MULTILINGUAL PRACTICES AND IDENTITIES OF SYRIAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN TURKEY

Melissa Hauber-Özer, Ph.D. | mhauberr@gmu.edu
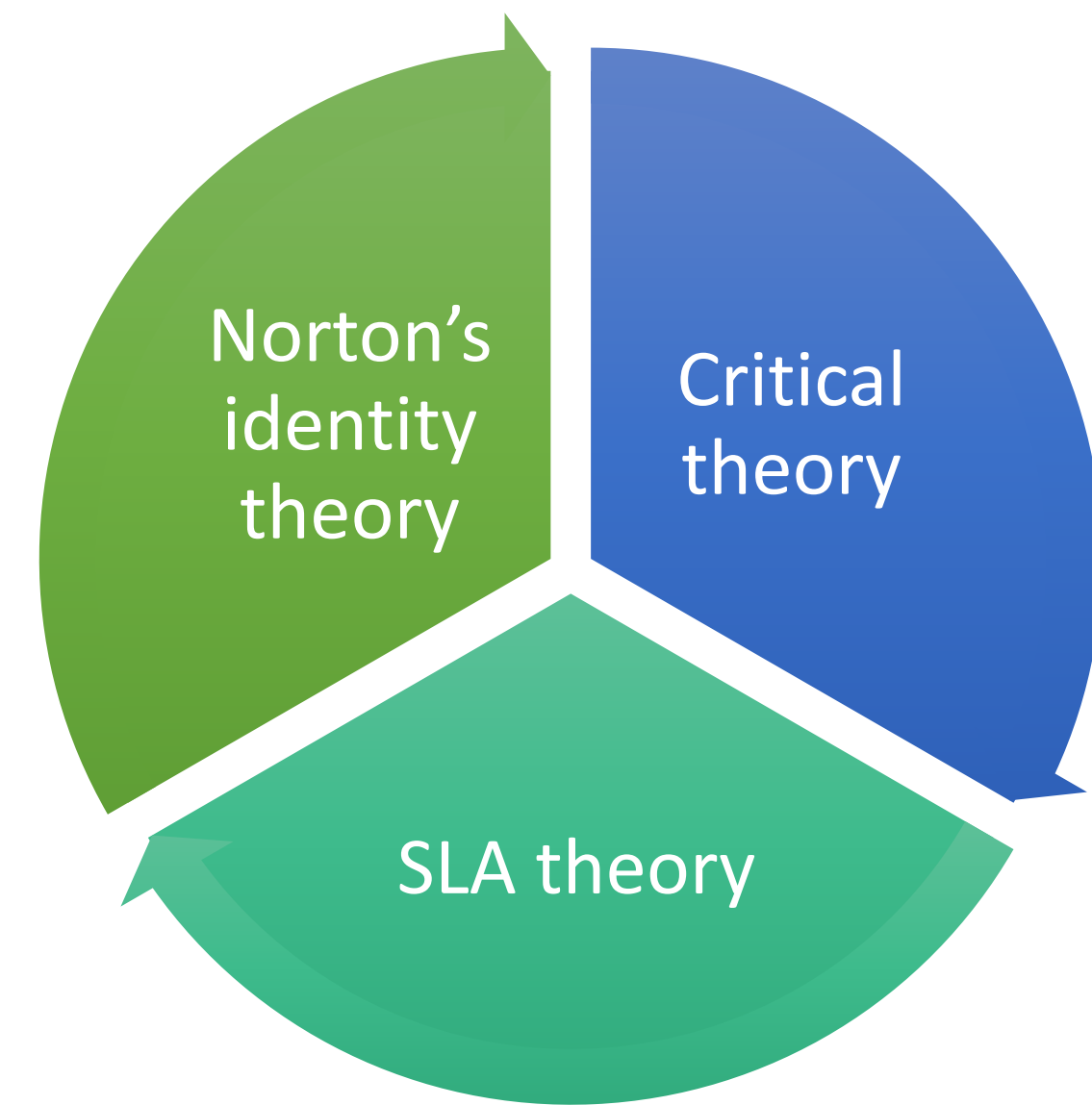College of Education and Human Development | George Mason University

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the experiences of a group of Syrian young adults living under temporary protection and enrolled in Turkish universities?
2. How do these students overcome barriers to invest in higher education in the host country?
3. How do these students envision and pursue their future goals and identities through education?

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

- Norton's identity theory
- Critical theory
- SLA theory

METHODS

Advocacy Ethnography

- Critical ethnography
- Narrative inquiry

Data Collection

- Online questionnaires (42)
- In-depth, semi-structured interviews (11)
- Photovoice (8)

Data Analysis

- Meaning field analysis
- Thematic coding
- Narrative portraits

FINDINGS

Multilingual Practices

- Learning Turkish through media
- Initiating friendships with Turks
- Establishing knowledge exchanges
- Drawing on background knowledge

Identities

- Strong learner identities and goal orientation drove investment of time and effort in learning.
- Investment contributed to success, confidence, and resisting discrimination.
- Academic success supported the development of multilingual, multicultural identities and a sense of local or transnational belonging.

"In the place of trying to understand the lessons, I tried to understand Turkish. While the students were trying to understand math, I was trying to understand Turkish, so then I learned Turkish well." (Muallim)

DISCUSSION

SLA Investment

- Participants overcame academic and social barriers, participated in the host society, resist marginalization, and construct a sense of local or transnational belonging and future identity through learning and then learning *in* a second language.

SLA Purposes

- In this way, they gained cultural capital and engage in self-advocacy (Bourdieu, 1977, 2004; Darvin & Norton, 2015).

SLA Processes

- Their strategies and trajectories illustrate the "highly complex and socially situated process" of second language learning (Swain & Deters, 2007, p. 827).

Figure 1. *"You don't get in life what you want!! You get what you fight for!"* *(Aynur)*

IMPLICATIONS

Scholarship

- Examine L2 curricula for academic purposes
- Develop faculty professional development

Practice

- Establish orientation, bridge, and mentorship programs
- Encourage translanguaging practices
- Facilitate study groups

REFERENCES

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

Bourdieu, P. (2004). The forms of capital. In S. Ball (Ed.), *Reader in sociology of education* (pp. 15–29). Routledge Falmer.

Canagarajah, S., & Silberstein, S. (2012). Introduction: Diaspora and identity. *Journal of Language, Identity and Education, 11*, 81–84. https://doi.org/10.1080/15348458.2012.667296

Carspecken, P. F. (1996). *Critical ethnography in educational research: A theoretical and practical guide.* Routledge.

Darvin, R., & Norton, B. (2015). Identity and a model of investment in applied linguistics. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics, 35*, 36–56. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190514000191

Freire, P. (1972). *Pedagogy of the oppressed.* Herder and Herder.

Marlowe, J. (2018). *Belonging and transnational refugee settlement: Unsettling the everyday and the extraordinary.* Routledge.

Norton, B. (2013). *Identity and language learning: Extending the conversation* (2nd ed.). Multilingual Matters.

Norton, B. & Toohey, K. (2011). Identity, language learning, and social change. *Language Teaching, 44*(4), 412-446. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444811000309

Smyth, J., & McInerney, P. (2013). Whose side are you on? Advocacy ethnography: some methodological aspects of narrative portraits of disadvantaged young people, in socially critical research. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 26*(1), 1–20. https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2011.604649

Stevenson, J. (2019). Imagining a future: Refugee women, possible selves, and higher education. In H. Henderson, J. Stevenson, & A.-M. Bathmaker, *Possible selves and higher education: New interdisciplinary insights* (pp. 127-149). Routledge.

Swain, M. & Deters, P. (2007). "New" mainstream SLA theory: Expanded and enriched. *The Modern Language Journal, 91*, 820-836. http://www.jstor.org/stable/4626134

Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes.* M. Cole, V. John-Steiner, S. Scribner, & E. Souberman, (Eds.). Harvard University Press.

Vygotsky, L. (1986). *Thought and language.* (A. Kozulin, Trans.). MIT Press.

Wang, C., & Burris, M. A. (1997). Photovoice: Concept, methodology, and use for participatory needs assessment. *Health Education & Behavior, 24*(3), 369–387. https://doi.org/10.1177/109019819702400309