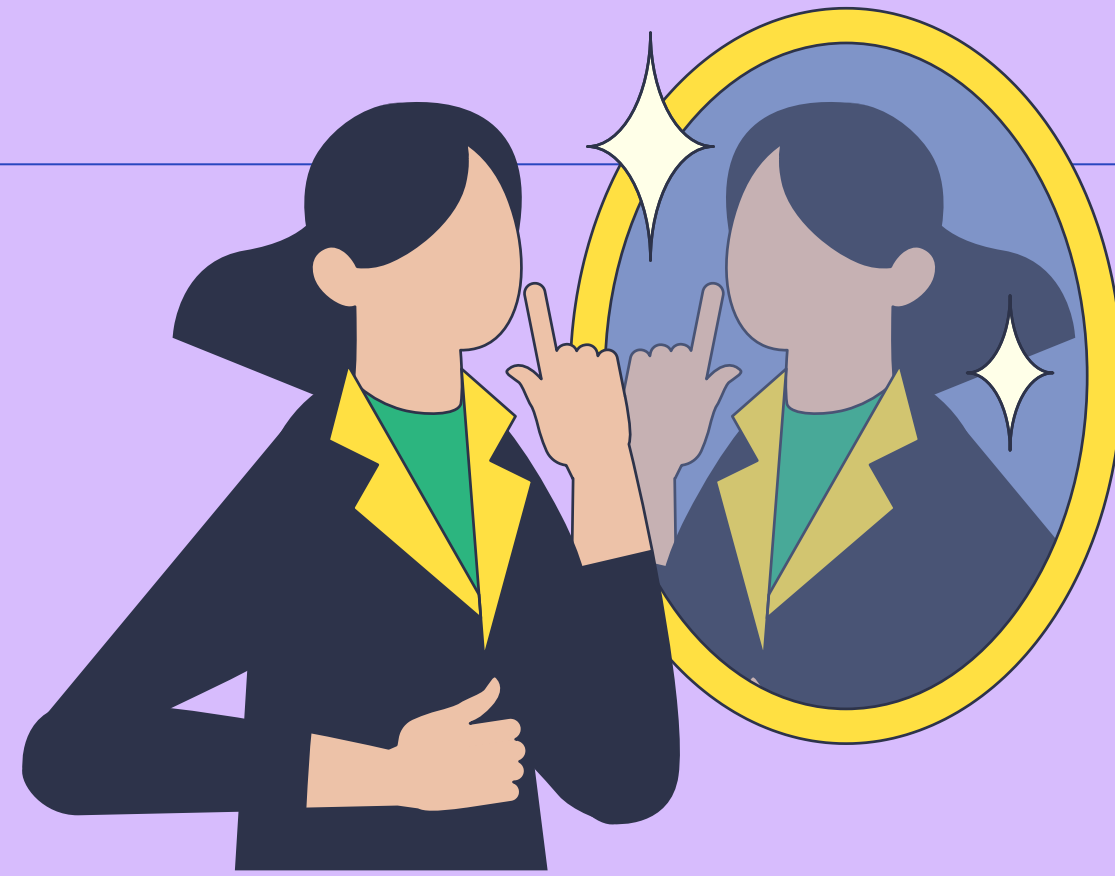


# Learning English &



# *Immigrant Identity*

Rachel Creason

8 December 2024

Professor Menkina-Snider

ENGL 2363

The University of Texas at Tyler

“**YOU**, who are you?

they don't know, **do you?**”

*“A slight accent.*

*Forming*

*each phrase before*

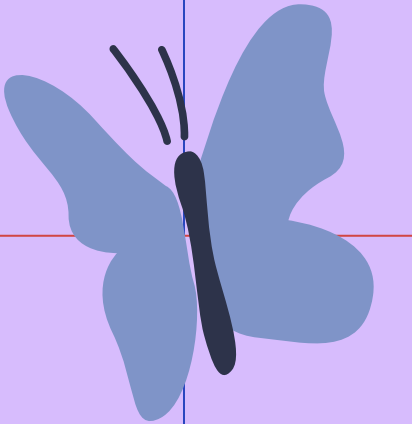
*delivery*

*and never a slur.”*

EMIGRANT/IMMIGRANT I & EMIGRANT/IMMIGRANT II

RINA FERRARELLI

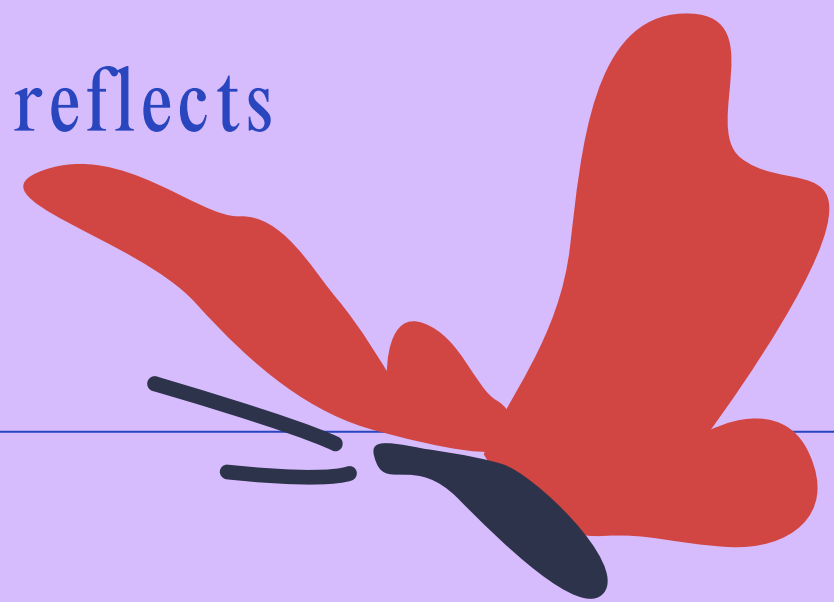
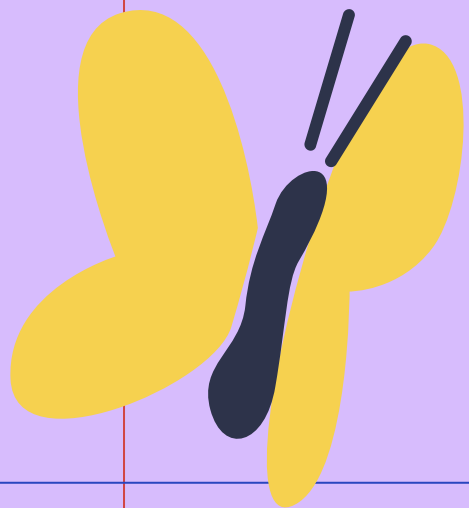
# Language has the power to *transform* identity.



✦ **Learning English** is central to assimilation into American society for many immigrants.

✦ **Language shapes the way people are perceived** and can influence social integration and opportunity.

✦ Immigrants' relationships to language also reflects **broader social and cultural dynamics.**





# *How Language Learning Transforms Identity*

## **Language as Identity Formation:**

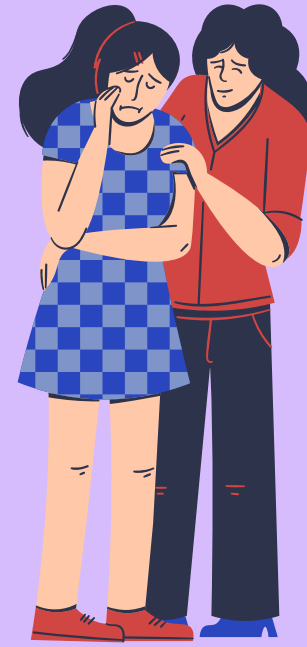
Language acquisition is tied to the reshaping of identity as immigrants engage with the New World culture.

## **Biculturalism and Adaptation:**

Immigrants often navigate between their Old World culture and the New World, with language learning helping to bridge the gap.

## **Language as a Cultural Tool:**

Language serves as a key marker of identity, allowing for a deeper connection with the host culture while still maintaining elements of the Old World.

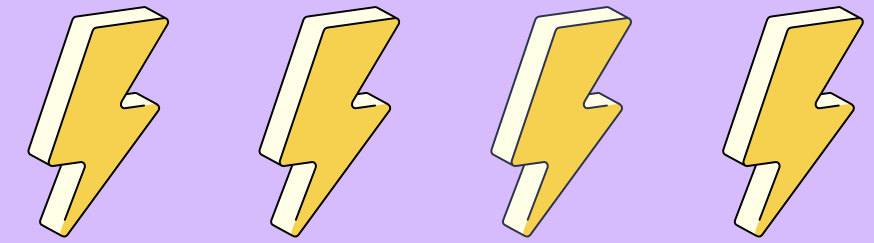


*“Lack of English competency relates to several maladaptive outcomes, such as weak social networks, feelings of discrimination, and anxiety.”*

*“Language proficiency is a key driver of immigrant integration. It increases job opportunities and facilitates social and political participation.”*



Identity also has the power



*to transform language learning.*

“AN EXTENSION OF INTEREST IN IDENTITY AND INVESTMENT CONCERNS  
THE **IMAGINED COMMUNITIES** THAT LANGUAGE LEARNERS ASPIRE TO  
WHEN THEY LEARN A LANGUAGE...

**IMAGINED COMMUNITIES PROVIDE INSIGHT INTO IMAGINED IDENTITIES.”**

AN IDENTITY APPROACH TO SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION  
BONNY NORTON AND CAROLYN MCKINNEY

# how does **IDENTITY** shape *language learning?*



Personal and cultural identities influence the way immigrants approach learning English.



Motivation and self-perception are key drivers in language proficiency.



Old World languages and cultural networks provide both resources and challenges.



"Teachers use assimilation pedagogy as a means of helping immigrant students navigate a better life in the U.S. ... assimilation may leave immigrant children feeling alienated from the intimacy of their families and their cultures."

**Teaching English language learners:**  
a reconsideration of assimilation  
pedagogy in U.S. schools

**Jessica Watts**

**Resisting Assimilation:**  
Deliberate Acculturation by the  
American English Language Learner

**Lyndsie Schultz**

“Rather than being completely stripped of their... identity, students succeeded in appropriating English when necessary while actively resisting white enculturation to forge their own identity.”

## *ASSIMILATION-FOCUSED TEACHING AND ITS IMPACT ON IMMIGRANT STUDENTS*







# CONSTRAINTS ON INTEGRATION AND LANGUAGE LEARNING

"Constraints have an important role in immigrant assimilation too. Even immigrants with strong preferences to integrate more fully into U.S. society may be constrained from doing so by their human capital... their English-language skills are worse, leading them to act *less American than they wish.*"

**Language proficiency**  
often dictates how immigrants can  
*express their true selves and integrate*  
into the larger society.

Age at Arrival, English Proficiency, and Social Assimilation Among U.S. Immigrants

Hoyt Bleakley and Aimee Chin



# TRANSFORMING LANGUAGE & IDENTITY IN THE IMMIGRANT JOURNEY

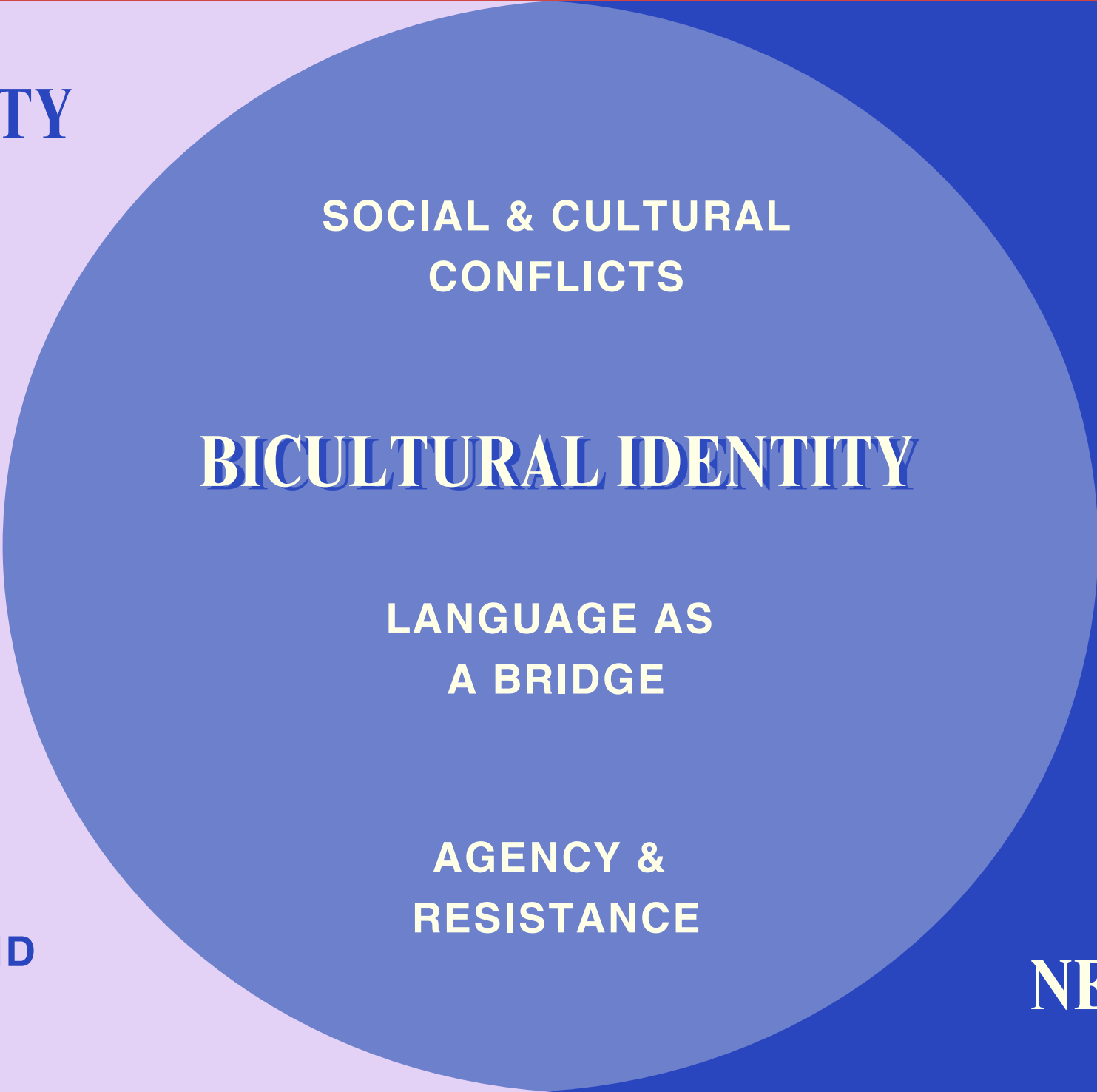
## OLD WORLD IDENTITY

CULTURAL HERITAGE

NATIVE LANGUAGE

TRADITIONAL VALUES

CONNECTION TO HOMELAND



SOCIAL & CULTURAL  
CONFLICTS

BICULTURAL IDENTITY

LANGUAGE AS  
A BRIDGE

AGENCY &  
RESISTANCE

ASSIMILATION PRESSURES

UNFAMILIAR CULTURE

OPPORTUNITIES

LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

## NEW WORLD IDENTITY

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Thank You

