



# Social identity & Investment in L2 learning

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Foreign Language Acquisition  
& Communication II

Class 4

Pre-class question: what does the interaction between two women tell us? How do you interpret their interaction?

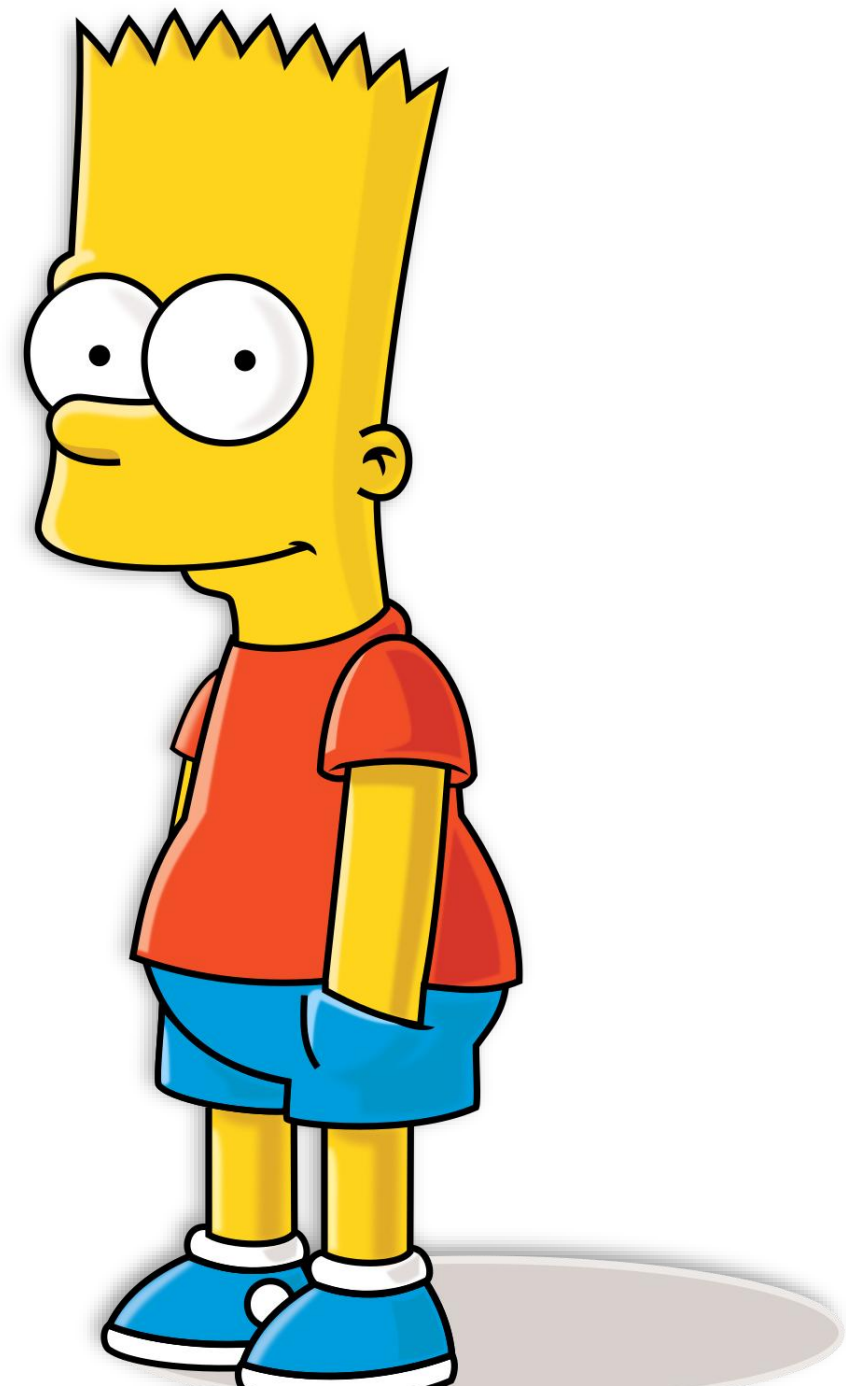
Eva (immigrant woman): "Do you see him?"

Gail (Canadian): "Yes, Why? Don't you know him?"

Eva: "No. I don't know him."

Gail: "How come you don't know him. Don't you watch TV. That's Bart Simpson."

See the argument in p. 16.





# **Power relations in L2 learning**

# Multi subjects of L2 learner

- Context dependent: Mother, teacher, manager, etc.
- Shift of attitudes towards L2 learning  $\Rightarrow$  struggling as an L2 learner in unequal power relations
  - Resistance to the position assigned and marginalized by the counterparts
  - Taking the position in a powerful subject
- Social identity: Power relations play a crucial role in social interactions between language learners and target language speakers (p. 12)

## **Investment** (Peirce, 1995)

- Focusing on the complex relationship of power, identity, and language learning; missed in the traditional motivational theories
- How do relations of power in the social world affect social interaction between second language learners and target language speakers?
- Native speakers' attitudes towards the minority group (i.e., non-native speakers) in their speech community
- A theory of social identity: 'power relations play a crucial role in social interactions between language learners and target language speakers' (p. 12): Gail vs. Eva
- Gail: How come you don't know him. Don't you watch TV. That's Bart Simpson. ⇒ Rhetorical, not genuine question to ask for yes or no. (p. 13)
  - Determining "the ground on which interaction could proceed," and demonstrating "power to bring closure to the conversation" (p. 13)

# **Roles of language in a speech community**

- Not a mere communication tool
  - A tool to negotiate identity
  - A tool to indicate the social identity
  - Traditional view of communicative competence in SLA: Social rules of language use
- ⇔ In terms of power relations, who have established the socially accepted rules?
- The language use: historically and socially constructed for the sake of a dominant group' (i.e., native speakers) convenience

## **Discuss Martina's case with the group.**

- Find her personal background.
- Talk about her social identity considering the excerpts inserted in the section.

## **Discuss Eva's case with the group.**

- Find her personal background.
- Talk about her social identity considering the excerpts inserted in the section.



# **My own experience as an illegitimate speaker: Is she a stone?**

- MA student at Ohio University
- Linguistics focusing on TESOL (teaching English to the speakers of other languages)  $\Rightarrow$  students from different linguacultural backgrounds, the native speakers of English with international experiences
- A party held by a premed student who is from Iran  $\Rightarrow$  All guests are the native speakers of English from the medical school (elite?)
- Little exposure to non-native speakers of English
- Uncomfortable speaking  $\Rightarrow$  quite, be silenced  $\Rightarrow$  Is she a stone? (overheard) [The right to speak was suppressed.]

# English varieties at the era of globalization

- Immigrant women's English investment experiences in the 1990's
- Dichotomous view in the 1990's: Native speakers of English vs. Non-native speakers of English
- World Englishes in the 2000's: diversified English → sense as a native speaker of my own English
- Language attitudes towards distinctive varieties of English → educating native speakers in terms of language awareness of and attitudes towards different Englishes
- Japanese varieties in Japan?