

Personal Identity through a Language Lens 2026

Book of Abstracts

DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS AND
COMMUNICATION UNIVERSITY OF ŁÓDŹ

Table of Contents

	Page
Keynote Lectures	3
Agnieszka Stepkowska — <i>Challenges and dilemmas in identity construction</i>	3
Michael Bamberg — <i>Identity, Sense of Self, and Answering the Who-Am-I Question</i>	3
Martin Hinton — <i>Identity Expression through Argumentative Discourse</i>	4
List of Authors	5
Abstracts	7
Linda Bäckman	7
Dagmara Banasiak-Antosiuk; Łukasz Wnuk	7
Sayeri Biswas	8
Irene Buttazzi; Martina Wiltschko	8
Irene Buttazzi; David del Rosario-Gilabert; Vittoria Acciai	9
Steven Castro	10
Kamila Ciepiela; Janusz Badio	11
Magdalena Dunaj; Jadwiga Linde-Usiekniewicz	12
Kaley Frye	13
Rachael Gabriel	14
Ewa Glapka	14
Brian Hibbs	15
Martin Hinton; Weronika Olkowska	16
Oleksandra Hrebenshchykova	16
Jadwiga Linde-Usiekniewicz; Magdalena Dunaj	17
Ahmed Saladin Mahrous	18
Heiko F. Marten	19
Donghao Ouyang	20
Wiktor Pskit	20

	Page
Muhammad Arinal Rahman	21
Khashayar Ramezanpoor	22
Danielle Cauchy Sagang Tajouo	22
Zlatoslava Savych	23
Thomas A. Williams	24
Patrick Wolf-Farré	24
Zhe "Gabriel" Yang	25

Keynote Lectures

Agnieszka Stępkowska

Challenges and dilemmas in identity construction

This keynote address highlights three interconnected dimensions of studying identity-in-discourse.

First, I examine the core challenges researchers face when identity is understood as dynamic, socially constructed and context-dependent. Individuals shift how they present themselves across time, space and social settings, creating complex and sometimes idiosyncratic identity trajectories. These challenges are amplified by linguistic limitations, institutional pressures and the intersections of multiple identity dimensions such as profession, language and culture. Further complexity arises from the interplay between moment-to-moment interaction and broader ideological structures that shape how identity becomes visible in discourse.

Second, I explore the dilemmas that emerge for both identity-builders and identity-researchers. Communicators often balance competing demands, such as expressing authenticity while meeting disciplinary or institutional expectations. Researcher positionality also creates tensions, particularly when insider–outsider perspectives shape interpretations of identity work. The deeply contextual nature of identity research generates dilemmas around generalizability and representativeness.

Finally, I turn to the most promising methods for investigating identity through language. Evidence supports combining fine-grained linguistic analysis with corpus tools, narrative inquiry, multimodal approaches and frameworks such as positioning theory and appraisal analysis. These multi-method designs allow researchers to capture identity as both enacted in interaction and shaped by broader structures. I argue that embracing integrative, theoretically layered approaches offers the clearest path toward understanding the complex, shifting nature of identity in discourse.

I will be making references to my research on bilingual couples. This keynote invites participants to reflect on how we can more ethically, rigorously and creatively study identity as it is performed, negotiated and transformed through language.

Michael Bamberg

Identity, Sense of Self, and Answering the Who-Am-I Question — in the Face of the Language Interface

When mulling over the topic of identity, what may call for our initial reflection is our daily experience. This means that we as individuals (but in the same breath other entities such as organizations or brands) are likely to maintain that we experience "having" a sense of who-we-are – i.e., (i) of what differentiates us from others, (ii) of what we say we manifest and promise, and (iii) of how we have evolved into who we (think we) are – over time. In the past, I have tended to conflate and use this kind of 'sense of self' or 'sense of who we are' synonymously with identity, in order to not preempt the assumption that identity is a priori something theoretical, philosophical, or even speculative. Instead, identity is a term that has become part of our everyday discourse in English (and other languages), where it is meaningfully applied. Most languages seem to have additional terms that often intersect with the use of the term identity, often rooted in traditional 'official' languages as well as particular regional or minority languages with their own indigenous roots.

A second step into a deeper understanding of how the term identity is applied in current sense-making practices is the scrutiny of our scholarly/academic discourses. Here we cannot avoid disciplinary traditions and their predispositions; it may be fair to divide how identity has been addressed from at least the following three disciplinary perspectives: (i) sameness versus difference between entities (social psychology, sociolinguistics, ethnoscience), (ii) agency versus structure (theorized by sociologists in terms of structuralist/determinist theories on one hand, and phenomenological, interpretivist, interactionist theorizing on the other), and (iii) constancy versus change over time (human development, branding, organizational theorizing).

I suggest that these processes of (i) differentiating and integrating, (ii) navigating high and low agency, and (iii) coordinating what has been stable and what has undergone transformation across time, take place in interaction – in mundane conversations as well as institutional interactions such as confessions, therapy, or life story interviews. Investigations of continuities and transformations across the lives of humans (or organizations or brands) stand out because they require a particular discourse genre: storytelling. Despite the popularization of narrative as a research method in our "turn to narrative," it remains often undertheorized.

Turning to narrative, I differentiate between two traditions in identity research. The first centers on narratives that seemingly capture the identities people, organizations, or nation-states "have" as part of their interior design; this tradition, canonized as 'narrative inquiry,' has tended to overlook incoherencies, contradictions, open-endedness, and stories about others. A second tradition has turned its focus to storytelling practices as ubiquitous, ordinary, mundane practices in everyday interaction.

I will end by briefly unpacking this turn to small stories and narrative practices under the labels of positioning theory and positioning analysis, and, if time permits, present two short examples from politicians/celebrities who turned to publicly apologizing after being caught in wrongdoing.

Martin Hinton

Identity Expression through Argumentative Discourse

Argumentative discourse is everywhere: in advertising, politics, and our personal communication. Traditionally, it has been studied from a logical perspective (is the reasoning sound?) or a rhetorical one (is the text persuasive?). Recently, however, more attention has been paid to other functions of arguing, in particular how arguing can express the identity of the arguer — both intentionally, via deliberate choice of topics and argument support, and unwittingly, through the inferences made by the audience on the basis of what we argue for and how we argue for it. In this talk, I briefly introduce this theoretical background and then describe a series of recent studies into individual arguer identity, looking at arguer role, style, and form of expression. These allow us to examine the construction and recognition of personal identity through the commitments and strategic moves made within argumentative discourse. I focus particularly on the use of arguments from authority and how the choice of authority reflects the attitudes and associations of the speaker. Alongside conclusions about identity and argument, I discuss the effectiveness of the tools used in these studies — corpora annotation, function typologies, individual case studies — and their potential for further research.

List of Authors

- **Linda Bäckman**, Migration Institute of Finland, **Finland** — Linguistic identities in onward migration from Sweden to Finland
- **Dagmara Banasiak-Antosiuk; Łukasz Wnuk**, University of Warsaw, **Poland** — Selected neological exponents of tensions within Polish national identity and their influence on Polish collective identity discourse
- **Sayeri Biswas**, Independent scholar — In Search of a Home: Language and Identity in Jhumpa Lahiri's 'In Other Words'
- **Irene Buttazzi; Martina Wiltchko**, Advanced Neuroscience Institute of Barcelona (INAB); Pompeu Fabra University, **Spain** — Rethinking the I AM Task: Topic Modelling and Sentiment Analysis as Tools for Investigating Fluid Identity Across Languages
- **Irene Buttazzi; David del Rosario-Gilabert; Vittoria Acciai**, Advanced Neuroscience Institute of Barcelona (INAB), **Spain** — One Body, Multiple Selves: Fluid Identity, Body Image and Self-Perception Across Languages in Italian–Spanish Bilinguals
- **Steven Castro**, University of Chicago, **USA** — Narratives and identity constructions of a mixed-race persona in Fiji
- **Kamila Ciepiela; Janusz Badio**, University of Łódź, **Poland** — Continuous Yet Transformed: Negotiating the Continuity–Change Dilemma in Turner Syndrome Identity
- **Magdalena Dunaj; Jadwiga Linde-Usiekniewicz**, University of Warsaw, **Poland** — Deaf Identities in the Making: Indexical Processes and the Interactional Production of Identity in Signed and Written Social Media Discourse
- **Kaley Frye**, Boston University, **USA** — Do You Hear What I Hear? A Socio-Semantic Analysis of Dog Whistle Expressions
- **Rachael Gabriel**, University of Connecticut, **USA** — The multimodal imperative in crip scholarship
- **Ewa Glapka**, Szczecin University, **Poland** — Looking Back at the Male Gaze: A Discursive Study of Women's Voices in Social Media Discourse
- **Brian Hibbs**, Dalton State College, **USA** — Using Arts-Based Research to Investigate Transnational Pre-Service ESOL Teachers' Multicultural/Multilingual Funds of Knowledge and Identity
- **Martin Hinton; Weronika Olkowska**, University of Łódź, **Poland** — I am whom I trust: Arguments from Authority as Expressions of Identity
- **Oleksandra Hrebenshchykova**, UiT The Arctic University of Norway, **Norway** — Being Ukrainian = Speaking Ukrainian? Negotiating Identity in Wartime Ukraine
- **Jadwiga Linde-Usiekniewicz; Magdalena Dunaj**, University of Warsaw, **Poland** — From disability through sign language people to crip linguistics: The role of language(s) and language rights in Deaf identities

- **Ahmed Saladin Mahrous**, Kuwait College of Science and Technology / University of Łódź, **Kuwait/Poland** — Polarization and Identity-Construction in Everyday Twitter Discourse during the Gaza War
 - **Heiko F. Marten**, Leibniz Institute for the German Language, Mannheim, **Germany** — Identity Constructions among Inhabitants of Latvia with a German Background
 - **Donghao Ouyang**, King's College London, **United Kingdom** — The small stories of 'that liu zi': Other- and self-identity in everyday talk among Chinese international students in the UK
 - **Wiktor Pskit**, University of Łódź, **Poland** — Preserving religious identity through liturgical language: the case of the English in the Ordinariate missal
 - **Muhammad Arinal Rahman**, University of Szeged, **Hungary** — Crossing academic systems: Identity dilemmas of Indonesian doctoral writers in Hungarian English-medium instruction (EMI) programs
 - **Khashayar Ramezanpoor**, University of Szeged, **Hungary** — Translanguaging and identity of international students in a Hungarian university context: Pilot findings from the University of Szeged
 - **Danielle Cauchy Sagang Tajouo**, University of Moncton, **Canada** — The identity construction of female bikutsi singers in Cameroon since 1900s
 - **Zlatoslava Savych**, WU Vienna University of Economics and Business, **Austria** — Negotiating the Self in Old-Age Care: Discursive Identity Constructions among Ukrainian Migrant Workers
 - **Thomas A. Williams**, University of Szeged, **Hungary** — Sites of contradiction and struggle: Identity construction in EFL–PE teachers
 - **Patrick Wolf-Farré**, University of Vienna, **Austria** — Bridging the gap: 'Societal identity clusters' in spoken discourse
 - **Zhe "Gabriel" Yang**, University of British Columbia, **Canada** — Standard Mandarin, Dialect and Identity in Secondary Schools in Urban Chongqing
-

Abstracts

Linda Bäckman

Migration Institute of Finland

Linguistic identities in onward migration from Sweden to Finland

Despite the transnational turn in migration studies in the 1990s, migration is often perceived as encompassing movement from a place of origin to a particular destination. Studies on onward migration, defined as "a spatial trajectory that involves extended stays in two or more destination countries" (Ahrens & King, 2023: 5), allow for an "open-ended and processual understanding of migration" (ibid). This paper takes as starting point particular patterns of onward migration, from Sweden to Swedish-speaking Finland. It presents ongoing analysis from a project looking at how linguistic resources 'travel' and how people describe their linguistic biographies in such transitions.

While previous studies of language in onward migration (e.g. Goglia, 2022, 2024; Sankaran, 2021) have looked at named languages and how these are maintained in families who move onwards, this research project includes varieties and styles, using the concept of sociolinguistic scales (e.g. Blommaert, 2012) to examine how linguistic resources are perceived as people move from one context to another. Drawing on early data collection with ethnographic methods such as life story interviews and language portraits (e.g. Busch, 2018), the paper discusses identity and language in transitory environments and processual, open-ended trajectories.

Keywords: onward migration; linguistic biography

Bionote

Linda Bäckman is a Research Fellow at the Migration Institute of Finland. With a background in sociolinguistics, she has studied e.g. language and identity among adults whose parents migrated, new speakers of Swedish in Finland, as well as language learning in international recruitments to the healthcare sector.

Dagmara Banasiak-Antosiuk; Łukasz Wnuk

University of Warsaw

Selected neological exponents of tensions within Polish national identity and their influence on Polish collective identity discourse

Our presentation will be focused on the analysis of selected Polish neologisms that have emerged over the last twenty-five years and which function as exponents (keywords, discourseemes, discourse markers) of Polish national identity discourse.

Among numerous new discourseemes engaged in the lexical and conceptual construction of Polish national identity (lexical and derivational nests based on such central entities as *fajnpolek* 'cool-o-Pole', *cebulek* 'onioner', *uśmiechnięty Polek* 'smiling Pole'), we also present the analysis of the neological graphoderivatives *Polek* 'Pole', *Półka* 'Polish woman', *Półska* 'Poland', including the intentional, symbolic orthographic modification o → 0. Through elements of semantic, pragmatic, and cognitive discourse analysis of these neologisms, we try to gain insight into the most active topics, (counter)arguments and tensions present in the ongoing debate on various images of Polish identity.

Keywords: Polish identity discourse, neologism, Pólak 'Póle'

Bionote

Dagmara Banasiak-Antosiuk is an assistant at the Institute of Polish Language at the University of Warsaw. She teaches descriptive grammar of contemporary Polish. Her PhD dissertation concerned the semantic, syntactic and pragmatic analysis of selected Polish verbs referring to speech acts involving humor. She collaborates with the editorial team working on the dictionary of Polish neologisms "The Language Observatory of the University of Warsaw."

Łukasz Wnuk is a PhD student affiliated with the Institute of Polish Language at the University of Warsaw. He is working on a dissertation on principles and pragmatic functions of conceptual metonymy in contemporary Polish. He teaches descriptive grammar and prescriptive linguistics. His research interests combine lexical semantics, pragmatics, psycholinguistics, cognitive poetics, and language teaching strategies.

Sayeri Biswas

Independent scholar

In Search of a Home: Language and Identity in Jhumpa Lahiri's 'In Other Words'

What does it mean to face "displacement" in language? Jhumpa Lahiri, an author of Indian descent living in America as an immigrant and choosing to write in Italian, constantly ruminates on this unique sense of displacement within the languages she inhabits and the cultures they represent. This paper looks at Lahiri's memoir 'In altre parole' ('In Other Words') to explore the nuances of the relationship between human identity and language. With knowledge of Lahiri's personal life and career as context, her odyssey into traversing boundaries between different languages is used to consider the identity conflict arising from feelings of rootlessness. A multicultural and multilingual identity influences and moulds consciousness, exposing it to a plurality of experiences, and Lahiri's perceptions on this are worded in her memoir, creating a remarkable document of what it means to search for a language one can call one's own. Through Lahiri's navigation of a hybrid sense of self, this paper attempts to trace the idea of language as a home — a paradoxical place where one is both at ease and not.

Keywords: Multilingualism, Diasporic Studies, Linguistic Exile, Language and Identity, Language and Culture

Bionote

Sayeri Biswas is currently an independent scholar applying for her doctorate. She has a Master's degree in English Literature from Jadavpur University, Kolkata, and earned her Bachelor's from St. Xavier's College (Autonomous), Kolkata. Her academic pursuits encompass linguistic anthropology and diasporic studies, with a focus on feminist theory within various media, including films, literature and art. Beyond her scholarly pursuits, Sayeri loves socializing, conversations and can be seen hoarding books at all times.

Irene Buttazzi; Martina Wiltschko

Advanced Neuroscience Institute of Barcelona (INAB); Pompeu Fabra University

Rethinking the I AM Task: Topic Modelling and Sentiment Analysis as Tools for Investigating Fluid Identity Across Languages

This study examines whether language shapes the semantic and affective organization of identity in bilingual speakers. Using the I AM Task, 236 Italian-speaking university students learning Spanish produced self-descriptions in Italian (L1) and Spanish (L2), generating a corpus of 9,440 statements.

We propose a computational approach to the analysis of I AM Task responses by combining topic modelling and sentiment analysis to investigate cross-linguistic differences in the lexical-semantic structure and affective valence of self-descriptions. Topic modelling identified recurrent semantic identity themes, while sentiment analysis examined the affective patterns associated with self-descriptions in each language.

The results revealed systematic cross-linguistic differences. Semantically, Spanish (L2) responses were characterized by generic social-role labels and positive descriptors, suggesting a more externally oriented self-representation. Italian (L1) responses, by contrast, displayed more culturally embedded forms of self-description and included negative traits absent from the Spanish corpus. Sentiment analysis further revealed more positive self-descriptions in Spanish and negative sentiment emerging exclusively in Italian.

These findings suggest that different languages may activate distinct semantic and affective configurations of the self, and highlight the value of computational text analysis in I AM Task research beyond traditional personal-versus-social classifications.

Keywords: bilingualism, identity, I AM Task, self-description, self-talk

Bionote

Irene Buttazzi is a postdoctoral researcher at the Advanced Neuroscience Institute of Barcelona (INAB). She holds an International PhD in Psycholinguistics from Universidad Nebrija and the Italian National Research Council (CNR), and specializes in self-perception, identity, and the plasticity of the self in multilingual speakers. Her research focuses on bilingualism and multilingualism, examining how language shapes otherness, emotions, and autobiographical memory. She investigates identity construction, acculturation, and biculturalization in migratory contexts and second language acquisition.

Martina Wiltschko is an ICREA Research Professor at the Universitat Pompeu Fabra in Barcelona, Catalonia. She is a theoretical linguist specializing in syntax and its interfaces. Working broadly within the generative tradition, she aims to bridge the gap to other traditions, including functionalist, cognitivist, and interactionalist approaches. Her big questions include the relation between sound, meaning, and category; language, thought, and communication; and what drives human interaction.

Irene Buttazzi; David del Rosario-Gilabert; Vittoria Acciai

Advanced Neuroscience Institute of Barcelona (INAB)

One Body, Multiple Selves: Fluid Identity, Body Image and Self-Perception Across Languages in Italian–Spanish Bilinguals

This study proposes an analytical framework for investigating embodied identity in plurilingual contexts through language-mediated self- and other-representations. It examines

how bilingual speakers construct body image across languages and how these constructions are perceived by others.

A total of 236 Italian–Spanish university bilinguals described themselves physically in Italian (L1) and Spanish (L2) in response to the prompt "Describe yourself physically," generating a corpus of 472 autobiographical narratives.

Lexical choices referring to corporeal, aesthetic, and phenotypic dimensions were analysed across both languages. Results reveal language-dependent patterns of self-construction: participants employ different adjectives and nouns in Italian and Spanish, suggesting partially distinct embodied self-representations and identity positionings.

To triangulate these findings, a complementary study was conducted in which external evaluators were presented with participants' photographs alongside their self-descriptions in both languages, and asked to determine which description best matched each individual.

By combining autobiographical narratives, lexical analysis, and perception data, this study highlights the role of language in shaping embodied identity and contributes to our understanding of the fluid nature of the bilingual self.

Keywords: bilingual identity, embodied self, body image, self-perception, other-perception, lexical choices, autobiographical narratives

Bionote

Irene Buttazzi — see bionote above.

David del Rosario-Gilabert is the scientific and general director of the Institute of Advanced Neuroscience of Barcelona (INAB) and a clinical associate in the Department of Psychiatry and Forensic Medicine at the Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB). Awarded the National Telecommunications Prize (COITT) and the Extraordinary Prize of the Master's Degree in Biomedical Engineering (University of Barcelona), he earned his PhD in neuroscience with honors ("Summa Cum Laude"). Founder and scientific director of two neuroscience research companies, he is the author of the bestseller "El libro que tu cerebro no quiere leer."

Vittoria Acciai is a neuroscience researcher with a background in cognitive neuroscience and biomedical research, holding a Master's degree in Biomedical Research from NOVA Medical School. She has worked in international environments across Spain, Portugal, and the Netherlands. She is currently part of INAB, contributing to research on the processes underlying human thought, emotions, and consciousness, primarily through EEG analysis, neuroimaging techniques, and behavioral assessment.

Steven Castro

University of Chicago

Narratives and identity constructions of a mixed-race persona in Fiji

This work examines the creation, legibility, and metapragmatic construction of a locally salient mixed-race persona in Fiji, the Kailoma, and how it relates to constructions and navigations of race and racial mixedness. This analysis expands our current understanding of persona (Agha 2005) and interactions between language and identity, by focusing on a mixed-race identity perceived to exist between rigid categories. The kailoma persona engages in

mildly transgressive linguistic and cultural practices perceived to break cultural norms and expectations regarding politeness, swearing, and linguistic ability. Their mixedness is often used to excuse their behavior from rendering cultural and linguistic exchanges void, allowing continual raciolinguistic enregisterment (Rosa 2019) of the persona as a salient semi-authentic in-group member that is legibly indigenous, albeit differently.

Using metapragmatic discourse, narrative, and media/textual representations, this work explores how this mixed-race identity is performed and taken up through active interaction in rituals and linguistic practices perceived as transgressive. I focus on the use of narrative and personal testimony to construct, perform, and comment on this mixed-race persona through interaction, expanding our understanding of how social identities existing between rigid categories combine semiotic resources and linguistic practices to establish identity.

Keywords: Language and Race, Persona, Mixed-Race, Linguistic Anthropology

References

Agha, Asif. 2005. Voice, Footing, Enregisterment. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 15(1). 38–59.

Rosa, Jonathan. 2019. *Looking like a Language, Sounding Like a Race: Raciolinguistic Ideologies and the Learning of Latinidad*. Oxford Studies in Anthropology of Language.

Bionote

Steven Castro is a Sociolinguist/Linguistic Anthropologist whose research specialization lies in raciolinguistics, contact linguistics, and critical mixed-race studies. His work focuses on contact environments — both racial and linguistic — where he examines how racially mixed identities are linguistically constructed and performed. He received his PhD in Linguistics from the University of Chicago in August 2025 and currently holds the position of Humanities Teaching Fellow there.

Kamila Ciepiela; Janusz Badio

University of Lodz

Continuous Yet Transformed: Negotiating the Continuity–Change Dilemma in Turner Syndrome Identity

Identity construction is fundamentally a temporal problem: claiming a self means claiming continuity across time, even as lived experience often demands accounts of transformation or rupture. This continuity–change dilemma becomes especially consequential for individuals whose lives diverge from the culturally scripted timelines governing development, partnership, reproduction, and health. This paper examines the non-temporal grammatical resources that women with Turner Syndrome employ when negotiating the continuity–change dilemma in identity talk.

Drawing on Bamberg's (1997; 2004) positioning framework and the small stories approach (Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008), the paper treats storytelling as the site where continuity and change are actively negotiated. This is sharpened through cognitive and functional linguistics (Langacker, 1987; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014), revealing that the dilemma is managed not primarily through tense, but through nominal and comparative grammar construing the self relationally and scalarly.

Analyzing Polish-language interviews, the paper identifies two such resources: nominal expressions encoding transformed relational positions, and comparative/contrastive constructions encoding scalar departure from prior self-states. Both function as non-temporal indexicals, yet they let speakers position themselves as simultaneously continuous and transformed.

Keywords: comparatives, continuity–change dilemma, identity, nominals, Turner syndrome

References

- Bamberg, M. (1997). Positioning between structure and performance. *Journal of Narrative and Life History*, 7(1–4), 335–342.
- Bamberg, M. (2004). Positioning with Davie Hogan: Stories, tellings, and identities. In C. Daiute & C. Lightfoot (Eds.), *Narrative analysis: Studying the development of individuals in society* (pp. 135–157). SAGE.
- Bamberg, M., & Georgakopoulou, A. (2008). Small stories as a new perspective in narrative and identity analysis. *Text & Talk*, 28(3), 377–396.
- Halliday, M. A. K., & Matthiessen, C. M. I. M. (2014). *An introduction to functional grammar* (4th ed.). Routledge.
- Langacker, R. W. (1987). *Foundations of cognitive grammar: Vol. 1. Theoretical prerequisites*. Stanford University Press.

Bionote

Kamila Ciepiela is a linguist and Associate Professor at the Department of Linguistics and Communication, University of Łódź, Poland. Her research focuses on the construction of self and identity in discourse, with particular attention to how identity is performed and negotiated in interaction.

Janusz Badio is Dr hab. in Linguistics at the University of Łódź, Poland, affiliated with the Department of Linguistics and Communication. His research is situated at the interface of cognitive linguistics, discourse analysis, and interactional sociolinguistics, with a particular focus on indirectness in interaction and the analysis of naturally occurring spoken discourse.

Magdalena Dunaj; Jadwiga Linde-Usiekniewicz

University of Warsaw

Deaf Identities in the Making: Indexical Processes and the Interactional Production of Identity in Signed and Written Social Media Discourse

This paper examines how identity relations are interactionally produced through multiple indexical processes, contributing to ongoing scholarly debates on the notion of "Deaf identity" (Ladd 2003; Leigh, O'Brien 2019). Drawing on the indexicality framework developed by Bucholtz and Hall (2005), it presents a case study situated within the broader context of signed language communication on social media (Guimarães & Fernandes 2018). The empirical material consists of a Facebook vlog created by a Deaf author and 212 comments posted in response to it.

The analysis investigates how identities emerge through a range of interactional resources, including overt labeling, evaluative and epistemic stances, and ideologically marked linguistic

forms. The paper argues that what is commonly referred to as "Deaf identity" should not be understood as a stable or unified category, but is continuously constituted through configurations of indexical relations. By foregrounding identity as an emergent, interactionally accomplished phenomenon, the study offers a more nuanced account of "Deaf identity," demonstrating that it may involve tensions and affective dimensions resisting reduction to coherent or uniformly positive representations of collective belonging.

Keywords: Deaf identity, identity construction, indexicality, sign language communication

References

Bucholtz, M., & Hall, K. (2005). Identity and interaction: A sociocultural linguistic approach. *Discourse Studies* 7(4-5), 585–614.

Guimarães, C., & Fernandes, S. (2018). The new agora: Social media as a vector for sign language as a language of culture, identity and inclusion of the Deaf. *Proceedings of the 51st Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences*, 2141–2150.

Ladd, P. (2003). *Understanding deaf culture: In search of deafhood*. Multilingual Matters.

Leigh, I. W., & O'Brien, C. A. (Eds.). (2019). *Deaf identities: Exploring new frontiers*. Oxford University Press.

Bionote

Jadwiga Linde-Usiekniewicz is a full professor of linguistics at the Unit for General and Sign Linguistics, Faculty of Polish, University of Warsaw. She specializes in interrelations between semantics, syntax and pragmatics. Since 2015 she has become interested in sign language linguistics and has co-edited several Polish Sign Language dictionaries. Her other research interests include hate speech phenomena in Polish and non-discriminatory, inclusive variants of Polish.

Magdalena Dunaj is an associate professor of anthropology at the Unit for General and Sign Linguistics, Faculty of Polish, University of Warsaw, specializing in linguistic anthropology and linguistic ethnography. Her research focuses on language ideologies related to Polish Sign Language and their impact on community-building processes among Polish Deaf. She is also interested in signed communication in social media and everyday communicative practices.

Kaley Frye

Boston University

Do You Hear What I Hear? A Socio-Semantic Analysis of Dog Whistle Expressions

Dog whistling, or the use of coded language that signals controversial identities or stances to specific groups while seeming innocuous to general audiences, has been a particularly insidious strategy in the rhetorical toolbox of American politicians for many years. Throughout contemporary U.S. history, political candidates have used dog whistles to garner support, often leading individuals to vote against their own stated interests. Building on existing semantic frameworks, this project introduces a new model for analyzing dog whistle meaning, presenting new typologies for classifying decoded expressions. The study includes an in-depth analysis of multiple dog whistle phrases, demonstrating how these typologies manifest in digital data. Ultimately, the project argues for a context-based model of meaning analysis and introduces a typology which provides insights into how dog whistles function

and evolve. As political discourse becomes increasingly polarized, analyzing dog whistles offers crucial insights into the use of language to signal sociopolitical identities across audiences, and to build and mediate in- and out-group dynamics.

Keywords: dog whistles, political discourse, social media, identity construction

Bionote

Kaley Frye is a graduate student in the Department of Linguistics at Boston University. She earned her bachelor's degree in Linguistics and Psychology at Emory University, and completed this project as her undergraduate honors thesis there. Her broader research interests span both sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics, with a focus on how language processing interacts with identity perception and construction.

Rachael Gabriel

University of Connecticut

The multimodal imperative in crip scholarship

This paper is part of an ongoing analysis of the Twitter account archive of the Deaf linguist and disability activist, Dr. Jon Henner (Henner, Robinson & Gabriel, 2025). My analysis draws on discursive psychology to identify the ways Jon used Twitter posts to construct an identity online that points towards new possible modes of public scholarship. In doing so, I attend to the ways he frequently merges modalities, interpretative repertoires (Wetherell, 1998), subject positions (Davies & Harré, 1990) and ideological dilemmas (Billig, 1988). I examine these patterns alongside notions of Crip Time (Kafer, 2013) and 'Slow(ed) Scholarship' (e.g. Kaufman, Chennault, Molana, 2024) and the social nature of disability activism (c.f. Wong, 2020). I consider the ways Jon's tweets often mix languages and modalities to highlight ideological dilemmas in real time, and to connect otherwise disconnected audiences. I argue that translanguaging and transmodal discourses are a necessary hallmark of crip'd scholarship, highlighting patterns in the ways Jon mixed representations of American Sign Language (ASL) and English with other modes including gifs and images, to do public scholarship in ways that centered intersectional identities otherwise marginalized in academia.

Keywords: crip theory, disability studies, discourse analysis

Bionote

Rachael Gabriel is Professor of Literacy Education at the University of Connecticut. She is author of more than fifty refereed articles, and author or editor of nine books for literacy teachers, leaders and education researchers. Rachael currently teaches courses for educators and doctoral students pursuing specialization in literacy, and is Editor in Chief of *The Reading Teacher*. Her research is focused on literacy instruction, intervention, leadership and policy, as well as neurodiversity, disability and crip theory.

Ewa Glapka

Szczecin University

Looking Back at the Male Gaze: A Discursive Study of Women's Voices in Social Media Discourse

This paper examines how women discursively negotiate their identities within an appearance culture shaped by the male gaze. While the concept of the 'male gaze' has been extensively theorized in visual studies, women's everyday encounters with gendered visual surveillance remain underexplored, particularly from a discourse-analytic perspective. Addressing this gap, the study conceptualizes social media platforms as spaces of affective exchange and identity construction, where women use digital storytelling to articulate and reframe their positioning in relation to dominant gender norms and visual regimes.

Drawing on a qualitative discourse analysis of six YouTube vlogs and their accompanying comment threads, the paper investigates how women narrate and make sense of their lived experiences of being positioned as objects of the male gaze. Using positioning theory (van Langenhove & Harré, 1999) and small stories research (Georgakopoulou, 2020; Giaxoglou, 2021), the study asks: (1) What subject positions emerge in vlog narratives? (2) How are these positions intersubjectively engaged with in comments sections? Examining these interactional dynamics, the paper explores whether and how the affordances of YouTube enable women to reclaim their identities in relation to the male gaze.

Keywords: social media discourse, male gaze, positioning analysis, short stories

Bionote

Ewa Glapka is a scholar at the Institute of Linguistics, Szczecin University, Poland. Her research bridges critical discourse analysis, social semiotics, and critical discursive psychology with media studies as well as gender and postcolonial studies.

Brian Hibbs

Dalton State College

Using Arts-Based Research to Investigate Transnational Pre-Service ESOL Teachers' Multicultural/Multilingual Funds of Knowledge and Identity

Arts-based research (ABR) is "a...method in which the arts play a primary role in any or all of the steps of the research method" (Austin & Forinash, 2005, pp. 458–459). ABR has emerged as a feasible methodology for understanding others' experiences that are not easily documented otherwise (Pentassuglia, 2017). The funds of knowledge approach (González et al., 2005) perceives culturally and linguistically diverse learners from an asset-based and strengths-based perspective. Additionally, funds of identity may be understood as "historically accumulated, culturally developed, and socially distributed resources that are essential for people's self-definition, self-expression, and self-understanding" (Esteban-Guitart and Moll, 2014, p. 37). Arts-based methods can thus be an effective means for collecting information on participants' identities. The purpose of this study was to explore the intersectionality of bicultural/bilingual ESOL teacher candidates' personal and professional funds of knowledge and identity. A variety of arts-based activities were utilized to support their emergent understanding of themselves both as individuals and as educators, along with the relationships between both. Analysis of the completed artifacts revealed that the activities helped participants embrace their pluricultural/plurilingual identities by visualizing their personal and professional individuality in new ways.

Keywords: Culture, Educator Preparation, Identity, Language, TESOL

Bionote

Brian Hibbs, Ph.D., is a professor of education at Dalton State College, USA. He teaches courses in applied linguistics, language teaching methodology, and culture and education to equip pre-service elementary-education teachers with the dispositions and skills needed to work effectively with multilingual learners. He has presented and published on a wide array of topics related to foreign/second language teacher education, including advocacy, agency, autoethnography, critical language awareness, faculty development, funds of knowledge/identity, language ideology, multicultural education, and translanguaging.

Martin Hinton; Weronika Olkowska

University of Lodz

I am whom I trust: Arguments from Authority as Expressions of Identity

We explore how arguments from authority function to express identity. We claim that certain types of argument from authority always carry a degree of association with the authority on the part of the arguer, thus projecting to the audience information concerning their own identity and a particular attitude towards what it is to be a trusted source on a given topic. We suggest that citing views, opinions, and advice emanating from certain trusted figures is a key way to use argumentation for identity expression and the establishment of social, political, and intellectual status. The function of arguments as expressions of identity has been discussed by Asen (2005) and Hinton (2024), and in a broader sense of social positioning by Garver (2000) and Goodwin (2007). We consider this as part of a wider typology of argument functions developed in earlier work, and discuss how the acceptance of authorities is a crucial element in the construction and projection of our social selves.

Keywords: argument from authority, identity expression, argument functions

Bionote

Martin Hinton is head of the Department of Linguistics and Communication at the University of Łódź, and is a linguist and philosopher specialising in argumentation theory. He has written extensively on fallacy theory and evaluation systems for arguments, and more recently on arguer identities. He is the principal researcher on the project 'Aida: Attitude and Identity in Argumentation' funded by the NCN, and leads the Xact: eXplainable Argumentation and Critical Thinking research group.

Weronika Olkowska is a student at the Doctoral School of Humanities, University of Łódź. She is part of the NCN-funded project 'Procedures for Interpreting Multimodal Argumentation'. She is the founder and convenor of the biennial conference series "Personal Identity through a Language Lens" at the University of Łódź.

Oleksandra Hrebenshchykova

UiT The Arctic University of Norway

Being Ukrainian = Speaking Ukrainian? Negotiating Identity in Wartime Ukraine

The Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 has brought language to the forefront of identity negotiation, particularly for Ukrainians navigating the complex relationship between Ukrainian and Russian. While the shift to Ukrainian is widely discussed, this process is neither uniform nor free of tension. Drawing on an online survey of 223 Ukrainians and 26

interviews conducted in Poland (November 2023–April 2024), this study examines how wartime conditions reshape language practices and the concept of *ridna mova* (native language).

Participants' accounts reveal that language choices have become emotionally charged and morally fraught. Ukrainian is often framed as a source of pride and belonging, while Russian is associated with trauma and its connection to the aggressor state. Many respondents describe reclaiming Ukrainian as their "true" native language, rejecting Russian as an imposed identity. However, others continue to view Russian as their native language, despite feelings of shame and discomfort. These experiences reflect a range of strategies, from categorical rejection of Russian to conflicted bilingualism, with language use shifting depending on social context, emotional state, and time.

This study demonstrates how wartime realities disrupt pre-war patterns of bilingualism in Ukraine, leading to deeply personal and context-dependent practices that reflect the complexity of identity negotiation among Ukrainians.

Keywords: identity negotiation; language attitudes; linguistic belonging; *ridna mova*; wartime Ukraine

Bionote

Oleksandra Hrebenshchykova is a philologist, linguist, and language educator. She holds a PhD in Philology from Karazin Kharkiv National University and a master's degree in Ukrainian Language and Literature from Luhansk National University. Since September 2023, she has been a researcher at UiT The Arctic University of Norway, focusing on the language practices and attitudes of Ukrainians in the context of war and migration (Language at War project); multilingual language acquisition and attrition (AcqCESS, Multilingual Minds, MOVA projects); and the linguistic integration of Ukrainian refugees (LINC project).

Jadwiga Linde-Usiekniewicz; Magdalena Dunaj

University of Warsaw

From disability through sign language people to crip linguistics: The role of language(s) and language rights in Deaf identities

In our paper we will be analysing d/Deaf identity discourses between the late 20th c. and the two first decades of the 21st c., showing that the paradigm for d/Deaf identity has undergone two major shifts in that time. First, Deaf self-advocates rejected the disability model of deafness and claimed their collective identity as Sign Language People, i.e. a linguistic and therefore cultural transnational minority (Batterbury, Ladd, and Gulliver 2007). Such self-framing has given ground to claiming sign language rights as a subset of linguistic human rights (Skutnabb-Kangas 2015), with the underlying conceptualization of language as an object. The second shift has brought about the conceptualization of language as an activity, deconstructing the Deaf-Hearing and visual-spoken language binaries through embracing the perspectives of crip theory (McRuer 2006). The resulting theoretical framework for d/Deaf persons' use of semiotic resources has taken the form of crip linguistics (Henner and Robinson 2023). Since Deaf identities are grounded in sign language, changes in conceptualizing language itself result in attempts to reframe and reconceptualize d/Deaf identities.

Keywords: d/Deaf identity; sign language; crip linguistics

References

- Batterbury, S., P. Ladd. & M. Gulliver (2007). Sign Language Peoples as Indigenous Minorities: Implications for Research and Policy. *Environment and Planning A* 39(12), 2899–2915.
- Henner, J. & O. Robinson (2023). Unsettling Languages, Unruly Bodyminds: A Crip Linguistics Manifesto. *Journal for the Critical Study of Communication and Disability* 1(1), 7–37.
- McRuer, R. (2006). *Crip Theory: Cultural Signs of Queerness and Disability*. New York: NYU Press.
- Skutnabb-Kangas, T. (2015). Language Rights. In *The Handbook of Bilingual and Multilingual Education*. Hoboken: John Wiley and Sons.

Bionote

[As above under Dunaj; Linde-Usiekniewicz.]

Ahmed Saladin Mahrous

Kuwait College of Science and Technology / University of Lodz

Polarization and Identity-Construction in Everyday Twitter Discourse during the Gaza War

This paper presents an ongoing PhD study that investigates how ordinary social media users, rather than political or institutional elites, perform identity politics and reinforce ideological division on Twitter/X throughout the Israel–Hamas War (2023–2024).

This paper builds on the Ideological Square by Teun A. Van Dijk, Social Identity Theory by Tajfel and Turner (1979) and Ambient Affiliation by Michele Zappavigna (2012), and utilizes Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies (CADS). Over the period between October 2023 and March 2024, 1,000 English-language tweets have been collected and are being analyzed and coded to explore how users engage in linguistic strategies including the use of specific lexemes (including profanity and slur), pronoun selection for ideological self-positioning, and the framing of events to align with particular ideological camps, in order to trace how such strategies contribute to identity construction and polarization.

Research suggests that although elite and media discourse are largely what has been investigated on this topic to date, bottom-up user-based discourse also contributes to their reproduction and reinforcement through various language use patterns. This research may contribute to scholarship on language and social media discourse and on ideological polarization in war contexts, highlighting how linguistic devices that construct solidarity between like-minded individuals concurrently increase animosity against the ideological out-groups they despise.

Keywords: identity construction, polarization, Twitter discourse, Critical Discourse Analysis, Gaza War, ambient affiliation

Bionote

Ahmed Saladin is an English Lecturer at Kuwait College of Science and Technology (KCST) in the Faculty of Business Management. He graduated from Ain Shams University in Egypt

and completed his MA at the University of Leicester, UK, in TESOL and Applied Linguistics, with a thesis on the place of emotions in political rhetoric. Ahmed is now a doctoral candidate at the University of Łódź (Poland) under the supervision of Professor Martin Hinton. His PhD research is in corpus linguistics and critical discourse analysis and looks into the ways identity and polarizing rhetoric are used in digital spaces related to wars and conflicts. Ahmed is a polyglot fluent in English, French and Arabic, and is currently learning German.

Heiko F. Marten

Leibniz Institute for the German Language, Mannheim, Germany

Identity Constructions among Inhabitants of Latvia with a German Background

This paper discusses identity constructions among people in Latvia with a German cultural background. After centuries of co-existence with speakers of Latvian, Russian, and other languages, most ethnic Germans left Latvia in the first half of the 20th century. However, some people with German ancestry stayed, usually hiding their German language practices until the liberalisation of Soviet societies in the 1980s.

On this backdrop, the Leibniz Institute for the German Language in Mannheim is conducting interviews with people with a German background, or who engage in one of the German minority organisations in Latvia. The interviews focused on language biographies and language practices determined by specific critical events. Questions of perceived and assigned identities were also addressed.

Results show that interviewees incorporate highly diverse understandings of languages, family backgrounds, cultural activities, and history in their personal identity constructions. In this sense, respondents oscillate between Germanness, Latvianness, and other cultural and ethnic affiliations within a European context, while also displaying a high level of insecurity. These findings challenge traditional understandings of minorities as well as policies and research traditions regarding the German language outside the German core area.

Keywords: Latvia, German, minority, language biography, critical events

Bionote

Doc. Dr. Heiko F. Marten, PhD 2007 at Freie Universität Berlin on minority language policy, 2024 habilitation (Docent) in German Sociolinguistics at Tampere University, Finland. Since 2022 Researcher on multilingualism in Germany and international roles of German at the Leibniz Institute for the German Language in Mannheim, and since 2007 Lecturer and Researcher at Rēzekne Academy of Technologies (today: Riga Technical University Rēzekne Academy), Latvia. 2009–2015 Lecturer in German linguistics at Tallinn University, Estonia; 2016–2022 Director of the German Academic Exchange Service's Information Centre in Riga, Latvia. Research interests: language policy, minority groups and languages, multilingualism in Germany and the Baltic states, language discourses, languages in education, linguistic landscapes, German in international contexts.

Donghao Ouyang

King's College London

The small stories of 'that liu zi': Other- and self-identity in everyday talk among Chinese international students in the UK

There has been a significant methodological tilt towards researcher-led biographical interview in social science research on the lived experiences and identity of international students. Empirical evidence from students' mundane discursive practices is extremely lacking.

This study presents preliminary findings from an ongoing doctoral project working with 9 Chinese international students in the UK. Drawing on the overarching framework of linguistic ethnography (Rampton, 2007), combining participant observation, micro-analysis of in-person conversations and ethnographic interviews, the project examines the ways identities are negotiated and (re)constructed in students' everyday interaction with peers and friends.

Specifically, I focus on the identity category of 'liu zi', a diminutive form in Mandarin of 'liu xue sheng' (international student), and the 'that-liu-zi story' as a type of small story of third-person narration (Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008). My analysis captures the iterativity of 'liu zi' within small stories and unpacks the interactional negotiation and co-construction of its meaning across all three levels of narrative positioning (Bamberg, 1997; Georgakopoulou, 2013). The discussion highlights how the sense of self can be conveyed via the interactional positioning of the other, offering insights into the complexities of individual identity at the intersection of emerging adulthood, educational mobility and intercultural experience.

Keywords: identity claims; international student identity; small stories; positioning; linguistic ethnography

Bionote

Donghao Ouyang is a PhD candidate in the Centre for Language, Discourse & Communication at King's College London. He receives his academic training with strong emphases on narrative analysis (small stories), interactional sociolinguistics, and ethnography. His ongoing doctoral thesis is a linguistic ethnographic project on the everyday experiences and identities of contemporary Chinese international students in the UK context.

Wiktor Pskit

University of Lodz

Preserving religious identity through liturgical language: the case of the English in the Ordinariate missal

The paper attempts to explore the ways in which the (post-)Anglican religious identity is preserved in the Catholic community through the variety of English employed in the liturgical texts of the Ordinariate for former Anglicans. While Christian liturgy is a public act of worship, it seems to express the participants' religious identity at both personal and communal (collective) levels. Although the issue of maintaining the so-called Anglican Patrimony within the Catholic Church has drawn the attention of scholars (cf. Burnham 2017, Rowland 2021), the linguistic aspects of the phenomenon are under-researched. The distinctive lexical and grammatical features of the relevant Ordinariate missal are presented against the background of parallel texts of mainstream Roman Catholic prayers. The compilation of texts from a variety of Anglican and Roman Catholic sources results in the emergence of a liturgical book

that, on one hand, has a distinctive linguistic (post-)Anglican character, and, on the other, constitutes an officially approved version of the Catholic missal.

Keywords: religious identity, liturgical language, Anglican, Catholic

Bionote

Wiktor Pskit is an assistant professor at the Department of Linguistics and Communication at the University of Łódź (Poland). His research interests include syntax and morphology, English-Polish contrastive linguistics, language contact and liturgical language. He is the author of one monograph (*The Concept of Grammatical Category in Generative Grammar and Cognitive Grammar*), and a number of articles in peer-reviewed journals and chapters in edited monographs. He is also the editor of two collective monographs.

Muhammad Arinal Rahman

University of Szeged

Crossing academic systems: Identity dilemmas of Indonesian doctoral writers in Hungarian English-medium instruction (EMI) programs

Drawing on semi-structured interviews with three participants across three universities in Hungarian EMI programs, this study uses narrative inquiry to examine the writers' identity dilemmas that emerge when they cross between Indonesian, Hungarian and Anglophone academic systems and what they choose to carry back when they return. One participant, a former investigative journalist with hundreds of Indonesian-language publications over seven years, finds that the competence he built does not automatically transfer to English academic writing, and feels he must build everything again from the beginning. A second participant is already writing comfortably in English but realizes that when he returns to Indonesia he will teach students within a writing tradition very different from what he has learned here. A third participant was aware that listing a senior colleague on a grant proposal without a direct contribution was questionable; in Hungary her conviction that this is wrong has grown stronger, though she does not rule out returning to it if the system back home leaves her no other choice. These stories show that academic writer identity is never final — it is carried across contexts, tested by different systems and sometimes quietly adjusted when writers return to where they started.

Keywords: academic writer identity, English-medium instruction, identity dilemmas, narrative inquiry, transnational doctoral education

Bionote

Muhammad Arinal Rahman is a doctoral candidate in the English Applied Linguistics PhD Program at the Doctoral School of Linguistics, University of Szeged, Hungary. His research focuses on academic writer identity, narrative inquiry, and English-medium instruction in transnational doctoral contexts. He is particularly interested in how multilingual doctoral writers negotiate their identities across different academic systems. His current study examines the writing experiences of Indonesian doctoral students in Hungarian EMI programs.

Khashayar Ramezanpoor

University of Szeged

Translanguaging and identity of international students in a Hungarian university context: Pilot findings from the University of Szeged

This pilot study examines how Iranian students at the University of Szeged use translanguaging as a resource for negotiating multilingual identities in an international university context. The study explores how students recalibrate, resist, and perform identities in relation to audience composition, perceived appropriateness, and power relations while focusing on the relationship between language practices, identity work, and perceived social constraints. The research adopts a mixed-methods design based on interactional and self-reported data collected in a dormitory setting with five Iranian PhD and Master's students. Data were gathered through an audio-recorded group conversation, an online questionnaire, and follow-up interviews. Translanguaging occurrences were coded in the conversation transcript and compared with questionnaire and interview data. The findings reveal a systematic tension between participants' reported language ideologies and their actual communicative practices. Although students described language mixing as something to be avoided, their everyday interaction included frequent translanguaging, particularly in humour, teasing, facework, and emotional expression. Persian was associated with intimacy, affect, and shared belonging, while English functioned as a marker of academic, international, and situational identity. The study suggests that multilingual identity negotiation is shaped by individual agency and structural constraints, and highlights the relevance of translanguaging for inclusive university language policies.

Keywords: Translanguaging, Iranian international students, identity-work, Persian-English

Bionote

Khashayar Ramezanpoor is a PhD student in Applied Linguistics at the Doctoral School of Linguistics, University of Szeged. His research interests include translanguaging, sociolinguistics, identity, and multilingual practices in educational contexts. His current research explores how international students negotiate and construct identity through translanguaging practices within the Hungarian higher education setting. Alongside his academic work, he has several years of experience in English language teaching and educational management, and is the co-author of a published book. His broader academic interests include diaspora identity, multilingual communication, and language use across culturally diverse contexts.

Danielle Cauchy Sagang Tajouo

University of Moncton

The identity construction of female bikutsi singers in Cameroon since 1900s

'Do women speak the way they speak because they are women, or do we decide that they are women because they speak the way they speak?' (Spolsky, 2004, p. 41). This question resonates with gender performativity, which posits that gender is enacted rather than inherent (Butler, 1990). This paper examines how Cameroonian female bikutsi musicians construct a subversive identity by performing provocative lyrics within a patriarchal society that closely scrutinizes women's 'verbal hygiene' (Cameroon, 1995).

Bikutsi — literally 'stomping on the floor' — is both a dance and a musical genre originating from the Beti ethnic group. Traditionally performed during women's gatherings, it created 'a private space for women to speak in an unedited manner' (Rathnaw, 2010, p. 51). In the 1990s, explicitly sexual lyrics and sensual choreography emerged as defining features of female bikutsi performance and continue to shape the genre's identity today.

Drawing on Bamberg and Dege's (2021) definition of identity as an ongoing process through which individuals and institutions maintain or transform their sense of self, this contribution analyzes the sociopolitical and economic conditions that enabled the rise of sensual bikutsi. It also highlights key linguistic features in the work of two emblematic singers, Lady Ponce and Coco Argentée.

Keywords: Identity construction, verbal hygiene, female singers, bikutsi, Cameroon

Bionote

This autumn, Danielle Cauchy Sagang Tajouo is starting her second year of studies as a PhD candidate in sociolinguistics. Her fields of interest are language policy, linguistic landscape, linguistic minorities, linguistic insecurity, (critical) discourse analysis and the sociolinguistic aspects of gender. Her thesis focuses on the analysis of debates around the language(s) of commercial public signage in the Acadian regions of New Brunswick, Canada.

Zlatoslava Savych

Institute for Intercultural Communication, WU/Vienna University of Economics and Business, Austria

Negotiating the Self in Old-Age Care: Discursive Identity Constructions among Ukrainian Migrant Workers

This study examines the discursive construction of identities and positionings among Ukrainian migrant women employed as domestic caregivers in old-age care settings in Germany and Italy. Migration, occupational change, and language socialization in a new workplace constitute life-changing turning points that remain under-researched in identity studies. Drawing on co-constructed narrative and non-narrative interview data, I explore how women without prior care-work experience in Ukraine make sense of, and respond to, this unfamiliar occupational role. Following Bamberg's positioning analysis framework, I examine how participants position themselves and others to construct evolving occupational and social identities, paying particular attention to the linguistic resources and strategies the care workers employ, as well as to the dilemmas arising when individual agency confronts structural and societal constraints. Preliminary findings reveal a recurring tension: while participants frequently describe care work as a stigmatized, low-status occupation, they simultaneously construct a positive self-identity, framing their experience through narratives of resilience, competence, and moral worth. The study contributes to debates on identity negotiation in transnational contexts, showing how narrative and interactional resources help migrant workers navigate the tension between imposed and self-chosen identities.

Keywords: positioning analysis, agency, identities, migrant workers, old-age care

Bionote

Zlatoslava Savych is a research and teaching associate at the Institute for Intercultural Communication at WU/Vienna University of Economics and Business. Her research interests

include language, identity, and transnational migration, cultural differences in workplace communication, and sustainability communication across countries. Her PhD thesis explores the interrelationship between migration, old-age care, and language, focusing on the discursive identity constructions of Ukrainian migrant workers employed as caregivers in Germany and Italy.

Thomas A. Williams

University of Szeged

Sites of contradiction and struggle: Identity construction in EFL–PE teachers

Proceeding from work by Bruner (1987) and Fougère (2008) on the construction of identity through self-narrative, the paper presents findings from a case study involving the life narratives of a fascinating but under-researched group of (pre- and in-service) teachers in Hungary: those with a double teaching degree in English language and culture (EFL) and physical education (PE) (n=10). The narrative data is triangulated with degree programme documentation and additional narrative data from teacher educators. The research seeks to ascertain the participants' relationship with English and sport/physical fitness, their sense of mission in each field, and their characterisations of the two degree programmes and other programmes, among other markers of identity. Themes explored include: sensemaking (the process of an ever-changing understanding of an ever-changing identity); a sense of belonging with a focus on insideness/outsideness, competence and role fulfilment, and centre/periphery dynamics; questioning and learning about the self; and development and change, including heterotopias, the 'third space,' and dwelling in-between. In examining the life narratives of these participants, the paper may have a range of implications for universities and other institutions in Hungary (and elsewhere) about more effective preparation for students and staff.

Keywords: teacher identity, EFL–PE teachers, identity construction, narrative inquiry, semi-structured interviews

Bionote

Thomas A. Williams, PhD, is a senior assistant professor at the Department of English Studies, University of Szeged, Hungary, where he teaches courses in sociopragmatics, cross-cultural pragmatics, and linguistic anthropology, as well as studying identity through life narratives in populations such as pre-service EFL teachers, international students, and ethnic Hungarians in the Vojvodina region of Serbia. He is currently part of an international project investigating degrees and types of agency manifested in the narratives of post-Covid patients.

Patrick Wolf-Farré

University of Vienna

Bridging the gap: 'Societal identity clusters' in spoken discourse

In recent years, the study of identity has been a constant point of interest in sociolinguistic research, with a few axioms established by now: identity is usually considered to be not fixed but fluid; it is not simply given but constantly being (re-)constructed (Androutsopoulos & Georgakopoulou 2003); and its construction can be observed in everyday communication through discourse analysis and ethnographic approaches (Deppermann 2013; Eckert 2018).

But while the sociolinguistic study has become rather detailed, looking into the fine grain of the 'situational identities' constructed in discourse, the other end — what Bamberg calls "socio-cultural categories such as gender, age, race, occupation, gangs, socio-economic status, ethnicity, class, nation states, or regional territory" (2011: 6) — often remains vague and rather difficult to grasp.

Using examples from research on youth groups in Hamburg and Vienna, I introduce 'societal identity clusters' as a concept to bridge this gap. The presented data shows how socio-cultural categories matter, but in a mediated manner: rather than influencing personal identity construction directly, individual speakers construct situational identities containing elements of many socio-cultural categories in idiosyncratic but never random combinations. These 'societal identity clusters' are pointed towards by the speakers, making them meaningful in the interaction.

Keywords: Sociolinguistics, personal identity, discourse analysis, multilingualism

References

Androutsopoulos, J. K. & Georgakopoulou, A. 2003. *Discourse constructions of youth identities*. Amsterdam, Philadelphia: Benjamins.

Bamberg, M. 2011. Who am I? Narration and its contribution to self and identity. *Theory & Psychology* 21(1), 3–24.

Deppermann, A. 2013. How to get a grip on identities-in-interaction. *Narrative Inquiry* 23, 62–88.

Eckert, P. 2018. *Meaning and linguistic variation: The third wave in sociolinguistics*. Cambridge: University Press.

Bionote

Patrick Wolf-Farré is an Assistant Professor of German linguistics at the University of Vienna. He studied German and Spanish philology at the University of Heidelberg, where he also completed his PhD on the "language and self-concept of the German-Chileans." After positions as a Lector at Yale University, post-doc in Duisburg-Essen and an interim professorship at Leuphana-University in Lüneburg, he joined the German department in Vienna in 2023. His research focuses on multilingualism and language contact in groups of young speakers in Austria and Germany, and on German-speaking minorities in Latin America.

Zhe "Gabriel" Yang

University of British Columbia

Standard Mandarin, Dialect and Identity in Secondary Schools in Urban Chongqing

China's top-down language policies heavily promote Standard Mandarin, creating a complex diglossic environment in regions with strong vernaculars like Chongqing. In urban secondary schools, students must navigate the profound tension between the official language and the local Chongqing dialect. Addressing the resulting potential for identity confusion, this proposed study utilizes Darvin and Norton's (2015) Model of Investment to explore how students negotiate language choices and identity positioning. Through a qualitative case study involving semi-structured interviews with urban secondary students of varying linguistic

competencies, the research investigates the perceived forms of capital driving these choices. Based on the theoretical framework, it is inferred that while investing in Mandarin yields cultural and future economic capital, maintaining the dialect provides essential social capital and peer solidarity. Ultimately, students struggle to reconcile their compliant "academic self" with their "authentic social self," highlighting the profound micro-level impacts of macro-level language policies on adolescent identity development.

Keywords: Language Policy; Identity; Diglossia; Model of Investment

Bionote

Zhe "Gabriel" Yang is a Master's student in the Department of Language and Literacy Education (LLED) at the University of British Columbia. His research primarily focuses on sociolinguistics and identity construction.