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Nearly two decades ago, Leo van Lier noted that in all research context must be delimited at some point, as researchers cannot take on board everything:

Context may be regarded as extending, like ripples on a pond, in concentric circles from any particular action or utterance. At some point we will have to draw a line and say: this is as far as we shall look.

(van Lier 1988: 10)

What I propose here is that in SLA research, we draw this line as far from the utterance or interactional level as possible, as we seek ever-more sophisticated understandings of second language acquisition.

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Identity Repertoires in the Narratives of Advanced American Learners of Russian

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Introduction

One of the central goals of foreign and second language (L2) learning for many, albeit not all, learners is self-translation; that is, the ability to present oneself in complex and diverse ways as one would do in the native language, yet in terms understandable to target language speakers. In cases of typologically similar languages and culturally similar communities, the achievement and display of this ability may pass unnoticed, but when the linguistic and cultural gap between the two speech communities is wide, self-translation becomes a daunting task (Pavlenko 1998, 2001, 2004).

What opportunities to master new self-representation resources are offered to students in foreign language classrooms? In a recent paper, 'Identity Options in Russian Textbooks', Shardakova and Pavlenko (2004) analysed two popular introductory Russian-language textbooks with regard to two types of identity options: imagined learners (targeted implicitly by the texts) and imagined interlocutors (invoked explicitly). They found that imagined learners were invariably able-bodied white heterosexual middle-class young people, members of the international elite, while their imagined interlocutors were upper- and middle-class members of Russian intelligentsia. Based on the results of their analysis, the authors argued that the books did not fully reflect the linguistic, social, ethnic and religious diversity of contemporary Russian society, nor did they address the full range of students in North American classrooms, obscuring the presence of Asian, Latino and African-American students, gay and lesbian students, disabled students, working-class students, or, for that matter, women.

The authors further argued that the biases, omissions and oversimplifications found in the texts 'represent lost opportunities for cross-cultural reflection; they may also negatively affect the students and deprive them of important means of self-representation' (Shardakova and Pavlenko 2004: 25). Notably, however, the researchers' analysis was limited to the textbooks.

In the present chapter, we will examine identity repertoires in the speech of advanced American students of Russian.

Research design

Objective. The aim of the present study was to examine resources for identity construction available to advanced American learners of Russian. While recognizing that linguistic repertoires are complex conglomerates of semantic, morphosyntactic, pragmatic and discursive resources, due to space constraints we will limit our discussion to a single resource, namely identity terms used by the learners to construct their own and others' identities. We will identify the range of terms used and the contexts in which they were used, compare the uses of identity terms by learners and native speakers of Russian in the context of the same task, and try to understand the sources of the students' difficulties and errors.

Method. To investigate the uses of identity terms we adopted a *corpus-based approach* to the study of learner language. In this approach, data are collected from a group of learners (here, advanced American learners of Russian) and from native speakers of the learners' L2 (here, Russian) similar to the learner group in terms of sociodemographic and socio-educational variables. The use of the native Russian corpus allowed us to identify the range of language variation in the target language and to judge the learners against a real, rather than an idealized, reference group. In the concluding section we will return to the implications of using such a native speaker standard.

In selecting among different types of data we could have collected, we chose *elicited life stories*, that is, narratives about participants' personal experiences elicited through the use of a structured life story questionnaire, which asked questions about participants' childhood and school memories, family, friends, and career choices and aspirations (see Appendix 1). In doing so, the interview prompted the participants to categorize and name themselves and others involved in their life trajectories.

Participants. The interviews were collected from two groups of participants:

1. Thirty native speakers of Russian (21 females, 9 males) who had only minimal knowledge of either German, English or French, ages between 18 and 21, undergraduate students at Tomsk State University, Russia; and
2. Thirty advanced American learners of Russian (15 females, 15 males), undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in sixth- and seventh-level and in graduate-level Russian courses in the intensive immersion programme at the Middlebury Summer Russian School, Middlebury College, Vermont, United States.

The age range of the learners was wider than in the native speaker corpus: 19 participants (9 females, 10 males) were between the ages of 19 and 24 (mean = 22.2), 11 participants (6 females, 5 males) were between the ages of 28 and 56 (mean = 35.7). While the students differed in the length of study of the language (range 1–16 years, mean = 5.3), their skills were relatively similar. On a 7-point Likert scale where 1 equaled 'poor' and 7 'native-like', most saw themselves as best at reading (mean = 4.9) and weakest at writing (mean = 4.2) with listening (mean = 4.7) and speaking skills (mean = 4.3) somewhere in between.

Data collection and analysis. To collect the data for the study, we chose to conduct oral interviews, rather than elicit written answers, because oral narratives are more representative of spontaneous speech. Each participant was interviewed separately by a native speaker of Russian using the same protocol. All interviews were tape-recorded and subsequently transcribed by a native speaker of Russian. Identity terms were identified, counted and then subjected to thematic analysis which allowed us to separate them into three thematic categories (for lists of identity terms produced by each group see Appendixes 2 and 3). Because nouns constituted by far the largest category of identity terms in the narratives, they were chosen as the target lexical category for the analyses. Where relevant, however, we will extend our discussion to the uses of adjectives, noun phrases, suffixation and so on.

The uses of identity terms by the two groups were analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The quantitative analysis examined the influence of the native language on the narrative length and the size and richness of the identity lexicon. The qualitative analysis considered similarities and differences in lexical choices made by native speakers and learners of Russian, and allowed us to identify clusters of identity terms that caused difficulties for the learners. Throughout the analysis, we distinguished between *lemmas* (units of meaning or words) and *tokens* (lexical items or lexemes).

Results

Quantitative analysis

A Kolmogorov-Smirnov test revealed that all of our data (life story length, proportion of identity term tokens per narrative) are normally distributed; the additional *F-test* showed no differences in variances between the native speaker and the learner corpora in reference to the above specified parameters. We therefore used parametric statistics (independent sample *t-test* and analyses of variance (ANOVA)) to analyse the data. Table 8.1 summarizes the comparison of the American learner corpus and the Russian native speaker corpus in terms of size and lexical richness of identity vocabulary.

Table 8.1 Size and lexical richness in the life story corpora

	N of words	N of identity term lemmas	N of identity term tokens	Lexical richness of the identity lexicon
Russian corpus n = 30	32,015 mean = 1,067.2	147 mean = 4.9	1,160 mean = 38.7	0.13
American learner corpus n = 30	24,225 mean = 807.5	124 mean = 4.1	780 mean = 26.0	0.16

In terms of narrative length, we found significant differences between Russian monolinguals and American learners ($t=2.61$, $df=58$, $p<0.05$), with the American group producing shorter life stories (mean = 807.5 words, $SD=409.7$) than the Russian group (mean = 1067.2 words, $SD=356.1$). An ANOVA confirmed the significance of the language group effect ($F=6.8$, $df=1$, $p<0.05$). This result is particularly interesting because in the analysis of elicited fictional narratives from the same two groups of participants, learners' narratives were significantly longer than those of native speakers of Russian ($p<0.003$) (Pavlenko and Driagina 2007). One possible explanation is that the learners may have felt more comfortable with elicited fictional narratives, a task similar to picture and film descriptions required of them in their Russian classes. According to the comments made in the interviews and in the debriefing procedure, some students had little or no experience with self-translation in a coherent narrative format, with the focus on the content rather than on particular lexical items or grammatical structures. Their experiences with life story telling were often limited to tasks eliciting personal utterances in the form of a list (e.g., Things I like) or a dialogue; for example:

(1) Мою семью? Ой, сколько раз я сделал этот диалог. С первого класса.

(My family? Oy, how many times did I do that dialogue. From the first grade on [what the speaker means here is 'from the first Russian class on'].)

(Paul¹, 20, international affairs major)

American learners also used fewer identity term tokens than Russian monolinguals (780 vs. 1160), but there was no significant difference between the two participant groups in terms of proportion of identity-term tokens in the overall corpus ($t=0$, $df=58$, $p=ns$). The learners' overall identity lexicon was somewhat more limited than that of the Russian speakers (124 vs. 147 lemmas); however, the richness of the identity lexicon was slightly higher in

the American learner corpus than in the native speaker corpus (0.16 vs. 0.13). Therefore, quantitatively, the learner and the native speaker corpora were not significantly different from each other in terms of identity vocabulary employed in the life stories.

Qualitative analysis

Our qualitative analysis tells a somewhat different story. The analysis consisted of two steps. First, we applied thematic analysis, which allowed us to subdivide our identity term corpus into three categories: (a) family membership, age and gender; (b) profession, occupation and class; and (c) other social affiliations and characteristics. We then compared the uses of terms in each category in the native speaker and in the learner corpus both quantitatively and qualitatively, and in the learner corpus we also analysed lexical choices in terms of correctness and appropriateness (for a full list of identity terms used by the two groups, see Appendixes 2 and 3).

Family membership, age and gender

Identity terms related to family membership, age and gender constituted the largest group in both corpora. In the native speaker corpus, 26.5 per cent of all identity lemmas and 53 per cent of all tokens fell into this group. In the American learner corpus, it was 25 per cent and 55.5 per cent respectively. Analysis of the learner corpus shows that the learners were well familiar with Russian kinship terms and used them appropriately and correctly (with the exception of the lemma *kuzen* 'cousin' which is an archaic borrowing, not used in Modern Russian). They also demonstrated the mastery of basic age distinctions, differentiating, for instance, between *devochka* 'little [girl]', *devushka* 'young woman', *zhenshchina* 'woman' and *staruha* 'old woman'.

There are also, however, subtle differences in the use of family membership terms between the two participant groups. To begin with, the learner corpus is limited to kinship terms and forms of address. In turn, the native speaker corpus also contains a number of collective nouns which delineate belongingness to one's circle of family, relatives and close friends: *rodnye* (a language-specific term referring to 'people related by blood or very close spiritually, emotionally'), *rodnia* (a related and more colloquial term synonymous to *rodnye* or *rodstvenniki* 'relatives'), *blizkie* ('circle of the closest, dear people'), *lubimye* ('loved ones'). These collective nouns, derived from adjectives signifying affection, function not simply as kinship terms but as emotional membership references, saturated with feelings of closeness and intimacy. As seen in examples below, they were employed by Russian speakers to sustain the emotional warmth of passages in which they discussed their family members:

(2) Я всегда с-с большой гордостью говорю о своей родине, то есть я туда приезжаю, у меня открывается второе дыхание, буквально вот эта вот природа, вот это вот успокоение, изобилие фруктов, то есть

родные, близкие, друзья, которые меня/э то есть с которыми я уже поддерживаю отношения теплые, именно с детских лет ...

(I always speak about my motherland with-with great pride, that is, I come there, I get a second wind, literally this nature, this this serenity, abundance of fruit, that is [dear] relatives (*rodnye*), close ones (*blizkie*), friends (*druzia*), who/uhm, with whom I keep a warm relationship, precisely from childhood ...)

(Lera, 20, engineering major)

- (3) Семья ... ну ... семья у меня интересная, все любимые, мама, папа, братик ... младший.

(Family ... well ... my family is interesting, all my loved ones (*lubimye*), Mom, Dad, little brother (*bratik* DIMINUTIVE) ... younger.)

(Olga, 20, engineering major)

Native speakers of Russian also favoured adjectives from which these collective nouns are derived. Thus, adjectives *rodnoi* ('related by blood or spiritually'), *lubimyi* ('loved, beloved') and *blizkii* ('close') frequently appeared as modifiers of such terms as *drug* (friend), *druzia* ('friends'), *otnoshenia* ('relationship'), *brat* ('brother'), *gorod* ('town'), *chelovek* ('person'), *ludi* ('people') (55 tokens). As mentioned earlier, *rodnoi* ('close, native') is an untranslatable Russian word that presents a person as a blood relative even if they are not an actual member of the family in question; this meaning also extends to metaphorical usages of the word, bringing in emotional overtones absent from the English term 'native' (Levontina 2005; Wierzbicka 1997); for example:

- (4) Я очень люблю своих родителей, скучаю, потому что уже четыре месяца их не видела, все равно домой тянет, как ... ну все равно ... хотя, конечно, Томск уже как бы стал родной дом.

(I love my parents very much, miss them, because [I] haven't seen them for four months now, [I] still really want to go home, well ... still ... although, of course, Tomsk already became like home [*rodnoi dom*, literally 'native, related/ kin home'].)

(Sasha, 20, engineering major)

Interestingly, while American learners did not use the nouns in this semantic domain, they are beginning to appropriate the adjectives: we found 11 tokens of *rodnoi*, *blizkii* and *lubimyi* in their narratives; for example:

- (5) А может быть десять лет назад мои родители, то есть мама и отчим, переместились в Вашингтон ..., так что я не знаю новый дом так

хорошо. Так что для меня, я считаю, что как бы родной дом или семейный дом, это первый дом все-таки для меня.

(And maybe ten years ago my parents, that is mother and stepfather, moved to Washington ..., so I don't know the new house that well. So for me I consider that the native home (*rodnoi dom*) or family home is still the first house for me.)

(Ben, 31, graduate student in Slavic languages and literature)

Another feature that differentiates the native speaker corpus from the learner corpus is the use of kinship terms, such as *dedushka* ('grandpa'), *diaden'ka* ('uncle'; colloq.), *teten'ka* ('auntie'; colloq.) and *bratok* ('brother'; colloq.), in reference to non-family members. Levontina (2005) comments that the metaphor of kinship is widely used in colloquial Russian for a variety of affective purposes, most often to signal a warm quasi-kin relationship, and at times also to signal a somewhat dismissive attitude; for example:

- (6) Я бы хотела там поработать. Тем более как бы у нас специалистов таких с высшим образованием нету, ну там уже как бы все такие старые тетеньки работают, ну, есть как бы перспективы наверно.

(I would like to work for a while there. Especially because we are lacking such specialists with higher education, well, it's like old ladies [*teten'ki*; literally *aunties*] are working there, so there is a future in this, probably.)

(Larissa, 20, engineering major)

Similar trends are seen in the use of diminutives and expressive derivation. Native speakers of Russian use more diminutive nouns when speaking of others in their circle than do American learners (19 tokens vs. 5 tokens, excluding nouns that are inherently diminutive in form, e.g., *devochka* ('girl'), *babushka* ('grandmother')). This difference in usage once again reflects a linguistic and cultural difference: While there are some diminutives in English (e.g., Mommy, kiddie, auntie), in Russian the use of diminutives and expressive derivation of personal names (e.g., *Elena* > *Lenochka* ('little Helen')) is widespread, diminutive suffixes play a prominent role in personal interactions by signalling feelings of warmth, affection and intimacy (Wierzbicka 1984, 1992); for example:

- (7) У меня мама, папа, есть еще младший братишка, на четыре года меня младше, Павлик.

(I have Mom, Dad, there is also a little brother (*bratishka* DIM.), four years younger than me, *Pavlik* [*< Pavel*, expressive derivation].)

(Lena, 20, business and management major)

A few learners, however, have begun to appropriate these language- and culture-specific uses of diminutives; for example:

- (8) Если моя мама расстроилась или что-то случилось, со/собака знает и сразу к ней подходит и 'Не плачь, мамочка, пожалуйста'.

(If my Mom is upset or something happened the do/dog knows and right away comes to her and 'Don't cry, Mommy [*mamochka*, DIM], please'.)

(Laura, 23, Russian major)

Overall, however, we see that advanced learners in our study use kinship-, age- and gender-related terms appropriately in their literal meanings, but do not yet have mastery of their metaphoric extensions to non-blood relatives, of the nouns in the semantic domain of *rodnoi/blizkii* ('close one'), and of affective uses of the kinship terms, diminutives and expressive derivation.

Profession, occupation and class

The second category of identity terms in our analysis is profession or occupation of the life story protagonists (42.2 per cent of all lemmas and 16 per cent of all tokens in the native speaker corpus, and 47.5 per cent and 23.7 per cent respectively in the learner one). The American learners used 50 different Russian terms for various professions and occupations, closely approximating the breadth of the native speaker lexicon. At the same time, 22 per cent of the terms (41 tokens) were used by the learners inappropriately. These errors can be subdivided into three types. The first type involves formal errors, whereby the learners distort the phonological or morphological form of the word; for example:

- (9) Я вырос в много местах ... да, я жил в семь штатах. потому что мой отец был *цветоцик / цветощиком, он работал в церковь/в церкви.

(I grew up in many places ... yes, I lived in seven states, because my father was *tsvetoshchik /tsvetoshchikom* [should be *svyashchennikom* ('minister')], he worked at the church/at the church [changes the ending].)

(Jeff, 24, graduate student in international studies)

The second type involves cases where learners simply lacked the appropriate terms and code-switched to English in order to fill their lexical gaps; for example:

- (10) И моя старшая сестра ... она ... работает кем-нибудь. Она была *social worker.

(And my older sister ... she ... works as someone. She was a *social worker*.)

(Paul, 20, international affairs major)

- (11) Да, а моя мама она работала/она была учитель американской истории, но и потом, она, ну, после мой брат родил/родились/родился он/она больше не работала / ну она работала как, я не знаю как сказать, с налогами, не знаю, *consultant или что-то ...

(Yes, and my mother she worked/she was a teacher of American history, but and later, she, well, after my brother was bo/born/born she/she no longer worked/ well, she worked as a, I don't know how to say, with taxes, I don't know, *consultant* or something ...)

(Laura, 20, Russian major)

- (12) А у меня брат есть, просто человек такой ((смеется)). Ааа но он будет стать *lieutenant в армии ...

(And I have a brother, simply such a person ((laughs)) Aah but he will become a *lieutenant* in the army ...)

(Mark, 21, Spanish major)

The learners also experienced lexical difficulties in discussing class issues, appealing to circumlocution and direct speech to overcome vocabulary limitations and to transmit the American notions of class; for example:

- (13) Ой, мой отец он работает плотником и он владелец своего бизнеса. Он более-менее успешный, более-менее богатый, но мы/мы как средний класс. Мы не как 'О, мой отец только врач, и моя мама *юрист. Мы средний класс'. Это как настоящий средний класс. И у нас есть минивэн и так далее.

(Oy, my father, he works as a carpenter and he is the owner of his business. He is more or less successful, more or less rich, but we/ we are middle-class. We are not like 'Oh, my father is only a doctor, and my mother a *irist*. We are middle-class.' This is real middle-class. We have a *minivan* [lexical borrowing] etc.)

(Paul, 20, international affairs major)

Interestingly, while *irist* is one possible translation of the term 'lawyer', in the present context it does not work, because the core meaning of the term *irist* is a 'legal specialist' or 'legal consultant'. To convey the notion of a 'wealthy lawyer', the speaker would need a different word, *advokat* ('defence lawyer'). This error, stemming from the fact that the English-language

category of 'lawyer' is quite broad while the corresponding Russian domain is more differentiated, exemplifies the third category, semantic errors.²

Somewhat unexpectedly, the learners – undergraduate and graduate students themselves – made the most errors when using academic terms. For instance, Russian differentiates between 'secondary school students' (*ucheniiki, shkol'niki*) and 'college or university students' (*studenty*). Consequently, when describing their secondary school experience, native Russian speakers used such terms as *odnoklassnik/odnoklassnitsa* ('male/female classmate'; 17 tokens), *shkol'nik* ('schoolchild'; 1 token), and *uchenik* ('pupil'; 2 tokens). It is only in discussions of their experiences in higher education that they used the word *student* ('college/university student'; 7 tokens). In English, on the other hand, the term 'student' has a very broad semantic scope, referring not only to college and university but also to secondary school students. It is not surprising, then, that several American learners committed first language (L1) transfer, mistakenly extending the use of the Russian word *student* to pre-college studies, both in secondary school and even in the nursery school (12 erroneous tokens); for example:

- (14) ... я/я была *студентом немецкого языка и я/я всегда хотел изучать ц/самый странный язык, и когда я был на/в школе, это был немецкий, и сейчас в колледже я/я изучаю русск/русский язык ...

(... I/I was a *student* of German, and I/I always wanted to study the/strangest language, and when I was in/at school, it was German, and now in college I/I study Russian ...)

(George, 20, history major)

- (15) Но я был неплохим *студентом, и когда мне было одиннадцать лет, я начинал как специальную школу как для особенных хороших *студентов литературы и истории и социальных вещей и социальных/ социальных ученых или что-то, не знаю.

(But I was not a bad *student*, and when I was 11 years old, I began a special school, for particularly good *students* of literature and history and social things and social/social scholars or something, I don't know.)

(John, 20, history major)

The learners also misused the term *professor* (20 tokens, all erroneous). This term is also only a partial cognate of the Russian word *professor*. In English, 'professor' may function as a rank term and as a form of address for a variety of college- and university- level instructors. In Russian, on the other hand, the use of the term is limited to those occupying the rank similar to that of a full professor in the United States or a Chair in the United Kingdom. School

teachers are referred to as *uchitel'ia* ('teachers') or *prepodavately* ('instructors') and college faculty as *prepodavately* ('instructors'); for example:

- (16) Ну, мама преподавателем – она работает преподавателем в моей же школе, где я учился.

(Well, Mom is a teacher [instructor] – she works as a teacher [instructor] at the very school where I studied.)

(Aleksei, 21, engineering major)

The learners, however, once again committed semantic extension driven by the L1 transfer and used the term *professor* to refer to their university instructors or even school teachers, as in the discussion of high school below:

- (17) Я была отличная *студентка и ... я много читала и я любила рисовать и ... разговаривать конечно. И я/всегда *teacher/*мичеры *профессоры всегда были сердиты на меня.

(I was an excellent *student* and I ... read a lot and I liked to draw and ... talk of course. And I/always *teachers* ... *teachery* [lexical borrowing], *professors* were angry at me.)

(Mary, 20, Russian area studies major)

While it is understandable that such partial cognates may lead to semantic extension in beginning students of Russian, it was unexpected to discover that these errors systematically appear in the speech of advanced students. Most introductory and intermediate textbooks present students with a full set of terms referring to students and teachers, or at least differentiate between college and secondary school students and instructors (e.g., Kagan and Miller 1996; Martin and Zaitsev 2001; Morris, Vyatyutnev and Vokhmina 1993; Rosengrant and Lifschitz 1996). Kagan and Miller (1996: 395), for instance, differentiate between *shkol'nik/shkol'nitsa* (elementary school student), *uchenik/uchenitsa* (school student), *student/studentka* (college student), and *aspirant/aspirantka* (graduate student).

Without further inquiry into acquisition of these terms it is impossible to determine precisely why these distinctions have not been acquired by the students in our study yet the data strongly suggest that further attention needs to be paid to the teaching of these identity categories. Considering the centrality of academic terminology for the students' presentation of self, we argue that, in order to avoid fossilization of semantic extensions, academic identity terms – and in particular false and partial cognates – need to be introduced in the teaching materials early on, repeatedly, and in a contextualized and contrastive manner that helps the learners to differentiate

systematically between different types of students and teachers and thus avoid misunderstandings in communication with their Russian interlocutors.

Other social affiliations and characteristics

The third category in our study involved references to social affiliations and characteristics (29.3 per cent of lemmas and 31 per cent of tokens in the native speaker corpus, and 27.5 per cent of lemmas and 20.8 per cent of tokens in the learner corpus). Both native speakers and American learners of Russian employed a wide variety of terms to refer to their own and others' social affiliations and characteristics, although native speakers demonstrated a slightly more diverse lexical repertoire than the learners (43 vs. 34 lemmas respectively).

The learners also exhibited three types of errors in references to social affiliations. The first type of error was semantic extension, this time in the domain of friendship. Native speakers of Russian systematically distinguished between different types of friends and acquaintances, such as *drug/podругa* ('close male/female friend'; 158 tokens), *znakomyi* ('acquaintance'; 33 tokens), *priyatel'* ('person one is in a friendly, affectionate relationship with'; 5 tokens) and *tovarishch* ('comrade, friend, mate'; 2 tokens); for example:

- (18) Ну у меня так, я могу сказать, что у меня в принципе больше не друзей, а приятелей, таких очень близких мне людей / таких друзей очень близких у меня мало как бы. Ну вот приятелей, знакомых много, есть с кем пойти, там, повеселиться, но чтобы с кем-то такие вот были очень близкие отношения таких людей мало.

(Well, I can say that actually that I have more *priyateli* rather than *druz'ya*, it's like very close/such close *druz'ya* I have very few. But I have many *priyateli*, *znakomye*, I have people to go out with, to have fun, but to have a very close relationship with, I have very few such people.)

(Larissa, 20, engineering major)

The use of these terms by the speaker reflects a central characteristic of Russian discourse, frequently discussed by linguists – categorical distinctions made between close friends (*drug/podruga*) and various types of acquaintances (Shmelyov 2005; Wierzbicka 1997, 1999). In contrast, in English the word 'friend' has a much broader semantic scope and can be used in reference to close friends and recent acquaintances alike. In accordance with the English-language pattern, American learners of Russian used the terms *drug/podruga* 54 times, with only one mention of *znakomyi* and *priyatel'*.

Similar to the case of academic identity terms, this performance reflects L1 transfer of a conceptual category delineated by English into Russian: the

learners are either unable or unwilling to utilize the full Russian lexicon of friendship. While it is the learners' choice whether or not to attend to the specificity of social relationships in their speech, they should be made aware of the importance that Russians place on identifying someone as a friend: overuse of the term *drug* (friend) can lead to misunderstanding, awkwardness or perception of the speaker as a shallow person by the Russian interlocutors.

The second set of errors involved substitution of ethnic and national identity nouns with adjectives; for example:

- (19) Моя мама сама русская, *белорусская ...

(My mother herself is Russian, *Belorussian* [should have been *белоруска*] ...)

(Steve, 24, graduate student in Russian)

- (20) ... ну в моей школе все были *итальянские и это был итальянский район ...

(... in my school everyone was *Italian* [should have been *итальянцы*] and it was an Italian area ...)

(Kate, 23, graduate student in Russian)

- (21) Ой, у меня большая ирландская семья, это не редко в Нью-Йорке. Ты еврей, *ирландский или *итальянский, если ты живешь в Нью-Йорке. И русский конечно ...

(Oy, I have a big Irish family, this is not a rarity in New York. You are a Jew, *Irish* or *Italian* [should have been *ирландец* или *итальянец*], if you live in New York. And Russian of course ...)

(Paul, 20, international affairs major)

These category errors also stem from transfer, as English uses the same words as ethnic and national identity adjectives and nouns, both single and collective. Russian, on the other hand, has distinct nouns and adjectives in this category (e.g., *frantsuz/frantsuzhenka*: 'French (person)' (noun, masc. and fem.), *frantsuzy*: 'the French' (collective noun), *frantsuzskii/frantsuzskaia*: 'French' (adjective, masc and fem)). The most notable exception in Russian is, in fact, the word 'Russian' itself, where the same form *ruskii* (masc.)/*ruskaia* (fem.) is used both as a noun and as an adjective. In the majority of the other cases students are asked to learn corresponding adjectives and nouns. Yet, even though they are warned against confusing the two categories and offered the appropriate vocabulary from the introductory level on, for some learners the confusion between structural categories persists.

The third set of problems involved cases where translation equivalents do not exist or at least are unfamiliar to the students. In these cases the students resorted to code-switching in characterizing people; for example:

- (22) Был очень трудно из-за того как я/меня считали как *scapegoat, что и дети как всегда смеялись на меня.

(It was very difficult because I/I was considered a *scapegoat*, and children always laughed at me.)

(Laura, 20, Russian major)

- (23) Она самая умная/ самый умный человек в моей семье ... Но она очень, но она большой *nerd, и ей так чуть-чуть грустно в школе.

(She is the smartest/the smartest member of my family ... But she is very, she is a big *nerd*, and it is somewhat sad in school for her.)

(Paul, 20, international affairs major)

We are not however concerned about this code-switching, especially because the switches appeared in interviews with a speaker bilingual in Russian and English. It is quite possible that in conversations with Russian speakers who are not fluent in English, the learners would express these meanings differently, for instance, appealing to circumlocution.

Discussion and conclusions

To sum up, the American learner corpus in our study contains numerous instances of correct and appropriate uses of identity terms referring to kinship, profession, social affiliations, age, gender, looks and personality. At the same time, the learners' usage differs qualitatively from that of native speakers of Russian, exhibiting the following distinguishing characteristics: (a) semantic and conceptual transfer evident in semantic extensions; (b) structural transfer; (c) lexical gaps evident in instances of code-switching and lexical borrowing; (d) narrow, and mainly literal, scope or reference; and (e) reduced affective range. The finding that the students have a reduced affective range of identity terms, seen in the lack of mastery of metaphoric uses of kinship terms, diminutives and expressive derivation, is consistent with our overall finding that advanced American learners of Russian have difficulties with authentic emotional expression and description in their L2 Russian (Pavlenko and Driagina 2007).

Together, these errors and weaknesses signal three main problems in self-translation and self-representation. The instances of code-switching and lexical borrowing suggest that sometimes the learners do not know how to map their own reality appropriately onto the Russian semantic map. This is a

common problem that stems not only from lexical gaps but also from social and cultural differences between the two speech communities. Second, taken together, lexical gaps, the lack of metaphoric extensions, and reduced affective range suggest that the students have a somewhat limited array of resources at their disposal, which is also to be expected in the case of classroom learners. A more disconcerting problem is presented by the cases where students map their own reality inappropriately onto Russian, as seen in the transfer of the all-encompassing L1 categories 'friend', 'lawyer', 'professor' and 'student' into the L2. These instances of semantic and possibly conceptual transfer reflect a lack of understanding of the internal structure of important Russian identity categories, all of which are more semantically differentiated than their English counterparts.

Unfortunately, we have been unable to elicit any references to race, sexuality or (dis)ability. It is unclear whether these references did not occur because of the students' lack of relevant vocabulary, because of the limited scope of our questionnaire, or because of the students' perceptions of these topics as irrelevant or taboo. Consequently, we were unable to address Shardakova and Pavlenko's (2004) arguments about the effects of omission of this vocabulary in the Russian textbooks. We did, however, identify an even more important problem – the fact that semantic and structural non-equivalences lead to difficulties in acquisition and use even for those identity terms that are well-represented in the textbooks.

A major limitation of the corpus analysed here is the lack of any descriptions of negotiation of identities with Russian-speaking interlocutors. This limitation is intentional and can be explained by our criteria for participant selection. Because we were interested in learners who acquired their identity repertoires primarily through classroom instruction, our learner group included only a few learners who had any experience in the Russian-speaking context. In order to see how cross-cultural contact is perceived and experienced, and how it transforms and expands learners' identity repertoires, future studies could examine identity repertoires of American learners before, during and after a study abroad experience, where most, if not all, will have had numerous attempts at self-translation in interactions with Russian interlocutors.

Another limitation of our findings is the exclusive focus on identity terms and, more specifically, nouns. While we found this focus to be extremely informative and well-linked to presentation of the terms in foreign language textbooks, in future studies it would be important to consider a full range of semantic, morphosyntactic, pragmatic and prosodic self-presentation resources used by the students.

We also realize that the approach taken here can be seen as an imposition of native speaker standard, and perhaps even of monolingual bias. We argue, however, that this approach is in fact consistent with the multicompetence model and the L2 user perspective (Cook 2002). To begin with, we take an emic – that is, student – perspective on the goals of our study, which is

consistent with the L2 user approach (Pavlenko 2002). The participants in our study do want to be compared to native speakers of Russian, not because this is who they want to be, but because these are their prospective interlocutors with whom they have to reach an understanding. And since semantic errors outlined above will affect communication, the students are interested in knowing where and how they can fine-tune their uses and interpretations of identity terms.

Second, in accordance with the multicompetence perspective, we acknowledge the hybrid and multilingual nature of their repertoires and do not exhibit concern with formal errors that do not affect communication, nor with code-switching and lexical borrowing. Rather, we are concerned with 'hidden' semantic errors whereby students impose their own worldview onto the new reality and miss out on the opportunity to learn new ways of presenting and interpreting identities.

Most importantly, in line with the multicompetence model, we are concerned with self-translation, that is with ways in which L2 users of Russian appeal to their linguistic repertoires to translate what is often untranslatable, their identities as Americans, into Russian. We do not expect that they will create artificial Russian identities for themselves. Rather, we are concerned with providing them with adequate means of self-expression and with alerting them to conceptual non-equivalences.

Our inquiry suggests that to acquire a fuller range of Russian identity terms and thus new interpretive repertoires, the learners will need a variety of consciousness-raising and noticing activities focused on cross-linguistic differences between Russian and English identity terms. For the learners to internalize the terms non-equivalent to English, more opportunities must be created in the classroom to discuss topics relevant to their lives and identities and more space for tasks that appeal to their motivation and ignite interest in expressing themselves through the means of the Russian language.

Notes

1. To protect the confidentiality of participants, all names have been changed.
2. Without further inquiry we cannot decide whether all of these errors also represent the case of conceptual transfer, consequently, we will use the more moderate term 'semantic'.

APPENDIX 1

Life Story Interview Guide

1. When and where were you born?
2. Please tell me about your childhood.
3. When and where did you go to school?
4. Please tell me about your school years.
5. Where were you and how old were you when the Soviet Union ceased to exist? (Only for Russian participants)
6. Please tell me about ways in which you managed life in the Soviet Union and ways in which you managed life in Russia. (Only for Russian participants)
7. Please tell me about your current educational status and your future plans.
8. Please tell me about your career plans and why you decided to choose your particular career.
9. Please tell me about your family.
10. Please tell me about your friends.

APPENDIX 2

Identity Terms in the Russian Corpus

(Total lemmas = 147, tokens = 1160)

Family membership, age and gender (lemmas = 39; 26.5%; tokens = 616; 53%)	Profession, occupation, and class (lemmas = 65; 44.2% tokens = 184; 16%)	Other social affiliations and characteristics (lemmas = 43; 29.3% tokens = 360; 31%)
бабушка (grandma) 32	автомеханик (auto mechanic) 1	болельщик (sports fan) 1
близкие (close people) 2	администратор (administrator) 3	братки (col., gangsters) 1
близняшки (dim., twins) 1	аудитор (auditor) 2	выпускники (alumni) 1
брат (brother) 57	бакалавр (bachelor) 3	гражданин (masc., citizen) 1
братик (dim., brother) 1	бандит (bandit) 1	друг (friend) 128
братишка (dim., brother) 2	бухгалтер (accountant) 2	земляк (fellow-townsmen) 4
взрослые (adults) 6	водитель (driver) 5	знакомый (masc., acquaintance) 33
девочка (little girl) 12	воспитатель (pre-school teacher) 2	индивидуум (individual) 1
девчонка (dim., girl) 3	врач (doctor) 3	иностранец (masc., foreigner) 1
девушка (young woman; girlfriend) 17	директор (director) 5	казах (masc., Kazakh) 1
дед (grandfather) 4	диспетчер (dispatcher) 1	казахстанец (masc., citizen of Kazakhstan) 1
дедушка (grandpa) 7	двоечник (poor student) 1	коллега (colleague) 2
двоюродный брат (male cousin) 3	домохозяйка (housewife) 1	коммунист (communist) 1
дочка (dim., daughter) 2	заводила (ringleader) 1	личность (persona, personality) 3
дочь (daughter) 2	завуч (school headmaster) 3	любимца (fem., favorite) 1
дяденька (col., dim., man) 1	инженер (engineer) 25	люди (people) 53
жена (wife) 4	инспектор (inspector) 1	народ (collective, people) 2
женщина (woman) 10	историчка (col., history teacher) 1	одноклассник (masc., classmate in university) 6
любимые (loved ones) 2	консультант (consultant) 1	одноклассница (fem., classmate in university) 2
мальчик (boy) 7	лидер (leader) 2	
мальчишка (dim., boy) 6	лингвист (linguist) 1	
мама (Mom) 86	маляр (house-painter) 1	
магушка (dim., Mom) 1	медик (medic) 1	
	менеджер (manager) 7	

мать (mother) 8	метролог (metrology engineer) 2	одноклассник (masc., classmate) 13
муж (husband) 5	механизатор (mechanical engineer) 1	одноклассница (fem., classmate) 4
мужчина (man, male) 4	механик (mechanic) 2	октябренок (young pioneer) 1
отец (father) 25	милиционер (militia man) 1	отличник (masc., straight-A student) 1
папа (Dad) 50	начальник (boss) 2	отличница (fem., straight-A student) 1
парень (guy, boyfriend) 16	нянечка (dim., care-giver) 1	пацанка (col., fem., tomboy) 2
племянница (niece) 1	охранник (guard) 2	первопроходец (explorer, inciter) 1
ребенок (child) 45	переводчик (interpreter) 1	пионер (pioneer) 2
родители (parents) 151	повар (cook) 1	подруга (female friend) 28
родные (relatives) 1	президент (president) 2	подружка (dim., female friend) 2
родня (col., relatives) 1	преподаватель (teacher; instructor) 9	приятель (masc., friend) 5
родственник (relative) 8	программист (programmer) 1	проказник (masc., mischievous child; prankster) 1
сестра (sister) 21	пропраб (work superintendent) 1	ребята (guys, friends) 2
сестренка (dim., sister) 7	психолог (psychologist) 2	россияне (Russian citizens) 1
сын (son) 4	рабочий (worker) 3	русский (masc., Russian) 1
тетенька (col., dim., woman) 1	радиооператор (radio technician) 1	советчик (masc., mentor) 1
	руководитель (manager) 8	сосед (masc., neighbor) 3
	сертификатор (certifier) 1	соседка (fem., neighbor) 1
	специалист (specialist) 4	тёзка (namesake) 1
	стандартизатор (standard controller) 1	товарищ (masc., friend) 2
	стоматолог (dentist) 1	томич (resident of Tomsk) 4
	строитель (construction worker) 3	трудоголик (workaholic) 1
	студент (student) 4	человек (human being) 38
	токарь (turner) 4	
	тракторист (tractor driver) 1	
	тренер (coach) 1	
	управленец (administrator, manager) 2	
	управляющий (manager) 1	
	ученик (pupil, student) 2	

(Continued)

Family membership, age and gender (lemmas = 39; 26.5%; tokens = 616; 53%)	Profession, occupation, and class (lemmas = 65; 44.2% tokens = 184; 16%)	Other social affiliations and characteristics (lemmas = 43; 29.3% tokens = 360; 31%)
	учитель (<i>masc.</i> , teacher) 19	
	учительница (<i>fem.</i> , teacher) 8	
	фармацевт (pharmacist) 1	
	футболист (football player) 1	
	химик (chemist) 2	
	шахтер (miner) 2	
	швея (seamstress) 1	
	школьники (schoolchildren) 1	
	шофер (driver) 1	
	штукатур (plasterer) 1	
	экономист (economist) 5	
	электрик (electrician) 3	

Note: *dim.* = diminutive form; *col.* = colloquial; *collective* = collective noun; *fem.* = feminine noun; *masc.* = masculine noun.

APPENDIX 3

Identity Terms in the Learner Corpus

(Total lemmas = 124, tokens = 780)

Family membership, age and gender (lemmas = 31; 25%; tokens = 433; 55.5%)	Profession/occupation (lemmas = 59; 47.5%; tokens = 185; 23.7%)	Other social affiliations and characteristics (lemmas = 34; 27.5% tokens = 162; 20.8%)
бабушка (grandma) 17	*автор (author, used in the meaning of writer = писатель) 1	американец (<i>masc.</i> , American) 9
близнец (twin) 1		американка (<i>fem.</i> , American) 1
брат (brother) 68	адвокат (lawyer) 4	англичанин (Englishman) 2
внук (grandson) 1	актер (actor) 2	*белорусская = белоруска (Belarusian) 1
девочка (little girl) 6	аспирант (graduate student) 4	блондин (<i>masc.</i> , blonde) 1
девушка (young woman; girlfriend) 4	балерина (<i>fem.</i> , ballet dancer) 1	богачик (<i>col.</i> , nerd) 2
дедушка (grandpa) 16	банкир (banker) 1	гуманист (humanitarian) 1
двоюродный брат / сестра (cousin) 5	врач (doctor) 3	*заводила = заводила (ringleader) 1
дочка (<i>dim.</i> , daughter) 3	губернатор (governor) 1	друг (friend) 40
жена (wife) 4	дипломат (diplomat) 1	еврей (Jew) 3
женщина (woman) 11	доктор (doctor) 1	знакомые (acquaintances) 1
кузен (<i>book.</i> , male cousin) 1	журналист (journalist) 1	иммигрантка (<i>fem.</i> , immigrant) 1
	инженер (engineer) 2	иностранец (<i>masc.</i> , foreigner) 2
мальчик (boy) 9	исследователь (researcher) 2	*итальянский = итальянец (Italian) 2
мама (Mom) 57	кандидат (candidate) 1	*ирландский = ирландец (Irish) 1
мамочка (Mommy) 1	медсестра (nurse) 1	любител (fan) 1
мать (mother) 6	менеджер (manager) 3	люди (people) 27
	музыкант (musician) 3	наркоман (drug addict) 2
*молодежь (youth) 2	официантка (waitress) 1	
муж (husband) 2	пастырь (preacher) 1	
отец (father) 37	пенсия (pension) 3	
отчим (step-father) 2	пенсия (<i>fem.</i> , pensioner) 2	
папа (Dad) 33	переводчик (interpreter) 5	немец (<i>masc.</i> ,) German 1
парень (guy; boyfriend) 1	*печатальник (printer) 1	подруга (female friend) 13
*подростник =	первокурсник (freshman; also used incorrectly to refer to first grader = первоклассник) 2	подружка (<i>dim.</i> , female friend) 1
подросток (teenager) 1		приятель (<i>masc.</i> , friend) 1
ребенок (child) 29		русский (<i>masc.</i> , Russian) 4

(Continued)

Family membership, age and gender (lemmas = 31; 25%; tokens = 433; 55.5%)	Profession/occupation (lemmas = 59; 47.5%; tokens = 185; 23.7%)	Other social affiliations and characteristics (lemmas = 34; 27.5% tokens = 162; 20.8%)
родители (parents) 55	писатель (writer) 2	сосед (<i>masc.</i> , neighbor) 5
родственник (relative) 3	плотник (carpenter) 1	соседка (<i>fem.</i> , neighbor) 1
сестра (sister) 49	поэт (poet) 1	украинка (<i>fem.</i> , Ukrainian) 1
старуха (old woman) 1	президент (president) 2	феминистка (<i>fem.</i> , feminist) 1
сын (son) 5	преподаватель (<i>masc.</i> , teacher; instructor) 10	хулиган (hooligan) 2
тетя (aunt) 2		человек (human being) 28
троюродные братья и	преподавательница (<i>fem.</i> , teacher; instructor) 6	чемпионка (<i>fem.</i> , champion) 2
сестры (second cousins) 1	программист (programmer) 2	*чек=чех (<i>masc.</i> , Czech) 1
	*профессор (full professor) 20	шатен (person with brown hair) 1
	психотерапевт (psychotherapist) 3	*nerd 1
	работник (employee; worker) 1	*scapegoat 1
	репетитор (tutor) 2	
	редактор (editor) 2	
	режиссер (movie director) 3	
	секретарь (secretary) 1	
	секретарша (<i>fem.</i> , secretary) 2	
	*социальный ученый = социолог (sociologist) 1	
	специалист (specialist) 2	
	спортсмен (<i>masc.</i> , athlete) 2	
	спортсменка (<i>fem.</i> , athlete) 1	
	студент (student) 31	
	(out of these 12	
	*студент = ученик, pupil)	
	судья (judge) 3	
	танцор (dancer) 1	
	ученик (pupil, student) 1	
	учитель (<i>masc.</i> , teacher) 12	
	учительница (<i>fem.</i> , teacher) 14	
	*цветошник = священник (minister) 1	
	футболист (football player) 1	
	художник (artist) 3	
	художница (<i>fem.</i> , artist) 1	
	школьники (schoolchildren) 1	

*юрист (lawyer) 1
 *consultant 1
 *lieutenant 1
 *photographer 1
 *social worker 1

Note: *book.* = bookish; *dim.* = diminutive form; *col.* = colloquial; *collective* = collective noun;
fem. = feminine noun; *masc.* = masculine noun; * word used inappropriately