

Languaging Diversity

Volume 2

Languaging Diversity Volume 2:

Variationist Approaches and Identities

Edited by

Siria Guzzo and David Britain

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LANGUAGING IDENTITIES: AN INTRODUCTION

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Following the publication of *Languaging Diversity: Identities, Genres, Discourses*, edited by Giuseppe Balirano and Maria Cristina Nisco in 2015, this volume of eight essays, based on papers presented at the first *Languaging Diversity International Conference* held at the University of Naples L'Orientale in 2013, aims to further explore the complex sociolinguistic manifestation of identity and diversity.

The role of identity in our understanding of language has been both centre-stage and yet controversial since the beginning of sociolinguistics, understood, instrumentalised and applied in different ways, by different scholars, in different sub-disciplines of sociolinguistics, at different times. On the one hand, this is to be expected, of course. As Bucholtz and Hall (2005: 607) suggested, “identity in all its complexity can never be contained within a single analysis”. There never has been, and likely never will be one centralising approach to identity, with accompanying methodological apparatus, that will ultimately satisfy the different needs of scholars across our diverse discipline, an approach that could cope at once with both subtle shifts in vowels, the deployment of discourse structures in talk, as well as societally hegemonic language ideologies. On the other hand, they also stress that while

“linguistic research on identity has become increasingly central within sociolinguistics, linguistic anthropology, discourse analysis, and social psychology... the concomitant development of theoretical approaches to identity remains at best a secondary concern, not a focused goal of the field”

(Bucholtz and Hall 2005: 585).

We have largely let identity speak for itself and few have attempted to coherently define it, theorise its relationship with language, or, just as important, propose a set of methodological and analytical tools by which we can study it. Some researchers have been cautious about resorting to arguments that deploy ‘identity’ as an explanatory concept, partly, it seems, because of the plethora of different conceptualisations of the term, and partly because of the frequent failure of scholars to sufficiently define how they are understanding and deploying the concept in their own research. And post-hoc explanations driven by ‘identity’ are rarely satisfactory or enlightening.

It is our job, then, to be clear about what identity is, how we are using it in our research, and what work it is achieving in our theorisations. Some sub-disciplines of sociolinguistics have been engaged in open, public debates about the changing understanding and operationalisation of identity in their work. In our own field of variationist sociolinguistics, scholars are presenting these developments in terms of three ‘waves’ – not chronological, nor replacive, but complementary, each reinforcing the other. Much early sociolinguistic work on language variation and change did not have issues concerning identity in its sights. The inclusion of social factors in early urban Labovian sociolinguistics was not aimed at addressing questions of the social identity of speakers, but was motivated by the hunt for the social embedding of linguistic change (Weinreich, Labov and Herzog 1968). Here, coverage and replicability were foregrounded, to get a broad snapshot of what was going on in a particular variety. These have come to be known as ‘first-wave studies’ (Eckert 2012). Social factors introduced at this stage were rather ‘simple’ broad social categories like social class and speaker sex. Scholars soon began, however, to reconceptualise these social categories into more motivated markers of social identity, considering what it was about ‘being a woman’, for example, that triggered particular tendencies to, for example, lead certain types of linguistic change or resist the use of stable non-standard variants. ‘Second-wave’ studies are attempts to link language variation with social factors intimately connected with and relevant to the specific communities under study, rather than or at least as well as relying on these first wave broader categories. In many second-wave studies, social network membership was foregrounded as part of a speaker’s social identity (e.g. L. Milroy 1980, J Milroy and L Milroy 1985, Lippi-Green 1989, Cheshire 1982, Eckert 2000), but also considered were orientations to the community (famously in Labov’s (1962) Martha’s Vineyard study), and lifestyle (Gal 1979). Third-wave studies work at a much more local scale still, looking at how individuals create styles, personas and stances –

identities - through their deployment of ideologically meaningful variable language resources. Such work might examine how variation is marshalled to perform assertiveness and authority, or, for example, to put on a diva-ish persona (see, for example, Podesva 2007, 2011).

Bucholtz and Hall attempt to embrace all three of these waves into their conceptualization of identity. They argue for an interaction-focussed approach drawing from many different traditions in sociolinguistics, but also beyond, in linguistic anthropology and cultural studies. Identity is, they claim, “emergent in discourse and does not precede it ... an intersubjectively achieved social and cultural phenomenon. This discursive approach further allows us to incorporate within identity not only the broad sociological categories most commonly associated with the concept, but also more local positionings, both ethnographic and interactional” (2005: 607).

All the papers in this volume draw on the concept of identity in different ways and come from different traditions within sociolinguistics, but are nevertheless in the spirit of Bucholtz and Hall’s constructionist proposals. Together, the papers in this volume demonstrate that language choices can often be understood as *acts of identity* (Le Page & Tabouret-Keller, 1985), by means of which people’s *selves* are constructed and performed. They demonstrate how professional, cultural, ethnic and social identities are maintained or challenged through language, from different critical perspectives and by applying different methodologies.

In the first essay, **Kamila Ciepiela** examines the complex issue of ESOL teachers’ professional identities. By analysing data from classroom interactions among experienced and less-experienced teachers, Ciepiela argues that teachers’ acquired knowledge as well as social interaction with their colleagues, students and parents construe their professional identities and legitimate them in their community of practice. The second essay draws attention to ethnicity, with **Anna De Marco** and **Mariagrazia Palumbo** investigating the construction of identity in discourses of migration. On the grounds that pronominal choices are at the core of the process of identity negotiation, especially in migration, their work explores how the use of pronouns indexes Italian emigrants’ identities in 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th generation speakers who settled outside Italy, showing different patterns across generations.

Focusing on Italian diasporic identities in the UK, **Siria Guzzo** and **Margherita Di Salvo**’s work offers a comparative analysis of the speech of 1st and 3rd generation speakers in the Italian communities of Bedford and Peterborough. Taking into account three language varieties (Italian dialect, Standard Italian and English), and adopting a variationist

approach, they discuss the patterns of occurrence and socio-cultural implication of code-switching and quotatives in 1st and 3rd generation informants. Following this, the essay by **Barbara Jańczak** uncovers the process of identity negotiation in family practices, by delving into the construction of *self* in bilingual families. In her essay, data from German-Polish married couples both in Germany and in Poland are investigated. In doing so, she adopts both qualitative approaches and conversational analysis in order to point out how biculturalism is displayed in family lives, providing evidence of different displays of negotiating identities.

Shifting to inner minority languages in Great Britain, **Kirsten J. Lawson**'s research is engaged with the thorny issue of the status of Scots. In the wake of recent political developments, such as the 2014 Independence Referendum, this essay mainly questions the Scottish people's attitudes towards Scots (is it a dialect or language?) and the extent to which it is considered part of the national identity. Following this, the essay by **Benedicta Adokarley Lomotey** tackles the issue of gender ideologies in discourse. Presenting qualitative analysis and a CDA approach, she investigates how and to what extent attitudes to sexism correlate with gender categories in Ga – a Kwa language spoken in Ghana - and Spanish (languages respectively without and with gender marking), and, interestingly, whether languages can convey sexist attitudes regardless of their (non)gendered nature. Providing further evidence from Italian communities, **Mariagrazia Palumbo**'s essay deals with code alternation in the construction of emigrants' identities, exploring to what degree changing topic entails code-switching and whether this varies across generations. Considering switches from Italian to dialect and to foreign languages, she analyses the distribution of code choices among her informants according to Berruto's model. In addition, **Elisa Pellegrino** and **Marta Maffia**'s work provides an acoustic analysis of emotional speech. By means of an innovative method for data collection, which they call "Card Task", they address the issue of acoustic differences between L1 and L2 in expressive speech and how its acoustic characteristics are perceived in L2 Italian by native and non-native learners.

Finally, what is significantly highlighted by **Monica Woźniak**'s essay is the tight relationship between language and culture by means of national stereotypes. Indeed, while recalling the huge power language exerts in conveying such culture-bound images, she explains how they can spark students' critical reasoning and cultural awareness in the context of education, thus fostering a positive approach to diversity.

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REFLECTION AND KNOWLEDGE-BASED TESOL TEACHER IDENTITY

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Abstract

Competence in a target language is considered to be a major component of an ESOL teacher identity. In this paper I will argue that both the ESOL teacher's knowledge of a target language as well as their pedagogical knowledge are drawn upon in different ways. Depending on the goal and the topic of the discussion, different factors will account for variations in the ESOL teacher professional identity. In particular I will aim to demonstrate that the performance of the professional ESOL teacher identity in the community of practice is mainly affected by the reflective knowledge interactants are able to create in response to the ongoing actions of other interactants. The presentation of incompleteness and possibilities of constructing multiple professional identities will be illustrated with samples of contributions of novice and in-service teachers. The data derive from real classroom discussions among TESOL teachers and participants of postgraduate, extramural courses of English Philology at the University of Lodz, Poland.

1. Identity, language and knowledge in postmodernity

Knowledge can be interpreted in many different ways. A stance taken most frequently views knowledge as a passive repository of information that people acquire and have ready to use at any point of their life to help them cope with the diverse experiences they encounter. Such a view of knowledge as a static, stable mental network has become inadequate in postmodernism, however. At present, knowledge is being created instantly in accordance with the demands of the moment. Knowledge means the process of capturing, developing, sharing, and effectively using information. This conception draws on the reflection by Immanuel Kant who set the

tone with the question “What are we?”, implying a critical analysis of ourselves and our presence in a precise historical moment, as opposed to Descartes’ question “Who am I?”, the “I” implying a unique but universal and ahistorical subject. In our lives, people cannot draw on the cultural capital of the previous generations because of omnipresent change. In all cases, human action becomes subordinate to a creative response to changing circumstances.

For decades now, researchers in the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) have been trying to define what identity is, how it relates to a larger society, and most importantly, how it affects one’s language learning process. Studies so far have confirmed that language use is a form of self representation which is deeply connected to one’s social identities and values (Miller, 2003).

Since identity is a multi-faceted phenomenon that is constructed only in the presence of others, individuals would not be able to address the question of “Who am I?” if they do not communicate with others. Language and identity appear to be inseparable sides of the same coin. Hence a study of identity must include some consideration of language, and research on verbal communication will inform other disciplinary studies of identity. As Bourdieu (1977) notes, the value ascribed to speech cannot be understood without any reference to the person who is speaking, and the person who is speaking cannot be understood if isolated from larger networks of social relationships. Every time the person speaks, she is negotiating and renegotiating her sense of self in relation to the larger social world, and reorganizing that relationship across time and space. Characteristics such as race, social class, ethnicity, or gender are all implicated in the negotiation of identity. Identity is made visible and intelligible to others through cultural signs, symbols and practices.

Language, as an arrangement of arbitrary symbols that possess an agreed-upon significance within a community (Morris, 1946), is the most effective medium to represent and communicate stereotypes. What is meant by representation here is the symbolic function that languages perform. “The symbolic value of language, the historical and cultural associations which it has accumulated and its natural semantics of remembrance” (Steiner, 1992: 494) provide a powerful underpinning of shared connotations and identities. In this sense language remains an emblematic marker of identity.

In post modernity, there is a loss of the idea that we are gradually heading along the one true pathway toward certain universal goals – such as the full picture of knowledge, or equality and justice. Instead, there is an emphasis on multiple pathways and plurality; on diversity and difference;

and on the partiality of all knowledge (that is, the idea that we can only have an incomplete picture, and the idea that all knowledge is biased). Change is seen, not as a linear progression, but as a series of networks and flows, connections and reconnections that, because they are always forming and reforming, never have time to solidify. In a more positive sense, this brings the possibility of multiple identities, arising from the incompleteness of human practices and knowledge. The postmodern person is thus a hybrid. He or she does not have one core or permanent self, but many selves. His or her identity is not fixed, but continually in process, as the boundaries between himself or herself and others, and between the different parts of oneself are negotiated.

There is growing recognition that identity formation must become an important focus in education. In the 21st century, modes of knowledge construction and accessibility to different types of knowledge are rapidly diversifying therefore academic learning cannot be divorced from the student's development of values, goals, social roles, and positions. In the postmodern view on learning, all practice is theory informed - whether or not the practitioner is consciously aware of this. Educational practice is no exception since it is informed by a mixture of different theories - theories about learning, knowledge, personhood, justice, equality, and the purpose of schooling. All educational practitioners know these theories at a very deep, but not always at a conscious level. They have been acculturated in them as part of the process of growing up in society (including going to school), and as part of the process of becoming a teacher, a researcher, or an education policy maker. However, they do not always know them as theories - often they are thought of as just 'how things are'.

Postmodernism declares the historically and situationally contingent nature of all knowledge. It is no longer thought of as information that is developed and stored in the minds of experts, represented in books, and classified into disciplines. Instead, it is now thought of as being a form of energy and a system of networks and flows - something that does things, or makes things happen. Knowledge is defined and valued not for what it is, but for what it can do. It is produced, not by individual experts, but by 'community intelligence' - that is, groups of people with complementary expertise who collaborate for specific purposes. A new mental set is required, one that can take into account the new meaning of knowledge and the new contexts and purposes for acquiring this knowledge.

2. Language knowledge-based identity in TESOL

In this section, drawing on real, interactional data from a university classroom discussion on the issue of “what makes a teacher a teacher?” I will discuss and illustrate those aspects of teacher knowledge that, on the one hand, have received remarkable coverage in TESOL and on the other appear to contribute significantly to the situational identity of ESOL teachers.

An ESOL teacher’s knowledge is not easy to define. What constitutes this knowledge has been characterized, both historically and institutionally, in a number of distinct and often disconnected ways. Many a time now, natural knowledge of a language has been prioritized, i.e., “if you can speak the language, you can teach it” (Johnson 2009: 41). From this perspective, knowledge of language has been associated with Chomsky’s notion of linguistic competence possessed by native speakers. That is, a competent ESOL teacher should be, first and foremost, naturally competent in the language he or she teaches. Being a native speaker of a language one teaches has been found advantageous in the sense that language competence does not constrain a teacher’s pedagogical practices. Nevertheless, Medgyes (1994), acknowledging that most of the differences in teaching practice can be attributed to the discrepancy in language proficiency, claims that both types of teachers (natives and non-natives) can be equally good teachers on their own terms. Similarly, Richards (2011: 8) argues that “being able to use the appropriate discourse (and, of course, understand what they mean) is one criteria for membership in the language teaching profession.” Likewise, Wenger (1998) states that professional experiences take place within larger communities of practice, where established individuals operate competently in familiar contexts and are cognizant of how to communicate with fellow community members. In other words, knowledge of the language to be taught is considered to be one of the key ingredients of an ESOL teacher’s knowledge.

In a series of classroom discussions I moderated for participants of TESOL university courses, I found a degree of confirmation of the idea that L2 competence is vital but not critical for the fashioning of language teacher identity. What I found most bewildering was the positioning of some of the interactants as core members of the teaching community despite their poor L2 competence. To illustrate my point I will analyse a short sample of conversation between four ESOL teachers. They have been given pseudonyms: Mary, Helen, Ann, Cathy. Mary and Helen are in-service teachers with a long, teaching experience. Ann and Cathy are novices who have just completed their teaching practicum but were not

engaged in professional teaching before. The focus of the analysis will be on Mary's conversational behaviour and the way it compares with the behaviour of the two novices. Further ahead a more detailed analysis of the behaviour of the novices, Ann and Cathy will be conducted to present how different their positioning in the discussion is despite their shared experience in learning and teaching English as a foreign language.

1. Mary: I believe that I have impact on the life of my students because I suppose that not only I can learn chemistry, I learn how they can live honestly but how they can, what relationships they can have with others, what good relationships and I always tell them about rules of life so I think that a good teacher should teach not only subject but also how people should be
2. Helen: I'm not sure if I have impact on lives of my students, I think I have because they often come, after graduating school, they often come to meet me, but I know from my own experience that teachers have impact on lives of their
3. Mary: I tried to explain them that they should learn because they should achieve something to live better, in better conditions and to earn much more money, I tried to tell them that maybe now they didn't understand that knowledge (...) when they get older they change their mind towards life, towards rules
4. Ann: The influence that my teachers had on me is that I don't like school, I have very bad memories about my teachers, really, so that's why I'm here=
5. Laughter
6. Mary: =you will understand your pu[pils
7. Ann: [Yes] I will, I will be a good teacher (.)
8. Cathy: it's my turn (.)
9. Mod: So what are these bad memories you have
10. Ann: I didn't like my teachers because they tried to stop my individuality and my passions just to make me study but not make me interested in the subject, of course not all of them but most of them, some of them

11. Mary: Yet it is important to be perceived as someone who is passionate about his subject, and not only does a job and goes home
12. Mod: Any other contributions
13. Cathy: My English teacher from my middle school she had influence on me because, she taught me only one year but then I went on (.) I learned English with pleasure. I liked English but after her lessons I liked it even more. First I thought about studying History after this one year I completely changed my mind and decided to study English. She had a big influence on me
14. Ann: I think that most my teachers weren't teachers that were interested in my social development, I think that only maybe my marks, my behaviour at school was interesting
15. Mary: This is also a job where our method of work and some basic technique is really ourselves, so the kind of person we are, what we represent ourselves, this is what they really learn, in addition to the subject content. For me, this is a difficult job and one that is challenging, because not everything can be taught because when you are working yourself that is, the fatigue and sometimes you have a bad day, and it is difficult, simply you cannot separate yourself from the job. It's not like accountancy that you add and subtract numbers and the balance will be fine. Simply we work with ourselves with our person. Here go our emotions and feelings and sentiments that matter and that ability to operate with all this stuff, this is probably the toughest thing (.)
16. Cathy: Students also have their lives that teachers should con[sider]
17. Mary: [Yes], but teacher is strictly, strictly connected with everything at the time because there's no lesson without the a teacher and no teacher without a lesson when you are seven till ten and the teacher is very, very important because, why do they say "Oh, this is my teacher, my teacher!?"
18. Ann: From my point of view the teacher should be wise, friendly but should be (...) should be objective. I

think that maybe teachers should see also the (..) of students and should be friendly for pupils because I remember that the atmosphere during lessons was very stressful when I was at school especially at secondary school also during my studies when a woman wanted to humiliate a student in many cases so I remember that it was most stressful for me, from time to time I tried to avoid this subject because of this teacher not because of this subject

19. Cathy: I remember a teacher who wanted us to answer in the same words we had in our notes or our books (..) we had no right to tell in our own words but had to learn everything by heart (..) it doesn't make any sense, after the lesson he or she doesn't remember words he was talking about and I think that most important in learning is to understand the process and not facts

In her contributions, Mary makes serious grammatical mistakes, which, surprisingly, do not disqualify her as an ESOL teacher. On the contrary, the content of her contribution is recognised as important and constructive by other participants in the interaction, who, in subsequent turns, continue with their own remarks and comments that legitimize Mary's position as a core member of the community of teachers. The content of Mary's talk appears to correspond to the way she is delivering her contribution, which might account for the justification of her position as a core community member. Mary highlights two key aspects of successful teaching practice, namely: rapport between the teacher and students, which, in turn, impacts on student motivation to learn, and attitudes towards the subject matter. Her interactional behaviour is in a way a manifestation of her teaching ideals. She is actively engaging in the dialogue with other interactants. She is not only expressing her own ideas and opinions on the subject of the discussion (turns 1, 3) but she is also attending to what other interactants are saying (turn 6), which reveals her positive and empathetic attitude to other participants. Such self-positioning in the interaction may be indicative of Mary's conduct in the classroom. She seems to treat Ann and Cathy as her students. She is listening to them respectfully, yet she considers herself to be the authority whose opinion and comments should be considered valuable since they are supported by her long-lasting experience in teaching and they are given from the bottom of her heart.

The content of Mary's contributions as well as her situated verbal performance imply that formal knowledge of the subject matter the teacher teaches is of secondary importance. For Mary, to be recognised as a member of the community of language teachers means acknowledging the needs of the students and revising her own actions in order to continuously adapt to changing situational contexts and participants' requirements. This attitude is probably a consequence of a long-enduring, recurring experience of engaging in talks with many individuals who have sought advice and guidance from her. She is saying explicitly that she frequently engages in talks with her students, and that in addition to the subject matter, she wants to teach them how to live a decent, worthy life (turns 1, 3).

Mary has the ability to sense other people's emotions and detect fear or anxiety. In other words, she can empathize with others as well as put herself into someone else's shoes, and she takes advantage of this ability while interacting with other people. Taking the perspective of other interactants, she can monitor them for comprehension and interest in the topic. She also knows how much information has to be provided for the listeners to help them comprehend her messages.

Mary's interactional behaviour brings counter evidence to the argument that knowledge of the formal properties of L2 or the ability to effectively use them in real situations has a profound impact on the identification of a teacher with the community of practice (cf. Bartels, 2005; Johnston and Goettsch, 2000). Her professional identity can be described as a collection of "what we think or say about ourselves,...what others think or say about us,...and a lived experience of participation in specific communities" (Wenger, 1998: 151).

The analysis enables us to understand that the teacher identity Mary is performing is not simply based on the application of acquired knowledge or learned skills in educational contexts. Rather it involves "a much more complex cognitively driven process affected by the classroom context, the teacher's general and specific instructional goals, the teacher's beliefs and values, the learners' motivations and reactions to the lesson, and the teacher's management of critical moments during a lesson" (Richards 2011: 10). Mary has mastered the skills that seem to be crucial to an effective performance of situated identity: the skills of online management of contextual cues. She knows when and how to engage in the discussion and has the ability to draw upon relevant experience in order to present ideas and solutions that can be used in the discussion. The skills and competencies she has mastered can be successfully employed in a variety of situations, with different kinds of participants and while discussing or teaching different kinds of content. They enable her to engage in the

processes of observation, reflection, and assessment and online decision-making about which course of action to take from a range of situationally available alternatives.

Mary is building her situated, professional identity on her ability to reflect consciously and systematically on her teaching and learning experiences. This reflection involves both looking back at learning/teaching experiences as well as looking forward and setting goals for new or changed directions (Schön, 1983; Richards, 2011). Moreover, this reflection facilitates the transition from seeing herself as a self-contained independent individual to seeing herself as a member of a community of practice. It also leads to positive social appraisal (Kwiatkowska, 2005) and allows Mary as a reflective practitioner to rise to the role of an agentic subject or social actor (Mead, 1934) who recognises her practice as a process that goes beyond her own limitations.

Making further contributions, in turn 15, Mary equates teaching with the teacher. The claim that a teacher as a person is inherently present in teaching emphasizes the momentary and fleeting nature of teacher identity. The teacher takes on different roles in varied contexts since, depending on the situation, some elements of the identity mosaic come to the fore and others are overshadowed and pushed into the background. In one context, the teacher can simply be an instructor, while in others the teacher can be both a partner and collaborator. In other situations he or she can play the role of the evaluator. Within one classroom, the teacher can take on several roles to adjust to short-lived alternations in situational demands. Identity, therefore, is a social-semiotic construct navigated through participation in a community.

Identifying the teacher with the teaching process, Mary acknowledges that both ends of the teaching-learning conduit are important. She admits that students are always the central figures in the classroom since teaching is targeted at them, but many a time the teacher goes unnoticed in the process.

Mary recognises the teacher as a human being with a complex personality. She argues that being a teacher is physically, mentally and emotionally challenging. She posits that teachers should be equipped with strategies to protect and invest in their personal sphere, while also investing in the public. However, this should not necessarily be read as a form of individualisation or a project of the self. Rather, she seems much more adept and realistic in both recognising and managing her range of parallel commitments and identities. She states that the necessity to deal with new and uncertain roles within rapid social, cultural and economic changes, and the changing experience and meaning of work in post-

industrial society are the toughest things the teacher has to face. As she copes with all these possibilities, the situations and opportunities she has to learn to adapt her substantial self to incorporate each new situational identity she encounters.

She emphasizes that no matter what methodology the teacher uses, she has to be humane and she also has the right to be perceived as a human being. The sense of shared humanity can connect the student as a language learner and the teacher as a language knower, but the reality seems to be that frequently, institutional demands and socio-political assumptions interpose themselves to recast the negotiated nature of the classroom context and predefined, stable identities seem to pre-exist any actual interaction. Therefore, teachers are frequently faced with the challenge of self-positioning in the ongoing process while they are positioned to pre-existent identities that they cannot escape.

To further verify my claim that the ability of ongoing reflection and online knowledge construction are key factors in situated identity performance, the analysis of the behaviour of the two pre-service teachers will be presented.

Cathy has no teaching experience, but has already started reflecting about her future life as a teacher. This enables her to position herself within an imagined community (Norton, 2001) of teachers, teaching institutions, and, naturally as a member of a real community of learners: learners of English in particular. In her contributions (turns 13, 19), Cathy is connecting with learners who have been either positively or negatively influenced by teachers. In turn 13, she is recounting a story of an English teacher from her secondary school who encouraged her to study English. In turn 19, a negative image of a teacher who demanded the students to recount facts verbatim is presented. By referring to these specific examples of her experiences as a student, she aims to present herself as a constructive, agentic learner who is willing to take responsibility for her learning and expects teachers to be facilitators of learning. The student's accountability for learning, learner autonomy and the view of a teacher as a facilitator is what she aims to communicate in the conversation. She has developed such a view of learning and teaching through years of schooling and being a pupil, through what Lortie (1975) calls "the apprenticeship of observation". Although Cathy has seen lots of teachers teaching, she understands teaching as a one-way process. She has become an accomplished observer of teaching, yet, she seems to have no access to the thinking and planning that underpinned her teachers' practice; what she saw was largely interpreted as the teacher imparting information. Therefore, critically reflecting on her classroom learning experiences,

Cathy is communicating an ideal or imagined, rather than real identity of a teacher. So when moving over to the teaching side, she acts from these superficial understandings of practice shaped by her “apprenticeship of observation”. In turn 19, referring to the specific experiences in her life, she is making a broader claim about the nature of learning and says that understanding processes is more important in learning than remembering individual facts. What she implies is that teachers should not present students with too many facts. Instead, they should make attempts to expound a less detailed but coherent picture of the subject matter. The ideal she is targeting is that of a teacher as a facilitator who initiates work, invites ideas or makes suggestions about who should do what, or how a task should be tackled.

Cathy is performing an identity of an active observer in the interaction under scrutiny. She is initiating her conversational contribution in turn 8 saying “it’s my turn now”, which shows that she is positioning herself as a student in a classroom following a typical IRF (Initiation-Response-Follow-up) classroom discourse structure (Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975). It also shows that she is engaged in the discussion. This unsuccessful attempt to self select as the next party in the conversation indicates that she is very interested in the topic and wants to present her view. It also demonstrates that the competitive nature of the debate increases situational anxiety. This is what happens in the classroom when students compete to take part in the activity and can lead to failure in turn upholding. Cathy’s behaviour, in this instance is characteristic of a student rather than a teacher. Moreover, other participants in the interaction position her as a pupil. This is evident in the behaviour of the moderator, who appears not to notice Cathy’s attempt to take the floor and continues talking with Ann (turn 9). Having finished the talk with Ann, the moderator poses a general question “any other contributions” which is taken up by Cathy to present her story. The moderator’s follow-up (turn 12) serves as a kind of wrapping up of a phase in the discussion or, referring to the classroom situation, as feedback on what has been said in the discussion so far, emphasising further that Cathy is being positioned as a learner.

A different interactional position is taken up by another pre-service teacher, Ann. Barnes (2004: 13) claims that “the accessibility of positions to any individual can depend on how their interests and capabilities are perceived by others in the group”. Ann, in contrast to Cathy, is actively seeking to adopt a position of an equal party in the interaction and, despite her different life history and lack of professional teaching experience, her self-positioning is accepted by other interactants. By making a straightforward claim, “that’s why I’m here” (turn 4), in the very first turn

she is able to take, she positions herself as an actor who not only knows the screenplay and its part, but is also aware that she has a degree of freedom in fashioning her image, which she uses skilfully. Tajfel (1970) suggests that when individuals see their present social identity as less than satisfactory, they may attempt to change their group membership in order to view themselves more positively. This is what Ann is aiming at in the interaction. She is much more assertive and less conciliatory than Cathy, therefore she is more difficult to ignore than Cathy. Ann's conversational behaviour and actions enable her to successfully perform the identity of an informed partner, or even an expert, in the discussion, and be ratified as one. By making these strong negative comments about her teachers from "the other side of the desk" she is trying to position herself as an "outside expert" (Barnes, 2004: 9). This position becomes available to her because she is introducing specialised knowledge or expertise from outside the teacher's space in the classroom, from other aspects of school life, and uses this knowledge to illuminate the issue under discussion. This position, however, would not be available to Ann if she did not grasp the opportunity to actively engage in the talk and present her views. Ann's self-positioning is contrastive to Cathy, whose attempts to join in the discussion, have either been ignored or interrupted or dismissed (turns 4-11), which results in her being positioned as an outsider.

Not only does Ann's situational positioning result from her life experiences and the way she adapts them to local demands, but also her conversational capabilities contribute to it. She is much more proficient a conversationalist than Cathy in terms of interactional skills; she knows how to initiate a turn and hold the floor, engage with the discussion and so on. She is trying to understand other people's thinking, explain and justify her own thinking, and critically monitor what others are doing. She displays what Goos et al. (2002: 197) refer to as "flexibility in sharing metacognitive roles". Her contributions to the talk are being recognized and ratified by others in the discussion. By presenting specific examples from her schooling histories and giving strong evaluations of them, she succeeds in taking up and securing various interactional positions. She is moving freely in and out of the positions of an expert, critic and collaborator. She expresses certain resentment at the power inherent in the position of other teachers and the moderator and she does not accept the fact that the classroom situation puts her in a less powerful position. This may follow from the positive feedback she gets from other interactants that further reinforces her self-efficacy, which is likely to increase when feedback is supportive, and diminish with criticism (Bandura, 1997).

Ann accentuates that group processes that promote positive effects for learning are often not well understood and are disregarded by teachers. In turn 15, she is talking about a classroom atmosphere that plays a major part in student achievement and subject matter mastery. In her view, teachers should encourage student meaning making and assist them in reasoning rather than evaluate their conduct, which will foster student development and creativity, while also lowering the affective filter. Ann favours a classroom in which students invest in their own learning, seeking out challenges, and where teachers encourage their participation through such devices as eliciting reasoning to support a statement or position. In short, she advocates for a shift in the control of learning from teachers to students. She recognises the teacher to be a key node in a network of external factors influencing student motivation (cf. Targońska, 2008: 233). Ann's views on the role of a teacher and teaching instruction can be recognised as a responsive follow-up to her experiences as a student. In turn 4, when saying "I have very bad memories about my teachers, really, so that's why I'm here", she implies that as her agency and responsibility for learning had not been appreciated by teachers, she decided to become a teacher to bring about a change in schooling. Deictic "here" refers to the university where she has been studying and where the discussion is taking place. Becoming a teacher herself is seen as an opportunity to exert an impact on the community of teachers in terms of "their system of knowledge and beliefs through a powerful series of binary oppositions, organized around a basic division between the 'traditional' teachers of the past – 'them', and the 'new' teachers of the future – 'us'" (Clarke, 2008: 13).

Ann's antagonism and hostility towards the school teachers are tempered in her reflection and the decision to become a teacher, through which she has demonstrated some awareness of the contingency and constructs of the community and its beliefs. She is clearly positioning herself within language teacher education discourse. Her developing teacher self simultaneously operates within student discourse and teacher discourse.

The analysis of the interactional behaviour of the three teachers demonstrates that the positioning of people in any situation depends not only on the context and community values but also on the personal characteristics of all the individuals concerned, their personal histories, their preferences and their capabilities. Mary has been in the teaching profession for a long time and she has very good social skills and highly developed social cognition. Cathy and Ann share much of their histories as learners and teachers, yet their personalities as well as conversational

skills account for their varied performance and different positioning in the interaction, which in turn, has a direct influence on the discursive identities that are occasioned by the two participants.

Conclusion

This analysis of a small sample of an interaction between ESOL teachers shows that identity is relational as well as experiential, constructive as well as participative, and individual as well as social. Not only are the experiences of positioning oneself and being positioned as a member of a community shown to be important for community membership, but also that the legitimate access to practice and the competence developed are tantamount to community identity formation. Identification as a community member involves not just being given legitimate access to practice but also legitimating one's access to practice as well as legitimating reifications. Both processes could be included in the broader concept of "legitimacy of access to practice" (Tsui, 2007: 678). Membership in a community embraces the reflective competence that membership entails, which parallels Wenger's view (1998) that the recognition of one's competence as valued by the community is an important source of identity formation. The competence of an ESOL teacher encompasses the knowledge of what to teach and how to teach as well as knowing how to engage with other members, understanding the activities in which members are engaged, and sharing the mediating resources.

Identity formation is the product of interaction with others, since "identity is at once a complex matter of the social and the individual" (Clarke, 2009: 189). Through interactions, which may include the conversations teachers have about teaching, seeking support from critical friends about their practice and the myriad of other interchanges between teachers and non-professionals, teachers model and shape themselves. Therefore I suggest that the shaping of a professional identity takes place during teachers' social exchanges and as a result of interactions with other members of the school community including other teachers, students and parents, which form the bases for a constructive reflection on practice.

Membership in a community of teaching practitioners provides opportunities for teachers to work and learn together through participation in group-oriented activities with shared goals and responsibilities, involving joint problem solving. Successful engagement in the construction of professional identity seems to be assisted in professional contexts where new and different ways of thinking can be accommodated,