space: A micro-ethnographic inquiry of first year multilingual*

doctoral students in the U.S. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH.

Sullivan, A. M. (2000). Notes from a marine biologist's daughter: On the art and science of attention. *Harvard Educational Review*, *79*(2), 211–227.

Trueba, H. T. (1988). Culturally based explanations of minority students' academic achievement. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, *19*(3), 270–287.

Young, R. F. (2009). *Discursive practice in language learning and teaching.* Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

Young, R. F., & Astarita, A. C. (2013). Practice theory in language learning. *Language Learning, 63,* 171–189.

Appendix A

Transcription conventions

.	end of intonation unit
?	fall–rise intonation end of intonation
underline	emphatic stress; increased amplitude; careful articulation of a segment
:	length
=	latching; no pause between intonation units
(.)	pause of 0.5 seconds or less
(2.0)	measured pause of greater than 0.5 seconds
[ ]	overlapping speech
(( ))	body language
!	higher pitch
CAPS	increased volume