On Dialogism, Social Interaction, and Second Language Acquisition: A Reevaluation of Bakhtin's Dialogic Perspective in Line with Vygotsky's Pedagogical Insights

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Abstract

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It is aimed in this article to explicate how Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of dialogue can be applied in the field of second language acquisition (SLA) theory and research. Recently, scholars have begun to integrate Bakhtin's concepts into discussions concerning different aspects of learning a second or foreign language, and literacy learning. However, these applications of Bakhtin's ideas have been restricted by their reliance on some indirect or secondary sources. In this respect, this study aims to offer a thorough introduction to Bakhtin's dialogue theory in the context of SLA. Bakhtin's theory of dialogue, being a fundamental component of his theories related to language, culture, and identity, has been chosen specifically for its potential to shed light on interpersonal and intercultural communication. These aspects are essential subjects that have been under active discussion among SLA researchers in recent times. The present study conducts a thorough analysis of various scholarly works, emphasizing the significant potential of Bakhtin's dialogical theory within the field of second language theory and research. Built upon a philosophical inspiration for multifaceted dialogue, it presents a novel perspective on how languages, cultures, and individuals can interact. Bakhtin's distinctive approach centers on comprehending language, culture, and self from a dialogical standpoint, which effectively enriches the established viewpoints on the acquisition and learning of a second language. This perspective guides the development of an approach in which language, culture, and identity progress through interactive dialogues and intercultural exchanges. Central to Bakhtin's perspective is the recognition of the dialogical nature inherent in social interactions and relationships, grounded in his fundamental belief that language is inherently dialogic. This perspective represents a substantial contribution to SLA theories, stemming from Bakhtin's enduring influence. Moreover, Bakhtin's concepts play a crucial role in examining how language influences an individual's personal identity. In the study, by leveraging conceptual similarities, Vygotsky's educational insights are brought into play to give Bakhtin's philosophical and literary interpretation of dialogue a pedagogical dimension, too. Across the three primary domains—language, culture, and identity—

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the recurrent theme of their dialogical essence is emphasized as a unifying principle. By underlining the similarities and divergences among these domains, a cohesive theoretical framework is elucidated and brought into focus in this study.

Keywords: Dialogism, Social Interaction, Zone of Proximal Development, SLA

1. Introduction

Over the past three decades, Mikhail Bakhtin's (1895-1975) scholarly work has exerted a significant influence on academic scholarship across various academic disciplines. This influence is particularly evident in the domain of second language acquisition (SLA) research, where a significant number of scholars have progressively integrated Bakhtin's concepts into discussions regarding various facets of second and foreign language learning, as well as literacy learning (Marchenkova, 2005; Nakamura, 2021). Bakhtin's theoretical framework introduces a groundbreaking paradigm with the potential to shed light on the field of SLA from a multitude of perspectives. Fundamentally different from traditional linguistics, Bakhtin's approach to language is distinctly centered on his theory of dialogue. In order to thoroughly comprehend the potential integration of Bakhtin's concepts into SLA research, it is imperative to contextualize them within the historical trajectory of traditional approaches.

These conventional methodologies began to emerge during the era of the Chomskian revolution in linguistics in the 1960s, aligning with the shift in psychology from behavioral to cognitivist theories. In fact, during its early stages, SLA research was primarily focused on the linguistic aspects of learner language. More specifically, researchers were deeply engrossed in understanding the acquisition of second language grammar and syntactic knowledge of the target language. In other words, traditional linguistic investigations have mostly emphasized universal properties, grammatical structures, and modeling at the level of individual sentences or utterances. Correspondingly, the traditional linguistic approach has aimed to elucidate the language that learners acquire and provide a comprehensive explanation of its structure. In contrast, psycholinguistics has directed its focus toward the process of acquiring a new language, delving into the internal mechanisms and strategies employed by learners during this acquisition process.

SLA researchers with a psycholinguistic perspective from the outset were primarily concerned with describing and analyzing phenomena like interlanguage, which denotes a transitional phase occurring between one's first language (L1) and a second language (L2) during the process of language acquisition. They were also interested in understanding the mental processes associated with the functioning of interlanguage (Corder, 1967; Selinker, 1972; Marchenkova, 2005; Leow, 2022; Lukačević, 2023). In both linguistic and psycholinguistic

paradigms, the social, cultural, and interactional contexts in which language learning takes place were not regarded as significant factors, despite being acknowledged as potential variables that could either facilitate or impede the development of an individual's internal knowledge of language.

The predominant focus on the individual learner and language within SLA research was initially challenged by advocates of the sociolinguistic approach. The emergence of the sociolinguistic perspective in SLA research was indeed a response to the global sociopolitical and economic changes of its time. However, the concepts regarding language that inspired sociolinguists during the 1960s and 1970s had already been formulated earlier in the twentieth century by renowned scholars, including Franz Boas (1928), Edward Sapir (1949), George Herbert Mead (1934), Benjamin Lee Whorf (1956), Lev Vygotsky (1987), and Mikhail Bakhtin (1990). The fundamental premise shared by these scholars is that language is always intricately intertwined with a social and cultural context, with its primary role being to facilitate communication. With the growing influence of this perspective, scholarly interest gradually shifted from an exclusive focus on the individual learner and their internal cognitive processes to the dynamics of interaction and communication among learners. Language progressively came to be considered as inseparable from power dynamics and their change within society. Consequently, the 1990s witnessed the emergence of various new approaches, including critical (Atkinson, 1997; Pennycook, 2001), ideological (Pennycook, 1994; Phillipson, 1992), sociocultural (Lantolf, 2000a; Lantolf, 1994), ecological (Kramsch, 2000; van Lier, 2002), and identity studies (McKay & Wong, 1996; Norton, 2000; Peirce, 1995). Even though the field of SLA research is witnessing a rapid growth in social and interactional studies these days, many experts indicate that there still remains a tension between recognizing the significance of social and discursive aspects in language use and learning, on one side, and the prevailing emphasis on individual cognition in research, on the other side (Firth & Wagner, 1998; Hall, 1999; Rampton, 1997).

Considering the recent surge in new approaches within applied linguistics, sociolinguistics, second language acquisition theory, and pedagogy, particularly with the emergence of the sociocultural perspective, it is evident that there is a need for new theoretical frameworks to address the central concepts utilized in these fields. Among these concepts, we can highlight (additional) language, culture, and self as areas that have attracted substantial attention. Nevertheless, these concepts remain subjects of considerable debate, with little consensus among scholars regarding their precise definitions and interpretations. For instance, within the field of language learning, there is a notable proliferation of theories. These entail both traditional theories, which focus on an individual's cognitive development, and those that have made initial

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efforts to comprehend the social factors influencing language learning (Marchenkova, 2005).

While these various approaches have undeniably made valuable contributions, it is challenging to argue that they fully satisfy the needs of SLA theorists and practitioners who are currently focused on the social and communicative aspects of language learning and usage. In this sense, many in the field acknowledge that a robust and comprehensive theory should encompass not only psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic elements but also more recent sociohistorical and poststructuralist perspectives. Similarly, it is widely accepted that, although the field has been prolific, it has yet to produce a unified and all-encompassing viewpoint on how second language acquisition or learning occurs. And thus, the existence of multiple theories within SLA engenders ongoing debates and controversies (Beretta, 1993; Ellis, 1995; Kramsch, 2002; Lantolf, 1996; Lantolf & Ahmed, 1989; Larsen-Freeman, 2002).

In light of the aforementioned considerations, it becomes evident that there is a pressing need for an extensive examination of Bakhtin's theory of dialogue within SLA literature. Based on the debate made in *The Modern Language Journal*, it can be anticipated that the integration of Bakhtin's ideas into SLA will provoke both endorsement and critique (Marchenkova, 2005). However, before any meaningful discussion can commence, Bakhtin's concepts must be adequately elucidated for the SLA scholarly community. In this sense, the primary objective of this paper is to provide such a discussion by conducting a comparative analysis of Bakhtin's and Vygotsky's viewpoints and foster a more profound and comprehensive exploration of the ideas put forward by both scholars regarding second language learning and usage.

2. Influence of Bakhtin on SLA Literature

Although the acceptance of Bakhtin's concepts within SLA has not yet reached widespread recognition, they have gradually made their presence felt in diverse studies related to second or foreign language learning in recent years. The interest in Bakhtin's theory of dialogue among second language researchers emerged more than two decades ago and has since found application in diverse contexts and for various purposes. Given its multifaceted and universally applicable nature, Bakhtin's theory offers a wide array of potential uses and interpretations in SLA (Marchenkova, 2005; Kuteeva, 2023). Presented below are a number of studies referencing Bakhtin's concepts as a valuable resource for discussing current issues in the context of second and foreign language learning and use.

Courtney Cazden's influential 1989 article, titled "Contributions of the Bakhtin Circle to Communicative Competence," played a pivotal role in introducing Bakhtin's ideas to the field of language education within academic settings worldwide (Kramsch & McConnell-Ginet, 1992, p. 12). In her work, Cazden incorporated Bakhtin's perspective into discussions on language as a social practice characterized by its dialogic nature. Cazden (1992) was particularly drawn to

Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia, which explores how individuals performatively construct language by drawing on the cultural resources available to them (p. 67). She presented an alternative perspective on expository texts in the foreign language (FL) classroom, emphasizing the idea of scripting texts through oral performance in multiple voices, which is a technique aligned with Bakhtin's analysis of text as double-voiced or multi-voiced. Additionally, in her subsequent 1993 article, "Vygotsky, Hymes, and Bakhtin: From Word to Utterance and Voice," Cazden introduced Bakhtin's concept of voice as an analytical tool for research on social interactions among individuals. In this way, she outlined the utility of this concept for analyzing interpersonal dynamics in the classroom.

In her notable work *Context and Culture in Language Teaching*, Kramsch (1993) incorporates various theoretical frameworks, including Bakhtin's dialogic-dialectic theory. Kramsch emphasizes the importance of "the shaping of context through dialogue" and advocates for the teaching of the interdependence of language and culture (pp. 235-236). A significant aspect of Kramsch's contribution to the discussion on the role of culture in language studies is the introduction of the concept of the "third place." This concept signifies the idea that learners should cultivate a perspective on both their native and acquired cultures, one that transcends the limitations of either of these cultures. Kramsch contends that "the only way to start building a more complete and less partial understanding of both C1 and C2" is to foster a third perspective that enables learners to adopt both an insider's and an outsider's viewpoint on these cultures. She suggests that it is precisely this "third place" that cross-cultural education should aim to establish (p. 210). In her book, Kramsch outlines a dialogic framework for cross-cultural comprehension, which, in certain aspects, bears significant resemblance to Bakhtin's concept of "outsideness."

Drawing a parallel to Bakhtin's ideas regarding the crucial role of language in shaping our worldviews, Hall (1995) argues that, "when viewed from a sociohistorical perspective, our language and its utilization play a significant role in creating our social worlds, influencing our relationships with others, and shaping our ideologies." (p. 207). Hall's discussions on social identity is in line with Bakhtin's theory of the self, and she also outlines several research directions for the study of oral language use. She suggests that these directions are applicable to research on reading and writing as well. In her more recent work, *Teaching and Researching Language and Culture* (2002), Hall draws upon Bakhtin's concepts of dialogue and single- and double-voiced utterances. These concepts feature prominently in her discussion of language as a sociocultural resource (pp. 11-17). This illustrates how Bakhtin's ideas continue to resonate and find application in contemporary research on language, culture, and identity.

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Marcia Moraes's work in bilingual education, as presented in her 1996 publication, provides a critical examination of policies and curricular design within the context of bilingual education. This examination includes a comprehensive exploration of the ongoing debate between English-only and English-plus instructional approaches. In her analyses, Moraes draws upon the insights of Bakhtin and Voloshinov. In her exposition of the Bakhtin Circle's work, she places particular emphasis on the writings of Voloshinov, particularly his books *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* (1973) and *Freudianism: A Marxist Critique* (1976). Voloshinov's socio-political perspective on language and consciousness, deeply rooted in Marxism, aligns highly well with Moraes's objectives. Moraes attempts to reevaluate bilingual education approaches through the perspective of the Bakhtin-Voloshinov dialogic theory, while also incorporating the dialogic pedagogy of Paolo Freire (1993) into this examination. This approach emphasizes how dialogic frameworks can be applied to address issues in the field of bilingual education.

In her book *Philosophy of Second Language Acquisition*, published in 2004, Marysia Johnson introduces a dialogic model for second language acquisition (SLA) by integrating the theories of Vygotsky and Bakhtin. While her primary focus is on Vygotsky's theoretical framework, she gives considerable attention to Bakhtin's concepts, specifically highlighting the heteroglossic nature of utterances and their connection to genres. Indeed, Johnson's work is closely aligned with the aim of this article, which aims at achieving a similar objective. She adeptly incorporates Bakhtin's theoretical ideas, particularly his analysis of speech genre, to enhance and complement Vygotsky's theories. Despite Vygotsky's emphasis on the importance of speech in human cognitive development, Johnson argues that his Sociocultural Theory (SCT) lacks a thorough examination of the characteristics of speech within a particular sociocultural setting. As stated by her, this gap is effectively addressed through Bakhtin's contributions (p. 127).

In his study, Prior (2001) extensively delves into the concept of voice as a central element in the acquisition and utilization of discourse, particularly within the domain of literary activity. He undertakes a thorough examination of this concept by leveraging the theories put forth by Voloshinov and Bakhtin. Rather than endorsing purely individualistic or strictly social perspectives of voice, Prior argues for a dual nature of voice, which encompasses both social and personal dimensions. Additionally, he indicates that language does not exist solely within an individual or externally, but is deeply rooted in the interactions and exchanges among individuals (p. 95). Emphasizing the significance of Bakhtin's and Voloshinov's theoretical framework, Prior suggests that it is an alternative to structuralist language and discourse theories by offering a more nuanced understanding. In his prior work, *Writing / disciplinarity: A Sociohistoric Account of Literate Activity in the Academy*, published in 1998, Prior utilizes Bakhtin's concepts of

authoritative and internally persuasive discourse. Through this framework, he examines the intricate dynamics involved in the negotiation of knowledge, identity, and community between graduate students and professors within during academic writing tasks (as cited in Lee, 2022; Green, 2022).

In her article titled "The Teaching of Academic Language to Minority Second Language Learners," Valdes (2004) introduces Bakhtin's concept of voice into the discussion concerning how learners engage with the study of English in both academic environments and communities. Valdes delves into an investigation of how the voices of individual learners are shaped by their social contexts and also contribute to the formation of these contexts in both educational and community learning settings. She advocates for a Bakhtinian approach that expands the diversity and breadth of experiences available to learners throughout the instructional process. A substantial component of Valdes's discussion centers on the complexities associated with standard English and the ongoing debate concerning English-only policies (p. 75).

In the chapter titled "Metalinguistic Awareness in Dialogue: Bakhtinian Considerations," penned by Hall, Vitanova, and Marchenkova (2005), a thorough examination of the concept of metalinguistic awareness is conducted by drawing upon the theories of Bakhtin and Vygotsky. The authors specifically utilize Bakhtin's ideas encompassing dialogicality, polyphony, and heteroglossia to assert that metalinguistic awareness is an outcome of both social and cognitive construction, taking shape through processes of socialization. Rather than being a singular entity, they argue that the resulting awareness is a multifaceted construct characterized by multiple voices. The researcher further indicates that this complexity necessitates a reconsideration of existing approaches to understand metalinguistic awareness.

In the chapter "Language, Culture and Self: The Bakhtin-Vygotsky Encounter," authored by Marchenkova in 2005, a significant comparison is drawn between Bakhtin and Vygotsky. It is aimed with this to emphasize that the theories proposed by these two scholars mutually complement each other, particularly within the domains of language, culture, and identity. The author contends that the similarities between Bakhtin's literary theory and Vygotsky's theory of cognitive development create a vital bridge. This bridge serves as a conduit for interpreting Bakhtin's concepts in an educational context, which indeed enables a pedagogical application as well (as cited in Khong et al., 2023).

Considering all these studies and articles, it is evident that there is a need for novel theoretical frameworks within Second Language Acquisition (SLA). A significant number of scholars have recognized the pertinence and applicability of Bakhtin's concepts to their research goals in the domain of SLA. Various aspects of Bakhtin's theory of dialogue are already proving

instrumental in a wide array of discussions concerning language, culture, and self. Currently, Bakhtin's name is frequently referenced alongside such scholars as Vygotsky and Voloshinov. Many authors emphasize the vast potential embedded in Bakhtin's philosophy for advancing studies in second and foreign languages and advocate for further investigation in this domain (Marchenkova, 2005). Although the initial introduction to Bakhtin's theories began approximately three decades ago, interest in his theoretical framework has significantly increased in recent years, particularly with the advent of the twenty-first century. This serves to validate Emerson's foresight that Bakhtin's ideas would become highly relevant to educational theory and practice in this new century (1997, pp. 274-276).

3. Bakhtin's Theory of Dialogue in the Context of Language Learning and Use

In the pursuit of assessing the applicability of Bakhtin's theory of dialogue in SLA, this chapter will delve into three specific themes derived from Bakhtin's ideology: (a) language, (b) culture, and (c) the evolution of self or identity. Each theme will be thoroughly analyzed to ascertain its relevance and potential contributions to the understanding of SLA.

Applying Bakhtin's conceptual framework to the SLA domain poses a significant challenge that is grounded in the philosophical foundations of his theory, as argued by Marchenkova (2005). Bakhtin's theoretical framework transcends conventional topics such as communication, pragmatics, stylistics, and discourse analysis. At its essence, Bakhtin's concern is centered on the development of an individual's ideological consciousness within the spheres of language and culture (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 348). In this sense, this article is devoted to a thorough examination of Bakhtin's work, with a particular emphasis on key concepts that have potential value for SLA. The concepts under scrutiny in this article include dialogue, utterance, heteroglossia, and polyphony. While evaluating the significance of these concepts within Bakhtin's theory of dialogue, their relevance to the prevailing challenges and focal points in contemporary SLA theory will also be carefully examined. According to Bakhtin, the ultimate purpose of dialogue is the attainment of understanding among individuals, with all the intricate elements that comprise its dynamic structure. The common thread uniting these themes in the article lies in Bakhtin's analysis of dialogic relations, whether they occur between cultures, individuals, or within an individual's consciousness (García & Kleifgen, 2020; Rafi & Morgan, 2021).

In this chapter, we will examine Bakhtin's theory of dialogue and its potential integration into SLA by also considering Vygotsky's psychological theory. We will compare and contrast Bakhtin's and Vygotsky's viewpoints on language, scrutinizing how both scholars applied the dialogic principle to language use, conceptualized intercultural understanding, and envisioned the development of self and identity. It's important to note that Bakhtin's academic interests did not encompass pedagogical concerns, and he did not explicitly formulate a theory of learning. In

other words, his theory of language and literature is not inherently a pedagogical framework, yet it exhibits substantial potential for shaping a theory of language and culture learning. To bridge this gap, we can draw upon Vygotsky's theories of cognitive development (1986, 1987) to integrate Bakhtin's concepts into language pedagogy effectively. Throughout our discussion, we will emphasize how Bakhtin's concepts align with the context of second language learning.

3.1. Bakhtin's Perspective on Foreign Language

Bakhtin himself recognized the broad applicability of his theory in both spoken and written communication within foreign or second language contexts. However, this aspect has been relatively underemphasized in the existing literature on Bakhtin studies. Bakhtin's acknowledgment of this potential is evident in his essay "From Notes Made in 1970-71," written during the later years of his life. In this essay, Bakhtin articulated his perspective on linguistic creations, stating that he constructs expressions of another person to encompass any utterance or writing by any individual, irrespective of whether it is in their native language or any other language that is not their own. This standpoint by Bakhtin, which is encapsulated in the phrase "the other's word (language)," indicates the inclusion of both a person's native language and a foreign language. Bakhtin's significant theoretical work, "Discourse in the Novel," which examines the philosophy of language, provides a framework to understand how individuals form their ideological perspectives through the assimilation of discourse from others. In the context of authoritative discourse, Bakhtin highlights the use of a foreign language as a means to express the perspective of the other. He suggests that authoritative discourse frequently emanates from another individual expressing himslf or herself in a language different from one's native language (1981, p. 343).

In a broader context, Bakhtin often integrated references to foreign cultures within his theory of dialogue, aligning with what contemporary discourse recognizes as intercultural communication. Particularly during the late 1960s-1970s, a period marked by the Cold War, Bakhtin displayed a keen interest in investigating "the relationship between one's own society and other cultures that are foreign to it in space or time" (Holquist, 1986b, p. 12). Moreover, Bakhtin's analysis of novelistic discourse provides a viable framework for engaging in discussions related to multilingual and multicultural communication. In fact, the core of Bakhtin's perspective is encapsulated in the statement that "We must deal with the life and behavior of discourse in a contradictory and multilingual world" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 275). Bakhtin viewed the acquisition of knowledge in other languages as a factor that enriches not only the first language (L1) and second language (L2) but also culture and personal identity. He argued that "For multilingual consciousness," as articulated in his essay on heteroglossia, "language attains a new quality, becoming something quite distinct from what it was for a deaf monolingual

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consciousness" (Bakhtin, 1996, p. 157).

Indeed, it is crucial to acknowledge that while Bakhtin's references to foreign languages hold suggestive implications, they are often indirect. The historical backdrop during Bakhtin's era did not encompass the specific notion of a 'second' language as understood in contemporary discussions of SLA. In that era, any language and culture other than an individual's native language were regarded as foreign by Bakhtin and his contemporaries. Nevertheless, Voloshinov (1973) explicitly addressed what he termed the "problem of alien or foreign discourse" in her essay "Marxism and the Philosophy of Language" (pp. 73-76). Voloshinov further argued that although this aspect had been overlooked in linguistics, discourse in a foreign language played a significant role in shaping language awareness.

3.2. Language Use, Linguistics, and Metalinguistics

According to Brumfit (2001), there has been a notable transformation in language teaching, particularly in the pedagogy of English as a second or foreign language, over the past half-century. The instructional focus has shifted away from a primary emphasis on literature towards a greater emphasis on speech, communication, and ultimately the concept of communicative competence. Brumfit (2001) identifies three significant shifts that have propelled these changes: the establishment of linguistics and sociolinguistics as distinct academic disciplines, the global economic advancements of the 1970s that spurred a heightened interest in learning English, and the influence of a philosophical tradition primarily emerging from non-English-speaking regions. This tradition draws from various sources, including prominent intellectuals like Bakhtin and Vygotsky from the early Soviet Union years, and the structuralist framework proposed by Saussure (p. 119).

As previously mentioned, the dominant viewpoint concerning language in Second SLA has primarily been shaped by traditional linguistic theories, particularly deriving from the theories proposed by de Saussure (1916/1974). However, recent years have witnessed concerted efforts to deviate from this conventional approach. Some significant alternative perspectives include sociolinguistics, pragmatics, conversational analysis, critical discourse analysis, sociocultural studies, contact linguistics, and translanguaging studies. Bakhtin's comprehension of language is in line with and lends support to these endeavors aimed at examining language through diverse perspectives (Khan, Perveen & Imtiaz, 2021).

Scholars specializing in Bakhtin's philosophy of language have observed a distinctive conceptual difference in his approach when compared to two major European language paradigms: the German "individualistic subjectivism" established by Wilhelm von Humboldt, and

the French "abstract objectivism" stemming from the Cartesian tradition as elaborated by
Ferdinand de Saussure (Makhlin, 1993). It is important to highlight that Bakhtin's
contemporaries, known as the "Russian Formalists" of the 1920s, including figures such as
Roman Jakobson, Vladimir Propp, Viktor Shklovsky, Boris Tomashevsky, and Lurii Tynianov,
operated within the latter tradition. The Formalists perceived language as "a reservoir of
linguistic resources, constituting expressions with associated semantic representations (abstract or
decontextualized meanings) which are integrated within systematic structures" (Linell, 1998, pp.
3-4). In contrast to Bakhtin, who prioritized language use, they relegated discourse to a secondary
position (ibid. p. 29). Likewise, subsequent American linguists such as Noam Chomsky drew
inspiration from Saussure's theories as well. However, it is a clear fact that Bakhtin's approach
challenges the fundamental assumptions held by these schools, be it Humboldt's, Saussure's, or
the Formalists' perspectives (Makhlin, 1993).

Bakhtin's viewpoint on language diverges significantly from these established approaches
in several fundamental aspects. One of the pivotal distinctions lies in Bakhtin's perception of
language as inherently social, portraying it as an "interindividual" phenomenon (Bakhtin, 1986a,
p. 121). From Bakhtin's vantage point, language comes to life through an individual's interactions
with others. Importantly, he does not restrict language analysis merely to its formal and semantic
dimensions; instead, he integrates it within the domain of speech practice. Bakhtin frequently
employs terminology such as "speech life of peoples" (1986a, p. 166), "live speech" (1986a, p.
147), "living word" (1981, p. 276), and "the concrete life of the word" (1984a, p. 181). Hence, it
is imperative to keep in mind that Bakhtin's linguistic scrutiny centers on speech within the
context of dynamic communication, which encapsulates language in practical usage.

Furthermore, within Bakhtin's philosophical framework concerning language, dialogue is
identified as the primary element. Bakhtin posited that dialogue is the catalyst for the existence of
language, contending that language originates from and operates as a crucial conduit for dialogue.
Intrinsically linked to this assertion is Bakhtin's firm belief in the presence of diverse voices,
referred to as heteroglossia, in language, extending from individual words to the core structure.
Bakhtin emphasized that language holds great importance in shaping an individual's worldview
and personal identity. In summary, Bakhtin posits that language is a dynamic, multivoiced, and
contextually grounded entity (Paquet & Woll, 2021; Peeters, Gallego & Paulis, 2022).

Morson and Emerson (1990) draw attention to Bakhtin's objective of presenting not only a
set of isolated terms or novel techniques but also a fundamentally different approach to both
language and literary discourse as a whole (p. 20). Bakhtin's standpoint emphasized going
beyond conventional linguistic boundaries to examine the broad philosophical, cultural, and
historical dimensions concerning "language in its concrete living totality" (1984a, p. 181). He

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highlighted the essential interrelationship between language and an individual's lived experience, affirming that each utterance posits claims concerning justice, sincerity, beauty, and truthfulness, effectively constituting a model utterance. These values, he argued, are shaped not only by their linguistic ties, but also by their diverse relationships with reality, the speaking subject, and other utterances—particularly those evaluating them in terms of sincerity or beauty (Bakhtin, 1986a, p. 123). Bakhtin termed this theoretical framework as metalinguistics, later evolving to translinguistics, a nomenclature adopted by subsequent scholars such as Clark and Holquist (1984), Holquist (1986b), Todorov (1984), and Wertsch (1991). This conceptual framework was coined metalinguistics by Bakhtin, which is a term subsequently modified to translinguistics by later scholars such as Clark and Holquist (1984), Holquist (1986b), Todorov (1984), and Wertsch (1991).

In his work published in 1984, Bakhtin explicates the central focus of metalinguistics, identifying it as the study of "dialogic relationships" within language. He suggests that language thrives exclusively through dialogic interactions among its users, highlighting this interactivity as fundamental to language's vitality (pp. 182-83). Bakhtin, along with fellow affiliated scholars with the Bakhtin circle, advocates for acknowledging the significance of specific, contextually grounded, situationally contingent, and historically contextualized applications of language. Furthermore, Voloshinov (1973) succinctly encapsulates his dissent from the Saussurian viewpoint, particularly underlining the societal and contextual underpinnings governing the origins and developmental process of language.

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

Bakhtin's stance positions him in opposition to subsequent developments stemming from Saussurian theories, specifically, structuralism and semiotics. He contends that structural linguistics and semiotics confine their scope to transmitting preconstructed communication using established codes. In contrast, Bakhtin argues that in spontaneous speech, communication is forged during the act of transmission, devoid of a predefined code or limitations (Bakhtin, 1986a, p. 147). Bakhtin's divergence from structuralism originates from his fundamental disagreement with the objectivist or scientific approach to language. He opposes the notion of perceiving language as an indifferent and strict entity governed by abstract principles. In his view, structuralism characterizes and distorts language into concepts, thereby considering it as abstract. Bakhtin disputes this perspective on language, arguing that it inaccurately disregards its inherent dialogic relationships. He maintained that within the domain of linguistics and its examination of language as an object, dialogic relationships are absent and unattainable. This absence extends to

both the elements within a language system (e.g., words in a dictionary, morphemes, etc.) and the elements within a 'text' when approached from a strictly linguistic perspective (Bakhtin, 1984a, p. 182). To address this limitation, Bakhtin proposed broadening the scope of investigation to include the contextual use of language by individual humans within a social context. He emphasized the personalistic nature of contextual meaning, arguing that it invariably involves inquiry, address, and the expectation of a response, fundamentally incorporating two interlocutors (as a dialogic minimum) (Bakhtin, 1986a, p. 170). Ultimately, Bakhtin viewed the object of linguistics as monologic, which is in fact in sharp contrast to his own perception of the word as inherently dialogic (Teo, 2019; Niknezhad Naeijabad & Khodareza, 2020).

The study of discourse and spoken communication constitutes a distinct domain within SLA, which attracts the attention of many scholars appreciating the insights presented by Bakhtin. It is evident that an expanding body of research draws inspiration from Bakhtin's theoretical framework. Considering the vital significance of dialogic relationships in Bakhtin's philosophy of language, it is highly important to conduct an in-depth analysis of the foundational principles that underlie his theory of dialogue.

3.3. Dialogic Perspective

The purpose of this chapter is to clarify the specific pertinence of Bakhtin's theory of dialogue within varied contexts marked by multilingualism and multiculturalism. In this context, the distinction between one's own identity and that of others is not solely a result of individual idiosyncrasies; instead, it is essentially shaped by linguistic and cultural differences.

At the core of Bakhtin's views on language, culture, and personality lies his theory of dialogue. Bakhtin's philosophical focus is primarily related to the dialogic connections that exist among individuals, cultures, and the interplay between an individual and their cultural milieu. Morson and Emerson (1990) bring attention to a prevalent misunderstanding, underscoring that Bakhtin's perspective on dialogue surpasses a mere verbal exchange (p. 49). Bakhtin conceptualized dialogue as a universal form of communication, fundamental to both culture and an individual's existence (Gurevich, 1992). Emerson (1997) further elucidates that Bakhtin's interest extends beyond a superficial definition of dialogue as mere conversation. His concern does not lie solely in individuals exchanging words in a social setting; Rather, it resides in the notion that each word encapsulates a multitude of distinct, discerning, and at times contradictory elements of communication. Simply put, the more a word is utilized across diverse conversational contexts, the more nuances it accumulates, thus expanding its array of meanings. This perspective redefines dialogue as a model for the creative process, implying that the healthy development of one's consciousness necessitates continuous engagement with a diverse range of voices or

perspectives (p. 36). Therefore, Bakhtin's comprehension of dialogue extends beyond ordinary communication, which encompasses creativity and the construction of an individual's distinct identity. Additionally, he posited that dialogue serves as a tool for the search of truth. Bakhtin further argued that truth is not an isolated creation within an individual's mind; rather, it emerges through collective dialogic interactions among individuals in the shared pursuit of truth (Bakhtin, 1984a, p. 110).

3.3.1. Dialogue: Dynamics of Utterance and Addressivity

Bakhtin conducted an analysis of dialogic relations applicable across diverse contexts. He delineated dialogue into two forms: external compositional dialogue and internal dialogism of the word. External dialogue refers to the conventional understanding of dialogue, involving a verbal interaction where interlocutors take turns to articulate their utterances and responses. According to Bakhtin (1981), this type of dialogue is typically examined as a compositional form in speech structuring, while the internal dialogism intrinsic to the word, consisting of all its semantic and expressive layers, is often overlooked (p. 279).

Bakhtin displayed a significant fascination with what he termed as the "internal dialogism of the word," which is also referred to as "internal dialogue" or "microdialogue" (1984, p. 184). He underscored that any form of communication between individuals, whether oral or written, inherently possesses this internal dialogic characteristic, using to its "dialogic orientations" (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 92). Bakhtin's fundamental argument centered on the idea that utterances [vyskazyvanie] are always directed toward another utterance or the responsive reply in a dialogue. This gave rise to his concept of addressivity [obrashchennoct'], which is defined as the act of addressing an utterance to someone, essentially "the quality of [the speaker's] turning to someone else" (p. 99). Bakhtin argues that the quality of addressivity is fundamental and serves as a necessary condition for any utterance. According to his perspective, an utterance must be directed towards someone and elicit a response from that individual. However, Bakhtin distinguishes between an utterance and traditional units of linguistic analysis, such as words and sentences (as cited in Marchenkova, 2005). He emphasizes that from the standpoint of traditional linguistics, units like words and sentences are typically regarded as not being attributed to anyone and not being directed at anyone. They inherently lack any connection to another person's utterance or word. Bakhtin clarifies that addressivity is conferred when an isolated word or sentence is aimed at or directed to someone, thereby forming a complete utterance forming a single word or sentence. Nevertheless, he indicates that the quality of being addressed is not an inherent feature of the language unit itself but rather an intrinsic aspect of the utterance (Bakhtin, 1986a, p. 99).

Voloshinov's interpretation is closely in line with this understanding of utterance.

On Dialogism, Social Interaction, and Second Language Acquisition: A Reevaluation of Bakhtin's Dialogic Perspective in Line with Vygotsky's Pedagogical Insights

According to Voloshinov (1973), comprehending another person's utterance involves orienting oneself in relation to it and placing it appropriately within the relevant context. With every word in the utterance, both the person expressing the utterance and the recipient of it are engaged in an effort to understand, and they metaphorically reserve a collection of their own responsive words. The greater the quantity and significance of these reserved words, the deeper and more comprehensive their understanding of the utterance becomes (p. 102). From a dialogic perspective, as suggested by Zhao and Zhang (2022), what Voloshinov proposes is closely connected to the active role of the listener within a dialogue. This concept implies that the listener's participation, in conjunction with the contributions of the speaker, actively influences the ongoing dialogue. The same principle applies to the interaction between a reader and a writer, as well as the process of meaning construction from the text. In essence, this articulates the concept that both the listener and the reader, with their individual perspectives, viewpoints, and conceptual frameworks, contribute to the dialogue, even in their silence. And thus, communication continually evolves as a multivoiced process. An utterance, as viewed by Bakhtin (1986) as the authentic essence of verbal communication, can be characterized by the fundamental features outlined below:

1. Every utterance has its source in a primary author, that is, an individual who serves as the "creator of the utterance whose position it reflects" (Bakhtin, 1984a, p. 184). Nevertheless, in accordance with Bakhtin's viewpoint, one could argue that each utterance also has a secondary or implicit author, which is the addressee. The expected response of the addressee markedly affects the semantic and syntactic characteristics of the utterance. Bakhtin labels this coexistence of multiple authors as 'double-voicedness.'

2. An utterance should be understood as "a link in the chain of speech communication within a particular sphere" (Bakhtin, 1986a, p. 94). Bakhtin attributes this characteristic to the socio-historical nature of the utterance. In other words, an utterance is not an isolated unit; it carries within it the historical contexts of its prior use. It is shaped by its history and predicts its own future. This perspective aligns Bakhtin with the phenomenological-hermeneutic approach to language. Additionally, it is important to consider Voloshinov's (1973) implication that not only the immediate social context but also the broader social environment can significantly influence the structure of an utterance.

3. An utterance possesses an ethical dimension in that it consistently embodies an emotional and volitional orientation. The response expected from an utterance is not neutral but carries an inherent sense of evaluation. Furthermore, as Bakhtin emphasized, an utterance itself should be regarded as a moral act (1990, pp. 103-105). Finally, an utterance should also be considered as a creative act, giving rise to questions of authorship and the role of

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the individual in its creation (1986a, pp. 119-20).

In summary, Bakhtin conceived an utterance as conforming to the compositional structure of a dialogue, having a definitive character as a complete semantic unit necessitating a response, implying responsive reactions to other utterances, emerging from at least two distinct voices, being situated within a socio-historical discursive tradition, and being shaped by a concrete social context. To condense it further, an utterance is final, responsive, historical, and context-bound. It's worth noting that Bakhtin used the terms "utterance" and "word" interchangeably to refer to what contemporary scholars now call "discourse." This terminological aspect was highlighted by the Russian scholar Makhlin (1993), who suggests that Bakhtin intended these terms to encompass a discursive act of speech consciousness that incorporates both uniquely expressive-subjective and socially objective characteristics.

Bakhtin's concept of utterance and, more broadly, dialogue, stands in contrast to the communication model that has been predominant in SLA until recent years. While the early research on interaction in the 1960s emphasized the significance of the social context of communication, SLA took a different trajectory in the 1970s and 1980s, influenced by three particular doctrines. The first doctrine is the information-processing theory, which posits a sender-receiver model (Ellis, 1995) and assumes that language is primarily a tool for information exchange, consisting of inputs and outputs. Kramsch (2002b) associates these views with what she terms "the prevalence of the machine metaphor," characterizing language acquisition as an information-processing activity focused on input and output rather than the negotiation of contextual meaning (p. 1). The other two theories are the speech act theory (Searle, 1975) and functional theory (Halliday, 1973), which assert that linguistic function takes precedence over linguistic form (van Lier, 2002, pp. 142-157). However, these prevailing theories have faced challenges in recent years with the resurgence of new contextualist approaches. Kramsch notes that "the 1990s brought back the importance of context" on a broader cultural scale, prompting a need to reevaluate the relationship between language and other meaning-making practices in everyday life (2002, pp. 3-4). Dialogic viewpoints on communication are currently undergoing a process of increased recognition, predominantly establishing their foundation within the domain of socio-cultural theory. (Lantolf, 2000b; Hall, 1999) and the emerging ecological approach to language learning and teaching (Kramsch, 2002; van Lier, 2002). The ecological-semiotic perspective on language "focuses on the ways individuals relate to the world and to each other through linguistic and other sign systems" (van Lier, 2002, p. 147), closely aligning with Bakhtin's understanding of communication.

3.3.2. Concept of Other and Otherness in Dialogue

Bakhtin's perspective on the role of the "other" in communication has garnered particular

attention within the realm of contemporary Second Language Acquisition (SLA) studies. Despite the growing recognition of the "other" concept in this field, its practical applications remain relatively constrained and lack a strong theoretical foundation. At the same time, the entire domain of second and foreign language studies fundamentally find their roots in the intricate relationships between one language and another, one culture and another, and one's self and another self (Arvaja & Sarja, 2021; Bian, 2022). The processes of language learning, cultural interaction, and self-formation are all based on the learner's relationship to another language, another culture, and another self. The dynamic between the self and the 'other' stands as an essential condition for the learner. Hence, addressing the 'other' is an integral aspect of any endeavor to comprehend these processes. Upon examining existing theories, it becomes evident that they fail to provide a comprehensive account of the 'other' within the contexts of language acquisition and cultural communication. In contrast, Bakhtin's framework offers a comprehensive and intricately interconnected examination of the 'other' concept as it pertains to his broader theory of dialogue. Bakhtin places particular emphasis on the role of the 'other' in linguistic consciousness and discourse. He aptly notes, "Our speech is replete with the words of others." Moreover, he observes that traditional linguistic paradigms are ill-equipped to integrate the 'other' concept into their models of human interaction. Bakhtin underscores that "the other's word" is, from the standpoint of syntax and grammar, an irrational notion, particularly within the domain of structural linguistics (Bakhtin, 1986a, p. 73). Bakhtin attached significant importance to the concept of "the other's words." He categorized discourse into three distinct word categories: those that are neutral, those originating from others, and one's own words (Bakhtin, 1986a, p. 88). Both Bakhtin and Voloshinov offered a detailed explanation of the intricate relationship between one's own words and those of others. Bakhtin perceived this relationship as a process in which the words of the other become integrated into one's own, describing understanding as "the transformation of the other's words into one's own" (Bakhtin, 1986a, p. 143). Likewise, Bakhtin delved into the great impact of the other in shaping one's identity, situating it within the context of "human consciousness" and "personality" (ibid., p. 168). He unified thought, personhood, and language into a coherent perspective, asserting, "Fundamentally, our thoughts, whether they are philosophical, scientific, or artistic, are conceived and shaped through interaction and engagement with the thoughts of others, inevitably leaving their mark on the verbal expressions of our thoughts as well" (ibid., p. 171).

It is important to emphasize that within Bakhtin's theory of dialogue, the concept of "the other" assumes a distinct role compared to its definition in postmodernist discourse. Postmodernism portrays "the other" as distinct, distinguished, non-Western, and disempowered, inherently juxtaposed with the powerful, hegemonic, and monologic center. The principal theme of postmodern discourse on language and culture centers on the struggle and resistance of this

"other" against the leveling influence of the center (Nichols & Petzold, 2021). This perspective is currently gaining ground within the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA), particularly in the exploration of issues pertaining to identity and non-native speakers (for an overview, see Pavlenko, 2002). Poststructuralists, who are deeply concerned with reclaiming identity and discovering their "voice," draw inspiration from Bakhtin's theories. However, Bakhtin's conception of the authority of "the other" diverges from the postmodernist model of power relations. In broad terms, Bakhtin's "other" denotes someone who is distinct from oneself, anyone other than "I." Nevertheless, Bakhtin often describes "the other" as the authoritative entity within discourse. These authoritative figures are defined within their historical, cultural, and contextual contexts. For Bakhtin, "the other's word" encompasses the words of parents, teachers, religious authorities, and the cultural-historical tradition (1981, p. 324). Moreover, Bakhtin viewed the relationship between the self and the other not solely in terms of resistance and rejection, but also as a process of the self-appropriating the authority of the other, thereby actively shaping itself. According to Bakhtin, this process does not culminate in the complete dissolution of the other. In other words, the other invariably remains an integral component within the formula that defines the self.

Evaluating the precise impact of Bakhtin's conception of the relationship between the self and the other on scholarly discourse in SLA is currently a complex task. These dynamics are a subject of considerable debate in Bakhtin studies and are a source of controversy within interpretations of Bakhtin in postmodernist theory (Matsuo, 2019; Iversen, 2021). Nevertheless, Bakhtin offers an alternative perspective to the one currently prevalent in SLA, potentially introducing new avenues for addressing this intricate matter. Bakhtin could serve as a valuable resource for SLA scholars who are embarking on the study of foreign languages from the advantage point of the L2 user. This contrasts with the traditional approach in which the L2 user is positioned as "the other," i.e., the voiceless subject of investigation, with the native speaker's viewpoint as the starting point. Scholars such as Cook (2002b), for instance, are actively working to make the L2 user's perspective the foundation for understanding the processes of second language acquisition.

3.3.3. Dialogue and Value-imbued Nature of Language

In Bakhtin's conceptualization of language, a central tenet is the belief that no utterance can be considered devoid of inherent value. In his view, our entire discourse is steeped in ethical and aesthetic dimensions, a characteristic that extends to utterances across political, artistic, and even scientific contexts. Bakhtin (1990) firmly asserts that utterances come to life and gain significance only when they are appraised in terms of being "true or false, beautiful or ugly, sincere or deceitful, frank, cynical, authoritative, and so on" (p. 292). Bakhtin is keenly aware

that this viewpoint on language differs markedly from the traditional linguistic approach, which assumes language to be value-neutral, comprised of abstract or schematic rules. In contrast, Bakhtin (1986a) contends that an utterance is not defined solely in formal terms; it possesses what it refers to as "contextual meaning." This contextual meaning is intricately linked to values like truth, beauty, and more, and it demands a responsive understanding that includes the act of evaluation (p. 125). Bakhtin further connects the richness of value within discourse to the emotional depth it carries (pp. 166-167). This underscores the idea that the emotional content of language is an integral component of the ethical and aesthetic meanings embedded within our expressions and communications. Emotions play a significant role in shaping the value and impact of language, which highlights the interconnectedness of these elements in Bakhtin's understanding of discourse.

Bakhtin's perspective also emphasizes that dialogue, in a general sense, carries an inherent ethical dimension. When individuals engage in a dialogue with one another, Bakhtin contends that they automatically take responsibility for both what they express to the other person and for the person as a whole. It is not uncommon for Bakhtin to describe love as the primary motivating force behind dialogue (Marchenkova, 2005). The ethical and humanistic significance of Bakhtin's theory has been highlighted by Holquist (1990), who states, "Each time we engage in conversation, we are essentially enacting values through our speech by shaping our own position and that of our listener within a culturally specific social context" (p. 63). This perspective enunciates the significant ethical implications inherent in every act of communication and the values it embodies.

3.3.4. Heteroglossia and Polyphony Integrated in Dialogue

Bakhtin's theory places significant emphasis on the notion of multiple dialogues influencing the communication process. When engaging in dialogue, individuals bring with them a multitude of conversational elements stemming from various cultural backgrounds, historical contexts, social affiliations, gender perspectives, age groups, differing levels of literacy, and other pertinent factors. This amalgamation of voices within a dialogue gives rise to a dynamic interplay of discursive forces, a phenomenon known as "heteroglossia" as described by Bakhtin (1981, p. 270). Heteroglossia, in essence, conveys the concept that a single expression can be shaped by numerous concurrently active voices, which do not merge into a unified voice but rather independently contribute their distinct "melodies" within the context of the expression. As Holquist (1990) expounds, heteroglossia presents a scenario where individuals encounter numerous potential responses within a given situation, yet each response must align with a particular discourse chosen from a wide array of available options. This conceptual framework paints a picture of the world as a complex interplay of diverse languages, each characterized by

its unique formal attributes (Holquist, 1990, p. 69).

Bakhtin (1981) posited a unique understanding of language, conceiving it not as a uniform and homogeneous entity but rather as a simultaneous coexistence of a multitude of languages. These encompass the languages of distinct social groups, what he refers to as "professional" and "generic" languages, literary languages, languages associated with different generations, and more (p. 272). Building upon Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia, Duranti (1997) draws a connection between this notion and the historical evolution of unified national languages. He highlights the usefulness of Bakhtin's concepts for sociolinguists, who have discerned instances of the phenomena and processes described by Bakhtin. Duranti also extends this linkage to the matter of identity formation (pp. 75-76).

However, the coexistence of these languages is often far from harmonious and is frequently characterized by conflicts and multiple competitions among these linguistic forms. This strife is not confined solely to interactions among individuals speaking a common language; it also extends to communication involving different (national) languages. This perspective gains particular relevance in light of the ongoing discord arising from the global proliferation of English as a lingua franca, leading to significant transformations in indigenous languages, including questions regarding their continued existence. Inextricably tied to these issues are the debates surrounding standard English and the various regional dialects of the English language, a topic under continuous examination in the field of second language studies.

In her insightful article titled "Arts of the Contact Zone," Pratt (1998) fervently advocates for the enhancement of strategies to facilitate the diverse processes related to meaning construction, worldviews, literacy, and language utilization. These elements are integral to the human experience within a world renowned for its inherent diversity. Pratt introduces the notion of the 'contact zone' (p. 173) to characterize the essence, spatial dimension, and consequences of genuine interactions among distinct cultures and languages. This spatial dimension can often manifest itself in a physical form, and the resulting consequences encompass both concrete and abstract aspects. Pratt's concepts of 'contact zones,' 'imagined communities,' and 'safe houses' (p. 184) exhibit resonance with the broader contexts of language use, which encompasses phenomena like World Englishes, English as an International Language (EIL), and cross –world or transcultural literacies.

Pennycook's contributions, as presented in his 1994 work "The Cultural Politics of English as an International Language," play a significant role in the ongoing scholarly dialogue within this field. Much like Pratt's reference to "print capitalism" (1998, p. 180), Pennycook prefers the term "linguistic imperialism," as championed by Phillipson in his influential 1992 publication, to analyze the contemporary global landscape of the English language. In Pennycook's perspective

(1994), the use of English as an International Language (EIL) within this global context transcends the mere departure from conventional English norms. It delves deeper into the realms of social positioning, encompassing cultural politics and the contestation of diverse representations of self and others (p. 34). Bakhtin, one might argue, could elucidate these dynamics by employing the concepts of centripetal (official) and centrifugal (unofficial) forces. However, it's worth noting Morson and Emerson's (1990) contention that proponents of Bakhtin's ideas, particularly those influenced by a Marxist perspective, occasionally misinterpret centrifugal forces by emphasizing Bakhtin's notion of these forces as being "disordered and unorganized" (p. 30). This cautionary observation is particularly directed at theorists like Pennycook, who have adopted a neo-Marxist stance to counteract the linguistic predominance of the English language (Pennycook, 1994, pp. 46-55).

Bakhtin's concept extends beyond heteroglossia; he envisions polyphony as feeling ideal. In essence, he perceives the outcome of dialogue not as a tumultuous conflict of divergent forces, but as the harmonious integration of diversity within a unified framework. Polyphony, in Bakhtin's view, represents the simultaneous coexistence of multiple languages harmonized under a single guiding principle. He describes this resulting harmony of diverse languages as "the university of mutually illuminating languages" (Bakhtin, 1981, pp. 367-368). To achieve such a well-balanced coexistence of diverse languages, Bakhtin emphasizes the fundamental convergence of languages within a singular consciousness, one that equally engages with multiple languages (ibid.). Essentially, to achieve polyphony, the divergent centrifugal forces of heteroglossia must be balanced and complemented by the unifying centripetal influence of a singular consciousness (Ball & Freedman, 2004; Nesari, 2015).

3.4. A Comparative Analysis of Bakhtin and Vygotsky on Language and Dialogue

It is evident that there is a shared conceptual foundation between Bakhtin's and Vygotsky's respective perspectives on language. Indeed, both scholars shared a deep interest in the social aspects of speech and conducted thorough investigations into the practical applications of language. Moreover, Bakhtin's exploration of dialogue (1990, 1993) is parallel to Vygotsky's emphasis (1978, 1986) on language as an inherently social mechanism that facilitates communication among individuals engaged in collaborative activities. These commonalities highlight their shared appreciation for the social and interactive nature of language.

Undoubtedly, it is also crucial to accentuate the conceptual affinities as well as disparities existing between Bakhtin and Vygotsky's theoretical frameworks. Bakhtin's focal point and primary domain of inquiry are situated within the domain of literature and literary discourse, whereas Vygotsky's primary concern pertains to developmental psychology, particularly within

the educational sphere. In addition, Bakhtin's examination of dialogue heavily gravitates towards the realm of verbal communication, encompassing both written and spoken forms, while Vygotsky's scholarly pursuits center on real-life interpersonal interactions among individuals, commonly taking place in dyadic or small group settings. Further, in contrast to Bakhtin's perspective, Vygotsky perceives oral communication as inherently dialogic, while characterizing written communication as predominantly monologic. Vygotsky articulates this viewpoint by stating, "Written speech and inner speech represent the monologue; oral speech, in most cases, the dialogue" (Vygotsky, 1986, p. 240). Hence, it is of great significance to take into account both the convergences and divergences when drawing parallels between the ideologies of Bakhtin and Vygotsky.

In revisiting the central themes explored in the preceding sections, Bakhtin's primary focus centers on the intricate interplay of dialogic relationships existing among individuals, among diverse cultures, and between an individual and their cultural milieu. Bakhtin's conceptualization of dialogue encompasses multiple strata of human experience, forging connections among the domains of consciousness, historical context, worldview, language, and interpersonal communication. These relationships, in turn, find their roots in the fundamental concepts of identity and differentiation, as well as the nuanced interplay between self and other. Notably, an analogous resonance of these ideas is discernible within Vygotsky's pedagogical theory, as expounded by Osovsky and Dubrovskaya (2021).

Vygotsky is widely acknowledged as the progenitor of the cultural-historical approach to human development. He posited that cognitive development and the emergence of advanced psychological functions are fundamentally influenced by social and cultural factors (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986). This viewpoint underscores the significance of intersubjective interaction in the process of learning. Among the array of "higher-order" psychological functions that Vygotsky contemplated, notable examples include logical memory, selective attention, decision-making, problem-solving, volitional actions, and language comprehension. These functions are juxtaposed with "lower" innate mental functions, such as elementary perception, memory, and attention. Vygotsky ascribed to language a paramount role in the evolution of these higher psychological functions. Similar to Bakhtin, Vygotsky refrained from endorsing cognitivist (positivist) interpretations of human individuality and instead insisted on the pivotal role of interpersonal interaction and communication in the development of human consciousness. As suggested by Ageyev (2003),

> A key recurring theme in Vygotsky's body of work is his resolute rejection of interpreting the origins and functions of the human mind through either an

individualistic or overly reductionist biological framework. Whether he was delving into fundamental or complex psychological processes, Vygotsky consistently demonstrated an aptitude for demonstrating that the most captivating aspect or element is not preordained by biology but, instead, is shaped and initiated by a distinct and influential spectrum of social interactions (p. 434).

In his work "Thought and Language" (1986), Vygotsky, as a developmental psychologist, argues that language constitutes a dual nature, being both an individual and a social phenomenon. Vygotsky keenly observes how children internalize social language and subsequently personalize it. He delineates the initial separation of thinking and speech as distinct processes, which eventually merge at a later developmental stage, resulting in "thought becoming verbal and speech becoming rational" (1986, p. 83). This association, however, is not static but evolves through various stages of a child's development. In alignment with Bakhtin's perspective on language's role in shaping individual consciousness, Vygotsky emphasizes that speech and consciousness continuously influence each other, with this interaction significantly determining their concurrent development, rather than their independent progression. Vygotsky indicates that "their development hinges less on changes within these two functions, but rather on alterations in the fundamental interplay between them" (1986, p. 85).

Vygotsky (1978) conceptualized language as a system of signs and symbols that embodies culture, thereby exerting a decisive influence on consciousness and personality. He positioned that a child's cognitive development and intellectual growth hinge on their exposure to sociocultural experiences and their mastery of the communal instrument of thought, which is language (Vygotsky, 1986, p. 94). In conclusion, Vygotsky's perspective serves as a robust rebuttal to both one-sided individualism and an exclusive sociocultural approach. According to Vygotsky, individual consciousness unfolds within the context of sociocultural interactions, yet it remains distinct from and cannot be reduced to this sociocultural milieu. Instead, the sociocultural environment contributes to the formation of individual consciousness but does not supplement it, aligning closely with Bakhtin's understanding of this process. As previously highlighted, Bakhtin offers an alternative to both positivist individualism and the reduction of the individual to sociocultural factors. Therefore, both Vygotsky and Bakhtin reinforce the argument advocating for an equitable relationship and mutual dependence between psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic processes in language acquisition and utilization (Taguchi, 2019; Lantolf & Minakova, 2021).

Vygotsky (1978) provides a concise definition of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) as follows:

The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) represents the disparity between an

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individual's current developmental stage, determined by independent problem-solving, and the potential level of development attained through problem-solving with the assistance of knowledgeable adults or through collaboration with peers who possess more advanced skills (p. 86).

The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) encapsulates a student's potential for further cognitive development, facilitated by the guidance of an adult or a more proficient peer. Vygotsky (1981) emphasizes that the crucial and indispensable factor for unlocking this potential is the interaction between the students, their peers, and instructors. Vygotsky's theory posits that a learner's acquisition of knowledge transitions from the intermental (reliance on external guidance) to the intramental realm (self-regulation) as they progress through the ZPD. Additionally, the concept of the ZPD includes not only the social context of learning but also the idea of a continuous process, as opposed to a mere end result (Vygotsky, 1978). This process facilitates the transition from each potential developmental level to the next actual developmental level, characterized by a "specific social nature and a process by which children become integrated into the intellectual life of those around them" (ibid., p. 88). Therefore, learning consistently leads development by one step, necessitating the learner to invest effort, shoulder responsibility, take risks, and engage in problem-solving and self-reflection. Importantly, this perspective does not fundamentally conflict with Bakhtin's viewpoint, despite potential variations in terminology and frames of reference. While Vygotsky perceives language as fundamentally social and primarily functioning at the interpersonal level, Bakhtin's emphasis on the dialogic nature of all communication aligns with this perspective. However, the key divergence lies in Bakhtin's conceptualization of dialogue as an ontological category, whereas Vygotsky primarily interprets communication within the framework of his theories of psychological development and learning.

As is evident, Bakhtin's metalinguistics, encompassing the concepts discussed earlier, offers an alternative, dialogic approach to the study of language. At its core, this approach posits that language is inherently dialogic. Bakhtin strived to convey and elaborate on this concept through notions such as utterance, heteroglossia, addressivity, voice, otherness, and outsideness. The idea of language's intrinsic dialogic nature holds particular significance in the context of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) because it suggests a mechanism for learners to assimilate and integrate another language into their own linguistic system. Another crucial concept within this framework is the recognition of the value-laden nature of language. Furthermore, Bakhtin's theory of language exhibits substantial parallels with Vygotsky's perspective on language, making it more feasible to apply Bakhtin's ideas to the domain of SLA.

3.5. A Comparative Analysis of Bakhtin and Vygotsky on Culture and Communication

Vygotsky placed great emphasis on the concept of culture as a central concern in his work.

He termed his theory of human psychological development "cultural-historical" because he regarded higher psychological functions as outcomes of processes occurring within the realms of culture and history. From a developmental perspective, Vygotsky saw culture as the ultimate aim of learning: a learner's objective was to internalize and embrace cultural values. According to Vygotsky, a cultured mind is one that possesses the requisite intellectual tools, with language holding a primary position among them (as cited in Merchenkova, 2005).

There are notable similarities in the ways Bakhtin and Vygotsky conceptualize culture. For both of these scholars, culture, language, and personal identity are intricately interwoven themes. According to Davydov (1995), a student of Luria and a follower of Vygotsky, Vygotsky's theory places significant emphasis on the idea that speech (as opposed to mere language) serves as a tool for executing actions. Furthermore, as a sign and symbol system embodying culture, speech also exerts influence on consciousness and personality. Vygotsky's perspective perceives culture as "the product of human social life and the social activities of human beings" (1987, vol. 3, p. 145). For instance, he articulated that "every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people... and then, inside the child" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 57).

As previously noted, in Bakhtin's perspective, language is fundamentally characterized by dialogic relations at all of its levels. An especially noteworthy element of these relations is the idea that the interaction among participants in a dialogue is facilitated by their mutual differences. A crucial methodological concept introduced by Bakhtin to describe these distinctions between dialogue participants is his notion of "outsideness" (1986, p. 7). In connection to this, there exists a fundamental link between Bakhtin's concept of outsideness and Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). These concepts share a common conceptual structure. This structure can be elucidated as follows: According to Vygotsky, interaction and collaboration are central features of the ZPD (p. 90). Therefore, the ZPD represents the developmental space where learning takes on a dialogical nature. Adhering to the Vygotskian perspective, scholars like Smagorinsky (1995) emphasize, for instance, that "The ZPD has an inherently developmental and semiotic character that is instrumentally influenced by the learner's assimilation and utilization of a culture's psychological tools" (p. 192).

Both the concepts of "outsideness" and the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) revolve around the presence of at least two participants engaged in a process of communication or interaction. In Bakhtin's view, dialogue hinges on the existence of a difference between the conversational partners, signifying a certain distance between them. Without this difference, the interlocutors become indistinguishable from one another, and the dialogue essentially transforms into a monologue. This condition of the interlocutors remaining distinct and unique in relation to

one another, as Bakhtin (1986a) termed it, is what he referred to as "outsideness." Likewise, in Vygotsky's description of the ZPD, participants in the learning process share a similar relational dynamic. For learning to take place, there must be a disparity between these participants. The ZPD can only exist when the interlocutors are unequal: the expert must possess greater knowledge (particularly regarding the subject of interaction) than the learner or novice. Thus, both "outsideness" in Bakhtin's dialogue and the ZPD in Vygotsky's theory necessitate a fundamental distinction between participants as a precondition for meaningful interaction and learning.

It is essential to underscore a significant distinction between these two thinkers. In Bakhtin's perspective, as pointed out by Nakamura (2021), dialogue is a concept that characterizes communication among equals, where all participants have equally valuable contributions to offer one another. Conversely, Vygotsky explicitly discussed the interaction between the student and the teacher, where they cannot be viewed as equal contributors to their mutual communication. However, it is important to note that the concept of "outsideness" in Bakhtin also implies a certain inequality between interlocutors. There is no purpose in communication if they are identical in what they can share with each other. This implies that their respective levels of knowledge in the subject of the dialogue must be different, hence unequal. Nevertheless, while both thinkers acknowledge the importance of this difference, Bakhtin's primary emphasis in his dialogue concept is on the equality of its participants, whereas the ZPD's fundamental condition is the inequality between the expert and the novice.

It is obvious that Bakhtin extends his dialogic approach from language to culture, stating that culturepossesses an inherent dialogic nature, too. This proposition suggests that the theoretical constructs Bakhtin employs to explain language can be equally applied to understanding cultural processes. This connection between language and culture forms the basis for a significant relationship between the two. Particularly relevant to the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) is Bakhtin's assertion that culture primarily reveals itself at its fringes, particularly through interactions with other cultures. A comparative analysis of Bakhtin's perspective alongside Vygotsky's allows for a more nuanced understanding of Bakhtin's unique approach to culture, as proposed by Marchenkova (2005).

3.6. A Comparative Analysis of Bakhtin and Vygotsky on the Self and Otherness

For both Bakhtin and Vygotsky, the concept of dialogue assumes pivotal significance in shaping one's sense of self. They both perceive the self as a dynamic entity, characterized by a continuous state of change. In Bakhtin's work, the self is portrayed as an ever-evolving entity deeply engaged in ongoing dialogues. In Vygotsky's writings, the self is portrayed as an integral part of the learning process, undergoing transformation as a result. In both perspectives, the self is

inherently situated within a communicative context. It is worth noting that Bakhtin's notion of dialogue is presented as a universal form of human communication, while Vygotsky's learning process can be seen as a specific manifestation of dialogue. However, in both instances, interpersonal communication involving two or more individuals constitutes the primary medium through which the self takes shape and evolves (Guzmán & Larrain, 2021). Consequently, Bakhtin and Vygotsky share the viewpoint that the self is receptive to the influence of other selves. Furthermore, these other selves actively contribute to the development of one's own self. As Bakhtin (1986a) suggests, these individuals are not passive recipients in the process of communication but instead actively participate in the act of speech (p. 94).

Similarly, within Vygotsky's theoretical framework, the role of the expert assumes even greater significance in affecting the development of novices, and the interaction between them serves as the defining element of what Vygotsky termed the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). This dynamic interaction is closely intertwined with the examination of how language contributes to the formation of individuals' identities. Vygotsky posits that language initially functions as a tool for communication between a child and the individuals in their immediate social environment. As this initial stage unfolds, and language undergoes a transformation into internalized speech, it gradually comes to structure the child's thoughts, effectively becoming an internal mental function (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 89). In this sense, it is noteworthy that Bakhtin fully concurred with the notion of the intricate interplay between language and consciousness, which is a perspective articulated by Vygotsky (1986) in the culminating conclusion of his major work, *Thought and Language*:

> ... The development of language is deeply interconnected with the entirety of human consciousness rather than being tied to a single, isolated thought. The word, within our consciousness, assumes significant importance, extending beyond the limitations of an individual mind and finding realization in the interactions between two individuals. It is in the word that consciousness is mirrored, akin to the sun's reflection in a tiny droplet of water. Essentially, a word can be regarded as a microcosm of human consciousness (p. 256).

However, Bakhtin and Vygotsky held different viewpoints in developing their ideas and understanding the dynamics between the self and others. As we have previously explored, Bakhtin's perspective on selfhood (1993) is notably flexible and lacks a clear-cut trajectory. In contrast, Vygotsky systematically constructed a theory of the self, perceiving it as evolving linearly through stages of maturation (Emerson, 2000, p. 23). Moreover, the concept of "outsideness" and how it influences the identities and distinctions among participants in a dialogue, as discussed earlier, is relevant in this context. Bakhtin envisioned the selves engaged

in dialogue as equals, while Vygotsky argued that selves were involved in a learning process that revealed differences in their levels of knowledge. In Vygotsky's framework, these distinctions among individuals become evident as varying levels of knowledge, whereas Bakhtin emphasized the impact of cultural and historical differences, as explained in the concept of 'outsideness.'

The major difference between the perspectives of Bakhtin and Vygotsky in terms of the development of self can be succinctly summed up as follows. Vygotsky states that an individual's self-formation is shaped considerably by the internalization of the sociocultural milieu. He argues that cognitive development primarily proceeds from the social realm to the individual, rather than the reverse (Vygotsky, 1986, p. 36). In support of Vygotsky's theory, Solomadin (2000) indicates that 'inner speech,' which represents personalized verbal thought or 'speech for oneself,' does not encompass 'the inner other' within this framework (p. 33). In contrast, Bakhtin's perspective starkly contradicts this premise. He argues that the essential nature of humanity, both in its external and internal dimensions, is intimately intertconnected with communication. In this sense, Bakhtin's argument that "To be means to communicate" (1984a, p. 287) directly contradicts Vygotsky's idea regarding this matter.

Another important similarity between these two scholars lies in their mutual interest in the creative aspects of individual awareness. In today's language pedagogy theory, there's a predominant focus on learning forms, structures, and functions, often leaving creativity, play, and imagination on the sidelines. While imagination and creativity have been explored in various contexts of educational theory, it's clear that they are seldom addressed in the literature on language and literacy studies. Both in Russia and the Western world, Vygotsky's contribution to the examination of imagination, creativity, and emotion has often been overshadowed (as cited in Mahn & John-Steiner, 2002). One possible explanation for this could be that Vygotsky did not give place to this subject in his research (he passed away in 1934, at the age of 37). On the other hand, the prevailing ideological tendencies in Soviet psychology during his time led most commentators or scholars to stress the role of the social environment in a child's development, emphasizing the collective's influence on the individual, instead. As stated by Vygotsky, imagination, feelings, and emotions, although not immune to social influences, are profoundly individualistic in nature. Given the political situation in the USSR in the 1930s, one has to appreciate Vygotsky's courage in bringing forth his ideas that implicitly contradicted the official view through which the collective authority totally defined the individual in the society. The interest in imagination and creativity under those conditions is yet another similarity between these two prominenent scholars. It is well-known that both scholars' work was a form of resistance to the totalitarian collectivizing thrust of the Soviet ideology of its time (Hall, Vitanova & Marchenkova, 2004; Teo, 2019).

Although Vygotsky did not explicitly stress the significance of emotions in the development of children, he endeavored to integrate them into his theoretical framework. This is evident in his incomplete work on the psychophysiology of emotions, titled "The Theory of Emotions," where he aimed to construct a new theory of human development that considered the whole individual. In one of his last essays, "Play and Its Role in the Mental Development of the Child," Vygotsky further bolsters his concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). That is, he defines play as a central factor in a child's development by molding the "zone of proximal development" and thus assuming a leading role in their individual developments. According to Vygotsky, during play, a child consistently exhibits behaviors that are beyond their typical age, which means they show a maturity beyond their everyday behavior. To facilitate the shift within the ZPD from the current level of development to the potential future level, two essential conditions are indispensable. Firstly, the child must have the capacity for both imagination and play. Secondly, the child must seek or demand support from adults and peers in social life. In this context, Vygotsky emphasizes the immense significance of creativity, as it not only allows children to nurture their creative instincts and skills but also motivates them to master human speech. According to him, human speech is the most advanced and intricate tool in order to express and convey human thoughts, emotions, and the inner world intertwined in them. In this sense, Vygotsky (1986) highlighted the importance of the emotions or affect in understanding others efficiently:

> Behind every thought there is an affective-volitional tendency, which holds the answer to the last "why" in the analysis of thinking. A true and full understanding of another's thought is possible only when we understand its affective-volitional basis, emotions, and motivation all (p. 68).

The self-development models proposed by Bakhtin and Vygotsky contain shared elements, some of which are explicitly stated and others implied. Their main distinctions lie in the way they prioritize certain aspects within the overarching conceptual structure, as observed by Marchenkova (2005). When viewed through the lens of language education, this common framework provides an opportunity to merge the two sets of concepts and enrich Vygotsky's educational perspectives with the cross-cultural potentials embedded in Bakhtin's approach. In other words, Bakhtin's perspectives on dialogue as both a literary phenomenon and a philosophical concept can be infused with an educational perspective by drawing from Vygotsky's terminology.

To sum up, considering the interplay of language and culture, it is understood that Bakhtin's perspective on individual identity is centered on dialogue and relationships. The discussion in this section indicates that, in Bakhtin's view, these three concepts are closely

interconnected. Bakhtin suggests that one's identity can only be shaped through engagement or interaction with others. What sets Bakhtin's concept of identity apart is his perception of it as being affected by the dynamic interplay of equality and differences among the participants in dialogue. This idea carries significant relevance for the ongoing discourse on identity matters in SLA. Similarly, in Vygotsky's framework, identity also develops within a dialogue, although the manner in which interaction unfolds between participants differs from Bakhtin's perspective.

4. Conclusion

Bakhtin's theories and ideas carry substantial significance in the contemporary discussions on SLA. While some SLA scholars have already recognized and incorporated his concepts in diverse ESL or EFL contexts, this article underlines the untapped potential for more profound engagement with Bakhtin's ideas in this field. It is no doubt that the theory of dialogue has the capacity to shed light on numerous facets of learning additional languages and cultures over time. However, it is also crucial to note that this study does not postulate that Bakhtin's theories and concepts provide ultimate solutions to fundamental questions that may emerge. Instead, they present a significant alternative to the prevailing perspectives on various issues that SLA scholars are attempting to address theoretically. Most importantly, as seen in the preceding discussions, Bakhtin's insights can serve as a catalyst for further examination of language, culture, and identity accordingly.

Additionally, Vygotsky's framework takes on particular importance in terms of applying Bakhtin's ideas to the field of language education. According to the two scholars, to achieve a genuine and creative mutual understanding, individuals must experience a process of learning and personal development that equips them for this endeavor. Both Vygotsky and Bakhtin acknowledged the essential nature of this developmental process, which Bakhtin (1986) described as the 'initial mastery of speech' (p. 143). Regarding today's context, Bakhtin's model can be considered as the desired outcome, while Vygotsky's model serves as the means to attain it. Without the latter model, it is quite likely that the realization of Bakhtin's dialogic ideals will remain an elusive goal. This perspective underscores how the theories of these two scholars complement each other and can be effectively merged for the discussions within SLA.

Moreover, Bakhtin's theory deeply aligns with the concerns within the fields of second and foreign language research and pedagogy. The pursuit of achieving universal equality among dialogue participants directly addresses the challenges posed by the coexistence of various languages and cultures in our contemporary global context. The concept of intercultural dialogue has evolved into a tangible reality within second language

classrooms as well. Similarly, the concept of self-development at the intersection of languages and cultures has become an increasingly integral part of second language learning and teaching. In today's second language classrooms, a dynamic balance of overlapping worldviews and values is needed to serve as the foundation for constructing intercultural understanding, where the status of an outsider is a prerequisite for fostering creative comprehension among all participants in the dialogue.

Regardless of the undeniable theoretical importance of Bakhtin's contribution to the field of SLA, the most invaluable lesson one gains from delving into his work is the lesson inherent in his entire persona, which encompasses both his written works and his life. In fact, despite facing formidable challenges, both physical and political, Bakhtin not only managed to endure but also discovered ways to share with his fellow humans, his indomitable optimism, his profound love for humanity, and his affection for culture—embracing all expressions of the the human spirit that kindle our empathy for the individuals deeply immersed in "the tangible and comprehensive reality" of their existence.

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