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Identity performance in a TESOL classroom

Teachers and pedagogues display the tendency to attribute L2 use in formal and informal interactions alike to *willingness* of the learners to use the language (Mac--Intyre, Noels, Clément and Dörnyei 1998) or to *differences* in their personality (Ely 1986, MacIntyre and Charos 1996, Rubin 1975), thus labelling learners as good and motivated language learners or bad and unmotivated language learners.

In this paper it will be argued that such understanding of *willingness* implies a general disposition to employ the L2, but doesn't necessarily consider what makes learners willing or unwilling to speak, either generally or during specific interactions. Therefore, following identity theorists (Norton B., Pavlenko A., McKinney C.), I will question the view that learners can be defined in binary terms as motivated or unmotivated, introverted or extroverted, inhibited or uninhibited, without considering that such affective factors are frequently socially constructed in inequitable relations of power, changing over time and space, and possibly coexisting in contradictory ways within a single individual. In other words, an attempt will be made to show that every time learners speak, they are negotiating and renegotiating a sense of self in relation to the larger social world, and reorganizing that relationship in multiple dimensions of their lives.

In this regard, social processes marked by inequities of *cultural capital* (Bourdieu 1986), topical knowledge, language knowledge, gender, and class may serve to position learners in ways that silence and exclude. Drawing on recordings from TESOL classroom discussions I will try to explicate that "An investment in the target language is also an investment in a learner's own social identity, which changes across time and space" (Norton 1997: 411). In other words I will strive to show the relationship between *identity enhancement* and classroom performance.

1. FLL motivation reconsidered

Recently, traditional theories of L2 learning motivation have reconceptualised the concept of motivation in relation to self and identity. For example, Gardner & Lambert's (1959, 1972; Gardner 1985), socio-educational model of instrumental and integrative motivation, building on Freudian psychoanalytic theory, explores the ways in which learners position themselves in relation to target language (TL) community. Other approaches that built on the critique of socio-educational models of motivation challenged the assumption that L2 language learning is best served by a strong integrative motivation. For example, Dörnyei (1994) suggested that, in many EFL settings, an instrumental orientation could actually have a greater positive influence. More recently Lamb (2004: 15) has refuted any clear binary distinction between the two forms of motivation, and suggested motivation to be a much more unstable process.

Contemporary discourses about English as global language and further research into both external and internal processes of identification (Dörnyei 2005, 2009), reflect the growing move towards considering identity as a key issue in many areas of applied linguistics. Bonny Norton, theorizing identity (Norton Peirce 1995, Norton 1997, Norton 2000), has posited a construct of *investment* that complements constructs of motivation in SLA. She argues that a learner may be a highly motivated language learner, but may nevertheless have little investment in the language practices of a given classroom or community, which may, for example, be racist, sexist, elitist, or homophobic. Thus, while motivation can be seen as a primarily psychological construct, investment is framed within a sociological framework, and seeks to make a meaningful connection between a learner's desire and commitment to learn a language, and their complex identity.

2. FLL identity reconsidered

For the last decade or so, poststructuralists in the field of SLA have been trying to understand what identity is, how it relates to a larger society, and most importantly how it affects one's language learning process. Studies so far have confirmed that language use is a form of self representation which is deeply connected to one's social identities and values (Miller 2003). There is growing recognition that identity formation must become an important focus in education. Particularly in the 21st century, when modes of knowledge construction and accessibility to different types of knowledge are rapidly diversifying, academic learning cannot be divorced from students' development of values, goals, social roles, and positions.

The studies have made a claim that identity is a site of struggle in a way that subjectivity is produced in a variety of social sites, all of which are structured by relations of power in which the person takes up different subject positions which

may be in conflict with each other (Norton 1995, 2000). McKay and Wong (1996) put forth the idea of *identity enhancement* as the process that drives, to a large extent, second language learning, which markedly differs from the traditional view of motivation thought of as an internal process that activates, guides and maintains behaviour overtime.

Identity enhancement affords learners a sense of power over their environment and thereby their learning. Hence language learning is no longer understood as a function of cognitive and affective factors and language is more than a system of arbitrary and conventional signs (De Saussure 1994[1972]); it is more than a social product of the faculty of speech; rather it is social practice in which experiences are organized and identities are negotiated. At the same time, the objectives of learning a foreign language have changed. Becoming a member of the target language community is no longer an aim of FLL (Le Page and Tabouret-Keller 1985). Rather, the issue is to become a member of a *community of practice* (Lave and Wenger 1991, Wenger 1998).

Norton uses the term identity

> to reference how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future. (Norton 2000: 5)

Drawing on poststructuralist theory, identity theorists (Schiffrin 1996, Bamberg 1997, 2005, Davies and Harré 1990, Harré and Langehove 1992, Norton, de Fina 2003, Georgakopoulou 2006, 2007) argue that identity is multiple, non-unitary in nature, changing over time. Benwell and Stokoe (2006) note that identity is now recognised as non-fixed, non-rigid but unstable, fluid, fragmentary and always being (co)constructed by individuals of themselves (or ascribed by others), or by people who share certain core values or perceive another group as having such values. Identity categories are no longer regarded as psychometric variables, sets of stable personality traits but rather as sets of relationships that are socially and historically constructed within particular relations of power Identity is a process, not an entity, something that does not belong to an individual but emerges in interaction and is achieved through social practices.

Since language is at the centre of most of social practices, it has an extraordinarily important role in identity constitution. Language, however, cannot be understood as an identity marker that speakers have no control of. In interactional contexts, language users maintain a quasi-agentive function because they can actively select language resources that are available to them in a given context. In other words, referring to positioning theory (Davies and Harré 1990; Harré and Langenhove 1992; Bamberg 1997) positions as grounded in discourses (also variably called 'master narratives', 'plot lines', 'master plots', 'dominant discourses', or simply 'cultural texts') which are viewed as providing the meanings and values within which subjects are 'positioned' (Hollway 1984, Davies & Harré 1990, Harré & van Langenhove 1999).

Discourses, however are often contradictive and in competition with one another, so that subjects are forced to choose. By doing this subjects are guided not only by a cognitive economy principle to communicate maximum with a minimum effort but also by their desire to project a positive social image of themselves. Hence using language, people do not only communicate but also do their identity work. As Goffman (1959/1969) put it, people in interactional contexts manage themselves to positively self-present, that is they continuously define and redefine their roles in order to maintain control over the situation and their self-presentation. Hence identity is an entirely social process that is managed and negotiated in varying contexts; it is "not pre-existing social interaction but constituted through it" (de Fina and Georgakopoulou 2012: 158).

Such characteristics of identity as a site of struggle is particularly relevant to SLA because learners who struggle to speak from one identity position can reframe their relationship with their interlocutors and reclaim alternative, more powerful identities from which to speak. Poststructural theorist of SLA (i.e. McKay and Wong 1996; Miller 2009; Norton 1995: 2000) emphasize that learners' subjectivities are witnessed to be sites of contestations as learners constantly conduct delicate social negotiations. In contrast, labeling learners as "risk-takers" or "good language learners" suggests that varied performance of learners in L2 interactions results from relatively immutable and consistent features of their nature as learners. Voluntary participation in interaction, however, may occur due to the presence of social or personal conditions that may be more appropriate to learners' preferences or needs for L2 use.

Identity theory of SLA, favouring social contexts of identity construction, does not refute the significance of personality traits in L2 learning. McCroskey and Richmond (1998), for instance, found that the communication skills of self identified reticent speakers did not differ from those of non-reticent speakers. They suggest that

> the reason for this lack of support may well be that it is not a person's actual communication competence or skill that determines one's willingness to communicate, but rather it may be the individual's self-perception of that competence or skill. (McCroskey and Richmond 1998: 126)

It seems that students make decisions about whether or not to initiate or sustain communication on the basis of how competent they think they are. Thus, the actual skill of the learner cannot be considered a trait characteristic alone, given that willingness to communicate is variable at the situational level as well.

The growing awareness of the role of interaction as a fundamental site for the constitution of identities has posed challenges to essentialist conceptions of the self and of language as an identity marker and inspired development of a comprehensive theory of identity that integrates the individual language user/ learner and the larger social world. With regard to SLA, identity theory makes

use of two basic concepts, namely (i) *a learner's investment* in the target language (Norton 2000, Norton Peirce 1995), and (ii) their identification with target *communities of practice* (Anderson 1991; Kanno & Norton 2003; Norton 2001; Pavlenko & Norton 2007).

2.1. Identity investment in FLL

The notion of *investment* derives from discourses of finance and economics where it means (i) in finance: putting money into something with the expectation of gain, that upon thorough analysis, has a high degree of security for the principal amount, as well as security of return, within an expected period of time (ii) in economic theory: the amount purchased per unit time of goods which are not consumed but are to be used for future production (i.e. capital). In SLA discourse, *investment* was first introduced by Norton (Norton Peirce 1995) and understood with reference to the economic metaphors used by Bourdieu, in particular the notion of cultural capital. Like investors at the Stock Exchange, language learners invest in a second language with a view of gain, that is "with the understanding that they will acquire a wider range of symbolic and material resources, which will in turn increase the value of their cultural capital" (Norton and M McKinney 2011: 75). Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) used the term *cultural capital* to refer to forms of knowledge, skills, education, and advantages that a person has, which give them a higher status in society. Barker (2004) notes that cultural capital acts as a social relation within a system of exchange that includes the accumulated cultural knowledge that confers power and status. In SLA the notion of cultural capital "signals the socially and historically constructed relationship of learners to the target language, and their often ambivalent desire to learn and practice it" (Norton and M McKinney 2011: 75). Drawing on Bourdieu's ideas, de Mejia explains that

> language may be seen as a symbolic resource which can receive different values depending on the market. The possession of symbolic resources, such as certain highly valued type of linguistic skills, cultural knowledge and specialized skills, help to gain access to valuable social, educational and material resources. These resources, which constitute symbolic capital, in turn acquire a value of their own and become sources of power and prestige in their own right. (2002: 36)

McKay and Wong (1996) emphasize that a learners' needs, desires, and negotiation must be understood as a constitution of learners' lives and their investment in learning the target language. The notion of identity presupposes that when language learners speak, they are not only exchanging information with target language speakers, but also organizing and reorganizing a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world. An investment in the target language is also an investment in a learner's own identity, which is constantly changing across time and space. Learning a second language learners invest in

their cultural capital, in fact, in themselves, and they hope to have a good return on that investment. By broadening access to symbolic resources (second language and culture) and accumulating knowledge they are constantly organizing and reorganizing a sense of their identity.

2.2. Communities of practice and language learning

The notion of identification with *communities of practice* has its roots in the work of Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger (1991), who, drawing on the ideas of social constructivism (Vygotsky 1930/1978), argued that social practice is a natural site for learning. Participation in interactional practices increases learners' competence of them and gradually they move toward fuller participation. Yet, they would not become legitimate members if opportunities of practice were not created by core members. Therefore, as Wenger (1998) claims, mutual engagement is what defines a community of practice (CoP) which, in this sense, is neither an aggregate of people defined by some characteristic nor a synonym to a group, a team or a network. A CoP exists because people are engaged in actions whose meanings they negotiate with one another. Doing things together is one of the underlying assumptions in the CoP theory, that is a sense of community arises from active engagement. Doing things together and mutual engagement result in a development of community relationships. These relations define a mutual viewpoint on the matters of the enterprise—what is important, what is not, what to do and not to do and so on. That these become shared in a CoP is what allows participants to negotiate the appropriateness of what they do. Engagement in practice is a powerful source of identification in that it involves investing ourselves in what we do as well as in our relations with other members of the community. It is through relating ourselves to other people that we get a sense of who we are; it is through engaging in practice that we find out how we can participate in activities and the competence required. Through participation in community practices, its members develop their community competences and therefore the degree of their identification with the community increases.

Wenger (1998) notes that *non-participation* can also be advantageous. He distinguishes between *peripherality* and *marginality*. By peripherality, Wenger refers to the fact that some degree of non-participation can be an enabling factor of participation, while marginality is a form of non-participation that prevents full participation or even leads to alienation of those who, despite producing original meanings accepted in the community, find themselves unable to reclaim the meanings they produced. For instance immigrants in a multilingual classroom can be marginalised in that setting because of racial or ethnic prejudice but simultaneously, because of their increasing L2 competence, that is through a process of peripheral participation, they can move toward a fuller participation in the target speech community.

The notions of *engagement*, *peripherality* and *mariginality* point to the significance of other individuals in the process of identification. One's identity does not lie only in the way one talks or thinks about oneself but also in the way others talk or think about one. Wenger (1998: 188) proposes that identities are formed through the "tension between our investment in the various forms of belonging and our ability to negotiate the meanings that matter in those contexts". Identification, then is "the investment of self in building associations and differentiations" (Tsui 2007: 660). It is a relational activity that occurs between specific individuals situated in specific sociocultural contexts. As Norton and McKinney observe

> language learners need to struggle to appropriate the voices of others; they need to learn to command the attention of their listeners; and they need to negotiate language as a system and as a social practice. (Norton and McKinney 2011: 81)

Speaking in a foreign language involves the risk that the speaker will be misunderstood and his or her self-image will be misperceived. Learners are often unable to express their thoughts fully, and an incomplete knowledge of the language can confound messages conveyed from speaker to listener. Socially, learners may find themselves feeling uncomfortable in establishing relationships with others. Since they are less proficient than others in the foreign language, speakers may feel that their audience perceives them to be unintelligent or immature. If the learner lacks sociolinguistic competence, she may inadvertently use culturally or situationally inappropriate language and, thus, be thought of as ignorant or rude. Therefore by interacting in the foreign language, learners are continually creating, evaluating, and revising their self-image and protecting that image when necessary by opting not to talk. Language performance, as a behavioural activity involves personal risk, therefore, students must make decisions about the reasons why they will speak in the language. This decision is very important to the learners since they must independently create and maintain opportunities to use and practice the L2.

Furthermore, Pellegrino-Aveni (2005: 20) argues

> the very processes of classroom education and research may create "poor language learners and risk-takers" by the nature of the classroom interaction alone, making categorical labelling of learners unjustified and potentially harmful, preventing opportunities for becoming better users of the L2.

Such view of identity implies a shift from seeing learners as individual language producers to seeing them as members of social and historical groups, which calls for an examination of the conditions for learning, or the appropriation of practices, in any particular community.

3. The study

The theoretical assumptions of an identity approach to SLA, reviewed above and expanded to TESOL, suggest that learning to be a foreign language teacher is not a gradual process of internalizing of a neutral set of rules, structures, and vocabulary of a target language nor a process of acquiring of pedagogical practical knowledge or principles of L2 instruction. Rather, the implication made is that members' investments in the practices of their communities of practice are of significant value in TESOL. Being a member of a community of TESOL assumes an identity and investment in both the target language and teaching practices that can be understood within specific local contexts and transported to capital D discourses.

3.1. Rationale

The TESOL students are highly motivated learners of English, yet there are particular social conditions under which they are most uncomfortable and unlikely to speak. The data suggest that a TESOL learner's motivation is mediated by investments that may conflict with the desire to speak, or, paradoxically, may make it possible for the student to claim the right to speak.

3.2. Methodology

Since an identity approach to SLA characterizes learner identity as multiple and changing, a quantitative research paradigm relying on static and measurable variables will generally not be appropriate. The focus on issues of power also necessitates that qualitative research designs are framed by critical research. For these reasons, the method that will be used in this study is qualitative and draws on Sociolinguistics, namely CA (Sacks 1972; 1992) as well as Positioning Analysis (Bamberg 1997, 2005, 2007; Davies and Harré 1990; 1999; Harré and Langenhove 1992), and Ethnomethodology (Garfinkel 1967).

As for the methodology of data collection adopted in the study, the aim was to collect naturally occurring data with the use of audio recordings, which were supplemented by field notes. The challenge for such an approach is that the data collected is "messy" in that it is difficult to represent and account for data that do not fit neatly into the theoretical framework adopted for the analysis.

3.3. Data and subjects

The data collected embrace two samples of discussions that took place in two groups of TESOL students. Sample 1 is a record of the discussion among undergraduate

students, who are at the beginning of their professional career and rely exclusively on their experiences as students. Sample 2 is a record of the debate in which TESOL postgraduate second year students took part. Some of these participants had already been in the teaching profession for many years while two of them were novices. The talks were carried out in English, a language foreign to all the participants but, at the same time, the language they had chosen as a subject they wanted to teach. Such an organisation enables one to observe both how students' pedagogical content knowledge and attitudes develop, in other words, how they progress from being a student to being a teacher of a foreign language, that is, how they act out becoming a member of the teacher community of practice.

In the discussions, the overarching theme was whether teachers had a long-lasting impact on the lives of their students. They began with a question posed by a moderator "Do you believe you have a long lasting impact on the lives of your students?". The discussions developed freely, in the sense that the participants were not nominated for speaking, rather the moderator waited for the participants to engage when they felt like contributing. Their contributions were used to trace the trajectory of the participants' identity formation from their experiences as students to their full engagement in teaching practices and becoming experienced teachers.

3.4. Analysis

Excerpt 1 comes from a longer classroom discussion among ten undergraduate students of TESOL. At the beginning, the moderator poses the question of the debate and waits for the students to make contributions. The students do not respond so the moderator resorts to a traditional classroom discourse and calls each student to present their views individually.

<div align="center">(1)</div>

64. M. miss XXX?
65. S.1. I don't want to be a teacher (.) I I: chose this school because I like English and I
66. think that I will: I will erm seek for a job connected with English but not teaching (.) I'm not patient enough (.) (laughter) my mother is a teacher and she: erm and I know that it's hard work and (laughter) maybe private lessons when a child can focus on one thing and is not disturbed by other children but erm I erm I don't want to teach the whole class
67. M. mhm
68. (...)
69. S.2. it's my turn now so=
70. Ss.   [(laughter)
71. S.2. [=so my father was a teacher my sister is a teacher her husband is a teacher [so=
72. Ss.   [(laughter)
73. S.2.   [=so you see=]

74. M. [family business yeah?
75. Ss. (laughter)
76. S.2. =no to be honest I don't want to be a teacher but I would like to learn English
77. good and find a job then connected with it and (.) that's it
78. M. mhm
79. S.2. erm two years ago I studied biology but I didn't like those studies at all so I
80. decided to change something an:d because I always liked English erm I decided to
81. follow (.) that direction=
82. M. mhm
83. S.2. =and I think this decision gives me better job opportunities so I'm here
84. Ss. (whispers in L1)

Turns 64-67 are an example of a standard Initiation-Response-Follow-up (IRF) classroom exchange as delineated by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975). The moderator nominates the student for the next turn and she (S1) responds producing a short explanation for why she has decided to study English. From her contribution we find out that she does not want to be a classroom teacher because it is too hard but she does not exclude the possibility of becoming a TESOL teacher in smaller contexts such as private tutoring. She admits that she turned to studying English hoping for better career opportunities. She has invested in learning English but has not invested in her career of a FL teacher yet. This might explain why she is not willing to speak. She sees her participation in the discussion as a language practice task so she positions herself as a student of ESOL. Therefore, her participation in the discussion is, in her view, an obligation rather than a right, which is evident in her interactional behaviour. She does not engage willingly and does not make a generic elaboration of the topic. She refers to her own personal experiences, from which we may conclude that she has not invested in her teacher identity yet and cannot bring any form of reification to the community of teachers. Moreover, her contribution ends fairly abruptly and is not even recognized as a turn relevance place (TRP) by others. Despite the moderator signalling her that other interactants are anticipating a continuation, she does not carry on, though, which is another manifestation of her investment in EFL learning along with a lack of identification with the community of TESOL teachers.

In turn 68 another participant takes the turn. S2 has not been nominated by the moderator, which might indicate that he is more involved in the discussion and ready to share the views than the previous student. Yet, he is not very willing to speak either, but engages only because he recognizes (by referring to the classroom layout) his obligation to do so. The phrase *it's my turn now so* points to the significance of the non-verbal context in the interaction. In this case the sitting arrangement serves as a clue for the recognition of *who should do what at what*

time. This time the identification of the speaker is not enabled by the sequential organization of classroom exchange but rather based on its spatial-temporal organization. S2 knows that he should self-select for the next turn without an explicit call from the teacher because he has high competence in the community of classroom students and can draw upon the context clues efficiently. Moreover, he can efficiently interpret behaviour of others in positioning himself. He perseveres in his talk despite background laughter and whispers, which might be recognized as ridicule and thus inhibit student's performance. Drawing on his acquaintance of other students in the classroom as well as participative knowledge of community of learners' rules, he can position himself as a motivated student and an active participant in the discussion. Of course he could resort to the strategy of not contributing, employed by other students. S2, however, has invested in himself and knows that his cultural capital is higher than the ones of the other students and performs his identity of a proficient core member of the community of language learners. Wenger (1998) notes, the recognition of one's competence as valued by the community is an important source of identity formation. S2's competence of a language learner encompasses knowing how to engage with other students in the classroom, understanding the tasks in which they are engaged, and sharing the mediating resources, that is language. Also his previous experiences of a student of biology had contributed to the accumulation of the capital that other students have not possessed, which entitles him to speak from the position of an authority in the community.

From the analysis of the classroom behaviour of these two students we can infer that their multiple membership in differing communities (school, family, university) allowed for an accretion of the cultural capitals that differ quantitatively and qualitatively. These capitals have been further invested in L2 learning and have led to a variable performance of identities in the classroom setting.

Another example of how investments in oneself help enhance situated identities comes from a TESOL classroom debate in which teachers with a varied teaching experience discuss the topic of a teacher's impact on a student's life. This time the focus of analysis is on how the concept of competence as a source of identity formation relates to the concept of legitimate access to practice. As mentioned above, Wenger (1998) distinguishes between *peripherality* and *marginality* according to the trajectory of participation: *Peripherality* leads to full participation whereas *marginality* does not. Excerpt 2 presents how the lack of access to community practices leads to the denial of the right to speak and depreciation of the situated identity.

(2)

11. M. Any other examples of the influence of teachers on the lives of students?
12. P8. The influence that my teachers had on me is that I don't like school, I have very bad memories about my teachers, really, so that's why I'm here
13. laughter (.)

14. (...)
15. P1. because you will understand your pupils
16. P8. Yes, I will understand, I have to be::
17. P8. (.) have to be a (.) teacher (.)
18. P6. (.) it's my turn
19. M. So what are these bad memories you have
20. P8. I didn't like my teachers because they tried to stop my individuality and my passions just to make me study but not make me interested in the subject, of course not all of them but most of them, some of them
21. P8. Maybe because every teacher thinks that his or her subject is the most important
22. M. Any other contributions
23. P6. My English teacher from my middle school she had influence on me because, she taught me only one year but when I went on (...) I learned English with pleasure. I liked English but after her lessons I liked it even more. First I thought about studying History after this one year I completely changed my mind and decided to study English. She had a big influence on me
24. M. So in most cases you mentioned here teachers had influence on your academic career, I'd say. So most of you agree that teachers have influence when the career you choose is concerned. How about the socio-social development, do teachers have long lasting impact on students or not

Excerpt 2 illustrates a varied positioning of the participants 6 and 8 despite their similar educational background and experiences. Barnes (2004: 13) claims that "the accessibility of positions to any individual can depend on how their interests and capabilities are perceived by others in the group" whereas Jones (1999) emphasises an individual dimension of positioning alongside the normative one. P8, in contrast to P6, is actively seeking to adopt a position of an equal party in the interaction and, despite her different life history and a lack of a professional teaching experience, her self-positioning is accepted by other interactants. It appears that P6 cannot accomplish the goal of positioning herself as a partner in the discussion whereas P8 succeeds in such self positioning, despite her life experiences similar to P6. By making a straightforward claim *that's why I'm here* (turn 12) in the very first turn she could take, she positions herself as an actor who not only knows the screenplay and her part but also is aware that she has a degree of freedom in fashioning her image, which she uses skilfully. Tajfel (1982) suggests that, when individuals see their present social identity as less than satisfactory, they may attempt to change their group membership in order to view themselves more positively. That is what P8 is targeting at in the interaction. She is much more assertive and less conciliatory than P6 therefore she is more difficult to ignore than P6, which is illustrated in turns 16-23, when the two students compete for turn taking and P8 wins. P8's conversational behaviour and acts enable her to successfully perform and get ratified an identity of an informed partner or even an expert in the discussion.

The options for her future teacher identity rely primarily on her reflection as a student but such a reflection, as claimed by Cummins (2000; 2003), may become central for consistent identity choices and performances in her future professional life. P8 is opting for a teacher who plays an agentive role in the educational space. She has invested in a language teacher education, with the expectation that her teacher training will yield returns for herself. She is planning to make good use of the knowledge and skills she has acquired when she starts her teacher work. She wants to agentively accommodate to teaching practice situations. Accommodation means that she is consciously aiming at changing the schema of the teacher she has been familiarised with in her "apprenticeship of observation" (Lortie 1975). Drawing on these experiences as a student and the theoretical knowledge she obtained in the college, she feels confident in taking on major reshaping of the teacher's role in the classroom. In seeking to redress what she considers to be fundamental flaws that characterized the teaching practice she had observed as a learner, she wants to derive insights from the participants of this debate in an attempt to incorporate them in her own language teaching practice. Such situated learning is advocated for by anthropologists (cf. Lave and Wenger 1991) who see it as an integral and inseparable part of social practice.

A contrastive identity of an active observer is performed by P6 in the interaction under scrutiny. She initiates her conversational contribution in turn 18 saying *it's my turn now*, which shows that she is positioning herself as a student in a classroom following a typical initiation-response-follow-up (IRF) classroom discourse structure (Sinclair and Coulthard 1975). This unsuccessful attempt to self select as the next party in the conversation indicates that she is lively interested in the topic and wants to present her view, yet, it also demonstrates that the competitive nature of the debate increases situational anxiety, as it happens in the classroom where students compete to take part in the activity, which, in turn, leads to failure in turn upholding. P6's behaviour, then, is characteristic of a student rather than a teacher.

Moreover, other participants in the interaction position her as a pupil. This is evident in the behaviour of the moderator, who appears not to notice P6's attempt to take floor and continues talking with P8 (turn 19). Having finished the talk with P8, the moderator poses a general question, *Any other contributions* which is taken up by P6 to present her story. The moderator's follow-up (turn 24) serves as a kind of wrapping up of a phase in a discussion or, to refer to classroom situation, as a feedback on what has been said in the discussion so far, which further bears witness to P6 being positioned as a learner.

The exemplary performance of the students in the two classrooms appears to support the view that their motivation is not a stable unique characteristic of each individual. The students are highly motivated, yet there are particular social conditions under which they are most uncomfortable to speak and their varied positioning is a function of the value of their cultural capital, investments they made in becoming L2 teachers as well as the perceptions and evaluations of other members of the community of practice.

4. Conclusions

The study, being limited in scope, suggests that learning to become a language teacher transcends mere linguistic competence. At a deeper personal level, to become a language teacher is to extend one's identity and to construct a new narrative about the self. TESOL classrooms can prepare students for life outside, but teaching and learning may need to be redesigned, based on an understanding of how cultural identities shape language learning and teaching. Both inside and outside the classroom, engagement with local communities of practice can help in achieving successful transitions to new identities, which integrate a globally--oriented English speaking self with a local L2 speaking self and L1 in situ speaking self and lead to increase of a cultural capital.

The identity approach to TESOL, as presented above, does not in any way claim to be able to answer all the questions pertaining to TESOL, nor does it claim to invalidate other approaches. What it does argue is that failing to consider the centrality of learners' identities, as well as issues of power and inequality in the language learning process, will produce an inadequate understanding of students' behaviourr in TESOL classrooms. Access and participation are key components of successful performance in the formal educational settings, particularly within a community of practice perspective (Lave & Wenger 1991). The meanings conveyed by the linguistic and nonlinguistic forms that students encounter in SLA, the prevailing ideologies of learning and using language, plus the identities made available to learners and whether they are taken up or contested are all important aspects of L2 performance. Students' willingness to communicate in L2 depends on how much they have invested in learning practices of the community of practice and to what extent they identify with its members and how they are identified by the members. The varied performance of the students in L2 interactions results not only from relatively immutable and consistent features of their nature as learners. Social conditions have impact on learners' preferences or needs for L2 use. The legitimate access to practice and the competence so developed constitute crucial dimensions of identity formation.

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