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SELF-IDENTIFICATION OF THREE BILINGUAL LANGUAGE TEACHERS: A MULTI-CASE STUDY

Summary. Identity, as a complex and relative notion, is extremely hard to define, especially when it comes to bilingual people who are to cope with two or more identities. The relationship between language and identity is already intricate, and those who are born into bilingual families not only deal with these lingual complexities, but also social diversities. Starting from this point, this qualitative multi-case study addresses the issue of identity through the in-depth analysis of three bilinguals who are also second language teachers at a private foundation university. The data were collected mainly through face-to-face semi-structured interviews, and similar and different themes were revealed by within-case and cross case analysis. The participants reflected on how they labeled themselves in terms of their identities as bilinguals. Finally, the research revealed that family bonds and emotions, as well as social norms and language, played various roles in the self-identification of bilinguals. The fact that the acculturation and integration strategies of the participants were different and that self-identification was remarkably subjective and flexible were the other underlying outcomes of the research.

Keywords: Identity, Self-Identification, Language, Bilingual, Acculturation.

Introduction

As the world has become a more globalized place, we have begun to see more people living in different countries, speaking more than one language, and having multiple cultural backgrounds (Benet-Martinez, Leu, Lee, & Morris, 2002). Considering that "more than half the world's population is bilingual" (Grosjean, 1998, p. 20), it would not be difficult to predict that many of these bilinguals are faced with having multiple and complex identities. However, we do not know much about how bilinguals come to terms with their dual or multiple identities (Benet-Martinez et al., 2002).

In terms of identity, bilingual people have the inclination to be bicultural (Ramírez-Esparza, Gosling, Benet-Martínez, Potter, & Pennebaker, 2006). However, as Grosjean (1998) asserted, "much less is known about biculturalism than bilingualism even though one sees the term 'bicultural' almost as often as the word 'bilingual' (p. 28). In line with the complexity of biculturalism and bilingualism, the term identity is also as complicated (Fielding, 2015). Yet, it is common for individuals to have dual cultural identities and behave accordingly (Benet-Martinez et al., 2002). Therefore, combining these two multifaceted

terms, this stud aimed to shed light on how bilingual people define their identity and how they cope with their dual or multiple identities.

It is notable that bilingual identity is claimed to be underresearched (Benet-Martinez & Haritatos, 2005; Phinney, 1990); and that the existing research has been criticized due to the heavy focus on the identities of "immigrants and ethnic minorities, mostly in Western cultural contexts" (Chen, Martinez, & Bond, 2008, p. 804). Therefore, the research aimed at voicing other bilinguals from different origins, namely Turkish, in this case. More importantly, it placed an emphasis on "self-identification" and aspired to contribute to the literature of bilingual identity by enabling participants to express their own identification.

Literature Review

Identity

Identity, one the core concepts of this research, is a term that is difficult to define. It is a paradoxical word that denotes both difference and sameness (Lawler, 2008). In other words, not only do we share common identities with others, but we are also different than others because of who we are (Lawler, 2008). With regard to sameness and difference, identity can be divided into "personal identity" and "social identity." As Worchel (1998) explains, the former refers to identities which render individuals different than others. On the other hand, the latter indicates identities mostly based on shared similarities within groups.

There have been other interpretations of identity. For instance, Jenkins (2004) defined identity as a social process that is shaped by time, meaning that we are not born with determined identities but they are rather shaped by us as we interact with the world around us. However, this research does not solely focus on the concept of identity, rather it refers to it as self-identification, which refers to how one makes sense of his/her own identity (Schlenker, Weigold, & Doherty, 1991). More explicitly, it is how a person shows who he/she is based on his/her own choice.

Language, Society and Identity

Language has been asserted as a marker of identity, as well. Fishman (1972) wrote that (ethnic) identity has been claimed to have an inherent connection with language. In other words, identity "constructs and is constructed by language" (Baker, 1997, p. 419). Furthermore, Llmas (2010) claimed that "our sense of who we are, where we belong and why, and how we relate to those around us, all have language at their centre" (p. 9). This point of view can be further understood by the social identity theory, which was "developed to explain large-scale religious, ethnic and national conflicts" (Stryker, Owens, & White, 2000, p. 23). According to this theory, people gain social identity by identifying themselves in a group by attaching emotions and values to that particular group membership (Tajfel, 1972, as cited in Turner, 2010). However, this group interaction cannot be dissociated from language, which mediates between individuals and groups (Ochs, 1993).

In this context, Stryker et al. (2000) mentioned symbolic interactionism which involves human beings as the actors of their choices. Therefore, it is probable that identities one can have are multiple. It is shaped in and by society as well the roles people undertake. It means a woman is a mother at home, while a teacher at work and therefore her identity shifts in accordance with the roles she carries. In a similar vein, "the individual may wish to identify with a certain group in specific contexts" (Hansen & Liu, 1997, p. 571), and

> creates for himself the patterns of his linguistic behaviour so as to resemble those of the group or groups with which from time to time he wishes to be identified, or so as to be unlike those from whom he wishes to be distinguished (Le Page & Tabouret-Keller, 1985, p. 181).

Thus, an individual can identify with as many groups as he/she wants in line with the roles undertaken, and prefer which language to use according to the group that he/she aspires to be involved in.

In brief, the role of language in shaping identity is undeniable. As Sapir (1929) pointed out:

> Human beings do not live in the objective world alone, nor alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but are very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression of their society (p. 209).

In addition to language, the nature of society one lives in and the roles he/she undertakes within and against the society heavily affect identity choice. When bilingual people who have two languages and cultures are considered, the impact of these concepts on constructing identity could be by far striking.

Bilingual Identity: Acculturation and Integration

In relation to biculturalism and identity, bilingual people eventually find themselves as biculturals; however, it is up to them to decide who they are as (Grosjean, 1998). This process requires a long time, and the " outcome of this long process is a decision to belong solely to culture A, to belong solely to culture B, to belong to neither culture A nor culture B, or to belong to both culture A and culture B." As for the optimal solution, Grosjean (1996) suggests that bilinguals should accept their biculturalism since living in conflict with dual cultures and languages, or totally rejecting them could be wearying for bilingual individuals.

Berry (1997) took a similar approach to Grosjean's in defining the acculturation process of multicultural people and suggested four categories:

- Assimilation (seek daily interaction with other cultures -instead of one's own culture);
- Integration (interest in both maintaining one's original culture while in daily interactions with other groups);
- Separation (holding on to their original culture, and at the same time wish(ing) to avoid interaction with others);
- Marginalization (little interest in having relations with others) (p. 9).

On the other hand, Martinez et al. (2002) introduced a construct called Bicultural Identity Integration (BII) which refers to to how biculturals negotiate their dual identities. When one's BII is high, he/she tends to embrace both cultures and

manages to switch to either culture when needed fluidly. As anticipated, those who have low BII view "their identities as oppositional to each other" (Martinez et al., 2002, p. 496). As is clear, acknowledging dual or more identities and integrating with them (equally or on a shift basis) have been suggested as the most favorable solution for dealing with multiple identities.

Previous Research

The research on bilingual identity have been criticized by some. For instance, Phinney (1990) argued that research on ethnic identity was fragmented due to contradictory definitions of identity and the focus being on single groups. Bucholtz and Hall (2004) also advocated for the necessity of the sustenance of identity research in the field of linguistic anthropology and its value be more elucidated. Though the number of research in this field has been underestimated, several researchers attempted to analyze biculturalism and identity.

In one study within Chinese-American setting, Martínez et al (2002) claimed that "although all biculturals identify with both mainstream and ethnic cultures, some biculturals perceive their dual cultural identities as compatible and integrated, whereas others see them as oppositional and difficult to integrate" (p. 496). The results of their study showed that individual differences in bicultural identity affect how cultural knowledge is used to interpret social events.

There have been a number of studies that focused on language and identity. For instance, Brown (2009) examined the relationship between identity and heritage language among Korean-American college students and found that:

> Dual identity is not necessarily a voluntary choice; individuals with a high level of heritage language proficiency cannot be assumed to have a strong ethnic identity, and negative stereotypes might be one of the sources of identity conflict for heritage language speakers (Brown, 2009, p. 7).

In his study of the relationship between language ideologies and identity among Korean children, Song (2007) asserted that code-switching, which is "the alternative use of two languages either within a sentence or between sentences" (Clyne, 2005, p. 242), played an important role in negotiating identity. In another study, Ayres (2003) examined the relationship between

the language and identity among 10 immigrants (of South American origins) in the USA. Her results showed that the participants defined themselves with their ethnic language. However, in an academic context, they identified with English language.

Although there is research going on in the field of bilingual identity, it is relatively inadequate and mostly focuses on certain cultures such as South American or Asian minorities in the USA. These studies mostly perceive identity form the framework of language, and focus on immigration-based biculturalism. Hence, the field of multiple or dual identity is wide open to further research that could defragment the contradictory views of identity and biculturalism in line with the ever-growing perceptions of these concepts.

Research Design

The research was designed as a case study based on the assumption that case studies, embedded in real life, "provide rich detailed accounts of (any) phenomena" (Ary, Jacobs, & Sorensen, 2013, p. 486). Therefore, the research focuses on three cases in order to evince how the participants identify themselves with the cultures they have identified with through questioning their bilingualism and multilingualism.

Participants

Participants were chosen among the instructors of the preparatory school of a private university in Turkey -where the researcher also worked- due to accessibility. There was only one sampling criterion which was that all the participants were bilinguals who lived their lives not only in their heritage culture but also the host culture. As two females and one male, the participants are aged 28, 41, and 50 respectively. Further details relevant to the participants are presented in the findings section.

Ethical Considerations

In order to guarantee their privacy (Lichtman, 2006), the participants were given pseudonyms. Furthermore, they were informed that their participation was voluntary and they could withdraw from it at any time, and that confidentiality was to be maintained throughout the research. They were also ensured that any harm to the participants would be avoided since ethical behavior requires "protecting individuals, communities and environments" (Hay & Israel, 2006, p. 2).

Credibility Measures

In order to accurately portray the truth, this research makes use of structural corroboration, in other words, triangulation (Ary et al., 2013, p. 499) which was categorized into four aspects by Denzin (2009) as the use of multiple methods, multiple sources of data, multiple investigators, or multiple theories. The type of triangulation that the research used is multiple sources of data, which are in-depth interviews, observation, and related documents. Other sub-strategies that increase credibility such as prolonged engagement, and low-inference descriptors were also used in the research. The researcher had several years of collegiality with the participants and been familiar with the research site for the same amount of time. Hence, the interviews took place in a friendly environment and the participants did not show hesitance in giving frank answers. Direct quotations (in vivo) from the interviews were also used to help the reader experience the participants' worlds.

Data Collection

To collect data, semi-structured interviews were conducted and tape recorded. The participants were asked open-ended questions that focused on identity, bilingualism, and language (For sample questions, see Table 1). Two of the participants preferred to have their interviews simultaneously. One participant was interviewed solely. Complementary sessions in which the participants clarified

their answers were held. The social media accounts of the participants were also examined in order to see their social interaction with their acquaintances. Their online biographies and the researcher's long-term observations were also benefited from.

Table 1.

Sample Interview Questions

Interview Questions
1. Where were you born? 2. Which language did you hear first? 3. What languages did your parents use? 4. Which language are you using the most now? 5. Which language do you use when you are angry, nervous, happy etc.? 6. Which language do you prefer to talk about important things? 7. In which language are you more self-confident? 8. How would you identify yourself? What do you base your identity on? 2. What does it mean to be Turkish/Spanish? 9. What does it mean to become American/Australian? 10. Who decides your identity? 11. Is being Turkish/Spanish a burden in any way? 12. Is there such a thing as being perfectly balanced between a Turkish/Spanish and Australian/American identity? 13. What kind of bilingual are you? 14. What's the most difficult aspect of being a bilingual? 15. How do you consider being a bilingual? 16. How do people react to your bilingualism? 17. How often do you translanguage? Why? 18. In which language do you forget words more? 19. If you went to another planet and were asked where you came from, how would you answer? 20. If there were a football match between your home country and your host country, which one would you support?

Data Analysis

After collecting the data, the information from the interviews were closely examined and turned into narratives. Each case was first analyzed on its own (within-case analysis), and was subsequently cross examined (cross case analysis) in order to see similar and different patterns. Finally, the participants were subjected to categorizations of their choices of identification.

Findings

Carlos

Born in Cuba into a Spanish family, Carlos migrated to New York with his family in the late 60s. With the exception of summers in which he visited his grandparents, Carlos has lived mostly in New York. At home, he spoke both Spanish and English with his parents. This is why he defines himself as a true bilingual. Since he expresses himself better in English, he acknowledges that his native language is English, yet he finds it as a very academic language and prefers to use it at work. For him, being Spanish is to enjoy life, to be social, to dance, to listen to music, while being an American is to work hard and be goal oriented. He calls himself a hybrid; a Cuban American Spanish since all of them play an important role in his life as he reported.

He thinks that he is a balanced bilingual and his identity is balanced as well. He sometimes translanguages, namely uses both languages flexibly in a bilingual norm (Celic & Seltzer, 2011) in order to flow his speech. Yet, being a bilingual is difficult at times. People might be hesitant towards him with regards to the language they should use to communicate with him. "People do not like complexity, they like simple things. I feel like I am not understood sometimes," he says. Not understanding his hybridity, they sometimes question him on why he or his family did not stay in Cuba or Spain. They say, "You are not Cuban, there is something different about you. You are not Spanish either. You are not American, too..." He comments this could be another demonstration of his hybrid identity.

Despite all these difficulties, he maintains the idea that being a bilingual and multicultural is wonderful rendering him a universal human being. He adds, "When I talk, I feel like I am juggling two languages and trying to make sense of things." As an expert in the field of bilingualism, he is currently working as a guest lecturer in Turkey. Carlos's embracing approach to different cultures can be easily noticed in his career decisions, his everyday manners, and even on his Facebook account, where he updates his status both in English and Spanish.

Fatma

Born in Australia as the daughter of an immigrant family, Fatma grew up learning both Turkish and English. At home, she was mostly exposed to Turkish since her parents did not speak English well. In her own words, "English was much stronger around her." Though her mother was of Albanian descendants, she did not use it in the family, so Fatma was basically surrounded with two languages as English (dominant) and Turkish. After living in Australia for more than 30 years, she came to Turkey and settled down with her two sons, who are also bilinguals.

Currently, she speaks 80% English at home. As she declares, she expresses her anger, happiness or frustration in the same language. She translanguages often, due to the fact that she occasionally forgets certain words, especially in Turkish. At home, she talks to her children mostly in English because she does not want them to forget it. She says that she is not self-confident when it comes to speaking Turkish. I recall an incident related to her insecurity. When all the instructors at our workplace were requested to give seminars to orientate students into the preparatory school program, Fatma became quite restless because of the fact that seminars were to be given in Turkish. She instantly asked the administration to be provided with some assistance via collaboration of another teacher.

Fatma defines herself as a third culture and multicultural person. However, she has some doubts about her identity. At times, she feels closer to Australian culture as she appreciates it very much because of the open-minded people and relaxed life style. However, the same relaxed and monotonous life style made her feel isolated and urged her to come to Turkey. She is happy about the fact that her friends call her an Australian rather than a Turkish person because she believes that she has a way of thinking like an Australian. Yet, she finds her life there less exciting and insecure. As she clarifies, "Culture and life style are different things. I like Australian culture but I do not want to live there. I'm fed up with it."

For her, being Turkish means being conservative; however, being an Australian means being relaxed and open-minded and having respect for other cultures. Being Turkish is occasionally a burden for Fatma because of the way the country represents itself. She declares that she feels relatively closer to Australian

culture and likes being a part of it more than she likes being a part of Turkish culture. After returning to Turkey, her identity conflict has become more evident. Moreover, the fact that some people judged her moving to Turkey instead of staying in Australia is an annoying factor for her. Another important thing about her is that she does not follow a traditional Turkish life style. Even the food she cooks is of other cultures she has been in contact with. She could have still admitted her Turkish self even if she had not come to Turkey or been exposed to Turkish as a child since her father is a Turkish, as she reported.

Selin

As the daughter of a Sudanese father and a Turkish mother, Selin was born in Kuwait. The first language she learned was Turkish since both her parents spoke Turkish. She first learned English when she was six years old and as she declared, although it is an Arab country, English is prevalently spoken in Kuwait. Gradually, her English got better than her Turkish and she started to speak half English half Turkish at home (and at times Arabic). She completed her high school and university education in the USA. Having quit her career in cancer research, she decided to be an English teacher in Turkey.

Selin uses English at 60% and in order to show her anger or happiness, namely her emotions, she prefers the same language. She translanguages a lot because she forgets words in both languages, mostly in Turkish. She thinks her native language is English and when she is overwhelmed by her emotions, she is not able to speak Turkish. However, when it comes to determining her identity, she defines herself mostly as a Turkish person who has a bit of an American in her as well. Yet, she does not hold any Sudanese features in her, as she reported. According to her, being Turkish means speaking Turkish, while being an American is having respect for other cultures, religions and thoughts; not only showing respect to people as Turkish people mostly do. Still, she enthusiastically mentioned that being Turkish was the best thing she had ever had, "This is the best thing I love about myself, being partly Turkish."

Selin thinks that people think that she is more identified with Turkish culture. However, she adds that people judge her for being in Turkey instead of being in America or other places she could have stayed. Yet, she has embraced

her Turkish self and the main reason for her self-identification is associated with her mother: "I wanted to relate to my mother."

I shared my work place with Selin for one year and I have known her for four years in total. When I first met her, she did not prefer to speak English and revealed that she did not feel confident in that language. However, currently we mostly communicate in Turkish. As she herself declared, she has been getting more involved in Turkish and her self-confidence has remarkably increased.

Discussion

All participants, based on their reports, gave away their sincere life stories and reviewed their own identities as the interviews took place. The findings were as complex as the very nature of identity is. Although they seemed to negotiate on some aspects of what being bilingual is, the results varied from totally embracing one's dual-identity to having some doubts about it. In terms of acculturation, all the participants mainly fall into the category of immigration-based acculturation except Merve, who had lived in America for educational purposes. Therefore, she could be claimed to have realized both globalization-based acculturation which occurs via traveling, education etc. (Chen et al., 2008) and immigration based acculturation.

To begin with, Carlos is an example of biculturals who have managed to achieve dual identity. Embracing both cultures and using both languages at the same level, he showed that he was proud of being both Spanish and American. He even identified himself as Cuban and asserted that none of his identities outweighed the others. Ghuman (1998) called such identities as "hyphenated" (p. 244), wherein one refers to his/her identity in such a way as Cuban-American. With a high level of BII, he is at peace with his double identities and has "the beneficial psychological outcomes" of integrating both cultures (Chen et al., 2008, p. 803), as he also acknowledged.

On the other hand, Fatma was neither very proud of her heritage culture nor the Australian culture. As she herself reported, she is still not very sure about the culture she belongs to. Occasionally, she feels that she is multicultural; whereas, she also feels as if she does not belong to any of these cultures. As Martinez and Haritatos (2005) claimed, personal and contextual factors may lead

a person to cultural conflict, and thus "to choose one culture or the other" (p. 1040). In Fatma's case, it is obvious that she is not very proud of her heritage culture. Moreover, although she appreciates the other culture, she is still restless and isolated in it as well. Her insecurity in using her heritage language also affects her identification with her heritage culture. In line with Martinez et al.'s (2002) BII construct, Fatma has a relatively low level of BII and her identification is mostly a result of cultural elements. How people react to her in her heritage culture and the host culture, have led her to decide her identity on a social basis.

In Selin's case, the effect of parents on identity formation is outstanding. In contrast with the argument that "the stronger the heritage language proficiency, the more positive the sense of ethnic identity," (Brown, 2009, p. 9). Selin did not choose her identity on the basis of her native language. Although her heritage language was weaker than English, she defined herself as Turkish because of the fact that her mother was Turkish. In line with Pavlenko (2007) who suggested that emotions had an impact on language choices, Selin's emotional bond with her mother, played a role in her decision of individual language use and identity. Selin's bilingualism is relatively different than the other two participants since her parents were also of different origins. However, in terms of heritage language and identity, Selin did not integrate with both parents' cultures, but rather integrated with her mother's.

The role of language is relatively relatively ambiguous as the two participants, Selin and Fatma, did not base their self-identification upon the languages they use. On the contrary, personal and cultural factors played an outweighing role in their choice of identity. However, Carlos, as an American citizen of Cuban origin, took language as a great determiner of his identity. The fact that he prefers (and values) English when he is in America has also affected his identity as an American. In the context of symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1991 cited in Niño-Murcia & Rothman, 2008), Carlos attaches value to the dominant language in the linguistic market and gains power through it. In other words, he reinforces his identity as an American through language.

Finally, no matter how much the participants struggled for coming into terms with their identities, the role of the society in their identification has been undeniable. As mentioned before, people's identities are not only a creation of personal preferences, but also an interaction with society. However, as

the participants revealed, the reactions they got as a result of immigration and judgments from others, led them to have fluctuations while deciding on who they were.

Conclusion

In this research, contingent self-identification patterns of three participants were unfolded. The overarching theme was that identity was indeed a relative and subjective concept. For example, it was more culturally related for Fatma, whereas, it followed an emotional and personal pattern for Selin. On the other hand, integrating with both cultures let Carlos to be at peace with his bilingualism. As mentioned before, most research on bilingual issues is on Latino cultures. However, in this research, bilinguals of Turkish origins were also involved. However, the context of these participants' bilingualism was immigration-based. Therefore, further research could investigate other types of bilinguals, those who have become bilinguals due to reasons other than immigration since bilingualism is no more restricted to immigrating to one country from another.

As the research progressed, it became more evident to the researcher that identity was such a broad topic and the research fell short of several possible outcomes because it dealt with themes in a general context. Therefore, further research that focused on language-identity in particular, heritage language and culture, or the effect of bilingual identity on teaching (since all the participants were language teachers) could be examined.

One for all, whether bilingual or not, identification is important since " it is the basic cognitive mechanism that humans use to sort out themselves and their fellows, individually and collectively" (Jenkins, 2008, p. 13). Furthermore, as previous studies have shown, having multiple identities do not pose a negativity, but trigger happiness and well-being (Owens, Robinson & Smith-Lovin, 2010; Thoits, 2001). Thus, the fact that bilinguals may have dual or multiple identities do not pose a threat provided that they are at peace with who they are.

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TRIJŲ DVIKALBIŲ DĖSTYTOJŲ SAVO TAPATYBĖS NUSTATYMAS: DAUGYBINIŲ ATVEJŲ STUDIJA

Santrauka. Tapatybę, kaip sudėtingą ir sąlyginę sąvoką, labai sunku apibrėžti, ypač kalbant apie dvikalbius žmones, kuriems tenka prisiimti dvi ar daugiau tapatybių. Jau pats ryšys tarp kalbos ir tapatybės yra painus, o gimusieji dvikalbėse šeimose turi susidoroti ne tik su įvairiais sudėtingais lingvistinio pobūdžio sunkumais, bet ir su socialiniu skirtingumu. Remiantis šia mintimi, straipsnyje pristatomas kokybinis daugybinių atvejų tyrimas, kuriame pateikiama giluminė trijų dvikalbių antrosios kalbos dėstytojų, dirbančių privačiame universitete, tapatybės problemos analizė. Duomenys buvo renkami akivaizdžiai, taikant pusiau struktūruotą pokalbį; atskleistos panašios ir skirtingos temos to paties atvejo ir skirtingų atvejų lyginimo analizėje. Tyrimo dalyviai reflektavo apie tai, kokiai tapatybei būdami dvikalbiais jie save priskiria. Gauti duomenys taip pat atskleidė, kad tarpusavio ryšiai šeimoje, emocijos ir socialinės normos bei kalba vaidina svarbų vaidmenį dvikalbiams identifikuojant savo tapatybes. Kiti svarbūs tyrimo rezultatai yra tai, kad dalyviai pasižymėjo skirtingu akultūracijos lygmeniu ir įvairiomis integracijos strategijomis, ir tai, kad savęs identifikavimo procesas yra nepaprastai subjektyvus ir lankstus.

Pagrindinės sąvokos: tapatybė, savęs identifikavimas, kalba, dvikalbis, akultūracija.