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Cultural challenges, identity and motivation in state school

EFL

Introduction

In the past decade or more, a consensus has formed in the applied linguistic community around the importance of identity in language learning. All learning, from a social perspective (e.g. Lave and Wenger 1991), can be viewed as the construction of a new identity in relation to a certain community; for example, learning to play tennis involves gaining knowledge of the game and physical skills for participation but it also implies ‘becoming a tennis player’ in one’s own eyes and that of other club members – feeling comfortable holding the racket, having the right shoes, speaking the jargon and so on. Similarly, ‘learning an L2 involves a struggle to forge a new identity that is true to the self’ (van Lier 2007: 47) and being recognised as a competent user of the L2 by others. In fact because language is so closely connected to our sense of selfhood, the path to proficiency is likely to be strewn with even more personal challenges than in learning other skills. The novice tennis player can assert their other more expert identities (as bank manager, chess player, mother) when chatting with other club members, whereas the person

learning a second language in a foreign country is denied their most basic means of self-expression at the same time that they are challenged by aspects of the local culture. Their sense of self may be destabilised, and they may feel ambivalence towards their new community – ‘feeling a part and feeling apart’, as Block (2007: 864) neatly puts it. Such ‘identity work’ is just as much a part of successful language learning as grammar work or skill-acquisition. Eventually, if the process continues far enough, the successful learner regains a coherent sense of self, begins to feel comfortable using the L2 to communicate intentions and feelings, and is increasingly recognised by others as competent to do so – (s)he develops an ‘L2 identity’.

Researchers have presented considerable evidence for such identity work being undertaken in naturalistic adult migrant settings, where migrants struggle to gain a foothold in new L2 communities (e.g. Norton 2000; Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004), or in study abroad contexts where an extended sojourn in a foreign country can provide multiple challenges to young adult students (e.g. Pellegrino-Aveni 2005; Jackson 2008). But what about for those learning the second language in home country institutions, perhaps distant from any actual community of L2 users, whose main daily preoccupations may be doing well in class quizzes or getting to the end of the latest coursebook? Block has expressed deep scepticism about how far such learners are able to develop L2 identities – ‘there is usually far too much first language-mediated baggage and interference for profound changes to occur in the individual’s conceptual system and his/her sense of self’ (2007: 144). In classrooms, the argument goes, learners’ primary identity is that of pupil, and while

some change is possible within that role – for example, becoming recognised as a star pupil, or as a class rebel – too often their true selves are not engaged, and the L2 is just another subject on the school curriculum quite divorced from the powerful resonances which it might have in the communities where it is used.

It has also been suggested that where English is being learned as a ‘lingua franca’ (ELF), as it is in most education systems worldwide, it has effectively lost its function as a ‘language for identification’ and can instead be categorised as a ‘language for communication’ (House 2003). ELF is ‘not a national language but a mere tool bereft of collective cultural capital’ (p. 560), and identification is not involved in its learning or use because there is no clear community of ELF speakers. The appropriation of English on a personal or societal level becomes much less problematic when it is perceived as a ‘post-identity language’ (Lo Bianco 2005).

Complicating the picture further is the issue of age. Early adolescence is typically considered a period of flux and uncertainty, when the individual questions identities ascribed during childhood, experiments with new identities and struggles to achieve a coherent sense of self – a period that sometimes has the character of a crisis, and which in the modern world can extend well into the 20s or even 30s (Côté 2009). In her review of research on adolescent migrants in Anglophone communities Harklau (2007) shows how ethnolinguistic identity is one such facet of the self which comes under critical questioning. The vast majority of the work done on adolescent identity though has been conducted in western contexts, and we

know much less about youth development in other international contexts. Arnett (2002) has argued that globalisation is having a profound effect on youth, at least in the wealthier, urban segments of societies where economic development means they share the extended period of 'identity explorations' and indeed 'identity confusion' of western youth. Further he argues that 'most people in the world now develop a bicultural identity, in which part of their identity is rooted in local culture while another part stems from an awareness of their relation to global culture' (p. 777). Lu and Yang (2006) elaborate on the Chinese bicultural self, which they conceive as 'a dynamic process of constantly resolving conflicts and striving for a better adaptation when the individual is caught up in a transitional society with both traditional and modern cultural systems side by side' (p. 170); young Taiwanese, for example, seek to reconcile a local socially-oriented self with a western-influenced individualism. As the global lingua franca, we might expect English to be strongly associated with the modern self that many young people aspire to.

The rest of the chapter relates this debate to the preliminary stages of teaching English during early adolescence in a junior high school in provincial Indonesia. Although the data is drawn from one particular institution – set in a relatively prosperous area, aspiring to be the best state school in town, and receptive to the inquiries of foreign researchers – it in many ways represents a ubiquitous context for the learning of language in the early 21st century. English is recognised by government and people as both a global and local lingua franca (it is the official language of the ASEAN trading association). It is an important and compulsory

part of the curriculum, taught for four hours per week, in fairly large (approximately 35 pupils) classes, using locally written textbooks, by lowly-paid and often overworked teachers, to pupils of mixed ability, most of whom will have learned some English in primary school or in private language schools, and who have increasing exposure to English in the media and physical environment but rarely have any direct contact with native speakers or other foreign users of the language. Therefore we believe the issues raised may have some resonance for the very large numbers of educationalists working in such contexts.

The chapter does not report the results of a specific research project but instead draws on the experiences and reflections of the two authors. The second author has taught in this school, which we shall call SMP X, for 11 years, and previously for seven years in other schools in more rural contexts in Indonesia. The first author has visited SMP X on numerous occasions during the past decade, including visits of three to four weeks in each of the years 2002–4 while conducting his doctoral research and shorter visits in subsequent years (2006, 2008, 2010, 2012); during these visits he made formal observations of over 30 classes, taught scores of classes in Years 7, 8 and 9 (ages 12–14), conducted formal and informal interviews with English teachers on numerous occasions and, thanks to the characteristic open architecture and welcoming nature of this particular school, was able to observe in a more casual way the teaching and learning going on inside (and outside) classrooms on a daily basis.

We begin by presenting three vignettes of English learning in the school. These are then discussed in relation to the literature on identity and L2 motivation. The chapter then presents further descriptions of language teaching practice in the school, while the final section will offer practical recommendations for promoting identity work in the classroom and so helping to sustain learner motivation over these three crucial years.

Three vignettes from the Indonesian junior high school

Vignette #1

The English teacher has organised a debate in one of his 'elite' Year 8 classes. The topic is 'Do ghosts exist?' He starts the class by telling an anecdote about a family member's encounter with a ghost and elicits various comments, some gently mocking, others more serious enquiries. He directly asks the students whether they believe in ghosts or not. There is a roughly even split, with several 'not sure'. He then suggests the class debate the issue, and arbitrarily divides the class into two groups, one to prepare arguments why ghosts do exist, the other to argue the opposite. He then leaves the class for about 30 minutes while the two groups cluster in different parts of the room and get on with the task of preparing their arguments. There is much animated discussion, mostly in Bahasa Indonesia but students write out comments in English to prepare for the oral debate. Some students

switch groups; a few sit on their own apparently not engaged in the task, or preparing their own thoughts. When the teacher returns, he asks the group who believe in ghosts to first present their arguments. Several different students make comments, mostly in the form of personal anecdotes or reports of local legends involving ghosts and spirits. The members of the other group respond in similar fashion, with two distinct lines of attack – some students argue that modern science has effectively disproved the existence of ghosts; others argue that Islam forbids its followers from believing in anything other than Jinns, which are invisible to people. All class members listen with interest, sometimes making comments to the class or to each other; public comments are in English, private comments usually in Indonesian. Sometimes pupils ask the teacher how to express something in English. The teacher allows the debate to continue for over half an hour, before eventually making some closing conciliatory comments of his own.

Vignette #2

The teacher has asked his Year 8 class to write a diary at least once a week to reflect on meaningful events in their lives; only he would read it, he has promised, and it should be written in English so it would be ‘secret’ from parents/siblings who did not know the language. Some learners have produced long entries of a very personal nature, which

they give to the teacher every week to read and comment. Here is one extract from a 13-year-old girl's diary:

14th February: Friday, maybe today every pair asserted their love to her/his darling with flowers, chocolate, or a present. That was mean, it was a special day for some of the people in the world but wasn't for me because according to my religion we might not celebrate it. I thought that didn't have a purpose or advantages. Forget about it !?!"

On the following page is a beautifully designed Valentine's Card.

Vignette #3

An English teacher has invited a British visitor to the school to meet her Year 7 class, 'to motivate them to speak English'. They arrive at the classroom about 10 minutes after the class was due to start; some students are inside doing gap-fill exercises in their textbook while others have to be summoned from various sites around the school; one group were sitting under a tree listening to a boy strumming his guitar. However once seated at their appointed desks the class captain quickly calls them to order and they give a choral greeting 'Good morning teacher!' The teacher introduces the native speaker and invites them to ask him questions. Since none are forthcoming, the native speaker introduces himself, giving his name and nationality and purpose for

coming to the school. Recognising that the class has limited English, he tries to speak as clearly as possible and checks that they understand him – they all say that they do, so he invites them to ask him questions. Again, there is silence, and the class teacher urges them to take this opportunity to communicate with a native speaker. Eventually, after a lot of giggling and a nudge in the ribs from his neighbour, a boy at the back raises his hand. ‘Yes!’ says the native speaker with relief. ‘How old are you Mister?’ asks the boy. The native speaker explains that this is not a question one normally asks in his culture, at least not of older people. The boy looks crestfallen so the native speaker gives him a rough answer, and now other questions start to come, mostly about his experiences of the school and town e.g. ‘Where do you stay?’ ‘What is your favourite food?’ ‘What do you think of Indonesian students?’ One or two students venture questions about the UK e.g. ‘What is your football team?’ ‘Do you know Justin Bieber?’ There is much laughter and much chattering among the students, and when the teacher finally calls a halt after about 30 minutes and the native speaker gets ready to leave, the students all rush to the front individually to take his hand and touch it to their foreheads. Some get snapshots of themselves posing with the native speaker on their Blackberry phones.

Identity and the school English language learner

We shall argue here that in each of these vignettes, we are witnessing learners of English in a heightened state of emotional arousal, and that this frisson is generated by the way the language is associated with challenging cultural values. In the first vignette, the topic excites debate because ghosts are a traditional feature of local belief systems, associated with particular places in the neighbourhood, and an ingredient in many of the stories passed on by older family members; yet the learners will also be aware that the English speakers of western societies who follow the tenets of materialist science would allow no role for ghosts, outside of Hollywood horror movies. Perhaps the Imams or teachers at their local mosque have also condemned the notion, in the name of modern Islam. In other words, the topic naturally stimulates debate among these learners – and pushes them to produce English at the very limit of their capabilities – because it probes the tension within many of them between their current identities, as local citizens and dutiful sons and daughters, and imagined identities of the future as sophisticated English-speaking citizens of the world (Lamb 2004, 2009).

This tension also manifests itself in the triple punctuation mark that ends the girl's diary entry in Vignette #2. Valentine's Day is a recent cultural import from the west, taken up with special enthusiasm by the urban young but also regularly challenged as un-Islamic or contrary to national values (e.g. The Jakarta Post 2012). The girl's diary entry reveals her ongoing struggle to reconcile her local self with this attractive ritual from the permissive west; she is aware that a future English-speaking self may gain access to some of the fruits of economic and

cultural globalisation, but it will also expose her to western (or other) influences which could lead to alienation from the home community. The diary writing exercise itself was extremely successful, motivating many of the learners to produce large amounts of written text in English, often reflections on issues of current personal concern, which was of great value to their linguistic development. We would argue its success lay in the way it allowed the learners to ‘try out’ their English-mediated identities, in the sheltered context of a ‘secret’ diary.

The third vignette presents a scenario which has been repeated in dozens of classrooms in SMP X by the first author. The native speaker’s appearance galvanised the pupils in a dramatic way; it returned them swiftly to their seats, riveted their attention on the person of the visitor, and struck them dumb. Only once the initial nerves were settled did they start to speak, and when those more forward individuals found that their English ‘worked’, they were keen to speak further. With minimal wit or personal ingenuity, the native speaker was able to induce a state of collective excitement that lasted beyond the day’s class; local teachers claim that such visits boost the students’ long-term motivation to learn English, and this belief underlies SMP X’s current policy of inviting native speakers to visit English classrooms whenever available, even when they are not qualified as teachers, or indeed even when they are not native speakers – international English-speakers are also welcome. Again, we would suggest that this motivational effect derives from the way learners are suddenly encouraged to perform an identity as a member of the global English-using community, with all its potentially threatening customs and values, which has hitherto been only

imagined. The content of the interaction may appear mundane, but many of the self-referential questions (another example, certain to evoke great hilarity, is ‘what do you think of *dangdut* music?’) allow them to use the English-speaking outsider as a mirror, reflecting light on their own familiar world, and suddenly juxtaposing their local interests and values with those of the supposedly cosmopolitan westerner.

Blommaert (2010: 133) argues that ‘the homogenizing ring of a word such as ‘English’ is the indexical trap of globalization’. English, like all languages, carries different connotations in different societies, and indeed within particular niches within a single society. House (2003) may be right that ELF is regarded primarily as a ‘language for communication’ among the German university students she teaches and researches, but it is far from a neutral code for many Indonesian teenagers. Likewise Block (2007) drew his conclusions about the lack of identity work going on in EFL classrooms largely from his observations of Spanish adult evening classes. Arguably the cultural proximity of these European contexts of learning to Anglophone cultures makes the appropriation of the language unproblematic in identity terms, involving relatively little ‘destabilisation of the self’. The more culturally ‘distant’ the context, the greater the potential challenge to individual learners’ sense of identity, even for those mainly studying the basics of the language in school.

In contrast to Block, Kramsch (1993, 2010) has consistently highlighted the transformative potential of language learning. Many teenagers, she argues, are

‘anxious to liberate themselves from the constraints of the one (monolingual) mOther tongue’ (2010: 206) and exhibit a powerful desire for the way a second language can open up new worlds, and new means of expressing their feelings and aspirations:

Seduced by the foreign sounds, rhythms and meanings, and by the ‘coolness’ of native speakers, many adolescent learners strive to enter new, exotic worlds where they can be, or at least pretend to be, someone else, where they too can become ‘cool’ and inhabit their bodies in more powerful ways. (Kramersch 2010: 16)

Of course exposure to new languages and cultures may excite but it will also challenge; learners may feel uncomfortable trying to express themselves in the foreign tongue; others may actively resist the identities that the language potentially imbues, as Canagarajah (1999) describes among Sri Lankan learners of English. Individuals in this Indonesian context too may objectively recognise the potential value of English yet remain personally detached and unwilling to invest effort in learning it – two examples are described in Lamb (2011).

For English as a lingua franca, there is legitimate debate about precisely what communities and cultures the language is or should be associated with. Canagarajah (2005) and Kumaravadivelu (2007), for example, have both recently discussed the way cultural globalisation has complexified the relationship, with learners of English no longer necessarily looking to join Anglophone communities

but instead using English to negotiate membership of hybrid and fluid communities within and beyond their own national contexts. As Baker (2009: 588) asks, '[i]f it is not possible to identify a clear language-culture relationship for lingua franca communication, then how are participants in ELF communication to be prepared for the wealth and complexity of cultural backgrounds and the associated communicative practices and forms they are likely to encounter?'. This is an important question with serious pedagogic implications, but at early stages of the language learning process, among school pupils with few immediate communicative needs, the more urgent concern is to recognise that 'language can never be culturally neutral' (Baker 2009: 588), that in more 'distant' contexts this cultural content can bring an emotional charge through challenge to learner identity and that, as Miyahara (2011) has pointed out, the emotions generated by these identification processes can contribute significantly to learners' motivation to acquire the language.

More typical English language learning activities

We are emphatically not saying that these vignettes represent typical practice in SMP X. In fact, rather the reverse is true – they are all exceptional. English class debates are not a common pedagogic practice, particularly in junior high school, even if nationally organised English language debates serve to motivate elite students in senior high schools; no other English teachers in the school have used diary-writing as a means of motivating students to write; native speaker visits are

rare events. Instead, the vast majority of English classes at SMP X involve practices that actually divest the English language of its cultural meanings. Lessons revolve around the textbook and the related 'exercise book', which all pupils bring to class. Central to each unit of the textbook, and so to each lesson, are certain aspects of language knowledge – structures, sets of lexis, and in more recent versions (reflecting national curricular priorities) skills and sub-skills expressed as competencies. While lessons may begin with brief oral exchanges between the teacher and pupils in which the main topic is introduced, most lessons then become overwhelmingly focussed on written language: on the reading of texts, on answering comprehension questions based on the text, and completing follow-up grammar and vocabulary exercises. Punctuating this individual work will be teacher explanations about the language, and pupils' production of their written answers. Listening or speaking activities specified in the textbook are often ignored, as most classrooms lack devices for playing CDs, and many teachers lack both awareness of communicative teaching methodologies and confidence in their own oral abilities. Further, although some of the reading texts describe aspects of western culture (usually from Anglophone countries), because few of the teachers have any personal experience of such cultures they are rarely exploited to stimulate thought and discussion. Finally as students move into the 9th grade, the work becomes more oriented towards practice for the local and national exams; these include a listening component, but not speaking.

The huge emphasis on written forms of the language, and especially on grammatical and lexical knowledge, is a source of dissatisfaction for many

learners. Survey results consistently indicate that pupils want to do more ‘conversation’ and ‘dialogues’ (Lamb 2007). As one pupil said to the first author in 2008, ‘in school it’s just about grammar grammar grammar and grammar, I still learn about grammar since I was elementary school and this, I feel this thing’. Indeed, Lamb (2007) reports the general fall in learners’ enjoyment of their English lessons over the first two years of study in this school, and on a recent visit to the school, one experienced teacher commented that by Year 9, pupils ‘think only about the final exam, they are not interested with the subject’. Of course this pattern of declining intrinsic motivation is not confined to Indonesia; Ryan (2009) for example describes the toll taken by a regimented exam-oriented language education system on Japanese school leavers’ desire for English.

Promoting identity change in the classroom

To review our argument so far, the three vignettes demonstrate that even at a very early stage and in a formal educational setting, the learning of English brings identity into play, and when it does so it appears to generate strong emotions, arguably because it triggers tensions between the young people’s local selves as dutiful members of the local community and potential future identities as citizens of the world. However, in the normal course of events, this rarely happens; most of the time, English is taught and learned as a value-free body of knowledge conveyed in official textbooks and assessed in high-stakes exams. Two sorry outcomes of

this are a diminution of learners' long-term motivation to learn the language and a failure to develop intercultural awareness.

Changing this state of affairs is inevitably complex, as it involves multiple factors at different levels of the education system (Wedell 2009). Feeding the systemic inertia here are both teachers' and learners' avoidance of risk – teachers preferring to avoid the unpredictability of speaking activities and the moral ambiguities of intercultural lesson content, and learners prioritising performance in their assessments. But the vignettes show that the seeds for change exist in the school. Here we will suggest some small steps that teachers can take to ensure that their lessons do involve 'identity work'. Our ideas are based on successful activities conducted by the second author, and the first author's observations and conversations with other teachers in the school. What is more, as we will explain, they involve practices already familiar to the teachers and do not assume familiarity with communicative teaching methodology.

Simple speaking activities – performing not communicating

In most classes at SMP X, there are only three situations in which pupils are encouraged to speak English. The most common by far is where learners give or read out answers to their written exercises. Another quite frequent occurrence is at the beginning of lessons, where teachers may introduce the topic of the class with some comments and questions in English, to which some learners might respond. The third type is also common, but only in classes whose teachers see value in

giving learners opportunities to speak. In this activity, pupils work in pairs (in the fixed paired seating common in Indonesian schools, this will almost always be the person sitting next to them) to prepare a dialogue, based on a situation in the textbook unit (e.g. giving directions, having a telephone conversation, explaining how to use a technical device); they then rehearse the conversation until it is memorised; then volunteers are invited to the front of the class to perform the dialogue, using whatever props are available.

The first author has observed this simple activity in other national contexts, and we would speculate that it is a ubiquitous form of speaking practice in the early stages of language learning, particularly in state education systems. Interestingly there is a key difference between this activity and those recommended in contemporary teachers' guides (e.g. Hadfield and Hadfield 1999) – it is not communicative. There is no information gap between the role players, no spontaneous negotiation of meaning. Its popularity with teachers is probably partly because it requires no extra materials preparation and affords practice of language items targeted in the class textbook, but as the first author has observed and the second author has experienced, it is also an activity enjoyed by learners. We would suggest that the pleasure comes from the way the simple role play allows them to 'perform' the language, to enact imagined identities as English-speakers in the sheltered environment of the classroom, in front of their friends and a supportive 'expert'. What is more, the imagined setting is also usually familiar – they are eating in an Indonesian restaurant, for example, or speaking on the phone to their own Indonesian friend. Without any international experience, these young adolescents

would have difficulty imagining any other setting, and in fact some of the humour generated by the activity comes from the discordance of using the international language English in local settings. This was evident in an activity observed by the first author in a Year 8 class recently, where the pupils constructed dialogues around bargaining for goods in a local marketplace; the dialogues were inauthentic in that they contained phrases (such as ‘please give me a cheap price!’) which would almost never be heard in an Anglophone cultural setting, and most of the gestures and behaviour of the pupils were slightly theatrical versions of themselves rather than attempts to mimic those of western users – but the activity produced laughter and obvious enjoyment.

It could be argued further that in ‘translating’ the local communicative event into English, the learners are becoming more aware of features of their social world, of how they may look to outsiders; and therefore the activity represents a very elementary form of intercultural learning. The second author has conducted similar speaking activities which, while again sometimes lacking a communicative element, encourage learners to represent their culture to English-speaking outsiders. A notable example is the writing of a prayer in English – pupils are encouraged to choose their favourite prayer and as a homework task to translate it into English; at the following class they read them out to their friends. A similar activity involves the translation, and performance, of Indonesian songs. A third example is the creation in English of a recipe for an Indonesian dish; in an unusually elaborate lesson, the pupils had the opportunity to explain the recipe

while actually preparing the dish over a grill in the manner of a TV chef. These activities generate very high levels of involvement.

The representation of one's own culture to outsiders is recognised as a legitimate motive for the learning of English in many national education systems. Such activities could be said therefore to directly address this objective. However they also have a more subtle motivational role in the way they bring into play the current and future element in learners' potential bicultural selves; that is, in forcing them to 'perform' aspects of their current selves in English – as when then reciting a favourite prayer in the language – they are being encouraged to see themselves in a new light, to question a habitus, to develop a new self-image that they may aspire towards. As we have argued in relation to the ghosts debate and Valentine's Day diary entry, such identification processes can be intrinsically motivating for language learning as the tensions involved produce emotions. In the longer-term, they may also be an early stage contribution towards the creation of an Ideal L2 self (cf. Hadfield and Dörnyei, in press). Claire Kramsch (2010: 205) has written

The challenge for teachers, as Vygotsky repeatedly stressed, is to teach to the potential adult, not just to the past or even the actual adolescent. This means giving the students the space to engage both the teenagers that they are and the adults they might become. The language classroom is precisely the place to explore with our students alternative ways of representing themselves...

Of course there is the possibility that tensions produce some discomfort, as well as excitement, and it is the teacher's role to judge the suitability of a particular task for a particular group. For example, such activities might fail to motivate a class of learners – perhaps in a rural setting less exposed to the forces of globalisation – for whom English is simply an alien code without any meaningful cultural associations. Alternatively an activity that confronted learners with too powerful a challenge to their local, traditional self may provoke a strong reaction against the language. To invoke Vygotsky again, educators have to work within their learners' cultural zone of proximal development. As learners become older and gain more knowledge of the outside world, such pedagogic activities should encourage learners to imagine interacting directly with international users of English (native speaker or otherwise), adapting both their verbal and body language accordingly. Baker's (2012) taxonomy of the features of intercultural awareness offers educationalists in Asia a helpful framework for sequencing classroom tasks.

A role for native speakers

In recent years it has almost become TESOL orthodoxy to downplay the value of native speaker teachers and advocate the strengths of nonnative local teachers of English on the solid grounds that knowledge of the learners' home context and language gives them significant professional advantages (e.g. Medgyes 1994; Holliday, 2005). Rivers (2011) goes even further in arguing that the consistent use of native speakers of English as models and interlocutors promotes a monolingual ethic and 'serves to train students in the development of less favourable attitudes

toward English language speakers of other racial, national and ethnic backgrounds' (p. 843), and possibly even reinforces a 'heightened sense of anxiety and inferiority among the students' (p. 851).

These arguments tend to emerge in contexts where native speaker teachers are plentiful, or even in competition for jobs with nonnative speaker teachers. In many areas of the contemporary world, however, the English language has spread in advance of actual human users, and probably the majority of school learners of the language have had no face-to-face contact with a native speaker. Such conditions should force a re-evaluation of the native speaker's possible role. In the market economy scarce commodities will find their own price, so it is no surprise to find that in Indonesia, as elsewhere, private sector language institutes will pay relatively high salaries to attract native speaker teachers. Where that is not possible, they will encourage their pupils to seek out native speakers in the local environment armed with questionnaires – a popular pedagogic activity known locally as 'hunting'. As stated above, SMP X is also actively looking to recruit short-term native speaker teachers, even unqualified ones, in the belief that they will help motivate pupils to learn to speak English. Their role would be primarily to serve as interactants in the language – their lack of explicit grammatical knowledge will not be a drawback since L2 explanations can be confidently left to their Indonesian counterparts, and their lack of proficiency in the Indonesian language could even be construed as an advantage, in that it leaves English as the only possible medium of communication. But we would argue that their main legacy will lie in the learners' imaginations – intense experiences of successful interaction will make it easier for them over time

to envision a modern English-using globally-involved self. At the same time, in seeing their own lives and culture reflected in the voiced experience of the outsider, their intercultural awareness is enhanced.

Rivers (2011), Baker (2012) and others are right to stress the educational benefits of employing other international users of English, whether L1 users (e.g. from Singapore, Hong Kong or India) or L2, to encourage 'more pluralistic and dynamic conceptions of English use in Asia' (Baker 2012: 26). The likelihood is that Indonesian youngsters will use English more with other Asians than with westerners, and alternative linguistic models are available, just as alternative lifestyles and moral values are laid out as options for their personal futures. Nevertheless, teachers in this locality stress the motivational potential of native speakers for their learners. This could be because, as the research of Timmis (2002) and Jenkins (2007) has found, the teachers themselves view native speaker models as the prestige professional variety, and learners pick up that message; another explanation, one more in tune with the arguments of this chapter, is that learners find difference exciting.

Conclusion

Riley (2006: 296) has pointed out how the very expression 'foreign language learning' should alert us to the fact 'that issues of identity are massively present', and it is also true that languages are likely to be perceived by learners as more or

less 'foreign'. Our main contention in this chapter is that, based on our experience of EFL in one state school in provincial Indonesia, identity work is present in mainstream EFL, that it can be motivating for learners through the emotions that it arouses, and that there is the potential for much more without the need for major methodological change on the part of teachers. Block (2007) may be right to argue that identity work is often absent, particularly in European settings where English is simply less foreign and brings fewer challenging cultural associations. It is also probably true in other settings, such as here in Asia, where many teachers and pupils prefer to play safe by divesting the language of its cultural content and instead emphasising the linguistic content presented in detail in the class textbook. But this represents a major lost opportunity to engage young people in the process of foreign language learning.

Of course cultures are not monolithic entities, and adolescents with little personal experience of foreign cultures will likely base their identifications on stereotypes that need to be critiqued as they move through the school system, and we would support the kind of intercultural awareness-raising proposed by Baker (2012). Likewise we have to acknowledge the cultural distinctiveness of SMP X within Indonesian society. The majority of pupils now come from middle-class backgrounds and have access to role models (in family members or through the media) of interculturally-competent, globally-aware English-speaking Indonesians, and therefore have had the chance by early adolescence to develop aspirations towards biculturality and ideal L2 selves (Lamb 2012 forthcoming). This is precisely why they see the moral character and cultural behaviour of westerners as

a potential challenge to their own future English-speaking identity, and react emotionally. In other more remote Indonesian contexts, where children are less exposed to outside influences and their future identities are anchored in local traditional society, the English language may not arouse the same emotions, and might instead meet the same indifference as Latin did to most 20th century Britons.

Engagement priorities

We are suggesting that cultural identification processes are present in the early stages of mainstream school EFL in this particular Indonesian context, and that they do affect learners' short and long-term motivation to learn the language. But how widespread is this phenomenon? Are there teachers or materials writers in similar contexts who are deliberately exploiting these cultural challenges, to motivate learners and encourage positive identity change? As mentioned, most of the current evidence for identity work in language learning involves adult migrants and study abroad participants, or older and more advanced EFL learners (see for example Yihong's (2009) useful summary of Chinese research demonstrating self-identity changes among undergraduate learners of English); research evidence is lacking for school age foreign language learners. Here are some questions that practitioners might usefully consider:

- Is it true in your context that adolescents tend to develop 'bicultural identities', with a local self and a global self? Where might you look for evidence of this?

- The chapter describes some simple speaking activities for elementary learners which encourage them to ‘perform’ L2 identities (e.g. telling a prayer in English, describing a local recipe), while also becoming more aware of features of their own culture. Can you think of other examples of such activities, suitable for your own context?
- How far do you see language teaching as also the teaching of culture? If you do, which culture do you find yourself teaching in the English language classroom? How far do you agree with Baker (2012) that, since we cannot predict what cultures our learners will come into contact with in the future, we should aim to develop their general intercultural awareness, rather than favouring particular Anglophone cultures?
- There is a widespread assumption that native speaker teachers *do* motivate students to learn the L2 and at the end of the chapter we argue that this needs to be empirically tested. How could we go about researching this? It would be important to know IF they motivate, and if so, WHY and HOW. Some further issues to consider:
 - What research methods would be most effective to address these questions?
 - What population of learners/teachers could you take as your sample?
 - How could you carry out such research in a practical and ethical way?

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