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The construction of ethnic minority identity: A discursive psychological approach to ethnic self-definition in action

for *Discourse & Society*

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Abstract

The present article intends to examine how ethnic minority group members account for their ethnic identity as part of a series of interviews with young Mapuches on what it means to be Mapuche in contemporary Chilean society. The focus is on the actual accomplishment and display of ethnic self-definition and group identification. We draw on insights from discursive psychology to explore some features of common sense practical reasoning that ethnic minority group members use to negotiate, self-ascribe or resist a particular sense of identity, and produce observable and reportable identities. We have a particular interest in illustrating how ethnic self-definition can be seen as the contingent outcome of a practical and interpretive issue for members of society, with a special focus on how ethnic minority identity is constructed through the flexible use of group-defining attributes and characteristics, categories and common sense categorial knowledge. We suggest that understanding the complex significance and meaning of ethnic self-definition for minority group members is dependent on engaging closely with its occasioned context of production and treating social identities as a feature of how people describe themselves. It is argued that this view of ethnic minority self-definition as a practical and interpretive issue and as a discursive product in action can provide further contribution to literature of both discursive and intercultural studies of ethnic identification of minority groups, inter-cultural and inter-ethnic relations.

Keywords: discursive psychology, Chile, ethnic minority, ethnic self-definition, Mapuche, social identities.

Introduction

As so many examples of social science research are showing today, it is becoming increasingly problematic to theorize and analyze identity as a fixed object, as something that is simply given. Margaret Wetherell cogently captures this idea when she points to a change of focus in contemporary research on identity, from 'stasis … the fixed traits and determining and unchanging essences' to the *making* of identity, to 'what a sense of identity allows and encourages and what follows from it rather how it is formed and how it got to be as it is' (2009, p. 2). This paper is concerned with offering an exploratory account of how a focus on the making of identity in discourse may facilitate the understanding of the complex significance and meaning of ethnic self-definition and social identification for minority group members. We contend that, perhaps, one cannot even begin to theorize ethnic minority identities in their multifarious manifestations and consequences for self and other, without asking how identity is actually *at* and *in* play, and a paramount concern for social actors. In what ways is identity 'doing' and 'making' a feature of understanding ethnic minority self-definition and the socio-political contexts in which it manifests itself?

We start from recognizing the diversity of people's social identities and social positionings studied, and we aim to study these as discursive accomplishments. We follow Antaki et al. (1996: 474) in distinguishing between social identities that can be seen as a 'feature of the objective world', a 'feature of perception and cognition' and a 'feature of how people describe themselves'. Here we focus on the latter, on social identities as a feature of how people describe themselves, with reference to indexical and interactional work performed in the particular context of social science research interviews and the

broader socio-cultural context of intercultural and inter-ethnic relations in Chilean society. We explore issues of ethnic self-definition and ethnic minority identity for young urban Mapuches as a matter of social actors' situated and interested descriptions of themselves and others (cf. Antaki et al., 1996; Stokoe, 2009; Verkuyten, 2003). We treat ethnic minority identities as *descriptions*, as something that does not just appear or simply pre-exists contexts of use, but something that is creatively, flexibly and contextually constituted, and making sense as part of interactional structure.

Studying identity in theory and in action

Intercultural studies of identity from a psychosocial perspective describe social phenomena such as prejudice, stereotypes and discrimination by focusing on the social attributes and categories that orient social practices of ingroup towards outgroups (e.g. Tajfel, 1982; Bourhis and Leyens, 1996). Within this framework, studying identity implies assuming and responding to 'otherness' in terms of the qualities that differentiate an individual's group characteristics from another in which the perceived 'degree of difference' between individuals is mainly derived from group membership factors as values, beliefs, norms and patterns of interaction. Being part of social groups allows the individual to construct his/her identity. Identity formation has been conceived as the more or less deterministic outcome of a series of cognitive, evaluative and categorization processes (Tajfel and Turner, 1979; Tajfel, 1986; Onorato and Turner, 2001; Postmes and Jetten, 2006; Postmes et al., 2006). Within this framework, experiences of society, group belonging and social identification are posited on the workings of inner psychological processes and in-group/out-

group dynamics. When the analytic attention moves towards the role of discourse as social practice in the formation of social identities, cognitive, evaluative and categorization processes are seen as discursive accomplishments (Edwards, 1997). Experiences of society, group belonging and social identification are conceived as essentially about social actors 'being multiply called upon, categorised, classified, registered, enrolled and enlisted, often in highly contradictory and antagonistic ways' (Wetherell, 2009: 4). What is constitutive of making and re-making identities is the 'endless work of forming and dismantling, claiming, reminding, identifying, re-establishing, rejecting', that is most often, 'what is most salient to the actual members of society' (ibid., 2009: 4). This entails, among other things, approaching identity 'making' and 'doing' as a public and discursive phenomenon, contingent on local and contextual conditions of production. Identities are constructed (rather than given) from varied social repertoires available to people (Benwell and Stokoe, 2006). Identities are multiple and dilemmatic rather than unique and coherent, constructed through the creative use of cultural categories and repertoires discursively produced within temporal and relational affiliations (cf. Hall, 2000).

When one turns to ethnic minority identity in particular one cannot help but notice that this is not constructed in a vacuum. It is usually taken for granted that intercultural and inter-ethnic relationships (and related issues of self- and group-definition) stand in a *sine qua non* relation to an in-group/out-group distinction, to a set of identities which are already given, to possibilities for self-definition and social identification which are prescribed by the tension between minority and majority self-categorization. What is nevertheless missing from such a perspective is an attention to how minority group members themselves

construct their identities, in their own terms, and what are the uses to which these are put. The point is to understand how social/membership categories, like "us" and "them", "minority group", and so on are socially constructed, how the taken-for-granted world of social and ethnic categorization is continually produced, negotiated or contested in interaction. Ethnic minority identity and issues of self- and group-definition are not given, finished, accomplished, 'once and for all time' (Wetherell, 2009: 4). Ethnic minority identity (and issues of self- and group-definition) should be seen and studied as a 'practical task' (Hansen, 2005; see also Moerman, 1988). In doing so, one should be able to describe not only how ethnicity and identity weave in and out of social interaction but also what social actors do with identity once it is an undeniable matter of record (cf. Wilkinson and Kitzinger, 2003).

Minority identity constructions do not reflect or mirror a pre-existing world of already known facts, of already 'claimed' identities, but rather they are actively constructing it. People engaged in conversations about themselves and others construct and negotiate categorial meanings and the 'reality' that they are talking about. Studies of the ways in which ethnic minorities define and account for their identity (especially to members of their own group) are still relatively scarce (but see Leudar and Nekvapil, 2000; Verkuyten, 1997, 2005; Verkuyten and de Wolf, 2002). Perhaps the most interesting and insightful study on the topic is Verkuyten and de Wolf's (2002) that shows how ethnic minority members (Chinese residents in the Netherlands) construct different versions of identity in interactions with members of their own group through mobilizing various discursive and cultural resources, and offering both deterministic and agentic accounts of their identity as minority group members. The significance

of appearance, the importance of early socialization, and the possession or non-possession of critical attributes were emphasised by participants, as well as an active and constructive role for themselves in identity construction.

The importance and relevance of studies such as Verkuyten and deWolf's lies in treating ethnic minority identity as a *to-be-accounted-for* phenomenon. Ethnic minority identity needs to be 'done' over and over again. Ethnic minority identity and self-definition and self-categorization needs working and re-working, and must be continually brought 'to life' (cf. Wetherell, 2009). Constructing an image for oneself and others through language involves a practical accomplishment of identity.

This paper considers how minority group members are continually collected under various ethnic categories, attributes and positioned widely in society not by majority group members but by members of their own group. We explore the discursive construction of identity in Mapuche adolescents drawing upon insights from discursive psychology (Hepburn and Wiggins, 2007). We pay special attention to the various ways in which these youngsters manage issues of self-definition and group membership, how they handle issues of justifying and qualifying ethnic identification to members of their own ethnic group. In the case of interactions between ethnic minority group members, what one often encounters is positioning in terms of ethnic category membership, where such categories, attributes, knowledge about categories and inferences are produced, reproduced or resisted.

We contend that an ethnic minority category like 'Mapuche' is not simply invoked as pre-existing cultural, normative ethnic reference, but rather actively constituted through its use in a specific local, interactional context. The analytic

questions that will guide our paper are: Is 'Mapuche' ethnic minority identity produced (and taken up) as problematic/unproblematic? How do participants display categorial knowledge, common sense practical reasoning around what it means to be 'Mapuche'? Furthermore, we intend to reveal how 'being Mapuche' is made observable and reportable, and how both interviewer and interviewee use, and negotiate, ascribe, resist various common sense cultural resources that provide for the orderliness of categorial identification *as* 'Mapuche' in terms of category-bound characteristics and category-bound knowledge.

Context

The current Mapuche population in Chile is 846.444 which corresponds to the 4,6% of the total Chilean population (16.928.873). The majority of Mapuche members reside in the southern Araucania region (15,4%) and the BioBio region (13,3%): whilst in Santiago, the capital city, the migrant Mapuche population is 285.974 (self-declared in the 2002 census). Mapuches have an average education of 7.2 years compared to the 9.6 years of non-Mapuche Chilean population (U.N. Development Programme, 2003).

A prevailing attitude within contemporary Chilean society is the presence of prejudice and discrimination against Mapuches that has been documented extensively in the literature. Prejudice and discrimination have been reported in everyday oral interaction among Chileans (Merino and Quilaqueo, 2003; Merino, Pilleux, Quilaqueo and Millamán 2004; Merino, 2006; Mellor, Merino, Saiz and Quilaqueo 2009; Merino and Mellor, 2009); in public and political discourse (Merino and Quilaqueo,2004; San Martín, 2001); and in educational practices and school textbooks (Rojas and Sepúlveda, 2002). In a longitudinal

study Merino, Saiz and Quilaqueo (2005-2007) explored the perception of discrimination in urban adult Mapuches' oral discourse and the psychosocial effects attached to such practices.

Methodology

Participants

For the study we approached 30 Mapuche adolescents (between 15 and 20 years of age) form the cities of Temuco and Santiago, in Chile. The criterion for identifying the participants was having at least one Mapuche surname. The participants spoke Spanish fluently and some of them understood Mapudungun (the Mapuche indigenous language) but could barely speak it. Participants were recruited from both state and private high schools. A snowballing sampling technique was used to recruit participants.

Procedure and materials

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with all participants. Interviews took the form of a conversation between members of the same ethnic group (the interviewer was an adult of Mapuche origin). In this sense, both interviewer and interviewee are seen as cooperatively engaged in producing the 'interview' (Wetherell and Potter, 1992; Widdicombe and Wooffitt, 1995), in this case, an interactional site where ethnic minority identity and ethnic self-definition are being negotiated and displayed. Interviewer and interviewees' social positioning were not seen as a mere reflection of life and identities outside the interview (Miller and Glassner, 1997), a 'reality report' (Holstein and

Gubrium, 1995), but rather a product of a specific interaction and 'spaces of interaction' in their own right (Rapley, 2001).

Method

We draw on discursive psychology's concern with action and construction (Edwards, 2003; Edwards and Potter, 2001; Hepburn and Wiggins, 2007) and with identities as multiple, variable and flexible, fashioned in interactional encounters (Benwell and Stokoe, 2006; Stokoe, 2009). Our approach to analysing interview transcripts aims to focus on people's situated activities in talk, by treating the interview as a place where identities are being negotiated part of an interactive process where meaning is co-constructed (Baker, 2000). We follow Potter and Hepburn (2005) in treating interviews as social interaction, including in our transcripts and in our analysis the interviewee, but also the interviewer's participatory frame and actions being performed. We have considered the complex and varying footing positions, as well as the various orientations to stake and interest of interviewer and interviewee. Baker (1997: 131) suggests that interviewing should be understood as an 'interactional event in which members draw on their cultural knowledge, including their knowledge about how members of categories routinely speak'. Moreover, we have attempted to treat answers as 'cultural stories' and draw out the range of cultural, categorial, normative resources, 'perspectives and moral forms' (Silverman, 2001).

We intend to reveal how Mapuche identity is made observable and reportable and how both interviewer and interviewee use, negotiate, ascribe, or resist various common sense cultural resources that provide for the orderliness

of categorial identification in terms of category-bound characteristics and category-bound knowledge. For the purposes of this paper we will focus on some examples that illustrate one pervasive discursive pattern identified across the data. Extracts were chosen as illustrations of an ongoing tension between a declarative sense of ethnic minority identity and a purportedly 'deeper', felt dimension of ethnic identification.

Analysis

One of the main concerns of the interview accounts we have analysed was constructed around the initial question (and variants of it): "What is it like for you to be a young Mapuche in Chilean society today?" Notice how the interviewer's question opens a social positioning slot for the interviewee. Identity positioning is invited in terms of categorial reference terms such as 'young Mapuche' and contextual localization of identity ('in Chile', 'in Chilean society today'). As Baker (1997: 131) argued, 'questions are a central part of the data and cannot be viewed as neutral invitations to speak – rather they shape how and as a member of which categories the respondents should speak'. It could be argued that this particular question sets the issue of ethnic minority identity and social identification as a categorial and practical interpretive problem. The organization of identity descriptions is subject to ongoing, mutual interpretative work from both interview and interviewer. 'What is it like to be a young Mapuche …' invites an evaluation, the volunteering an ethnic self-definition in categorial terms[1]. The initial ethnic categorization and the reference to the social and political context of majority Chilean culture can be said to be mutually recognizable in terms of asking for an account in terms of a potentially

problematic issues of social identification. The question seems to imply that being a young Mapuche in contemporary Chilean society is not a straightforward issue, but is something potentially problematic[2].

Answers to this initial question were organized, not simply as reports of experience, but as *accounts*, that is, part and parcel of a work of accounting by a member of a category for the incumbent category-bound attributes and activities, category-bound knowledge attached to that particular category. In inspecting the data, we found that, recurrently, the interviewees were displaying a commitment to the same moral, categorial identity universe put forward by the question. In response to the question, most participants offered an affiliative account to the social identity proposed in the question, constructing a self-definition inclusive of group solidarity, but which was, nonetheless, not left unqualified. The issue of identification with own group and that of self-definition in relation to that were not offered as non-problematic but rather as something in need of accounting. Extract 1 is a good example of this.

Extract 1, Sergio

```
1    Carmen      Eh, I would like to know a little bit (.) to
2                know you (.)  How is it for you or how (.) do
3                you feel, if you feel that you are a mapuche
4                youngster or how do you feel (.) how is it
5                like to be a young mapuche in the Chilean
6                society
7    Sergio      Eh, well I identify myself as mapuche but (.)
8                no more than that=
9    Carmen      =you mean you identify yourself (.) Why do
10               you identify yourself as mapuche?
11   Sergio      Only because of my surname (.)
12   Carmen      Only because of your surname (.) but doesn't
13               your  family  identify  itself  as  a  mapuche
14               fami[ly?
15   Sergio          [my grandpa and my grandmother
16   Carmen      Yes (.) and how do they identify? Do they
17               partici[pate?
18   Sergio             [yes my grandpa goes to guillatunes as
19               you said (.)
20   Carmen      right
                 […]
```

At line 7 one can see Sergio producing himself as ascribing to the category Mapuche ('I identify myself as Mapuche') but at the same time setting boundaries on group identification and self-definition (note the use of 'no more than that'). He uses a rhetorical 'yes, but' device to simultaneously move the discussion '*towards* a particular topic, while redirecting the conversation *away* from another' (Billig, 1999: 53, emphasis in original). For Sergio ethnic self-definition seems to be restricted to a sort of lip service to ethnic identification in the (categorial) terms put forward by the interviewer, restricted to an *avowal* of ethnic identification. In the ensuing turns, Sergio can be seen as making relevant an implied tension between avowing/declaring and (displaying) being and feeling a member of ethnic minority group member (see Verkuyten, 2003).

At lines 9-10, the interviewer is challenging Sergio to offer an account of his 'declarative' sense of identity, which is now on the record. The direct challenge of the interviewer constructs Sergio's previous position as one that

one has to defend. It can be seen how such a direct challenge invites positioning in terms of members' knowledge of certain things that are known about the ethnic category Mapuche. With 'only because of my surname' at line 11, Sergio reinforces the boundary of self-definition and identification and restricts it to a recognizable, category-bound attribute. 'Only because of my surname' constructs the surname as a prototypical category-bound feature. By identifying the surname as a central category bound feature linked to being Mapuche he displays cultural knowledge about the category and attributes which are usually associated with it.

One can self-categorize and claim membership in an ethnic category by describing oneself in terms of particular characteristics commonsensically attached to specific ethnic categories. At lines 12-14, the interviewer introduces another challenge by expanding the universe of ethnic group identification, beyond the surname, and to the family. There is a sense in which simply *declaring* your identification with an ethnic group is not enough. Sergio is invited to account for how one *is* Mapuche. There is a shift from a declarative sense of ethnic identity and identification of attributes to the issue of *doing* and *being* Mapuche. Ethnic category labels, such as 'Mapuche', can be seen as inviting and constituting argumentative positions around the meaning attached to the particular category (cf. Figgou and Condor, 2007). The issue of ethnic identification is reframed by the interviewer as one of *activity*, of participation. At lines 15-20 one can notice how this is the outcome of a joint accomplishment. Knowing what someone's identity is we can work out the kinds of activities in which they might engage (Sacks, 1995; Eglin and Hester, 2003). In this context, by identifying a person's activity (like participating in a 'guillatun'[3]) one provides

a space for offering inferences with regard to what their social identity is likely to be (e.g. Mapuche).

The tension between a declarative sense of ethnic identity, on one hand, and being and feeling Mapuche, on the other, is taken further by the interviewer later in the same interview.

Extract 2

```
56  Carmen      And you Sergio (.) how do you see yourself?
57              like a young mapuche in this (.) this country
58              or like an ordinary citizen?
59  Sergio      No (.) like a mapuche (.)
60  Carmen      Like a mapuche (.) why?=
61  Sergio      =because (.) because of my surname, I think
62              (.) that I don't feel like the [others=
63  Carmen                                     [right
64  Sergio      =I see the world like they do (.)  but I
65              don't feel like them
66  Carmen      In what sense you don't feel like them, like
67              the Chileans, you say?
68  Sergio      Like (.) I don't share anything with them (.)
69              like that
70  Carmen      Right (.) but (.) so what would you have of
71              mapuche apart from your surname?
72  Sergio      I think it is only that
```

In extract 2, social positioning is invited, again, in categorial terms. The question is one about self-perception and social identification. 'How do you see yourself? Like a young Mapuche in this (.) this country or like an ordinary citizen?' The question sets up an implicit contrast between 'us' and 'them', between identification in particular ethnic minority terms and identification in terms of the majority member perspective. The question can also be seen as setting the issue of identification as one where there are a large number of categories, attributes, and so on, that can be used to describe a social identity. Sergio's answer at line 59 comes without delay and is emphatic; it rules out the alternative candidate for self-definition and identification ('No (.) like a Mapuche). Sergio's answer constructs the two categories, 'young mapuche' and 'ordinary citizen' as contrasting. Ethnic minority categorization is on the record

and is constructed as exclusive and non-permeable. There is a subtle sense that one cannot claim to be a 'Mapuche' and an 'ordinary citizen' at the same time. At line 60, Sergio is invited to qualify why he sees himself as a Mapuche. 'Only because of my surname, I think' is the answer that comes without delay. If one conceives ethnic self-definition and identification as a practical task (see Hansen, 2005) one can see how ethnic categories of self-definitions and attributes commonsensically attached to it need to be managed in interaction and one needs to display cultural knowledge of the kind of attributes that make up ethnic minority identity and that can differentiate the person, as member of an ethnic group, from other groups ('them' – the Chileans). The surname is identified and ratified by both the interviewer and interviewee as a salient and prototypical feature that differentiates Mapuches from 'others' (the Chileans). Not feeling like the others is qualified at lines 64-65: 'I see the world like they do, but I don't feel like them'. It is implied that although on one hand one can share outward, ways of seeing the world, one the other hand, one is not sharing an inward, more intimate dimension of existence. Two seemingly opposing versions of self-definition are offered by Sergio. The first seems to rely on conceiving social identities as a feature of perception and normative positioning in the world ('I see the world like they do', possibly implying 'like any other youngster of my age'); the second seems to rely on conceiving social identities as a feature of emotional positioning in terms of *feelings*, which may drive the individual towards acknowledging ethnic group essentialist cultural ties (cf. Verkuyten, 2003). Here, one can conceive of 'seeing' and 'feeling' as not indexing purely perceptual (cognitive) and emotional worlds. Integral part of our common sense cognitive and emotional psychological thesaurus, they are

invoked in order to ground a dilemma of ethnic self-definition in the context of inter-cultural, majority-minority group relation.

As discursive psychologists have shown, cognitive and emotional categories can be invoked to provide for and deploy a flexible range of oppositions and contrasts in the service of situated rhetoric of ethnic self-description and ethnic identification, and manage the interplay between internal states vs. external behaviour: private ('feelings') vs. public ('expressions', 'displays'), subject vs. object evaluations (Edwards, 1999; Edwards and Potter, 2005).

At lines 66-67 the interviewer invites a clarification. 'Not feeling like them' is qualified as not sharing 'anything with them' (lines 68-69). There is a move from a subjective assessment/construction to an objective assessment/construction (Wiggins and Potter, 2003). Throughout his account, Sergio works up a contrast between a shallow, superficial 'outside' of ethnic self-definition and identification and a deeper, substantial 'inside' of ethnic self-definition and identification.

The interviewer invites Sergio to think about other commonsensically attached attributes to the category 'Mapuche' in terms of his own self-definition. The issue of self-definition as Mapuche is restricted by Sergio to the surname. He is implicitly signalling that from a perspective of personal positioning the surname is a necessary and sufficient attribute to think of oneself as Mapuche.

Sergio can be seen as having to reconcile cultural positioning with personal positioning, having to reconcile the tension between self-definition in terms of what characteristics he, as an individual, includes in his self-definition as a member of ethnic/sociocultural group and what characteristics are

normatively attached to describing someone as a *bona fide member* of an ethnic/sociocultural group. Constructing self-definition and social identification is not simply a matter of knowing 'what it means to be Mapuche', but realizing and displaying what are the category-bound characteristics that can be used to describe someone as Mapuche. Both interviewer and interviewee's speech seems to be '*designed* with regard to such matters' (Edwards, 1997: 98, emphasis in original). In extracts 3 and 4 we offer further examples of how participants negotiate this tension between cultural and personal positioning.

Extract 3

```
1    Carmen      Okay (.) The first question (.) and the most
2                important also (.) is (.) eh::: (.) What is
3                it like for you  to be a young Mapuche in the
4                Chilean society?
5    Jessenia    Eh::: first (.) well (.) it is kind of cool,
6                it is (.) all the same it is (.) good (.)
7                but, sometimes it is (.) nevertheless (.) it
8                is like (.) "oh, she is Mapuche" and (.) like
9                (.) they reject you but that has never
10               happened to me (.) it is like I have been
11               accepted everywhere (.) that is (.) I mean
12               (.) I don't know whether it is because I get
13               along with everybody easily, that I am good
14               at making friends with people (.) but I have
15               noticed that other persons (.) yes=
16   Carmen      right
17   Jessenia    =that it has happened to them (.)
18   Carmen      But you have been lucky
19   Jessenia    Yes (.) I get along well with everybody and
20               they kind of like me (.) and accept me
21   Carmen      That's good! (.)
22   Jessenia    In (.) in my  my class (.) it is like
23               everything is all right (.) No (.) there is
24               no discrimination at all (.)
25   Carmen      Well (.) then (.) Okay (.) so  you feel good
26               being a Mapuche (.)
27   Jessenia    Yes (.) and what's more (.) I like the things
28               they do (.) traditions and staff (.)
```

First, notice how the interviewer's question and the categories it is explicitly invoking are central to producing interviewee's talk (that is, the

19

categories they invoke and identities they speak from) (cf. Baker, 1984, 1997; see also Widdicombe and Wooffitt, 1995). Jessenia can be seen as orienting to a tension between positive ('kind of cool', 'good') and negative (rejection and discrimination) aspects of social identification. In doing so, she constructs the issue of being a young Mapuche in contemporary Chilean society as a problematic issue, one that requires accounting.

The issue of rejection (discrimination) is accounted for on the basis of someone being *seen* and subsequently categorized as Mapuche ('oh, she is Mapuche'). Rejection is constructed in terms of categorial and cultural positioning by others (when one is perceived and categorized *as* Mapuche, one is rejected). Jessenia constructs a contrast between general categorial/cultural positioning by others and personal positioning (note the use of extreme case formulations 'never happened to me' at lines 9-10; and being 'accepted everywhere'). One can see how Jessenia negotiates the tension between cultural and personal positioning by linking issues of self-definition with issues of self-presentation in relation to individual traits and characteristics. Accounting for negative and positive aspects of social identification with own group is turned into a concern to produce herself as a certain *type-of-person*. Although Jessenia does not orient to her experience as being common or rather exceptional, interviewer's take on her account at line 18 ('but, you have been lucky') orients to the exceptional character of her experience (the exception that, in a way, confirms the rule!), and implicitly, to the pervasiveness of rejection and discrimination in society on categorial, ethnic membership grounds. By constructing herself as a certain type-of-person (someone that gets along with everybody easily; good at making friends with people) Jessenia is

able to account for the differences between her own experience (of discrimination) and that of her own ethnic group (categorial vs. individual; people ratified as members of an ethnic/sociocultural group with distinct characteristics vs. individuals, people endowed with a certain disposition to engage with others).

Rejection is something she is able to notice happening to others, as both a *feature* and *consequence* of group membership (being identified as Mapuche), but that is not a group experience she shares as virtue of group membership. Her experience is further particularized with a reference to 'my class' (line 22) where discrimination is said not to exist at all (lines 23-24).

Extract 4

```
110  Carmen      Do you know your name in
111              Mapuche?
112  Jessenia    yes
113  Carmen      But (.) how do you know that you are Mapuche?
114              Is it only because of your surname (.)
115  Jessenia    No (.) it is that my family on both sides
116              they are Mapuche (.)
117  Carmen      okay
118  Jessenia    And because my mother has a second last name
119              which is also Mapuche and (.) I don't know
120              (.) also  my body build (.) I don't know (.)
121              like (.) my shape (.) my body build is like
122              that of the Mapuche people (.) all Mapuche
123              people look somewhat alike (.)
124  Carmen      Right::
125  Jessenia    I have noticed that
126  Carmen      Really? (.)
127  Jessenia    Yes (.) they all look alike (.)
```

In extract 4, the interviewer seems to implicitly set a contrast between an external/public dimension of ethnic self-definition and identification ('knowing that your name is Mapuche' – knowing what your name means in Mapuche) and an internal, personal/private dimension of ethnic self-definition and identification (how does one know when one is Mapuche).

21

At lines 113-114, the interviewer invites confirmation from Jessenia on the issue of the surname being the only 'method' that can be used to self-categorize as Mapuche. Like we have seen in Sergio's case, it is implied that what it means to be Mapuche is linked to a set of culturally category-bound attributes and features. It is implied that the feature of having a Mapuche surname and being a member of the Mapuche group are mutually constitutive. At lines 115-116, Jessenia widens the scope of self-definition and ethnic identification by pointing to several other features that allow her to self-identify as Mapuche: family ties (lines 115-116), her mother's 'second last name which is also Mapuche', and physical appearance, which is recognized as something that all Mapuches hold in common: 'all Mapuche people look somewhat alike' (line 122-123). The issue of physical appearance is offered as something she has happened to notice, as a somewhat natural, visible and recognizable feature of ethnic identification present 'out-there' (and available for everyone to see). Identification in terms of surname, family ties and physical appearance are all available elements to be drawn upon in the construction of ethnic self-definition and social identification. Constructing ethnic-self definition and social identification is accomplished by pointing to *visible* and *recognizable* features of ethnic identity.

In both Sergio's and Jessenia's case, one can see how the interviewer and interviewee jointly negotiate tying knowledge, attributes and activities to particular categories (in this case, 'Mapuche'). What our analysis has hopefully shown is that, although available 'out-there', as cultural and social objects, ethnic minority categories are not somehow plucked out of that social and cultural space according to enduring, unseen 'rules'. Ethnic self-definition and

social identification are the very outcome of both interviewer and interviewee attending carefully to personal and categorial/cultural positioning in terms of knowledge, ethnic categories, commonsensically attached and shared attributes, and so on. One can see how both parties sequentially monitor identity production and attend to social positioning as minority group members. Ethnic self-definition and social identification are constituted *as* discursive accomplishments through active interpretive work involved in rendering (and attending to) the local, interactional implications of producing descriptions and using particular categories and predicates as tools of self-definition.

In the interactional unfolding of the interview, interviewees and interviewer can be seen as managing and constituting the implicative relationship of category-bound knowledge and predicates, and producing (ethnic) identity and identification as a matter of social actors (Sacks, 1995; Eglin and Hester, 2003). Both interviewer and interviewee work with and negotiate a set of presumably shared categories and common sense categorial assumptions in order to construct what it means to be 'Mapuche' in contemporary Chilean society. Interviewer and interviewee seem to be at pains with constructing a moral world of categorization where what it means to be Mapuche is brought up for discussion in terms of both individual and categorial positioning. What this engenders is a continuum of inclusive (larger) and exclusive (narrower) identity self-definitions.

Conclusion

In this paper we have shown some of the ways in which Mapuche adolescents manage issues of self-definition and group identification. We have seen how Mapuche youngsters make flexible use of their understandings of

category-bound knowledge, attributes and activities to display and resolve an ongoing tension between avowing/declaring and (displaying) being and feeling a member of ethnic minority group member. Ethnic self-definition and social identification are conceived as the result of a range of constructive processes that show how participants 'sensitively reproduce and rearticulate' (Silverman, 2001:104) ethnic minority identity and social identification within the interview. Both interviewer and interviewee are negotiating and constantly working up the orderly, recognizable, tellable features of ethnic minority identity.

Understanding the complex significance and meaning of ethnic self-definition for Mapuche members of society is dependent on engaging closely with its interactional, occasioned context of production, treating social identities as a feature of how adolescents describe themselves and attending to the interplay and tension between cultural and personal positioning.

By considering how ethnic self-definition is jointly constructed in interaction by members of a minority group, one can perhaps understand more of the ways in which a particular moral world of ethnic social categorization is typically legitimated, categorically organized, and justified to self and others (cf. Wetherell, 2003). One may also start to appreciate, perhaps to a fuller extent, how 'terms of cultural engagement' (Bhabha, 1994) with self and others, are produced performatively within local, socio-cultural frames of reference and through a variety of interactional work.

Notes

1. For a Mapuche interviewer and interviewee the category Mapuche is not a neutral one, but rather a lay category, an already constituted category 'out-there', an inference-rich category, a social/moral object to which both parties can meaningfully orient.

2. This concerns the conflictual status of interethnic relations between Mapuches and Chileans, especially in the Araucania region and Temuco, its capital city, where interviewer and interviewees live. This conflict derives from Mapuche claims of ancestral territory 'recovery', a problematic issue to which successive Chilean democratic governments have not been able to find a satisfactory solution, and one that would satisfy both parties.

3. The 'guillatun' is the most relevant socio-religious ceremony of Mapuche culture. Every two years, one or more communities would gather at a three-day feast to thank or petition to the deity for good crops or for other pledges the community would like to make.

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