The Development of Conceptual Socialization in International Students

SERIES: ADVANCES IN PRAGMATICS AND DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

EDITORS: PILAR G. BLITVICH - UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHARLOTTE
MANUEL PADILLA CRUZ – UNIVERSIDAD DE SEVILLA
EDITORIAL BOARD:
KATHLEEN BARDOVI- HARLIG – INDIANA UNIVERSITY
PATRICIA BOU-FRANCH – UNIVERSITAT DE VALENCIA
PIOTR CAP – UNIVERSITY OF LODZ
ULLA CONNOR – INDIANA UNIVERSITY—PURDUE UNIVERSITY AT INDIANA
JONATHAN CULPEPER – LANCASTER UNIVERSITY
SUSAN FITZMAURICE – UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD
BRUCE FRASER – BOSTON UNIVERSITY
JOHN JOSEPH - THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH
ISTVAN KECSKES – STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT ALBANY
NURIA LORENZO-DUS -SWANSEA UNIVERSITY
YULING PAN – US CENSUS BUREAU
MARIA ELENA PLACENCIA – BIRKBECK COLLEGE
DEIRDRE WILSON – UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF LONDON
FRANCISCO YUS -UNIVERSIDAD DE ALICANTE

The Development of Conceptual Socialization in International Students: A Language Socialization Perspective on Conceptual Fluency and Social Identity

By

Deniz Ortaçtepe

CAMBRIDGE SCHOLARS

PUBLISHING

The Development of Conceptual Socialization in International Students:
A Language Socialization Perspective on Conceptual Fluency and Social Identity,
by Deniz Ortaçtepe

This book first published 2012

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

12 Back Chapman Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2XX, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Copyright © 2012 by Deniz Ortaçtepe

All rights for this book reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN (10): 1-4438-4055-6, ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-4055-2

To the most wonderful parents a person could have;
Şule and Doğan Ortaçtepe, and to my brother, Yaşarcan.
I could not be here today without their unconditional love and trust
in me to accomplish any journey that I have embarked on so far
and many more yet to come.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF MODELS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work began during my first year in the United States as an international graduate student. With the thoughtful guidance of my advisor, Dr. Istvan Kecskes, my observations of other international students in regard to their English skills and adaptation to the American culture found a solid ground in second language research. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Dr. Kecskes, for being a role model with his professionalism as a scholar as well as his constant support and critical comments that helped me complete this journey successfully.

I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to my doctoral committee members; Dr. Jane Agee, who contributed to my academic development both as a professor and as a committee member, and Dr. Anne Barron, who agreed to be a committee member even though she had never met me before. I would like to thank them both for their insightful comments, constructive criticisms and guidance.

Many thanks to the participating Turkish students who made this study possible. No matter how overloaded they were in their studies or how overwhelmed they were with their new life in the U.S., they took this study very seriously and completed the instruments promptly and shared their sincere insights and experiences with me. I cannot thank them enough for their collaboration. The American participants also deserve appreciation for their time and collaboration.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Since the late 1970s, second language acquisition (SLA) research has been under sturdy criticisms mostly because of a) its positivist assumptions with respect to how a second language is learned, and b) its reliance on linguistic factors; both of which disregard the role of cultural and social aspects of language learning (Watson-Gegeo, 2004). Therefore, SLA researchers recently have started to change their focus from linguistic and cognitive point of view to the social aspects of language learning (Leung, 2001). Learning a language has started to be perceived as a socialization process through which learners come to know how to participate in forms of talk (Goffman, 1981) while engaging in the cultural practices of a speech community. In this realm of change, "Who is an L2 learner? How does s/he fit into the social world surrounding her/him? What cultural and behavioral values does s/he hold? What new roles does s/he take?" (Ros i Sole, 2007, p. 203) are some of the questions being posed in second language (L2) research. Language learners have started to be called "'cultural mediators' 'border-crossers', 'negotiators of meaning', 'intercultural speakers' and such like" (Roberts, Byram, Barro, Jordan & Street, 2001, p.98). With respect to these shifts in re-defining the concept of an L2 learner, Roberts et al. (2001) define the problem of language learning as follows: "Using a foreign language is not experienced as a social practice until students find themselves in an environment where the language is all around them, usually in a foreign country" (p. 9). As Norton and Toohey (2001) state, the study of good language learners should comprise the study of the social contexts where and through which individuals learn another language. Norton's call (1995) for second language acquisition studies to develop a "comprehensive theory of social identity that integrates language learner and the language learning context" (p. 12) has been responded to by various studies, many of which addressed questions such as "how language learners position themselves and are

positioned by others depending on where they are, who they are with and what they are doing" (Block, 2007b, p. 2).

The present study contributes to the above-mentioned shift by not only addressing the problem that L2 learners themselves do not relate L2 learning to the target language's social contexts and perceive L2 as a social practice (Roberts et al., 2001), but also by breaking down a historical dichotomy in the literature: the individual (cognitive) vs. social aspects of language acquisition (Kramsch, 2000). While the former sees language as a product of psychological processes that take place in the brain, the latter highlights the role of social context and the social processes of language use (Kramsch, 2000). According to Watson-Gegeo and Nielson (2004), this cognitive/social dichotomy "obscures the relationship between the knowledge about language that learners construct and the social, cultural, and political contexts in which acquisition takes place. Cognition originates in social interaction. Construction of new knowledge is therefore both a cognitive and a social process" (p. 156).

Hence, this study combines the social and individual aspects of language learning by examining language in its social context. It employs a language socialization approach according to which linguistic and cultural knowledge co-construct each other (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986). In this process, language learners, children or adult, play the role of an active agent since "acquiring a language is part of a much larger process of becoming a person in society" (Ochs, 2004, p. 106). More specifically, language socialization relies on the assumption that language in daily interactional contexts is a major resource by which novices/children gain understanding of cultural knowledge and belief while also adapting social roles as well as identities (Cook, 1996). Similarly, when applied to SLA research, second language socialization refers to the process of "assimilation into the linguistic conventions and cultural practices of the L2 discourse communities," especially when L2 learning takes place in a context "where the L2 is the language of power in society" (Lam, 2004, p. 44).

Aim of the Study

The present study deals with individuals crossing cultures, specifically, international students who study abroad. The rationale for selecting international students as this study's unit of analysis also relies on the assumption that "no real fluency is possible in the foreign language unless the learner spends some time in the target language country" (Kecskes & Papp, 2000, p. 10). What lies beneath this belief is the influence of living

in the second language community on L2 development. This phenomenon can be addressed within the framework of language socialization, a process that starts as soon as a human being enter into any kind of social contact (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986).

International students are at the same time language learners who "have both physically and symbolically crossed the border" (Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2001, p. 74). Hence, their social contact within the new sociocultural and linguistic environment can be best explained by the framework of language socialization. Since the aim of language socialization studies is to understand "how persons become competent members of social groups and the role of language in this process" (Ochs & Schieffelin, 1986, p. 167), L2 researchers have applied this framework to second language acquisition to investigate L2 learners' language and social development in the target language culture (Poole, 1994; Matsumura, 2001; Willett, 1995; Kanagy, 1999). However, a new perspective is needed to analyze second language socialization since L2 learners have already gone through their L1 socialization and acquired the norms and values of their L1 culture (Kecskes, 2002; Matsumura, 2001). Hence, what they will experience in the target language culture is conceptual socialization (Kecskes, 2002), a theoretical framework that will be adopted in this study to refer to the process that second language learners go through in becoming members of the target language community. Therefore, the aim of this mixed-methods study is to explore the process of conceptual socialization by investigating its impact on the language learners' social (qualitative) and linguistic (quantitative) development. The rationale behind employing a mixed-methods study is to emphasize the interplay between the social and linguistic aspects of conceptual socialization. In this respect, the overarching research question of this study is:

What kind of linguistic and social impact does the process of conceptual socialization have on international students studying in the U.S?

Conceptual socialization involves understanding the social practices of that community and behaving in ways which will allow some continuing relationship with it in terms of linguistic and social aspects. Since conceptual socialization has a linguistic as well as a social side, the research questions will be grouped into two sub-questions. The linguistic aspects of conceptual socialization will be examined through the use of formulaic expressions since the pragmatic conditions as well as the communicative functions of these routine formulas can only be accessible to language learners through exposure to the beliefs, wants, wishes, norms

and preferences of native speakers (Coulmas, 1979). This aspect of formulaic expressions not only justifies the fact that they are linguistic elements that clearly demonstrate the interplay between language and sociocultural content, but also the interpretation and appropriate usage of them require a process of conceptual socialization.

As far as the social aspects of conceptual socialization is concerned, the emphasis will be on social identity negotiation since conceptual socialization involves engaging with new knowledge, adjusting it to the knowledge base dominated by L1, and gradually developing a new conceptual base while going through an awareness of cultural differences and development of a new social identity (Kecskes, 2002).

Significance of the Study

According to the annually published *Open Doors* report by the Institute of International Education (2012), "In 2010/11, the number of international students in the U.S. increased to a record high of 723,277 students, a 32% increase since 2000/01." There are 20,550,000 students enrolled in the higher education institutions in the U.S. 53.5% of them coming mostly from China, India, South Korea, Canada, and Taiwan. The 4.7% increase in the number of international students between the years of 2010 and 2011 indicates that the U.S. remains as the premium destination for international students from all over the world. Thus, the significance of the study lies in the fact that these international students, who are about to venture into a new sociocultural environment which requires a new linguistic system to communicate, will be experiencing the process of conceptual socialization.

However, L2 learners' socialization in the target language community has one striking difference compared to first language socialization: while the latter occurs in a supportive environment (e.g., family) where children adapt their community's linguistic as well as cultural repertoires, the former takes place in a less favorable social context (e.g., host cultural environment) where L2 learners may experience problems in their communicative interactions (Shi, 2006). These cross-cultural communication difficulties result from the gap between one's own and the target cultural behavioral standards and cultural values in the sense that "intercultural misunderstandings, communication breakdowns, ridicule, and discrimination together with strong feelings of inadequacy will be the ineluctable 'tuition and fees' second language learners have to 'pay' on their way to becoming bilingual/bicultural individuals" (Shi, 2006, p. 3).

Considering the increasing number of international students in the U.S. and the challenges awaiting them in the new sociocultural environment, the present study plays a substantial role in exploring the process that international students go through as a result of their conceptual socialization. The findings of this study will not only shed light on how international students become socialized into the target culture's linguistic and sociocultural repertoires, but also will provide recommendations for the prospective international students so as to facilitate their conceptual socialization process.

CHAPTER II

CONCEPTUAL SOCIALIZATION

The following review of literature consists of three main parts: language socialization, second language socialization, and conceptual socialization. The last section, conceptual socialization, which foregrounds the theoretical framework of this study, will be discussed with respect to its skill and content sides. Conceptual fluency and social identity are some of the notions that will be elaborated on with respect to, respectively, the skill and content sides of conceptual socialization.

Language Socialization

Ochs (1988) claims that a society's transmitting of social and cultural knowledge to its youth, which has been referred to as enculturation, is one of the distinguishing characteristics of human beings. Socialization, however, refers to a higher level process of "transmission of both procedures ('knowing how') and premises ('knowing that')" (as cited in Ochs, 1988, p. 5; Cicourel, 1973). Language socialization assumes that language learning and enculturation together comprise parts of the process of acquiring a language (Watson-Gegeo, 2004). Thus, language socialization (LS), as a response to the criticisms on the narrowness of L1 acquisition research, provides not only a theoretical but also a methodological framework to examine "how language practices organize the life span process of becoming an active, competent participant in one or more communities" (Ochs, 2001, p. 227).

In this continuous process, "linguistic and cultural knowledge are constructed through each other" (Watson-Gegeo & Nielsen, 2004, p. 165). This interplay between language acquisition and socialization has been described by Ochs (1996) as follows: "From this perspective, the acquisition of language and the acquisition of social and cultural competence are not developmentally independent processes, nor is one process a developmental prerequisite of the other. Rather, the two processes are intertwined from the moment a human being enters society" (p. 407).

The impact of socialization on language can be best observed in the activities in which children routinely interact with their elders/caregivers. These routine interactions not only are shaped by social, cultural and political factors but also constrain the linguistic forms children/novices are exposed to (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986; Watson-Gegeo & Nielsen, 2004). Conversely, in regard to the impact of language on socialization, LS research indicates that "children learn culture largely through participating in linguistically marked events, the structure, integrity, and characteristics of which they come to understand through verbal cues to such meaning" (Watson-Gegeo & Nielsen, 2004, p. 158). In this respect, LS can be considered as "an interactional display (covert or overt) to a novice of expected ways of thinking, feeling, and acting": a process requiring children's participation in social interactions so as to "internalize and gain performance competence in these socio-cultural defined contexts" (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986, p. 2). In other words, language socialization deals with how novices "become competent members of their community by taking on the appropriate beliefs, feelings and behaviors, and the role of language in this process" (Leung, 2001, p. 2).

As an interdisciplinary approach exploring the process of acquiring linguistic and social competence, language socialization has roots in anthropology, sociolinguistics, developmental psychology, and sociology (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986; Shi, 2006; Leung, 2001). While each of these fields contributes to LS research, there are some theoretical lines from which language socialization research draws insights the most.

LS studies mainly focus on two processes: socialization *through* the use of language and socialization *to* use the language. The first process, socialization through the use of language, refers to the process of acquiring "tacit knowledge of principles relating linguistic forms not only to each other but also to referential and non-referential meaning and functions" (Ochs, 1988, p. 14). For instance, the ways the interactional sequences provided by caregivers direct children to say "thank you" can be an example of the way language socialization encourages linguistic development (Poole, 1994). On the other hand, the second process, socialization to use the language, refers to "the use of language to encode and create cultural meaning" (Poole, 1994, p. 594). Ochs (1988) explains this phenomenon as "understandings of the social organization of everyday life, cultural ideologies, moral values, beliefs, and structures of knowledge and interpretation are to a large extent acquired through the medium of language" (p. 14). In this respect, while the former focuses on the linguistic development of the language learner, the latter is more related to the social development of the language learner in the target

language community. In this respect, the acquisition of linguistic and social competence are two interdependent processes which constitute the process of language socialization (Ochs, 1988; Matsumura, 2001). Figure 1 presents a model of the interdependency between linguistic and social knowledge.

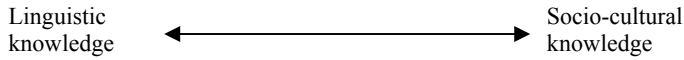

Figure 1. The Interdependency between Linguistic and Social Knowledge (Ochs, 1988)

However, according to Ochs (1988), the above demonstrated model does not acknowledge the role of human activity in constructing knowledge. Therefore, Ochs (1988) proposes a modified model which reflects the role of human activity in mediating linguistic and cultural knowledge (see Figure 2).

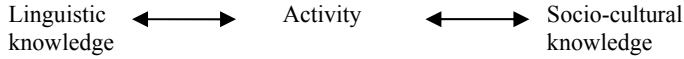

Figure 2. Human Activity and Mental Representation of Language and Culture

According to this model of Ochs' (1988), "participants' in verbal activities/practices draw on linguistic and sociocultural knowledge to create and define what is taking place" (p. 128). On the other hand, these verbal activities/practices provide the means through which aspects of linguistic and social knowledge are developed (Ochs, 1988). This model of language socialization, where activity and knowledge construction are intertwined, draws on several approaches including Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory as well as Lave and Wenger's (1991) legitimate peripheral learning.

Sociocultural theory (SCT) has an influence on LS research since it views human learning "as a dynamic social activity that is situated in physical and social contexts" (Johnson, 2006, p. 237). More specifically, "different social and cultural structuring of activities (demanding different cognitive skills) across social groups at particular historical moments will differentially impact the development of certain higher level functions (e.g., abstract thinking)" (Ochs, 1988, p. 15). In this respect, the traditional premise of LS research with respect to how novices acquire linguistic and social knowledge through engaging in joint activities with experts (e.g., caregivers) finds resonance in SCT (Ochs, 1988).

LS research also incorporates insights from Lave and Wenger's (1991) notion of legitimate peripheral participation, which works from the premise that cognition is built from experience through social interaction in communities of practice. It is a process of "incorporation of learners into the activities of communities of practice, beginning as a legitimated (recognized) participant on the edges (periphery) of the activity, and moving through a series of increasingly expert roles as learners' skills develop" (Watson-Gegeo, 2004, p. 341). While children adopt various communicative and social roles in these temporary and spatially situated activities/practices, they also develop grammatical, discourse, sociocultural and general cognitive structures of knowledge (Ochs, 1988). Nevertheless, as important as social participation is, there are rules of entry into a community of practice. Participation begins peripherally through exposure and mutual engagement with the members of the new community until the newcomer is granted enough legitimacy to be a potential member (Wenger, 1998). In this respect, it is one of the concerns of LS research to study how language learners, immigrants, and minorities move from the status of a beginner to advanced roles through gaining and/or being allowed access to social interaction in the dominant language community (Watson-Gegeo, 2004; Watson-Gegeo & Nielsen, 2004).

The emphasis that language socialization puts on the interplay between language and culture, and more specifically, how linguistic and social competence are intertwined in language socialization (Ochs, 1988), also finds resonance in the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986; Ochs, 1988; Leung, 2001). The studies in LS support a version of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis by questioning "how, in the process of learning first, second, and additional languages, learners also learn multiple representations of the world" (Watson-Gegeo, 2004, p. 340). Since language socialization is a two-way street consisting of the processes of socialization through and socialization to use the language, "not only are language practices organized by the world views, they also create world views for the language users carrying out these practices" (Ochs, 1988, p. 14).

Lastly, LS research shares insights with the ethnography of communication, both perceiving language as a socially constructed activity (Hymes, 1974). The notion that "language and culture are deeply tied to one another" is also at the center of Hymes' communicative competence: "knowing the linguistic and sociolinguistic rules for communication *and* having the cultural knowledge that underlies the context and content of communicative events and processes" (Leung, 2001, p. 2).

To conclude, traditional roots of the term *socialization* are grounded in how infants are enculturated in their L1 community, a process called primary socialization. Since adults also go through socialization each time they enter a new social community and take on new roles, the term secondary socialization was proposed to distinguish it from primary socialization (Leung, 2001). Schieffelin and Ochs' (1986) language socialization, as a conceptual framework, includes but is not limited to children's integration into their community with the help of their L1 (primary socialization). However, language socialization is a lifelong process that involves many social contexts such as work, school, neighbors, and other living environments (secondary socialization) (Ochs, 2001). For this reason, individuals are not only socializing but also being socialized by others that they have contact with (Ochs, 1988). In this respect, since language learning also involves culture learning (Heath, 1983); second language learning brings about second language socialization, especially when situated in the target language culture.

Second Language Socialization

According to Kasper (1997), language socialization as an "inherently developmental" approach which requires the establishment of "links between culture, cognition, and language, between the macro-levels of sociocultural and institutional contexts and the micro-level of discourse" (p. 311) plays a paramount role in explaining second language acquisition. Nevertheless, there is a striking difference between language socialization and language acquisition research. While the latter focuses on individual learners as novices and more advanced learners and/or native speakers as input, the former adapts a holistic approach and concentrates on the interaction that takes place between them since "the role of language in the cultivation of social convention" is the main focus in language socialization research (Ochs, 2001, p. 229).

Criticizing the dominance of studies focusing on transformational generative linguistics, psycholinguistics, and cognitive psychology in the field of foreign language learning, Kramsch (1987) proposes that two purposes of foreign language education should be "socialization into and literacy in a foreign language and culture" (p. 243). To achieve these two purposes, foreign language teachers should convey the functional uses of any language in its social context along with its structural components because of the close link between language and the social contexts in which it is being used by native speakers. For instance, learning how to structure social encounters, not only with teachers, but with peers in

academic and non-academic environments is one of the tasks that nonnative speakers need to fulfill in order to achieve social competence (Kramsch, 1987).

Hence, L2 socialization focuses on the process by which individuals "acquire tacit knowledge of principles of social order and systems of belief" (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986, p. 2) through exposure to and participation in L2-mediated interactions (Matsumura, 2001, p. 636). According to the perspective of L2 socialization, second language learners are "novices being socialized into not only a target language but also a target culture" (Leung, 2001, p. 1). In this respect, according to second language socialization, the process of language learning enables the learner not only to acquire new linguistic skills but also provides opportunities to use that language to establish relationships within the community (Ros i Sole, 2007).

Schieffelin and Ochs (1986) argue that as children learn to become competent members of their society, they also learn to become competent speakers of their language. Since language socialization comprises, "socialization through the use of language" and "socialization to use the language" (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986, p. 163), in many language socialization studies, the focus was on all aspects of language use in local contexts in order to explore to what extent language learners follow the social and pragmatic norms of the target culture (Kasper & Rose, 2002). In this respect, studies on L2 socialization can be grouped into two categories: studies focusing on the social aspects of language socialization and studies dealing with the linguistic aspects.

The research line emphasizing the social aspects of language socialization has revolved around the use of linguistic resources available in bilingual and multilingual communities and the ways these resources are selected by bilinguals/multilinguals for their pragmatic and symbolic values (Bayley & Schecter, 2003). This realm of research has investigated "how children, adolescents, and adults in fluid bilingual and multilingual contexts are socialized by and through language into new domains of knowledge and cultural practice" (Bayley & Schecter, 2003, p. 2). Studies following this research line have dealt with issues like language maintenance and shift (Schecter & Bayley, 2004; Lucca, Masiero & Pallotti, 2008). For instance, in an ethnographic study, Schecter and Bayley (2004) investigated the home language practices of two Mexican-background women in northern California to understand the processes of minority language maintenance and shift as well as the ways these two processes affect the role of language in the social context. Bayley and Schecter's (2003) book is an extensive resource for this line of language

socialization research as it not only provides a good review of studies conducted in bilingual/multilingual contexts but also illustrates that language socialization is a dynamic process which occurs throughout the lifetime of individuals.

Another line of research relating language socialization to second language learning has dealt with the linguistic aspects of language socialization. According to these researchers, language socialization plays a crucial role in facilitating L2 learners' linguistic development in the L2 community. That is, the communicative practices that L2 learners engage in in various social contexts such as school or workplace would reshape and reconstruct their interactional strategies as well as communicative routines (Shi, 2006). In this respect, acquiring pragmatic competence, that is, the ability to use and interpret language appropriately in contexts, is an essential part of the language socialization process, because without pragmatic competence it is hard to participate in ordinary social life within a variety of social contexts (Matsumura, 2001, p. 637).

In a quantitative study relating L2 socialization to intercultural pragmatics, Matsumura (2001) examined the change in college level Japanese students' socio-cultural perceptions of social status and their pragmatic use of English when offering advice. Ninety-seven Japanese exchange students in Canada (the ESL group) and 102 students in Japan (the EFL group) were examined for a year in order to determine how L2 socialization affected the route and rate of pragmatic development as well as intercultural variance in both groups. Seventy-one native speakers of English who were either the roommates or flat mates of Japanese exchange students in Canada also participated in the study in order to allow comparisons between the ways Japanese and Canadian students offer advice. A multiple choice questionnaire consisting of twelve scenarios, each scenario having four response choices was administered three times during an 8-month period. The results revealed that studying in the target language community had a positive impact on the students' pragmatic competence. For instance, the ESL students in Canada started to demonstrate similar patterns of giving advice to individuals of equal or lower status as native speakers did. However, with respect to giving advice to individuals at higher status, L2 socialization did not seem to be making any difference since no differences were observed between the ESL and the EFL groups. Matsumura (2001) suggests that this finding may be an indication that the ESL group was in some cases applying their experience from their L1 socialization process to the L2 context or alternatively that both groups had acquired some L2 pragmatic competence through media, school, etc. in Japan.

In another study relating L2 socialization to pragmatic development, Kanagy (1999) addressed the problem of "how children with no knowledge of L2 learn to participate in discourse sequences and initiate interactions with their teacher and peers, and what techniques the teacher uses to socialize children toward interactional competence in L2 classroom discourse" (p. 1489). More specifically, Kanagy (1999) examined the ways classroom routines facilitated socialization as well as L2 acquisition in kindergarteners in an immersion school with a 90% Japanese and 10% English theme-based curriculum. Analysis of data coming from ethnographic observations as well as audio and video recordings of a class of 19 five-year-olds whose first language was English revealed that interactional greeting, attendance and personal introduction routines served as a means for socialization in the immersion classroom while the teacher's repetition and scaffolding enabled the kindergarteners to develop intercultural competence (Kanagy, 1999).

In a similar study, Ohta (1999) examined the role of interactional routines in 14 classes of adult learners of Japanese as a foreign language. In particular, Ohta's (1999) study emphasized the role of Lave and Wenger's (1991) peripheral participation on the acquisition of the interactional routines as well as on the socialization of the adult L2 Japanese learners' socialization to express alignments. The findings, which resonated with those of Kanagy's (1999) study, indicated that during the peripheral participation process, the adult learners not only gradually became more active but also acquired the interactional routines through participant-observation and scaffolding in learner-learner and teacher-learner interactive contexts.

While Ohta (1999), Kanagy (1999) and Matsumura (2001) shed light on the acquisition of pragmatic units by L2 learners, all three studies failed to capture the socialization process in a naturalistic setting. Kanagy (1999) and Ohta's (1999) studies rely on classroom observations, which represent a limited discourse of Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) interactional sequence, while Matsumura's (2001) data came from a multiple choice questionnaire, which could not capture authentic language use in naturalistic settings. There is one study, though, that discusses the development of pragmatic competence as a reflection of language socialization in naturalistic settings.

In an attempt to examine language socialization in L2 workplace settings, Li (2000) conducted an ethnographic case study focusing on how a 29-year old, Chinese immigrant in the United States made requests at work. This longitudinal study builds on the participant's developmental processes as well as experiences of language socialization by drawing on

data coming from observations, audio-recordings of daily interactions, the researcher's journal as well as the participant's journal, ESL essays, and interviews. The adaptation of 'the American way' was one of the themes that emerged in this study, which reflected itself in not only the more direct requests that Ming made but also the way she re-constructed herself as more open and direct in social contexts. The contextualized examples as well as the findings underline the importance of exposure to and participation in social interactions with more competent peers as well as with experts in the workplace in facilitating Ming's internalization of the pragmatics of the target language as well as its cultural norms attached to the pragmatic structures (Li, 2000).

As shown in Kanagy (1999), Matsumura (2001), Ohta (1999) and Li's (2000) studies, second language socialization research has mostly revolved around how language learners develop pragmatic competence, the emphasis being the acquisition of speech acts and interactional units. In order to emphasize the role of pragmatic development in language socialization, the term pragmatic socialization was also proposed to refer to "the ways in which children are socialized to use language in context in socially and culturally appropriate ways" (Blum-Kulka, 1997, p. 3). Contrary to this realm of research in the field of L2 socialization, Schieffelin and Ochs (1986) draw a distinction between language socialization and developmental pragmatics. According to the researchers, while developmental pragmatics looks at the ways children construct discourse through speech acts, turn taking norms, etc., so as to measure children's functional competence in language; language socialization relates these practices with cultural patterns, beliefs and behaviors (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986).

While L2 socialization research has gained popularity over the last two decades, it also has received criticisms in regard to its emphasis on the social aspects of language acquisition. For instance, whether language socialization can address the cognitive aspects of language acquisition (e.g., acquisition of phonological knowledge) was one of Gregg's (1999) main concerns. For these reasons, the present study adopts a different approach to explore the language socialization processes of language learners. It employs the framework of conceptual socialization which addresses both cognitive and social aspects of language learning. The next section will present conceptual socialization as a framework and discuss the ways in which it differs from L2 socialization.

Conceptual Socialization

Kecskes and Papp (2000) state that the problem of language acquisition is neither grammatical knowledge nor communicative skills since the former can be learned while the latter can be acquired. They argue that lack of conceptualization in the target language's socio-cultural environment is the problem that makes "full mastery of an L2 or FL" difficult to achieve (p. 9). For this reason, Kecskes (2002) proposes the term conceptual socialization to refer to "the transformation of the conceptual system which undergoes characteristic changes to fit the functional needs of the new language and culture" (p. 157).

Although conceptual socialization draws insights from language socialization, it broadens the scope of L2 socialization studies (Kecskes, 2002). Most of the LS research covers L1 socialization and as mentioned in the previous section, only a few studies have extended the LS approach to second language research (Willett, 1995; Matsumura, 2001; Poole, 1994). However, in contrast to previous studies adopting a second language socialization approach, Kecskes' (2002) conceptual socialization acknowledges the fact that L2 learners have already gone through their L1 socialization, which enabled them to acquire social and linguistic competence in their L1 culture and language, respectively. The main difference, however, between conceptual and second language socialization lies in the way these two frameworks perceive language acquisition:

> [I]t [CS] emphasizes the primacy of mental processes in the symbiosis of language and culture, and aims at explaining the bidirectional influence of two languages in second language development. The process of conceptual socialization is strongly tied to the emergence of the common underlying conceptual base that is responsible for the operation of two language channels (Kecskes, 2002, p. 156).

Schieffelin and Ochs (1986) suggest two ways to examine "language in socializing context": the role of language in the socialization process and "the acquisition of appropriate uses of language as part of acquiring social competence" (p. 167). Similarly, conceptual socialization can be explored in two aspects: a content side and a skill side (Kecskes, 2002).

The Skill-side of Conceptual Socialization: Conceptual fluency

Kecskes (2002) claims that a child grows up in the culture that is responsible for his/her language development along with the development of the knowledge base, image system, and concepts that give meaning to

the linguistic signs acquired. However, an L2 learner's language development, if that person is not exposed to the target culture, is based on his/her native culture's concepts. That's why, "new knowledge and new information is processed through existing knowledge" (Kecskes, 2002, p. 156). When the L2 learner enters the community where the second language is spoken, what s/he will depend on would be still his/her L1 background knowledge, which usually results in misunderstandings or communication gaps in conversations. That is where conceptual socialization emerges as a paramount factor which not only changes the way L2 speakers think but also the way they speak the language. In order to be native-like, second/foreign language learners have to do more than mastering the grammatical structures and communicative skills but learn to think, perceive the world, and use the language as native speakers do (Kecskes & Papp, 2000).

Since conceptual socialization is a process resulting from learning a second language, this study's focus will be on the pragmatic competence of the language learners for the following reasons. First, international students before coming to the United States have to take the TOEFL exam, a standardized test measuring the test-takers' listening, reading, writing, speaking skills as well as grammatical knowledge (ETS, 2009). A TOEFL score is one of the admission requirements in the universities in the States; all international students have to receive a minimum score in TOEFL to be eligible to enroll. What is not measured in this exam is the pragmatic competence of the test-takers.

Second, adults' social competence is closely related to the social contexts in which they acquired their mother tongue. As a result, the linguistic knowledge learned within classrooms does not lead to social competence unless the functional/pragmatic use of those structural properties is acquired in naturalistic social contexts (Kramsch, 2001). Therefore, acquiring pragmatic competence is one of the essential components of language socialization since pragmatics is "the study of language from the point of view of users, especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction and the effects their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication" (Crystal, 1997, p. 301). Since communicative action in its social contexts is facilitated through pragmatics (Kasper & Rose, 2002); the lack of pragmatic competence will prevent easy participation in daily social life as well as in different social contexts (Matsumura, 2001).