Call for Papers

2025 Special issue:

Language, Power, and Identity in TESOL and beyond: Celebrating Ten Years of Darvin and Norton's (2015) Model of Investment

Guest editors

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Introduction and Rationale

Bonny Norton's (1995) seminal work in TESOL Quarterly on identity and investment demonstrates how language learners, as social beings with complex identities, engage with target languages through socially and historically constructed relationships. The concept of investment transcends traditional notions of motivation, showing that learners invest in language and literacy practices when they perceive it as a pathway to expanding their symbolic and material resources, thereby building cultural capital and social influence. The degree of investment, however, varies based on power dynamics across contexts and whether learners are granted or denied opportunities to speak in a rapidly changing world (Darvin & Norton, 2015; Norton Peirce, 1995).

Recognizing how globalization and technological innovations have shaped lifestyles and productivity through time-space compression and increased private isolation, Darvin and Norton (2015) expanded the theory of identity and investment by locating investment at the intersection of identity, capital, and ideology. Adopting a poststructuralist perspective that challenges traditional identity dichotomies (e.g., male/female, motivated/unmotivated), they conceptualize identity as multiple, fluid, and contested (Norton, 2013). Drawing upon Bourdieu (1991), they define capital as power manifesting in multiple forms, especially given how language learners negotiate their economic ("what they have"), cultural ("what they know"), and social capital ("who they know") to assert their own positions across social spaces. Ideology, the third element in their investment model, illuminates how power operates invisibly to shape L2 learning behaviors and identity construction through normative beliefs that determine inclusion and exclusion (Darvin & Norton, 2016, 2023). In today's era of accelerated

global mobility, individuals often navigate spaces where competing ideologies shape their identities and influence the value of their negotiable capital. To be invested in language and literacy practices, learners must exercise agency in assembling their linguistic, semiotic, and cultural resources while asserting legitimate speakership and identities as they traverse ideologically charged spaces (Darvin & Norton, 2023).

Over the past decade, the model of investment has gained significant global traction across the world. In African settings, scholars have employed this framework to examine how language teachers and learners navigate postcolonial linguistic landscapes, from digital initiatives like the African Storybook in rural Uganda (Stranger-Johannessen & Norton, 2019) to indigenous language learning in post-apartheid South Africa (James, 2022). Asian researchers have applied the model to investigate both digital literacy practices in online language learning, particularly in East Asian contexts where English serves as cultural capital (Liu, 2023; Liu & Darvin, 2024), and identity construction in various contexts, such as heritage language teacher identity in Bangladesh (Afreen & Norton, 2022) and English teacher identity in EFL, EMI, and ESL contexts (Zhang & Huang, 2024), and decolonizing practices through YouTube video production and critical pedagogies in Hong Kong (Darvin & Zhang, 2023; Zhang & Gonzales, 2024). In Europe, studies have focused primarily on immigrant language learners' investment in both majority and heritage language maintenance (Iikkanen, 2022), while research in North America (Crowther, 2020) and Australia (Gilanyi, 2019) has explored how transnational students invest in daily literacy practices while negotiating their multilingual identities. This widespread adoption demonstrates the model's theoretical robustness in illuminating the complex interplay between language learning, identity, and power across varied sociocultural contexts.

As teachers, researchers, and policymakers across the globe engage more frequently with questions of investment in TESOL and beyond, it remains crucial to critically investigate the constructs of identity, capital, and ideology to ensure their relevance in our evolving social order. In the 2025 special issue of *IJTS*, we aim to advance this research agenda while simultaneously celebrating the ten years of Darvin and Norton's (2015) influential model. We highlight that Darvin and Norton's contributions have not only expanded the theoretical boundaries of language and power but also provided practical insights for educational stakeholders by promoting more inclusive and equitable practices that recognize learners' diverse identities and experiences. Their work continues to inspire new scholarly investigations into the intersections of language, identity, and power, which are able to deepen our understanding of language learning complexities in the 21st century.

Through this special issue, we seek to showcase innovative applications of the investment model across diverse linguistic/cultural contexts and to examine how recent technological, social, and political changes have shaped investment in language education and communication. We particularly welcome empirical and theoretical contributions from scholars across disciplines that push the boundaries of the model while maintaining its core commitment to understanding the complex relationship between identity, capital, and ideology. Possible topics include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Investment in language learning and communication in digital spaces;
- Identity construction and investment across transnational and translingual spaces;

- The interplay of ideology, power, and investment in institutional and community settings;
- Investment in heritage language and cultural practices;
- Investment in professional development (e.g., ESP, teacher education) and workplace communication;
- Methodological innovations in researching investment, identity, and ideology;
- Investment in multimodal and multiliteracy practices;
- Decolonial and critical approaches to understanding investment and identity
- Policy implications of the investment model for educational equity and social justice

Submission Instructions

We invite submissions of original research, including empirical studies and systematic/scoping reviews, that advance theoretical and practical understandings of investment. Prospective contributors should submit:
* A proposed manuscript title and abstract (maximum 300 words, excluding references)
* Author biographical statements (approximately 150 words per author)

While manuscript length is flexible to accommodate different research approaches, we recommend the following guidelines:
* Research articles: 6,000-10,000 words (including references, excluding appendices)
* Theoretical articles/Commentaries: 3,000-5,000 words

All submissions must conform to the journal's style guidelines. As part of our commitment to rigorous scholarship, contributors may be invited to participate in the peer review process for other manuscripts submitted to this special issue.

Please direct all submissions and inquiries to the lead guest editor: Guangxiang Leon Liu Email: G.Liu@link.cuhk.edu.hk The timeline is below:

Abstracts due: January 30, 2025
Invitations for full paper: Feb 15, 2025
Full paper due: April 30, 2025
Reviews sent to authors: July 30, 2025
Final revisions due: October 1, 2025
Publication of the issue: December 2025

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