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Title: Identity (Re)Construction in Bilingual Children: The Interplay Between ESL and EFL Contexts

Abstract:

Inspired by the Mosaic approach (Clark, 2017), this paper reports the second stage of my research project on the bilingual/bicultural identity negotiation of six Vietnamese children after their sojourn in Australia. The most noticeable similarity among them was their reemphasised ethnic identity as Vietnamese. Apart from that, each of them followed quite different identification paths. The first group tended to have loosened their connection with the distant country and lesser use of the distant language, paired with a flexible family policy. The second group, on the other hand, managed to harness connection with the distant language and culture with purposeful scaffolding and guidance from the parents despite the constant influences from the immediate surrounding environment. There are also “in-between” cases where both children and parents were cognizant of the variations in the children’s identification process but due to objective and subjective reasons, employed moderate interventions. The children’s identification appeared to echo the influencing factors from the surrounding microsystem levels (i.e., family, peers and schooling). The extent to which these factors impacted on the children’s bilingual/bicultural identity varied case by case, depending significantly on how the parents communicated their perceptions of and practices towards the identification process to the children themselves.

