

THE CONSTRUCTION OF LINGUISTIC IDENTITIES IN OFFICIALLY BILINGUAL CONTEXTS

XAVIER MARTIN-RUBIO
UNIVERSITAT DE LLEIDA

The aim of my research is to find out about the ways through which people construct our linguistic identity and ideology. In order to do that, I have carried out fieldwork in two high schools of two towns of two officially bilingual communities (Basque Country and Catalonia). The data I have collected there – semi-structured interviews, focus group sessions in their native language/s and in English, field notes, and so on – have then been duly treated / transcribed. At this point, I have started analysing the data both from a micro and a macro perspective. At the micro level, I have taken notions from ethno-methodology and discourse analysis in order to understand in some depth what went on in the recorded speech events (concepts such as participant alignment, speaker selection, topic management, and so on). But due to my political commitment with the issue of investigation, I wanted to take that to a more general level, and thus I have come up with linguistic profiles of the subjects (myself included), in relation to what these subjects do, know and think/feel about the languages and varieties they use/learn, and the relationship they perceive between these and the wider socio-political context in which they live, a context that, as I see it, is basically dominated by the two phenomena of globalisation and nationalism.

Keywords: linguistic identity – profiles – micro and macro – discourse analysis

El objetivo de mi investigación es descubrir las maneras en que la gente construimos nuestras identidades e ideologías lingüísticas. Para conseguir dicho objetivo, he realizado trabajo de campo en dos centros de educación secundaria de dos ciudades de dos comunidades autónomas oficialmente bilingües (Euskadi y Catalunya). Tras recoger los datos necesarios – entrevistas semi-estructuradas, sesiones grupales in lengua extranjera y propia, notas de campo, etc.- he realizado transcripciones de los que podían ser así tratados. A la hora del análisis, me he acercado a los datos desde una perspectiva micro y otra macro. A nivel micro, he recogido conceptos de la etnometodología y del análisis del discurso para entender con mayor profundidad lo que pasaba en las interacciones analizadas (conceptos como el posicionamiento de los participantes, la selección de hablante, gestión de temas, etc.). Pero debido a mi compromiso político con el tema investigado, también he querido tomar una visión más general, y para ello he realizado perfiles de los sujetos analizados (incluyéndome a mi), en relación con lo que dichos sujetos hacen, saben y piensan/sienten sobre las idiomas y variedades que usan/aprenden, y sobre la relación que los sujetos establecen entre estas variedades y estos idiomas, y el contexto socio-político que viven, un contexto que, tal i como yo lo veo, está básicamente dominado por los fenómenos de la globalización y el nacionalismo.

Palabras Clave: identidad lingüística – perfiles – micro y macro – análisis del discurso

1. Introduction

As the title suggests, a main concern of the research project I am carrying out is the way linguistic identities are constructed. A first consideration to be born in mind is that I conceive verbal interactions to be a key site where this construction occurs. People use language not just to communicate, but also to construct their identities, which includes their linguistic identities. In section 2 of this paper I will try to define the concepts ‘identity’ and ‘ideology’ from a poststructuralist approach. In section 3 I will describe the research project in which I have been involved for the last three years, pointing out the methodological and analytical decisions that I have had to take all along. In section 4 I will give some examples of data already analysed, although I find myself at an early stage in the analytical process. I will wrap it all up with a discussion on two aspects in the conclusions: on the preliminary conclusions that I am reaching after these first analysis, and on the adequacy of the methodological and analytical decisions I have taken in relation to the research question I have been looking an answer for.

2. Identity and Ideology

Identity is typically defined in dictionaries as “who a person is, or the qualities of a person or group which make them different from others” (Cambridge Dictionary Online). What this notion of identity implies is that there **is** something that defines the individual, or the group; John is tall, blonde, egotistic, left-wing and works as a teacher, at the individual level; and Catalans are mean, Scotsmen wear kilts and Spaniards love tortillas, flamenco, and bullfighting, at the collective level. The poststructuralist approach questions this notion and proposes an alternative way of conceiving identity. Norton (2000) defines identity as being: 1) multiple and non-unitary (and thus allowing for contradiction), 2) a site of struggle (i.e. fluctuating and in constant revision), and 3) dynamic, changing over time. Individuals are not seen as entities with an essence that use language, a transparent, unproblematic tool for communication. Subjects are material beings that engage in different practices (with)in a social structure; the subject’s participation in these socio-discursive practices actually constructs the subject. Language is understood in poststructuralism as “symbolic capital” (Bourdieu, 1991) and as a site of identity construction. Individual identities are constructed “in and by discourses that supply the terms by which identities are expressed (identity performance) and assign differential values to different identities or subject positions” (Pavlenko, 2002: 284). In this dialogical conception of identity construction and language use/learning, the socio-discursive practices in which individuals engage both shape their complex identity and constraint their behaviour in these practices.

What this notion of identity implies is that it will not be so easy to find out how someone’s identity is constructed, let alone what someone’s identity is. In its extreme formulation, poststructuralism simply considers such discoveries impossible, since these “discoveries” would be nothing more than the researchers’ subjective perception of the identities/processes of identity construction of those s/he has observed. However, if we are to adopt a less radical version, we can grant identity the complexity that it surely has, while still allowing for human beings (and thus researchers) to analyse the context in which they live, with the intent of making it somewhat better (more on this below).

As for ideology, a parallel distinction can be drawn. Whereas essentialism conceives ideology as something that can be labelled and pinned down, poststructuralism insists on the complexity, and multifaceted nature of ideology. People’s (and collectives’) ideologies are constantly being negotiated, at the same time activated and redrafted in every socio-discursive event in which they participate. This allows for apparently contradictory behaviour, but contradiction is part and parcel of human behaviour. What occurs, as Giddens (1991) suggests, is that individuals create a coherent narrative of their identities/lives/ideologies, and it is this that they show to other people. If we analyse different events in which the same subject participates, we can try and establish links between his/her behaviour across these events, and risk a description of the image s/he is giving of him/herself to the other participants in those events. Some of the links that we will be able to establish might be related to the subjects’ ideology/attitudes/beliefs.

Zimmerman (1998) proposes that at least three types of identity should be identified. She calls these types discursive, situated and transportable identities. Since identities (subjects) are created in interaction, the first kind of identity is the one a person has within a given speech situation: speaker, listener, questioner, answerer... The subject will adopt different discursive identities as the conversation unfolds. Situated identities are those that subjects adopt when engaged in a particular social activity. In class, a certain subject acts as the professor, and other subjects as students, but once the class is over, the professor leaves the classroom and receives a phone-call from his sister, and adopts the situated identity of brother. Lastly, transportable identities are those that travel with the individual across a variety of interactions. Your being a male is something that you transport from home to work, and from there to the pub. These identities need not be relevant to a specific event, unless the interactants make it so. It is related to the abovementioned fact that human beings are material beings, with a shape, a skin colour, a way of walking, et cetera.

But not only physical attributes are maintained across ‘a variety of interactions’. A mental or psychic component could be added, which would contain memories of past events, a

series of links to an environment and a number of people who are part of one's social network, a linguistic repertoire, an ideology (complex, changing, yet one that the subject will relate as being coherent and without gaps), beliefs, knowledge, a number of social practices one tends to engage in and attitudes towards other practices, groups of people, etc. This list of components can be conceived as a less material complement to the transportable identity of the individual, and is in fact what is enacted, negotiated and transformed in the different events and interactions in which one participates.

3. Semi-ethnography and methodological decisions

In this section I will describe the methodological decisions I have had to take in relation to the kind of data to be collected, and the way I should collect them on the one hand, and to the analytical treatment that best suited these data, on the other.

3.1. Data collection

A first decision I had to take very early on was whether to adopt a quantitative or a qualitative stance. These two approaches differ in several respects, of which I would like to point out three. Firstly, whereas the quantitative approach believes that there is an objective reality out there, susceptible of being described and comprehended, the qualitative approach claims that reality is always subjective, since, after all, it is encoded in each one of us in a different manner, and thus it is much more elusive than we would like to have it. Secondly, the quantitative stance aims at describing the general picture, the average behaviour, and thus discards exceptional and strange data, whereas the qualitative stance prefers depth to representativity, and might in fact find a single "strange" case more informative than several 'typical' cases. Thirdly, whereas the quantitative researcher tries to disappear from the data, since it is considered that the less the researcher influences the data, the more accurate these will be, the qualitative researcher assumes the inevitability of such an influence, and thus prefers to openly and actively participate in the data, to the point that the researcher him/herself becomes simply another subject under scrutiny. Since I started from a poststructuralist philosophical stance, and since I wanted to discover mechanisms of identity creation, it seemed to me that a qualitative approach was the most suitable for my project.

I knew I wanted to collect samples of discourse (text in context), and analyse these data linguistically, so the next decision had to do with the amount and type of interactions that I had to collect. I decided to look for settings and phenomena that could generate intense levels of identity negotiation, and since a nationalist discourse seems to be dominating the contemporary world (Guibernau, 1996; Billig, 1995; Özkirimli, 2005), communities such as Euskadi and Catalonia presented themselves as good candidates. I chose to visit with some degree of intensity a model D state-financed secondary-school in Vitoria-Gasteiz during the academic year 2003-2004, and another state-financed secondary-school in Lleida during the following year. I focused on two groups of the second year of post-obligatory education in each centre, and spent a few weeks carrying out participant observation of their English lessons. This was due both to practical and to theoretical reasons; I chose to focus on schools because the educational system is what Althusser (1971) identifies as one of the most powerful Ideological State Apparatuses today, together with the family and the mass media, but also because I knew some English teachers who were willing to allow a researcher into their classrooms, not always an easy task.

In Vitoria-Gasteiz, I interviewed the youngsters' language teachers (i.e. their Euskara, Spanish and English teachers), passed a questionnaire to the students, gave two lessons, and collected some compositions they had written as part of their English subject. Towards the end of the academic year, and when the feared *Selectividad* exam was approaching, I asked four of these students to meet me at a civic centre on a Saturday morning. We spent an hour commenting on several issues, in Spanish, and I audio and video recorded this meeting. I spent that summer transcribing that encounter, and doing a discourse analysis of this piece of data, which then translated into my qualification paper (Martin-Rubio, 2004).

In Lleida, I interviewed the Catalan, Spanish, English and history teachers of the two selected class groups. Although I also collected some of their compositions, I did not pass a questionnaire, and instead of giving a lesson, I recorded a university-colleague giving her first lesson as a teacher in practice, and carried out a reduced focus group session in English with the subjects I would later on ask to meet for the final group session. This focus group session took place one early evening in a building different from that of the school, and I audio/video recorded it and transcribed it in its entirety.

Scholars such as Erickson (1986) insist that ethnography requires an extended period of time, of sometimes years, in the chosen setting, and that the researcher must get tightly involved in the activities of the observed institution or community. Rampton (personal communication) advised me not to use the term 'ethnography' in my case, and proposed that I compared the class and focus group sessions that I had recorded. I took note of his warning (thus the 'semi' before 'ethnography'), but decided to take a different analytical path.

3.2. Data analysis

The overall analytical framework I am using is Critical Discourse Analysis. Blommaert (2005) mentions Norman Fairclough, Ruth Wodak, Teun van Dijk and Paul Chilton as the leading scholars of this 'school'. CDA is, according to Blommaert, a community of scholars who share the same perspective and, to some extent, similar methodologies and theoretical frameworks. Language use has a social dimension that needs to be explored and exploited, by that is not enough for CDA proponents. This social dimension of language needs to be critically evaluated, and CDA analyses must have positive effects in society, to the point that CDA advocates active intervention in the social practices it critically investigates. CDA scholars also tend to deal with similar topics; of those listed by Blommaert (2005: 26-27), "ideology" and "education" coincide with the leading topics in my research project.

An important theoretical tenet in CDA is the way it goes from the actual text/interaction, to the analysis, evaluation, and intention to change the social structure. As one of the leading scholars mentioned above expresses:

CDA "studies real, and often extended, instances of social interaction which take (partially) linguistic form. The critical approach is distinctive in its view of (a) the relationship between language and society, and (b) the relationship between analysis and the practices analysed. (Wodak, 1997: 173).

Fairclough (1992) identifies three levels of analysis, "discourse", "social structure", and in between the socio-discursive practices into which we are socialised. He considers that the way of analysing social structure and social change (i.e. the way social structure is reproduced and transformed), is through samples of language in use, and that language use is packed in practices that people, as members of society, are capable of recognising. We are socialised into distinguishing masses from English lessons, and these from political rallies, and we associate a series of rules and mental models (schemas) to these archetypal practices. By comparing the actual transcribed event with the practice it belongs to, and by drawing from the social context, we can analyse how social rules are being reproduced and challenged.

Taking as an example the focus group session recorded in Vitoria-Gasteiz one day in May 2004, the text would be the video-tape and the transcription of that discursive event. As a discursive practice that could be termed "ethnographic groups session", the circumstances of the event activated a set of rules and mental models of what was acceptable and what was not in the participants. There are social practices, such as class sessions, in which most youngsters engage regularly. However, 'ethnographic focus groups sessions', if not rare in educational contexts, are not that commonplace either. This is probably why that session resulted in a mixed genre, with elements typical of the informal conversation between friends, elements that took it closer to the classroom session, and event hints of the ethnographic interview. The 'discursive practice' level is similar to Pujolar's (2003) 'local fields of participation', and must be placed between the micro and the macro (more of the final discussion). The final, more general (macro) level is the social context.

From a deterministic philosophical position, the social structure dictates people's behaviour, nature and linguistic productions. To the other extreme, human agency theories claim that the individual is free and chooses his/her actions according to the context, thus regarding every text as an exercise in pure freedom. CDA accepts that the social context exerts a remarkable influence on the practices (and thus on the texts) in which human beings engage, but acknowledges the degree of agency of what the individual is capable. As Giddens (1984), in his theory of structuration, puts it, people are socialised into a series of practices, with rules and expectations, and dislike those who act differently, but there will always be individuals who feel like acting differently, and when a big enough number of people act in this new manner, social change is achieved.

Methodologically speaking, CDA uses analytical tools from different disciplines. There is no readymade tool-kit for the Critical Discourse Analyst. Rather, s/he must borrow tools from different boxes and make his/her own one. In my case I have adopted Membership Categorisation Analysis (in the manner proposed in Sacks, 1972) and the theory of 'positioning' (Davies and Harré, 1990) as the core elements for my analysis, but due to the nature of the data, I will be also paying attention to code-switching (in the manner of Alvarez-Cáccamo, 1990 and Rampton, 1995, 1999), vocabulary choice (in the manner of Fernández-García, 2006), and other rules and notions from pragmatics, discourse analysis and conversational analysis. This arrange of tools are applied to the analysed texts, which are in fact transcriptions of the audio and sometimes video recordings of the analysed events. Transcribing such recordings already implies a degree of interpretation and alteration, an issue that deserves a whole article for itself. The tools are, thus, applied to the transcript, but always with the audio and video files as support. Due to my political agenda, evaluative stance and implication with the issues being investigated, though, the analysis must transcend this textual level, and point towards the discursive practice and towards the social context and structure. The aim is to establish connections between events, and to pay attention to the possible appearance of regularities, or explicatory hypotheses. Rather than approaching the data with already formed hypotheses, these will be raised from the data during the analysis. These connections and claims will have to do with the nature of the discursive practices of which the collected data are samples (and here is where issues such as hybridisation and intertextuality will be raised), and with the nature of the social context of the analysed subjects (and here is where the researcher's political agenda intervenes). I will exemplify how this apparently disorderly arrange of tools can be combined to carry out analysis at the different levels identified by Fairclough.

4. Some examples of analysed data

In this section I will use excerpts from my data to show in a practical manner what I have been explaining at the theoretical level. As I have suggested above, my analysis is directed at the micro level to the textual data collected, but also at a more general level, trying to draw profiles of the analysed subjects in relation to the narrative they construct of themselves, and to identity and ideology they activate, all this with the pertinent post-structuralist considerations mentioned above.

4.1. Examples at the textual level

Because of the space limitations of this paper, I will focus on two subjects, the researcher, Xavi, and a student of the scientific branch of the last year of non-compulsory secondary education in Lleida, Lidia. I will start from a short excerpt of the semi-structured interview given by Lidia, and use notions from MCA and discourse analysis (similar to what Fitzerland and Housley (2002) do when they merge MCA and CA). In excerpt one, Xavi wants to know the language Lidia uses with her friends. Lidia establishes two distinct categories of friends: "*amigas que no son de clase ni nada*", and "*amigas del deporte/volley*". A few lines below, she adds a third category, "*amigas de aquí*". She differentiates her non-school and non-volley friends from her volley companions, and these from her schoolmates (the interview was recorded in the school, thus "*aquí*"). Most volley companions (there) are and use Catalan. The

implication here is that there are two categories in the volley group, those who are Catalan and use Catalan regularly and those, she amongst them, who are not Catalan and probably use Catalan less regularly or not at all. Although Lidia arrived in Catalonia when she was two, and has spent her whole life in Lleida, she does not categorise herself as Catalan, and hardly ever uses Catalan. When later on in the interview Xavi asks her what she feels in terms of national allegiance, she says that she does not feel neither Catalan nor *Extremeña* (she was born in Extremadura, and Xavi proposes that she might identify with this region), and ends up accepting the label Spanish, proposed by Xavi. At this point, Xavi assumes that the Catalan ‘group’ in the volley group addresses her in Catalan for two reasons. On the one hand, Lidia has introduced the group of Catalan girls in the volley group as an answer to Xavi’s question: “does someone talk to you in Catalan?” On the other, Xavi supposes that these girls, who are Catalan and use Catalan regularly, will also address Lidia in Catalan. However, it turns out that they use Catalan, but not to her. What Lidia must have meant in that she is contact with Catalan-speaking girls, although this does not translate into being addressed or holding conversations in Catalan. Moreover, Xavi realises here that in fact he has acted in the interview precisely like the girls in the volley group; although he had planned to carry out the interview in Catalan, he himself had switched to Spanish after obtaining the first answers from Lidia in Spanish. This is why he establishes a category (“*solemos*”) of ‘Catalan people who use Catalan amongst themselves, but who switch to Spanish when the interlocutor shows a preference for this language. Xavi shows some amazement (transcribed with an (L) for “laughter”) when he is expressing this, demonstrating that he had in fact not realised that he himself was acting in this manner. We can hypothesise that he believes (ideology, beliefs...) that Catalan people should stick to Catalan when addressing people who understand Catalan but prefer using Spanish, because he establishes the link “being Catalan – using Catalan regularly – addressing someone like Lidia in Catalan”, and because he probably is concerned that if Catalans act in this way, language substitution in the Catalan territory might become a reality.

(1)

- XAV: *y. y en tu grupo de amigos también es más prioritario el castellano*
 LID: *si*
 XAV: *(0.5) no hay así nadie que. siempre hable catalá:n y_*
 LID: *mm no (.) en mi grupo de amigos no (.) pero bueno es que. a ver yo tengo mi grupo de amigas↑ (.) o sea que no son de clase ni nada y después tengo otro grupo de amigas que son del. bueno del deporte vale↑ del volley (.) =yo juego en un= equipo de volley↓*
 XAV: *=ah juegas a volley=*
 LID: *entonces ahí si que hablan mucho catalán (.) son casi todas catalanas (.) pero con mis amigas de =aquí=*
 XAV: *=de salir. y tal=*
 LID: *eso no*
 XAV: *no y. y esas chicas te hablan a ti catalán*
 LID: *mm no normalmente me hablan castellano ya es la costumbre (.) si me oyen hablar a mi en castellano pues*
 XAV: *solemos pasar a. bueno a mi (L) me pasa o sea que_*
 LID: *si*
 XAV: *y mm vale re (2.0) el volley eh. hace años que lo haces↑ es_*
 LID: *desde sexto*

This short extract is part of an ethnographic interview in which Xavi assumes the category ‘researcher/interviewer’, and she the category ‘investigated subject’. As the interviewer, Xavi has a series of category-bound activities, such as introducing the topics, asking the questions, or deciding when the interview is over. As the subject being interviewed, Lidia provides the answer and explanations, asks for reformulations when the question is not clear enough, etc. But all the other layers of both Xavi’s and Lidia’s identities are there, in stand-by, during the event, and they are displayed throughout it. Lidia has self-categorised as “a non-Catalan living in Catalonia”, and Xavi as “a Catalan who, unfortunately, is incapable of

sticking to Catalan with people like Lidia". Schegloff (1997) warns Critical Discourse Analysts, that the analyst must ground claims in the text rather than think of claims and then look for excerpts that might prove his/her point. Lidia is, for instance, an academically-oriented student who gets good marks and aims towards university (she is already there now), a language learner who makes extra-efforts to learn English, and the sister of an older girl who's studying Tourism and travels regularly, just to mention a few other layers. But what becomes salient in this short extract is the fact that Xavi and Lidia have different views on the way Catalan people should use language. Xavi feels that if he addresses in Catalan a Catalan person who understands and can speak Catalan, this person should answer back in Catalan, out of respect. He also thinks that if this person, despite knowing Catalan, refuses to use Catalan and answers in Spanish, the Catalan-speaker should stick to Catalan as a way of defending the language. Lidia, however, perceives that both Catalan and Spanish are recognised languages of her community (be it Lleida, Catalonia or Spain), and that people should be free to use any of the two. Their volley companions, or Xavi, are free to use Catalan, and she is free to use Spanish, and in any case, exolingual conversations are perfectly tolerable. It could be also hypothesised (on the basis of other analysed extracts), that in fact Xavi is containing himself in his small self-mocking (that (L) I've mentioned above). As a researcher he needs to keep his subjects happy, rather than antagonise them. He depends on Lidia's good will to obtain more data (future emails, focus group sessions, or encounters...), so he postpones dealing with the topic with a code-switching into Catalan ('re', Catalan for "nothing"), meaning "let us leave this potentially tense topic for later on and let us focus on... volley instead".

As happened with the "focus group ethnographic session" in Vitoria-Gasteiz, ethnographic interviews are not a discursive practice students of Lidia's age tend to experience. A potential line of inquiry from the data is the different types of intertextuality identified by Fairclough (1992, 2003). One such type would render us the thread starting with Xavi's participant observation of English lessons in which Lidia participated as a student, continuing with this interview, and then extending through the focus group session, corridor-encounters, emails, etc. This would be the thread corresponding to the different practices in which Lidia and Xavi have participated together, and it is an ongoing thread, in that they both still send each other emails now and then, and will surely bump into each other at the supermarket or around campus. It is interesting to note that this "potentially tense topic" was delayed for weeks, up until a 'respondent validation' session in which Xavi was showing her bits and pieces of his work in progress, and in which he finally asked her point blank: "why do you refuse to use Catalan so consistently?" By doing this, he proved that Lidia's linguistic behaviour was causing with some problems. To Lidia and Xavi, the different encounters they have had, have meant a mutual enrichment; a site of identity negotiation and recreation. Lidia has been the more consistent of the two, never code-switching and showing any hesitation when it came to choosing what language she should use. Xavi has had to fight with himself, balancing a desire to gain her confidence and a sincere sympathy for her with his linguistic militancy. But what is unquestionable is that is through situations like the one described above that our ideology, identity, attitudes and prejudices are created, and recreated, event after event.

I find myself at this point of the analytical process, and what now must be done is working across the data analysing in detail as many excerpts as possible. The plan is to organise the information about the subjects into three categories: what they do (from what I see them do or from what they claim they do), what they know (which includes the competence in languages and varieties), and what they feel (which includes beliefs, attitudes, prejudices and stereotypes). Bishop et. al (2003) proposed this way of classifying information in their study about Irish diasporas in America, and I found out later that in a way it resembled a similar proposal by Ochs's (2002), in which she identified "social actions being performed", "psychological stances of epistemic orientation", and "psychological stances of affective orientation". The extract analysed above brings as information about what Lidia does (or says she does), at the linguistic level. An example from Lidia about what she knows, for instance, could be the following: during that same interview she referred to the dual system in Catalan television channels, demonstrating she knew about it, and could thus benefit from it. I then forced her to wonder why Antena 3, for example, did not have it, and she admitted she had never thought about that,

and that did not know or imagine why this could be. All this information, obtained across all the data, and organised into these three “boxes”, will be the skeleton when it comes to drawing a subject profile in relation to the main topics covered in this project: national allegiance, linguistic behaviour, language ideology and attitudes, multilingual identity, etc.

5. Conclusions

Let us recapitulate a little bit. I am a researcher interested in finding out ways in which people today construct their identities (particularly their linguistic identities) in and through language. I believe people do not have essences, but I do not believe that we are constantly in flux either. We probably have a set of transportable identities, and a self-constructed coherent narrative of who we are. We move through life equipped with all this; while moving through life, we engage in social practices, with other people, where we adopt discursive and situated identities. What occurs in these practices contributes to the reconstruction of our complex identities. Myself, as a human being, go through these same processes, so I find myself analysing change, and changing myself. The way to proceed is, I record interactions and transcribe them, and using tools from different linguistic currents, I analyse these texts in context, in order to see what they tell me about the participants involved, about the practice they are engaging in, and about the social context in which they live. Again, as a human being, I have a series of beliefs; for instance, I believe that the more language people know and use the better, that it is very dangerous to maintain the old equation one territory – one language – one people, that English has become the international language per excellence, and that it can be used as such without posing a direct threat to lesser languages, etc. This is why when I see that, as the first results from the analyses I am carrying out show, youngsters currently entering the university system in Spain have limited competence in English, and tend towards a conscious or unconscious identification with the equation given above, I feel research like the one I am carrying out is necessary, and can complement big-scale quantitative surveys and other kinds of study on the same issue.

6. References

- Althusser, Louis, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, London, NLB, 1971.
- Alvarez-Cáccamo, Celso “Rethinking conversational code-switching: Codes, speech varieties, and contextualization”. In *Proceedings of the Sixteenth Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society. General Session and Parasession on the Legacy of Grice*. Berkeley, Berkeley Linguistics Society, 1990, pp. 3-16.
- Billig, Michael, *Banal Nationalism*, London, Sage, 1995.
- Bishop, Hywel; Coupland, Nikolas and Garrett, Peter ““Blood is thicker than the Water that Separate Us!”: Dimensions and Qualities of Welsh Identity in the North American Diaspora”, *North American Journal of Welsh Studies*, 3 (2), 2003.
- Blomamert, Jan, *Discourse*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Bourdieu, Pierre, *Language and Symbolic Power*, Oxford, Polity Press, 1991
- Cambridge Dictionary Online. Online Resource. Available: <http://dictionary-cambridge.org> (Accessed on April 18th 2006)
- Davies, Bronwyn, and Harré, Rom “Positioning: The Discursive Production of Selves”, *Journal for the Theory of Social Behavior*, 20 (1), 1990, pp. 43-63.
- Erickson, F., “Qualitative methods in research teaching”. In Wittrock, M.C. (ed.), *Handbook of research on teaching*, New York, Macmillan, 1986.
- Fairclough, Norman, *Discourse and Social Change*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1992.
- _____. *Analysing Discourse. Textual Analysis for Social Research*. London and New York, Routledge, 2003.
- Fernández-García, Francisco, “Valores del léxico en el discurso informativo: enfoque crítico”, *Estudios de Sociolingüística*, 6 (2), 2005.

- Fitzerald, Richard and Housley, William, "Identity, categorization and sequential organization: the sequential and categorial flow of identity in a radio phone-in", *Discourse and Society* 13 (5), 2002, pp. 579 – 602.
- Giddens, Anthony, *The Constitution of Society*, Berkeley (CA), University of California Press, 1984.
- _____, *Modernity and self-identity: self and society in the late modern age*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1991.
- Guibernau, Montserrat, 1996, *Nationalisms: The Nation-state and Nationalism in the Twentieth Century*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1996.
- Martin-Rubio, Xavier, *Multilingual identities in the Basque country: the case of four youngsters in Gasteiz*, Unpublished qualifying paper, 2004. Available online: <http://web.udl.es/usuarios/r4666831/tesina.htm>
- Norton, Bonny, *Identity and Language Learning: Gender, Ethnicity and Educational Change*, London, Longman, 2000.
- Ochs, Elinor, "Becoming a speaker of a culture". In Kramsch, Claire (ed.), *Language Acquisition and Language Socialization: Ecological Perspectives*. London, Continuum, 2002.
- Özkirimli, Umut, *Contemporary Debates on Nationalism*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.
- Pavlenko, Aneta, "Poststructuralist Approches to the Study of Social Factors in L2". In Cook, Vivian (ed.), *Portraits of the L2 User*, Mahwah (New Jersey), Multilingual Matters, 2002. pp. 277 – 302.
- Pujolar, Joan, "La construcció del gènere en la interacció infomral cara a cara: aspectes teòrics i metodològics", *Estudios de Sociolingüística*, 4 (2), 2003, pp. 483-503.
- Rampton, Ben, *Crossing: Language & Ethnicity Among Adolescents*, New York, Longman, 1995.
- _____, "Deutsch in inner London and the animation of an instructed foreign language", *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 3/4, 1999, pp. 480 – 504.
- Sacks, Harvey, 'On the analyzability of stories by children'. In J.J. Gumperz, and Hymes, Dell (ed.), *Directions in sociolinguistics: the ethnography of communication*, New York, Rinehart & Winston, 1972, pp. 325-45.
- Schegloff, Emmanuel A., "Whose text? Whose context?", *Discourse and Society*, 8 (2), 1997, pp. 165-187.
- Wodak, Ruth, "Critical Discourse Analysis and the study of doctor-patient interaction". In Gunnarsson, B.L.; Linell, P. and Nordberg, B. (eds.), *The Construction of Professional Discourse*, London, Longman, 1997, pp. 173 – 200.
- Zimmerman, D. H., "Identity, context and interaction". In Antaki, Charles and Widdicombe, Sue (eds.), *Identities in talk*. London, Sage, 1998, pp. 87-106.