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BAKHTIN'S 'BORROWED' VOICES IN THE NARRATIVES OF POLISH-BORN ADOLESCENTS LIVING IN THE UK

Keywords: Bakhtin; identity; adolescents; narrative.

ABSTRACT

Bakhtin's theory of 'heteroglossia' has often been used in sociolinguistics to examine questions of multilingualism. However, his concept of 'borrowed' voices is also useful for work that investigates identity, especially in the investigation of participant narratives. In my study of ethnic-linguistic identity construction of Polish-born adolescents living in the UK, I draw on the concept of borrowed voices to explore how the adolescents shape their narratives of their experiences. The findings suggest that the adolescents' accounts are informed by the voices of others around them and that they borrow from discourses on Polish identity as they attempt to make sense of their experiences in their new environments.

INTRODUCTION

The linguistic philosophy of Mikhail Bakhtin has often been drawn upon in sociolinguistics research, particularly his notion of heteroglossia, which provides a useful 'lens through which to view the social, political, and historical implications of language in practice' (Blackledge and Creese 2014, 1). However, as illustrated in his work on the Russian novelist Dostoevsky (1984), Bakhtin's work is based on both linguistic and literary theory. This makes it especially helpful when investigating questions of language and identity explored through narrative inquiry (Vitanova 2013), given the storied nature of work in narrative research. In my doctoral study investigating ethnic-linguistic identity construction amongst Polish-born adolescents living in the UK, Bakhtin's (1984) concept of 'borrowed' voices was used to explore how the adolescents' narratives of their experiences are informed by the voices of others around them. This paper aims to illustrate how these other voices inform the construction of the adolescents' stories and the construction of their identities as young Polish-born migrants living in the UK.

SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT

Following Poland's 2004 accession to the European Union (EU), there was a marked increase in the number of Poles coming to live in the UK (White 2017). While initial scholarly attention focused on adult migrants, research gradually emerged that aimed to investigate the experiences of those individuals who migrated under the age of eighteen and who came to the UK with their parents (e.g. Moskal 2014; Slany and Strzemecka 2016). These children may be termed the 1.5 generation, whom Benesch (2008, 294) defines as those individuals who have undergone their secondary, and maybe primary, education in the host country. This group of migrants was the focus of my doctoral project exploring how Polish-born adolescents living in the UK negotiate the construction of their ethnic and linguistic identities. The study examined the narratives of eleven adolescents (aged 11–16) living amongst small Polish communities in semi-rural settings in south-east England.

The fieldwork was conducted between January and May 2016: the period which preceded the Referendum on Britain's membership of the European Union (EU). At that time, the question of migration, especially that from Eastern Europe, was dominating media discourse (see Rzepnikowska 2018). In exploring the narratives recounted by the adolescents in the study, I found that their stories were often informed by the discourses on migration and Polish identity which surrounded them, and that the adolescents borrowed from the voices of others in order to make sense of their experiences and to fashion new identities in the new environments in which they found themselves.

Based on my wider study, this paper examines the following question:

• What does a Bakhtinian analysis of the narratives of Polish-born adolescents living in the UK suggest about the way these adolescents negotiate and construct their identities?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In keeping with the post-structuralist framework that underpinned the study was the corresponding understanding of identity as fluid and multi-faceted; this aligns with similar work in sociolinguistics and applied linguistics focused on identity (e.g. Norton 1997; Pavlenko 2001, 2003; De Fina 2016). The construction of an individual's identity is understood through Bakhtin's conceptualisation of the creation of self and of identity as a dialogic construction. That is, the self is fashioned through dialogue or discourse with the Other, taken to be both the immediate interlocutor and the wider society in which an individual finds herself (Bakhtin 1981). The notion of identity as constructed through negotiation with the Other has been conceptualised by Blommaert (2005) in terms of ascribed and inhabited identity. Here, it is the Other who may bestow an identity on, or ascribe an identity to, an individual; that individual may then choose to accept, or inhabit, that identity. However, this indicates an implicit limitation on the agency of the individual, as negotiation of identity is curtailed by what may be accepted by the

Other. While this nonetheless implies a sense of dialogue, negotiation undertaken with the Other is rooted in the present: it does not allow for a sense of dialogue with the past and future, as found in Bakhtin's theory. Neither does Blommaert's conceptualisation allow for the way an individual may draw on collective memory in formulating his/her own identity.

The understanding of the relationship between language and the construction of self has made Bakhtin's work especially useful in sociolinguistic and applied linguistic work on identity. Pavlenko (2007) asserts that Bakhtin's conceptualisation of language holds an important space in the domain of sociolinguistics research, while Vitanova (2004, 275) argues that, due to the 'complex and multifaceted' way in which Bakhtin conceived of language and of the self, his work has 'much to offer to researchers of immigrant communities'.

As part of his 'theory of the dialogic nature of language' (Pavlenko 2007, 179), Bakhtin also proposes the notion of 'voice'. As set out in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (1984), an individual may be seen to appropriate, or 'borrow', the words or voice of another. While heteroglossia relates to an overarching view of language as inherently diverse and fluid (Lähteenmäki 2010), the notion of voice posits that the language of an individual is 'always laden with the language of others' (Thesen, cited in Norton 1997, 421). In Bakhtin's (1986) conceptualisation of language, no utterance can be made in a void but must unavoidably borrow from what surrounds or has preceded that utterance (Vitanova 2013, 249). Moreover, in keeping with his wider sense of dialogism, speech is simultaneously in dialogue with future utterances. For Bakhtin, therefore, it is impossible for any individual to speak without drawing on others' words or on other discourses. Furthermore, it is not possible for such borrowing or appropriation of another's voice to be 'neutral' (McKinney and Norton 2008, 193), given that '[a]ll utterances derive from and reconstitute particular social, cultural, and ideological practices' (Kamberelis and Danette Scott 1992, 363).

Yet this is not to argue that an individual is being unoriginal, as each utterance is simultaneously recognised as unique due to the subjectivity of any given individual. It is the way a person employs these words that asserts the distinctiveness of that individual (Kurban and Tobin 2009, 27). Thus, Bakhtin's concept of voice emphasises the dialogic, or polyphonic, nature of the act of speaking. Yet, as Park-Fuller (1986, 2) notes, polyphony does not mean 'a number of voices', but denotes

the collective quality of an individual utterance; that is, the capacity of my utterance to embody someone else's utterance even while it is mine, which thereby creates a dialogic relationship between two voices.

Furthermore, Bakhtin sees each individual as engaged in dialogue with themselves; and their speech imbued by the idea of what may come to be. Implicit in any speaker's utterances are references to the future (Holquist 2002); in this way, an individual is thereby dialogically imbricated with a predicted version of themselves and their imagined future. This constant reference through speech to past, present and future reinforces the inherent dialogic nature of language.

LITERATURE REVIEW

While Bakhtin's notion of 'voice' is especially relevant to literary studies, the concept is also useful in sociolinguistic research, where it has been examined in various ways. Blommaert (2005, 68) sees 'voice' as a highly social issue, and related to the issue of the 'linguistic resources' available to the individual, whether in terms of the language(s) spoken by an individual or the way in which s/he speaks that language. Drawing on the notion of 'function' as examined by Dell Hymes (1980), Blommaert argues that voice is also tied to the question of audibility: if an individual lacks access to certain linguistic resources, they are unable to make themselves heard. This in turn links to the notion of legitimacy (Bourdieu 1977), and who may have the right to speak (see McKinney and Norton 2008).

Bakhtin's conceptualisation has also been applied to work on identity and language learning. Creese and Blackledge (2012) allude to the notion of voice in a study that investigates the practices of a team of ethnographers engaged on a multilingualism project. Here, voice is used to understand the way that different people participate in meaning making, and how individuals may take on the voices of others both to represent and evaluate those voices and the meaning embedded within them (Creese and Blackledge 2012, 310).

The notion of appropriating others' voices has also been applied in studies that explore learning and second-language identities. Norton and Toohey (2001, 311) use the idea of 'the social nature of learning' to examine the way a learner may employ the language of another so as to develop a sense of linguistic ownership in the new language:

[a]s people initially appropriate the utterances of others and bend those utterances to their own intentions, they enter the communicative chain and become able to fashion their own voices.

In a later study, Norton and Toohey (2011, 417) draw on the notion of voice to caution how the ownership of language is influenced by social position, which 'might affect any individual's speaking privilege'. That is, an individual might find themselves prohibited from using certain voices. Thus, in Gergana Vitanova's (2004) study of language use amongst Eastern European immigrants in the US, the women relegate themselves to the position of non-fluent users in English, absorbing in their view of themselves the reaction of others whom they have encountered in work or commercial interactions. Vitanova (2013) also argues that the strong link between narrative and Bakhtin's work on discourse make his conceptualisation a useful way of theorising identity construction. This has particular resonance here and will be discussed further in the following section.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

In line with other work on sociolinguistics that investigates identity construction through narrative (e.g. Pavlenko 2001, 2007), the study described here was designed as a narrative inquiry. Vitanova (2013, 44) argues that the importance of contemporary

narrative inquiry lies in its focus on 'the intricate relationship between narratives and the very construction of human identity'. Regarded as 'a way of making sense of the world' (Georgakopoulou 2006, 122), narrative is often employed in research that focuses on the individual experience (Riessman 2002). Narrative inquiry has also been used in work on Polish migration (e.g. Bell 2012; Galasiński and Galasińska 2007), and to investigate identity construction by adolescents (Bamberg 2004). Pertinent to this current study is the emphasis on agency: the narrator has the ability to fashion a story whereby they can demonstrate agency through the way they present themselves (Pavlenko 2007, 177). The notion of 'narrative agency' is also noted by Filipkowski (2019, 288), for whom narrative is not necessarily a faithful 'representation of experience', but the recounting of that experience through 'creative organization and interpretation'. Seen through a Bakhtinian lens, agency may thereby be seen here as the way these adolescents synthesise and reformulate the words of others in creating their own stories.

The study was conducted with a group of eleven adolescents aged 11–16. Each had arrived in the UK at a different stage of their life, but was attending secondary school in the UK. Thus, they can all be seen as belonging to the 1.5 generation (Benesch 2008).

Unlike many sociolinguistic studies on identity which focus on urban areas, such as London (e.g. Block 2006), I deliberately chose a semi-rural setting with a predominantly white British demographic. As Moskal (2014, 282) observes, while '[c]ities remain the main centres of concentration, [...] rural areas are increasingly affected by migration'. The participants were recruited from two settings: Grovesham, a state secondary school located in Fieldstone (population 60,000); and St. Ferdinand's, a Polish complementary school situated in Steadton (population 15,000). Fieldstone has a small, post-2004 Polish community, while that of Steadton dates from the time of the Second World War. I was helped in recruiting participants by Jo Malinowska, the Polish teacher at Grovesham, and Alina Rudawska, the Director of St. Ferdinand's. (The names of all locations and participants have been given pseudonyms.)

The study was conducted in adherence to British Educational Research Association ethical guidelines (BERA 2011); approval for the study was given by the UCL Institute of Education. Information sheets were given to the participants and their parents, in both Polish and English, and to the schools' headteachers. Participants were asked to opt in to the research, and assured they could withdraw at any time.

The school timetables necessitated a carefully designed interview schedule that took account of school holidays and national exam dates. Accordingly, the data collection was organised into three blocks of interviews. The first was held at Grovesham, during January and February 2016. The first session comprised an initial observation of the Polish class, the aim being to establish rapport with participants prior to their interviews (Eder and Fingerson 2002). This was followed by two hour-long group interviews with the students there, group interviews being seen as possible ice breakers (Robson and McCartan 2016, 299). The second block was at St. Ferdinand's in March and consisted of two 50-minute pair interviews with Anna and Krystyna, two girls who attended the school. For block three in May, I returned to Grovesham and held three hour-long sessions

of pair and individual interviews. These lasted between 10 and 25 minutes, following Habermas and Paha (2001), who advise shorter interviews for younger participants. All interviews were conducted in English; although participants had been offered the chance to use Polish, none opted to do so. The observation class and interviews were audio recorded, and the files transferred to my laptop for analysis.

As a primary step, the data was analysed thematically, coded into broad themes such as 'migration journey' or 'relationship with Poland'. The second stage was a closer reading of the data, drawing on discourse analysis. This drew on Van Dijk (2000), where discourse analysis enables the researcher to analyse the way that talk is structured, including the linguistic strategies employed by the narrative and the way this can relate to the wider political and social context. A narrative analysis was then undertaken, drawing on Bamberg (2004), who emphasises the importance of focusing on details such as the narrator's use of tense or aspect. These analytical stages allowed for a thorough reading of the adolescents' stories and the way they were constructed.

FINDINGS

This section examines the responses given by the adolescents when asked about their experiences of migration, and their attitudes towards a possible return to Poland.

Several offered quite explicit reasons as to why their families had migrated, often citing financial considerations as the primary motivation. This is illustrated in a discussion with Tomasz and Ryszard, both twelve years old. Tomasz moved to the UK at the age of four, while Ryszard was six at the time of his arrival.

Sara: Do you know why your parents moved to this country?

Ryszard: Financial problems, probably. Because in Poland they don't usually – it's, it's like

you've got enough just to live. You don't have enough, like good car –

Tomasz: Yeah. [...] My Dad came here cos his friend was coming to England and then my Dad

was like, 'yeah, it's just a year, nothing more.' Yeah, a year! He's ten years in England

now!

Sara: Are you glad that he came, or -?

Tomasz: I think genuinely I am glad, cos it's like we have some more money, now.

Here, Ryszard provides a clear articulation as to why his parents moved to the UK: 'financial problems'; Tomasz echoes this by agreeing 'Yeah', and in insisting that he is 'genuinely' pleased to be in England as the family now have 'more money'. Yet these brief accounts invite further scrutiny. Firstly, given the age that the two boys moved, it is unlikely they were aware at the time of the reasons that lay behind the move. It is more probable that they are relying on what their parents have told them since then. Moreover, since Tomasz was only four years old on his arrival in England, it is unclear how aware he would have been of the family's lack of money when they were living in Poland.

Tomasz also explains that his father was encouraged to move by a friend who was also migrating – a move initially seen as temporary, but then extended. Tomasz punctuates his account with the exclamation: 'a year! He's ten years in England now!'. In doing so, he appears to mock the way the stay expanded from the original 'just a year' to 'ten years'. However, it may also be that Tomasz is replaying a story, borrowing from the voices of older members of the family as they react to his father's insistence that his migration will last 'just a year, nothing more'.

Thus, the boys' understanding of their experiences are articulated through short narratives that are constructed using scraps they have heard from others' stories. Their utterances borrow from others' words, yet are reconfigured in a way that is unique to each boy. Ryszard presents himself as an expert, asserting that in Poland 'you've got enough just to live'. This chimes with his responses elsewhere, as he volunteers his opinions on the political situation in Poland, where he also explains that he discusses such matters with his father. This supports the probability that Ryszard draws on his father's voice as he formulates his own opinions.

Another point of discussion with the adolescents was whether they thought of returning to Poland at any stage. Despite having only been in the UK for two years, thirteen-year-old Filip is adamant in his strong desire to remain in the country, where he has fixed career plans: he explains that he is 'planning on following [...] my sister Agnieszka's footsteps and I'm going to be a vet'. Yet while Filip describes himself as aiming to follow his older sister, he later explains that he is in fact intending to realise an ambition his sister Agnieszka was unable to accomplish due to family commitments. Filip explains that although his sister had 'wanted to be a vet', this did not transpire: 'she's got a family, so she can't [...] and she works at Tesco'.

In creating an identity for his imagined future self in this way, as a valid member of British society, Filip can be seen to be fashioning his projected self on the experience of his elder sister Agnieszka, who has been living in the UK for around fifteen years. Agnieszka's experiences of having to relinquish her ambitions, and who now finds herself working in a supermarket, can be viewed as an example of the way that migrant individuals frequently have to realign their imagined identities in relation to the new context in which they find themselves (Pavlenko 2002).

However, the way that Filip takes on Agnieszka's wish to become a vet can be understood in terms of both borrowed voices and a dialogic construction of his own identity. On the one hand, Filip is borrowing the voice of his elder sister in an attempt to establish his own position within Britain; this echoes Bakhtin's (1984) notion of appropriating the voices of others in order to create one's own. At the same time, seen through the lens of Bakhtin's (1981) notion of dialogics, Filip can be seen as being in dialogue with his possible future self (Markus and Nurius 1986) that he sees living in Britain.

Beyond this, however, Filip may be seen to be drawing on wider discourses: his narrative of his projected self, a qualified vet living comfortably in the UK, aligns with the long-standing myth of the successful migrant. As Pavlenko (2001, 320) notes, this is more commonly associated with migration to America; however, its reach can be seen

in the way that Filip echoes similar desires in his own narrative and creation of future self. Thus, drawing on Bakhtin, it may be seen how Filip's identity construction in the present borrows from both a long-standing image, that of the successful migrant, and simultaneously from his own envisaged future.

In contrast to Filip, fourteen-year-old Krystyna mentions the possibility of returning to Poland; when prompted further, she elaborates:

Sara: You said you might go back when you're like fifty or something like that.

Krystyna: Yeah < laughs>.

Sara: Why are you thinking that?

 $Krystyna: \hspace{1.5cm} I \hspace{0.1cm} just \hspace{0.1cm} think \hspace{0.1cm} I \hspace{0.1cm} want \hspace{0.1cm} to \hspace{0.1cm} like \hspace{0.1cm} be \hspace{0.1cm} there \hspace{0.1cm} when \hspace{0.1cm} I \hspace{0.1cm} like \hspace{0.1cm} -\hspace{0.1cm} pass \hspace{0.1cm} away \hspace{0.1cm} <\hspace{0.1cm} laughs \hspace{0.1cm} >\hspace{0.1cm} . \hspace{0.1cm} I \hspace{0.1cm} mean \hspace{0.1cm} like, \hspace{0.1cm} I \hspace{0.1cm} know \hspace{0.1cm} like \hspace{0.1cm} -\hspace{0.1cm} pass \hspace{0.1cm} away \hspace{0.1cm} <\hspace{0.1cm} like \hspace{0.1cm} -\hspace{0.1cm} pass \hspace{0.1cm} away \hspace{0.1cm} <\hspace{0.1cm} low \hspace{0.1cm} like \hspace{0.1cm} -\hspace{0.1cm} pass \hspace{0.1cm} away \hspace{0.1cm} <\hspace{0.1cm} low \hspace{0.1cm} like \hspace{0.1cm} -\hspace{0.1cm} pass \hspace{0.1cm} away \hspace{0.1cm} <\hspace{0.1cm} low \hspace{0.1cm} like \hspace{0.1cm} -\hspace{0.1cm} pass \hspace{0.1cm} away \hspace{0.1cm} <\hspace{0.1cm} low \hspace{0.1cm} like \hspace{0.1cm} -\hspace{0.1cm} pass \hspace{0.1cm} away \hspace{0.1cm} <\hspace{0.1cm} low \hspace{0.1cm} low \hspace{0.1cm} like \hspace{0.1cm} -\hspace{0.1cm} pass \hspace{0.1cm} away \hspace{0.1cm} <\hspace{0.1cm} low \hspace{0.1cm} low \hspace{0.1c$

I shouldn't be thinking about this right now, but like I also like prefer the way that erm, people that have passed away are presented in Poland with like [...] cemeteries. [...] in Poland everyone respects it and like there's no-one who's going to come along to the graveyard and smoke and then you just find like drunk people in England. I just think I want to lay there in peace! [...] and I just think – yeah, cos there'll be family there

as well so I think I'd want to be there.

As Krystyna herself notes, her projections of returning to Poland to die may seem anachronistic when expressed by a young teenager; however, this can be understood more clearly when viewed in terms of borrowing voices, both those of individuals, and of wider myths connected to migration.

As with the other adolescents' accounts, it is unclear how far Krystyna is voicing her own impressions, and to what extent she is repeating those of another person. When she makes the comparison between what she sees as the respect shown in Polish cemeteries and the 'drunk people' in a cemetery in England, Krystyna does not clarify whether she herself has seen such places or whether she is drawing on others' experiences. Similarly, in expressing a wish to return, it may be that Krystyna is echoing a desire to spend her last years in Poland that has been expressed by one of her older relatives currently living in other countries in Europe.

Beyond this, however, Krystyna's wish to return can also be regarded as echoing other tropes connected with the myth of return. In her study of returnees to Poland, White (2014) explores various reasons behind people's decisions to return. These are frequently driven by a sense of Polish identity. For those who see migrating for economic reasons as 'shameful', returning 'constitutes a symbolic affirmation of Polish collective identity' (White 2014, 27), while others evoke Poland's 'beautiful cities and landscapes' (White 2014, 38), and demonstrate 'a strong sense of ethnic identity and attachment to Poland in the abstract' (White 2014, 38). This chimes with Krystyna's view of the country, as she talks of missing the 'small seas' in Poland, and simply 'the way that [...] Poland is'. In terms of identity construction, Krystyna's account of wanting to return thus indicates the way that she endeavours to retain her Polish identity and to view her time in England as temporary. It is the thought of return which may be seen to sustain her.

Here, as with Filip, Krystyna can be seen to be drawing on wider tropes that resonate from the past, in order to fashion her own sense of identity.

DISCUSSION

An examination of the adolescents' accounts drawing on Bakhtin's notion of 'borrowed' voices thus provides a deeper insight into the way they are constructing their stories. It appears that, in order to create their own narratives, these young people draw on the voices not only of those around them, but also on discourses that resonate with wider narratives of Polish migration. Given the young age at which several of them left Poland, it is unlikely that these adolescents genuinely remember many of the details surrounding their moves or the rationale for leaving. Thus, to reconstruct their stories and make sense of their experiences, they draw on the utterances of others.

At times, this borrowing is more self-aware. In offering his opinions, Ryszard acknowledges that he discusses current affairs with others. Through this, Ryszard is able to construct his identity as an expert and speak with confidence about the reason for his family's migration. In response, Tomasz, who has been close to Ryszard for several years, appears to defer to his friend's account. He reiterates the story of economic hardship and elaborates on the account of his father's migration with a story that he is likely to have picked up from others. It is also possible that as well as absorbing these stories from their own families, the boys are fashioning their accounts based on common stories of migration. Accounts of moving for economic reasons are well documented in the literature (e.g. Ryan et al. 2009; White 2017); given that the Polish community in which the boys live is a post-2004 settlement, it is probable that they will have heard such stories repeated amongst their friends.

When discussing the choice of staying in the UK or returning to Poland, Filip's ambition to fulfil his sister's thwarted ambition to become a vet not only draws on what he has been told of his sister's individual experience, but can also be seen to mirror the long-standing myth of the migrant who finds success in his new country (Pavlenko 2002). Thus, Filip can be seen as 'borrowing' the voice of both one individual and of a discourse that continues to resonate. Likewise, Krystyna's view of return may be viewed as a reflection of the desires of others in her own family, while also echoing contemporary myths of return (White 2014).

One limitation of the study is that only the adolescents themselves were interviewed at length. As noted above, the aim of the study was to focus on their disparate views, therefore no parents or other relatives were included in the research. Thus, even while recognising that the adolescents' stories are thus comprised of different voices, it remains difficult to ascertain fully where these voices originate, and from whom the adolescents are borrowing. Nonetheless, it is possible to infer that borrowing occurs. The adolescents do report conversations they have had at home, indicating the importance they attach to such discussions and the influence these conversations have on the way they fashion their own stories.

A further limitation of the analytical approach used in this paper is that it does not account for adolescence as a particular phase of identity construction (Beyers and Çok 2008). It may be that the salience of 'borrowing' voices is greater during this period than during adulthood.

Notwithstanding this, it may be argued that the identity of any individual is, in a dialogic sense, inevitably informed in some way by the country from which they come. Consequently, their narratives are shaped by utterances that, in a Bakhtinian sense, may even be 'the product of collective effort', one which has been 'carried on through the consciousness of several generations' (Vitanova 2013, 249). The former Polish Foreign Minister, Radek Sikorski, recalls how he was permanently imbued with the sense of 'living in a zone of heightened political risks' despite having been born into a post-war generation, something which came from 'imbibing it [this sense] from stories told [...] at the family table' (Sikorski 1997, 92). While Sikorski may have lived quite a different life from the adolescents in the study described here, given the extent to which Poland may be regarded as a country whose people have been dominated by waves of migration and exile (White 2017), it remains unlikely that these adolescents will have remained untouched by similar historical stories. These tropes are likely to have been passed on either at home or through the Polish schools they have attended.

These findings may also resonate with other adolescent migrants who draw on similar tropes of migration and the history of their countries of origin, together with stories told within their families, to construct their own identities. The findings of this study may therefore also aid understanding of the experience of such individuals and the way they use the voices of others to situate themselves and make sense of their new situations.

CONCLUSION

In alluding to tropes which resonate with other stories of migration in the narratives they create, the adolescents in this study can be seen to be dialogically connecting their voices with the past, even as they talk of their own envisaged future. Using a Bakhtinian approach to analyse their narratives illuminates the way that these adolescents negotiate and fashion their identities by drawing on the voices of those around them, from the past, present and future.

Bakhtin's theory of borrowed voices is thus a useful way to understand how these adolescents reconstruct and interpret their experiences as they attempt to adapt themselves to their new environments. However, it is important to remember that, in a Bakhtinian sense, while their stories rely on borrowed utterances, this does not diminish the adolescents' individuality. Rather, it is to recognise how such linguistic borrowing feeds into the construction of their own self. In attempting to reconcile their stories with those of others, the adolescents are engaging in dialogues with these voices, and, through this, are constructing their own unique identities.

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"Pożyczone" głosy Bachtina w narracjach polskich nastolatków mieszkających w Wielkiej Brytanii

Słowa kluczowe: Bachtin; tożsamość; młodzież; badania narracyjne.

STRESZCZENIE

Teoria heteroglosji Bachtina jest często wykorzystywana w socjolingwistyce w badaniach wielojęzyczności. Jednak koncepcja "pożyczonych" głosów jest również przydatna do badań nad tożsamością, zwłaszcza do analizy narracji uczestników. W moich badaniach nad tożsamością etniczno-lingwistyczną nastolatków urodzonych w Polsce, którzy obecnie mieszkają w Wielkiej Brytanii, korzystam z koncepcji pożyczonych głosów, aby ustalić, w jaki sposób młode osoby tworzą narracje będące zapisem ich doświadczeń. Wyniki badań pokazują, że w relacjach nastolatków słychać głosy osób z ich otoczenia, a także te "pożyczane" z dyskursów na temat polskiej tożsamości, w ten sposób młodzi ludzie starają się wykorzystać swoje doświadczenia w nowym środowisku.