Intersecting Identities and Interculturality

Intersecting Identities and Interculturality: Discourse and Practice

Edited by

Regis Machart, Choon Bee Lim, Sep Neo Lim and Eriko Yamato

**CAMBRIDGE
SCHOLARS**

P U B L I S H I N G

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

REGIS MACHART

The concept of identity has generated a rich scientific literature and it has been associated with various adjectives: hyphenated (Caglar 1997), multiple (Posner 1998), overlapping (Lustick 2000), hybrid (Skapoulli 2004), multifaceted (Fought 2006), segmented (Plaza 2006), multilayered (Hornberger 2007), or plural (Abdallah-Pretceille 1997; 2005), to name only a few. This list shows how complex identity can be: it appears as the sum of different parts or components which maintain intricate relations. Researchers sometimes emphasise the separation of different categories of identity (as the use of *segmented* in the list above shows) while others deal with the connections between different identity aspects (see *overlapping*).

Dervin (2012) claims that Bauman's notion of solid versus liquid identity (2001) can be used to summarise the different approaches of the concept, even if the people under scrutiny in research do not clearly define what they mean by identity. This occurs most of the time when people, politicians, researchers, etc. deal with issues related to culture/cultural identity (Lavanchy, Gajardo and Dervin 2011). The solid conception of identity refers to the association of an individual with static cultural elements and its proponents are usually more interested in defining what constitutes a (national, cultural, gender…) category and its boundaries, and putting the individual into a box. In opposition, the fluid approach to identity focuses on the process of identification, refraining from categorising and constraining the individual in a fixed representation of his/her identity.

The fluid approach implies a contact, an overlap or an intersection of different components. The idea of identities intersecting is not new: Judith Butler (1990, 3), for instance, wrote that it "intersects with racial, class, ethnic, sexual and regional modalities of discursively constituted identities". Yet, academic contributions on intersecting identities concern the field of Gender Studies, while intersection also appears between other 'layers' or 'facets' of one's identity, notably nationality, race, ethnicity, language, gender, or occupation, etc. For example, linguistic identity can only be understood in the framework of nation building, at least when the official or national language is at stake, and the ethnic and linguistic identities are

often embedded in these discourses.

The intersection of many and varied aspects of identity finds its full development in interpersonal communication when participants influence each other during the exchanges, under the influence of some *Other*, a full participant of the interaction or a simple witness whose presence can connote differently the terms and images used to construct identity. We should bear in mind for example that the presence of parents in the next room may impact communication between two teenagers, or that the simple presence of an individual perceived as belonging to a (politically, racially…) hostile group may influence a speaker's discourse in a given situation.

This is what we call interculturality in this book, which has to be understood as "interculturality without culture" (Dervin 2010), a "renewed interculturality" (Lavanchy, Gajardo and Dervin 2011) not only focusing on 'cultural' differences but expanding to gender, occupation, social class, etc. and the way identity is created through the interaction of two (or more) individuals.

In the intercultural approach, researchers try to find a balance between universalism and particularism (Abdallah-Pretceille 2005). Individuals are not mere representatives of 'a culture' but they diverge from the stereotypes they are assigned. As Martine Abdallah-Pretceille (Ibid., 480) puts it:

> Cultural practices, attitudes and behaviours are therefore approached through a subjective personal experience, as a symptom in the relationship between the individual and the environment.

Indeed, their (personal) identity is fully recognised as being intersubjective and scholars focus on the discourse through which the act of identity occurs (Ibid., 478).

The contributors in this book consider that the different components/ aspects of one's identity are not necessarily opposed to each other, that someone's identity is not pre-determined and that different voices can often be heard from within a given group. We could list the countries in which the authors work: Finland, Japan, Malaysia, Romania, United Kingdom and United States of America, but it would not necessarily reflect the researchers' identity, nor would it have implications for the participants who took part in their studies or the contexts which are dealt with in their contributions. In accordance with our conception of interculturality, it would be more consistent to mention the fields which are explored in conjunction with the intersection of identities and interculturality: linguistics, sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, linguistic anthropology, cultural anthropology, literature and education.

This book contains three parts: the first part revisits the key concepts associated with identity and interculturality, the second questions linguistic identity in contexts perceived as 'monocultural', and the third part is dedicated to literary situations where more than one national identity is present.

In the first part, the authors question the concepts of (racial, ethnic, cultural) identity or identification, interculturality, and nationalism (e.g. in national literatures). In his contribution, **Fred Dervin** claims the necessity to move away from *methodological nationalism* that he considers too static and binding, and from *transnational paradigm* which is not satisfying as it appears as a mere extension of the former. His plea for *mixed intersubjectivity* to be integrated in research would enable the incorporation of a more coherent and consistent fluidity of identity.

Régis Machart and **Sep Neo Lim** challenge the definitions of race, ethnicity and culture as they have been defined over time. They consider that the static conceptions of the terms are not only derogatory, but have also proven not to be scientifically valid. A constructivist approach to these concepts is nevertheless not so easily accepted. The authors prefer the term *identification* which could translate a process, but the way the term is used by researchers tends to show an essentialisation of this term.

From the field of education, **Michael Byram** relates the term of *identification* to teaching and teacher mobility situation. Elaborating on *social identity*, he insists on the role of schooling in the construction of linguistic identities and the importance of language teachers.

As an interdisciplinary scholar**, Shu-mei Shih** questions the role of literary works written in minority languages and their relation to national literature as well as their relation to the construction of the nation. She focuses on Malaysian Sinophone writers who, she claims, are denied national recognition because the language they use is perceived as an affiliation to a foreign entity.

In the second part of the book, researchers approach the question of identification by analysing practices within three national contexts: Romania, Malaysia and Japan. **Cristina Ungureanu** examines relations within Romanian families, especially when addressing parents-in-law. The terms used to address and refer to parents-in-law are analysed based on identity components such as age, occupation, gender and geographical origins of the respondents who negotiate their identity between participants of different generations. The rural versus urban environment seems to have a significant impact on the way in-laws are addressed and family relations are constructed.

Airil Haimi studies the identification processes of Malay undergraduate

students who chose to interact with each other in English. By using English they create exclusionary identity markers (language use) for other Malay-speaking counterparts. Airil suggests that ethnic (*Bumiputera*) identity may clash with the linguistic adoption of English in this post-colonial country.

Japan's reputation as a monolingual state still needs to be questioned. The Japanese language borrows a lot of words from other languages and its standardisation occurred under the influence of European ideologies of the 19th century. **Setsuko Adachi** relates how the monolingual ideology is driven by the political desire of the country to be recognised as a nation-state in the wake of European nation-building. She also discusses how the 'Japanese language' ideologically got rid of local variations and the *han* specificities in order to build a national identity, and how both processes (nation-building and linguistic hegemony) worked hand in hand to create the utopia of a monolingual nation.

In the third part of this volume, the authors address the question of identity of consumers of 'foreign' labelled cultural products and in literary works of 'minority' writers, either in Malaysia at the time around its independence or in the works of Malaysian-born poets who migrated to the USA. **Eriko Yamato** explores the *otaku* identity of young Malaysians. The *otaku* identity is characterised by a consumption of Japanese cultural products such as anime and manga which are spreading in Malaysia through the Internet. These young Malaysians expose their own relation to the Japanese products and their own definition of the concept of the *otaku* identity which they revisit and adjust to their personal experience.

Choon Bee Lim relates the original experience and orientation of a Sinophone literary magazine, the *Chao Foon*, which appeared before Malayan independence in 1957. This date in the Malaysian history is crucial for the descendants of Chinese migrants and their integration into the Malayan nation. Lim shows how the writers of that time, while choosing to contribute to the national literature in Chinese, were willing to adapt to the context of the Peninsula. At the same time they contributed to *Imagining and practising a pure Malayanised Chinese literature*.

Chin Woon Ping's work has been influenced by Melaka, her place of birth, her Peranakan origin which is a mix of Chinese and Malay/ Indonesian traditions and her migration to America. **Kim Tong Tee** explores the language used by this diasporic poet, who borrows words from (Baba)-Malay and Indonesian while writing in English. Her experience reveals that her identity has not been replaced by another but rather both (Malayan and American) facets intersect. Tee also connects Chin's experience to that of another diasporic author: Shirley Lim Geok-lin.

In the last chapter of this book, the question of place in the work of Shirley Lim Geok-lin is analysed by **Ting-hui Hsiung**. Drawing from her Chinese Baba background in the Malaysian port of Melaka and her Californian life, the writer's hybrid identity is central to her work. It is also connected to her relation with English which she claims as her own and with the fact that she has never been called by her Chinese name.

The theoretical and empirical contributions of this book reflect intercultural encounters at a micro (familial, interpersonal) or a macro (societal, national) level. Both levels of course are not exclusive, the micro being a part of the larger macro that, in turn, is constituted of individuals. The micro influences the macro and vice-versa. To wonder if the micro could be a representative of the macro as a whole (an individual representing the society) is, in the case of intercultural studies, not relevant. It would bring us back to a macro-isation of the individual, an attempt to culturalise/essentialise him/her.

If Chin Woon Ping and Shirley Geok-lin Lim may appear as epitomes of fluid identities, it is partly because they are not only Malaysians, not only Americans but both at the same time. Nevertheless, all the voices in the various chapters here have also their own identity complexities that the authors attempt to reveal.

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PART I

REVISITING LANGUAGE, IDENTITY AND INTERCULTURALITY

CHAPTER ONE

RESEARCHING IDENTITY AND INTERCULTURALITY: MOVING AWAY FROM METHODOLOGICAL NATIONALISM FOR GOOD?

FRED DERVIN

> One of the central issues must be how human beings are seen. Should they be categorized in terms of inherited traditions, particularly the inherited religion, of the community in which they happen to be born, taking that unchosen identity to have automatic priority over other affiliations involving politics, profession, class, gender, language, literature, social involvements, and many other connections? Or should they be understood as persons with many affiliations and associations the priorities over which they must themselves choose?
>
> (Sen 2006, 156)

The field of intercultural communication, but also sociology of youth and generation (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2009), anthropology of globalisation (Pieterse 2004) and language and intercultural education (Abdallah-Pretceille 2003; Holliday 2010; Dervin 2012), are witnessing important changes in the way they engage with the concept of identity. As such it seems that most scholars dealing with such themes as international mobility, immigration and 'otherness' in general are now moving away from studies that rely exclusively on *Methodological Nationalism* (MN) to tackle research through a *Transnational Paradigm* (TN). Methodological Nationalism designates "the assumption that the nation/state/society is the natural and political form of the modern world" (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002, 302). On the other hand, Transnationalism privileges "the simultaneity and the mutual interaction of national and international, local and global determinations, influences and developments" (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2009, 26). This has also been conceptualised through the term *Cosmopolitanism* by Ulrich Beck (2006). Increasingly some scholars find

the often artificial boundaries between MN and TN to be blurry. Both thus deserve a critical examination, especially in relation to interculturality and identity.

In this exploratory chapter, I would like to discuss how the study of identity is impacted on by the approach chosen by researchers within the context of interculturality. I will first look at how research on identity is positioned within MN and TN and the problems posed by both approaches. Following this critical review, I propose a third approach (or layer) to identity and interculturality, which I shall call *Mixed Inter-subjectivity* (MIN). MIN aims at discussing and correcting many of the problems posed by MN and TN. What Wimmer and Glick Schiller (2002, 326) call "Methodological Fluidism" is very close to the notion of MIN. For the sociologists, "where there were fixed boundaries, everything is now equally and immediately interconnected. Structures are replaced with fluidity". In order to illustrate these three approaches (MN, TN and MIN) to identity and interculturality, various corpora are used (amongst others: research interviews, podcasts, and scientific studies).

The concept of identity will be reviewed as follows. First of all, I examine *Solid Identity* within the MN approach. Secondly, what I call *Façade Identity*, which corresponds to some extent to TN, is sketched out. And finally, I focus on *Identification* and MIN. The following graphic summarises these three positions:
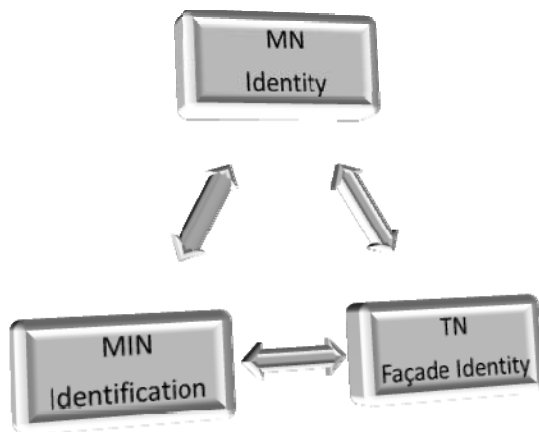

Figure 1-1. MN, TN and MIN in relation to the concept of identity

Solid Identity and Methodological Nationalism
in Interculturality: Culture as an Excuse …

In intercultural communication, the concept of 'cultural identity' is often used to refer to and explain encounters between people 'across cultures'. Identity is reduced to the contested, old and tired concept of culture in this context. This is now increasingly viewed as a *slippery slope* as the term contains two extremely problematic and questioned terms: *culture* and *identity*. Many scholars working on interculturality have highlighted the problems posed by an over-emphasis on 'culture' to explain the meetings of people from different times-spaces, especially as it is often presented as being something solid, unchangeable and objective/ objectivising. The concepts of *culturalism* and *essentialism* describe this way of working on interculturality and the impact it has on giving a limited view of identity. For Bayart (2005, 21), for example, culturalism is "an ersatz of demonstration". In other words, an alibi, an easy way to explain what happens when two individuals meet. But this is problematic as it gives the impression that there "are resolutely distinct human essences" (Laplantine 1999, 46). Culturalism is also often used parallel to the idea of Nation States and thus is very much reminiscent of Methodological Nationalism (MN). It should thus be considered as anachronic as MN. Yet many scholars who criticise MN still hold onto the concepts of culture and cultural identity. They seem to ignore the fact that "culture is now widely employed in a discourse that denies human agency, defining individuals through their culture, and treating culture as the explanation for virtually everything they say" (Philips 2007, 9). It is surprising that even though the boundary between MN and culturalism is non-existent as they are often inter-changeable, the latter is still very much used to do what researchers want to avoid with MN. The following quote taken from Jack (2009, 111), who criticises culturalism, could easily be used to substitute any criticism of MN:

> [E]pistemologically, I believe that a 'dimensional' approach to culture, which allows us to plot or map representatives of national cultures onto some kind of continuum, presents students with unhelpfully fixed catego- ries of analysis that essentialize culture and divest it of its key processual and political contingencies.

Let us now look at a few examples of culturalism to see how culture is used as explanations, as an excuse, as an almost natural phenomenon just like MN has been used in the past. This first example is a comment left on

The Times website in reaction to an article which criticised Finnish society in the aftermath of school shootings in 2008:

> Yes, we are maybe quieter than people in other countries. Why it is such a big problem? It just belongs to Finnish culture. It doesn't mean that we were depressed or something, it's just in the habit of Finland.

One can see here how culture is said to shape Finnish society (the Finnish 'nation') and Finns in a somewhat programmatic, explanatory way – removing any possibility of agency on the side of the people and thus responsibility. The next example differs from the previous one as it shows how solid identities, related to space ('nations') are often used to determine an 'other'. Taken from a podcast recorded by a young girl who lives in the USA and whose parents are from India, the excerpt enacts a dialogue that the young girl had with a German tourist when she was in India:

> -Where are you from?
> -*I tried to explain that I was a student living in Jodhpur that I spoke a bit of Hindi and that my parents were from India.*
> -What does your passport say?
> -*I have an American passport*
> -Well then you are American.

Later on in the same episode of the podcast, the young girl also shows how this can occur between herself and people from India (*Desis* in what follows: *Desi* is a term used to designate people of Indian 'origins'). In what follows the speaker clearly shows that people tend to contribute to limiting her identity or 'solidifying' it:

> *Many people would say:* -Just say what you are, if you're Indian, say you're Indian *... however, if I do use the word Indian to describe myself, many Desis from the home country would say:* -You're not Indian, you're American.

Though these imposed identities are witnessed on a daily basis, it is also interesting to note that some researchers also contribute to such discourse on the 'other', which limits their identity. This is often the case with 'the Chinese student' in research on stays abroad. In a critical article on such studies (Dervin 2011), I showed how culture was often used as explanations for the so-called non-acculturation of 'the Chinese student':

> - The students had arrived in Britain **with their own cultural scripts** which were no longer applicable in the new environment.

- It seemed rather that **coming in contact with a different culture** forced them to become aware of their own cultural perspectives.
- The opportunity to **experience the target culture and speech community** firsthand.

Here again, it is clearly culture – theirs and the hosts' – which serves as an agent and 'dictates' how one should behave, experience the world, etc.

All in all, this approach to identity in interculturality leaves little space for the individual and for what s/he does, co-constructs with the people s/he meets. For Ouellet (2002, 11), there is now a need to move away from such limiting visions, which are suspicious, anachronic and contrary to the criticisms that are targeted at MN. This approach asks questions which could be summarised as: *What is their cultural identity? What is their culture?* Many researchers now explain that these questions cannot be fully/accurately answered in today's mixed, glob/cal and complex societies.

In terms of research, this solid identity approach is very much problematic as analyses are often based on a simple review of what research participants say during data collection (questionnaires, interviews, focus groups…). The participants' discourses are taken at face value and serve the purpose of providing evidence and/or 'truth' as results. Furthermore, some researchers rarely implicate themselves in the analysing section of their research, i.e. the fact that researchers cannot but intervene in the creation of data and ensuing discourses. In other words, by not making clear what their position is in the created data, which they analyse, scholars eradicate intersubjectivity and fall into the trap of *Othering*. Every time the researcher asks a question, or by her/his mere presence in research contexts, her/his influence on what is said and done – on identities that are created – cannot be ignored.

In what follows, we examine a research movement which seems to increasingly combat culturalism and MN in interculturality. This is worked upon in research by transnationalists. Discourses on the plural self and the other resonate in human and social sciences. In what follows I am interested in if and how they are taken seriously in TN.

Façade Identity: When Work on Identity Pretends to Do Away with MN…

The second approach to identity and interculturality is named *façade* or *pretense identity*. It seems to correspond fully to the Transnational para-

digm which is increasingly used in research. Before we start looking at Façade identity in detail, let us mention what the sociologist Z. Bauman (2004, 10) has to say about identity work. For him, it corresponds to "the daunting task of 'squaring a circle'". In the age of "crisis of belonging", it is clear that national identity is competing with other global, alternative identities, globalisation leads towards some sort of pluralisation of identities (Ibid., 20; see also Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2009). But it does not mean that national identity has disappeared as it is still very much present in people's discourses and identification. What we are sure of today – at least in research worlds – is that this identity is imagined and communitarian – but not the 'truth'.

How do we deal with this fact as researchers? To me, this question equates the question: how do we treat utterances i.e. how do we treat what our research participants have to say about themselves and the 'other' in our work? What the speaker usually presents to the researcher as an identity is just 'declared', and chosen as a 'true identity'. But is it enough for us researchers to present them as 'truths'? As such, there are many scholars who work within a transnational paradigm and who, instead of relying on one national identity, will satisfy themselves with two or three or four identities as presented by their research participants. For example, someone who has lived in a country for a long time might say "I feel I am both German and English", or they might say I feel I am European or a World citizen. These utterances are, in my opinion, as problematic as solid identity or MN: instead of limiting an identity to one entity, they restrict it to two or several identities, which are clearly defined. But identities and expressions, constructions of identities cannot be so precise. This is not enough. Moreover this approach is ethically problematic, as the researcher co-constructs the identities that are put forward in her/his results, i.e. s/he cannot but influence the choice of identity. Yet this is hardly ever taken into account by researchers.

Let us look at some examples here as well. The French linguist and psycho-analyst Julia Kristeva, who originally comes from Bulgaria, was interviewed twice on television at a week's interval. On the first occasion, she was interviewed by the French journalist Bernard Pivot and had the following discussion:

Pivot: Do you feel more French than Bulgarian today?
Kristeva: Well today I feel I am more American, because Americans understand me better.

A few days later, having received a prestigious prize in Norway, she was interviewed on national television:

> Norwegian interviewer: You have lived in France for over 30 years now, what are you now? French or Bulgarian?
> Kristeva: French, you know the French taught me how to appreciate Human rights and *les Lumières*…

It is interesting to see how different the answers were for a very similar question, which basically urged the linguist to identify. If I want to look at her identity in these excerpts, I face a big problem: who is the real Kristeva? Is she French or American? Does she feel French or American? It is easy to see how such questions are irrelevant in terms of research, and how we can only face *façade* identities in trying to answer these questions ... Can we explain the shift in identification in the quotes above? Not really but we may propose the following hypothesis: the interlocutor (i.e. the interviewer) and the context (a mere interview on French television vs. an interview following the reception of an important prize) may impact on such acts of identity. Also the way the questions were formulated probably influenced what was said about the self. Finally the interlocutors also influenced the answers (a French journalist known for his chauvinistic views vs. a Norwegian journalist of whom Kristeva might have known nothing).

In a similar vein, the following excerpts show how problematic it is to position the 'other' – this time in research. They are all taken from the studies on 'the Chinese student' mentioned earlier (Dervin 2011). While all the papers that were studied clearly reduce the identity of the students to an MN/solid culturalist identity, many of the authors warn us of this generalising practice, especially in the conclusions to the studies – which give a very contradictory tone to the articles.

The first example is interesting in the sense that the researchers explain that they want to avoid generalisation – and thus emphasise the complexity of 'the Chinese student'. In order to do so, they have decided not to choose students from the whole of China but simply students from Shenzhen in Southern China. As such, they believe that their study will not be generalising. In other words, it means that instead of representing 1.3 billion individuals, the research participants symbolise 'only' 9 million people (the population of Shenzhen)… The same unconvincing claim goes for the scholars who assert that "(…) it is important not to essentialise communication among Chinese and to acknowledge that there may also be considerable in-group differences in every culture (…)" even if their article clearly reduces the students to 'Chinese culture'.

At a recent event that I attended many of these contradictory discourses were used by researchers. One researcher presented results of a study on binational/multinational individuals' national identities based on

'ideal-types' of how they identified themselves. I told him that his work was ethically problematic because he was wrongly imposing identities on the participants. He answered that his case was different because he had presented mere 'ideal-types' not 'truths'. I responded that I understood his point but that probably other researchers – more positivistic than him – were going to use his 'ideal-types' to classify people of different nationalities and that he would be responsible for the ensuing stereotyping and hierarchisation of difference (some characteristics of the national identities he introduced could be presented or interpreted as better than others).

To sum up the façade identity approach, it is clear that such an approach can lead to contradictory discourses on interculturality, self and 'other'. By re-categorising individuals into clear-cut entities (even multiple entities), researchers create neo-culturalism/neo-essentialism, see neo-MN. Besides the concepts of nations and cultures are still in use in such approaches, or even dichotomies such as the imaginary West/non-West. Pieterse (2004) has coined the phrase "pluralised" "double monoculturalism" to label these approaches. Wimmer and Glick Schiller (2002, 324) share similar views in their criticisms of transnational studies: "Strangely enough, the neo-communitarianism of transnationalism studies also reproduces the standard image of a world divided into nations and thus naturalises this vision of the world in new forms". They add that:

> Much of transnational studies overstates the internal homogeneity and boundedness of transnational communities; they overestimate the binding power for individual action; they overlook the importance of cross-community interactions as well as the internal divisions of class, gender, region and politics….
>
> (Ibid.)

Let us now look at a proposal, which may allow researchers in the field of intercultural communication to go beyond the problems presented by the first two paradigms.

Identification: New Worlds of Research?

> In order to escape the magnetism of established methodologies, ways of defining the object of analysis and algorithms for generating questions, we may have to develop (or rediscover?) analytical tools and concepts not coloured by the self-evidence of a world ordered into nation-states.
>
> (Ibid., 326)

L'individu doit avoir les moyens de s'approprier son origine et doit avoir aussi la possibilité de refuser son origine.

(de Singly 2003, 58)

As asserted at the beginning of this article, identification (which translates a process, see –*ATION*), equates "Methodological fluidism" as proposed by Wimmer and Glick Schiller (2002), and which I call *Mixed Intersubjectivity* in what follows. Let us start with a quote from the anthropologist K.P. Ewing (1990, 251):

I argue that in all cultures people can be observed to project multiple, inconsistent self-representations that are context-dependent and may shift rapidly. At any particular moment a person usually experiences his or her articulated self as a symbolic, timeless whole, but this self may quickly be displaced by another, quite different 'self', which is based on a different definition of the situation. The person will often be unaware of these shifts and inconsistencies and may experience wholeness and continuity despite their presence.

For the anthropologist and many other scholars from different fields, people represent themselves, not as truths but as constructs. People are thus often in the midst of identity 'inconsistencies' and 'shifts'. For this third paradigm, identity is thus taken as a discursive phenomenon and by no means a given. In order to grasp fully what this means, the central concept of representation is introduced. For Jovchelovitch (2007, 11), "the reality of the human world is in its entirety made of representation: in fact there is no sense of reality for our human world without the work of representation". She adds: "we use representations to position ourselves, to claim common identities and to defend ourselves against stigmatizing or marginalizing practices" (Ibid., 25). In other words, we now agree that identity – just like reality – does not exist in itself but is (co)constructed, through representations that are either shared by individuals or 'invented'. But how do we then work with the concept of identity (identification) and what does MIN mean?

First we need to move away from the idea that identity is an *Object*, to the hypothesis that identity (identification) is a process. Thus instead of asking the question "what is somebody's identity?" in front of our data, we should be more interested in "how do they construct what they present as their identity?" or "how do they identify themselves?" In other words, instead of collecting the 'identity/ies' which are found in a corpus (inter-views, blogs, focus groups, novels…), we should look at the identity markers that are used to indicate shifts and inconsistencies in identifi-

cation. These identity markers can still be related to MN and TN but they are not taken for granted or used to 'crystallise' the presented discourses.

Let us look at one example of identification. This is taken from a podcast recorded by a young British man, whose mother was Brazilian and dad English, who lives in France. In the episode, he tells us about the confusion concerning his accent – and how he himself is confused about his own identity:

> I always feel a bit of an outsider because for instance **Scotland people would say** I was English because they heard my accent and it sounded English to them it wasn't definitely Scottish in any case and euh when I was in S... in England I was even more surprised when **people said to me** I had a Scottish accent so in way the accent made me feel different and when I am in France I speak French and **people say** I have an accent I don't necessarily sound like an English person speaking French **that's what I am told** but **they can tell** I am not French you know **they say** you have got an accent when you speak so that makes me feel different again

In the excerpt the elements in bold indicate that the way he identifies his accent(s) in English is influenced directly by what other people have told him. Yet, it does not mean that any of these 'definitions' are true or correspond to a 'reality' to him. The speaker uses these voices to provide proof of his complex linguistic identity but not of who he is. It is easy to see in similar cases (being in relation to language, nation, gender, feelings…) that confusion and instability are normal. This case might seem extreme to the reader, yet it is important to bear in mind that such variations in identification can occur daily through questions related to one's gender, generation, profession, faith, emotional engagement, etc.

Now let us try to see how one could approach identification in terms of analytical tools. In other words, is identification researchable? And how could one propose a less neo-essentialist vision of identity than those put forward by the two previous approaches?

Since the beginning of this article, it has become clear that scholars need to go below the surface of discourse in order to work towards more complex identification. If the individual is plural, complex, etc., repeating what s/he asserts as evidence is not enough. This is why it seems important to concentrate on what is hidden behind what is presented by the speaker, in terms of identification strategies: do they contradict themselves, manipulate, lie, do 'facework' (or protect themselves because they feel 'attacked'), etc.? In order to propose such analyses, it seems interesting to look at how visible and invisible voices contribute to construct experience, identity, or the speaker's 'truth'. Critical and Reflexive Ethnography, Conversation Analysis, and also Linguistic Discourse

Analysis (theories of enunciation/dialogicality) are excellent tools to work within such a paradigm.

Because of space limit, only the concept of *dialogicality* will be looked at here. Dialogicality is now worked upon – in many and varied ways – by many scholars from different fields. Two sub-branches of linguistics are particularly interested in dialogicality: theories of enunciation (Marnette 2005) and pragmatics (Kerbrat-Orecchioni 2002). According to scholars who work within such methods, discourse is always heterogeneous and unstable; otherness is constitutive of discourse and meaning; discourse is always co-constructed and co-enunciated by interlocutors; discourse is constructed in specific situations. It is important to be able to either identify many of these elements when analysing data or laying down some hypotheses as to how they contribute to what is being said by research participants. Dialogicality is interested in the voices that are introduced by speakers in their discourses as they indicate plurality and thus identification. By placing a voice in what one has to say, a strategy is always to be found. In order to do so, researchers should try to identify linguistic traces of otherness in discourse:

- Presence of identifiable others
- Presence of unidentifiable others
- Presence of 'real' interlocutors
- Presence of self/selves
- Presence of hidden self/selves (manipulation, lies, silence, contradiction, etc.

After having identified these voices (which again contribute to identification), it is important to propose some hypotheses as to what impact these voices have in terms of strategies and identification. This is what I call *Mixed Intersubjectivity* (MIN): the fact that interlocutors 'play' with different voices (their own and others'), goes well beyond what appears at the surface of discourse.

What follows is an illustration. The following three excerpts are taken from the interview of two international students based in Finland, who are talking about their daily lives with the same researcher. The students were interviewed separately at a Finnish university by a scholar who shares the same first language. In the sequences below, the students are asked to talk about their apartment and their feelings towards the fact that they both share an apartment together with another French student in Finland. The first student gives a very communitarian image of the three flatmates and uses the voice of one of them to express the fact that they do everything together ("three captains onboard a ship"):

A: (…) de toute façon *la Finlande c'est un bateau*, on dit souvent d'ailleurs que la **Finlande c'est un bateau**… dans le sens où … bon on est les 3 capitaines à bord. C'est B qui aime beaucoup utiliser cette expression, c'est un bateau, on fait tout ensemble.

The student who is mentioned by A (student B) was also interviewed and what she has to say about flat sharing with the two other French students differs from the image given above:

B: (…) ben moi de manière générale je supporte très bien de faire les choses seule tandis que je vois… en comparaison mes deux colocs font toujours tout ensemble *à quelle heure on prend le bus? à quelle heure on mange?* C'est toujours *on* mais moi c'est *je* quand je parle déjà. (…).

The student clearly dis-identifies herself from the two other flatmates and she even uses a direct quote uttered by them to show how different she is from them ("What time shall we take the bus? What time are we eating?"). The image that she wants to give is that of an autonomous, group-free person who always says "I" when she talks about what she does. Yet during the same interview, especially at the beginning, she talks in the plural form "we" (*on* in French) when she describes what she does on a daily basis:

B: bon je me lève en général à 10h bon ça c'était plus au premier semestre je me levais vers 10h30, j'avais cours de finnois à midi jusqu'à deux heures ensuite **on allait manger à la cafeteria** avec des internationaux **on restait discuter on allait à la BU, on vérifiait nos mèls** et le soir… hum **on allait faire nos cours** et là donc je retrouvais les Français et j'arrivais chez moi vers quelle heure? vers 9h du soir en fait.

It is easy to see from these three excerpts that it is very important to work not only across data (within interviews and between interviews) but also on identity markers such as pronouns (which indicate voices) and quotes. In the excerpts, three layers can be identified: first of all, there is a difference between what A says B said and what B says during her interview; a difference between what B says and A says; a difference between what B says at moment 1 and at moment 2. Through the analysis of such *mixed intersubjectivity*, the researcher can note shifts and inconsistencies and thus identification – not to find the 'truth' – but to highlight the complexity of human experience and the strategies used to construct it.

Conclusion

Each of us involves identities of various kinds in disparate contexts. The
same person can be of Indian origin, a Parsee, a French citizen, a US resi-
dent, a woman, a poet, a vegetarian, an anthropologist, a university professor,
a Christian, a bird watcher, and an avid believer in extraterrestrial life and
of the propensity of alien creatures to ride around the cosmos in
multicoloured UFOs. Each of these collectivities, to all of which this
person belongs, gives him or her a particular identity. They can all have
relevance, depending on the context. There is no conflict here, even though
the priorities over these identities must be relative to the issue at hand.

(Sen 2005, 350)

This article aimed at reviewing three ways of working on identity
within the context of interculturality. I have linked Methodological
Nationalism, which relies mostly on Nations/states, to Solid Identity and
culturalism. The second approach, which is a direct criticism addressed to
MN, is entitled Transnationalism and Façade Identity. Though critical of
MN, it became clear in our deconstruction of the concepts that even if they
seem to move beyond Nationalism, they still remain within static
boundary-ful entities which pluralise the self and the other but still limit
them to countable and even programmable identities. Façade Identity has
not done enough to allow 'fluidity' in the expression, construction and
enactment of identities to emerge fully.

The third approach that was proposed is Mixed Intersubjectivity
(MIN), which relies on identification, or processes rather than objects.
What this last approach suggests is that it is important to work on several
layers of identity at micro-levels to be able to give a more balanced and a
more mixed and complex vision of research participants. What MIN also
puts forward is that both MN and TN though flawed and somewhat
anachronic, should not be discarded but included in complex analyses of
identification, not in a naïve 'truthful' sense but in a constructivist fashion
which reflects the fact that postmodern individuals are torn apart by
contradictory discourses about belonging and not belonging. Moving away
from methodological nationalism for good means following this path…

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CHAPTER TWO

IDENTITY AND LANGUAGE
VS. IDENTIFICATION THROUGH LANGUAGE:
A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

REGIS MACHART AND SEP NEO LIM

The relation between language and cultural identity is often evoked in the contributions of researchers, the speech of politicians or in conversations held by individuals for whom the possibility of speaking their language in official setting is connected to the recognition of a cultural specificity (Corsicans in France, Basques in Spain, Baba-Nyonyas in Malaysia…). The coinage of the simple phrase *ethnolinguistic groups* also shows a confluence between the notions of ethnicity and linguistic identity which have merged to the extent of sometimes becoming interchangeable. Race and language lack this obvious connection although the three terms *race*, *ethnicity* and *culture* carry very similar meanings.

In this chapter, we will analyse how the notions of *race*, *ethnicity*, *culture* (often associated with the concept of *identity*) and *identification* (from a postmodern point of view) are related to language. The shift from *racial* to *cultural* identity through *ethnicity* did not bring the crucial change that *identification* was going to instil in interpersonal communication. The role of language as a collateral element to race or as an ethnic and cultural identity marker will find under the identification theory a new function, i.e. as the medium through which the process of identification occurs. The place of the individual will drastically be revisited under the recognition of the role of language in use (or discourse) in the construction of the *Self*, while it was previously perceived as a group feature.

Language as a Social Construct

The use of language as a cultural marker needs to be questioned. For French sociolinguists, languages do not exist *per se*: they are just collections

of speech acts (Calvet 1996) which exist only because they have some importance in the eyes of their speakers who believe in their existence and have some representations about them (Calvet 1999, 15). A language has thus to be seen as a social construct, or even as a "fiction" (Bourdieu 1982, 140), transcending practices.

Languages may show some regularity which may be useful for linguists (Calvet 1999, 14) but their delineation may prove to be difficult. Bourdieu (1982, 140) discussed the limits of the exercise in the case of Occitan: he considers that naming the population speaking the 'Occitan language' as *Occitans* may only result from a performative act, as discrepancies between the speakers' practices are very high and the author sees very little regularity among Occitan speakers. Moreover, the "recognition" of the Occitan language goes hand in hand with the recognition of the Occitan "nation", a term which has to be understood here as *ethnicity*. The naming of a language is thus doubly performative. As Canut (2000) puts it, this act is like socially giving birth to the entity.

Although the limits of languages are unclear, the concept has been widely used in relation with identity. It functions as an ethnic marker, for instance during the splitting of Serbo-Croatian into two different languages (Bugarski 2004) with two groups claiming to be culturally different and speaking two different languages. It is also regularly used as a cultural indicator besides gastronomy, religion, traditions or other elements (e.g. Argenter 2000, 30-31). It may also be inferred in interethnic relations when members of an ethnic group are expected to speak a certain language or language variety because of their physical appearance: the Peranakan Chinese or Baba-Nyonyas from Melaka (Malaysia) are speakers of Malay[1] (Zhiming 2001, 283) but when they are in Kuala Lumpur, they are regularly addressed in one of the varieties of Chinese 'because of' their Chinese phenotype, although most Baba-Nyonyas of the older generation actually do not speak these languages 'despite' their ancestry.

Refusing the term of *language*, certain researchers prefer to use the word *discourse*. Charaudeau (2001) claims that language (defined as a morphosyntactic system) has merely an identity function whereas discourse can be considered as the cultural realisation of the language. Language is thus not a cultural marker itself, but the way it is used to communicate makes it one. Nevertheless in this contribution, we will use the word *language*, as we focus more on the symbolic, sometimes iconic value of the term, than on language in use. We will keep the word *discourse* when we refer to discourses held on language, race, ethnicity, culture and identity.

Racial Identity and the Race - Language Association

Even if race is often perceived as a biological term, it has been related to language practices over the years. People from a certain 'race' are associated with a certain language, for example, in the pre-Mandela South-Africa (Lafon 2004).

Race refers, at least in its original meaning, to the transmission of physical characteristics over generations through procreation, with a particular emphasis on "skin shade" (Oppenheimer 2001, 1050). Races are distinguished by different biological features which give an individual a certain, visible appearance to which researchers refer as phenotype. A phenotype is "a grouping of physical features, often with significance to a community in the ascription of race" (Fought 2006, 224).

Race, in biological and primordial conceptions, cannot be chosen: it is inherited from parents and it cannot be changed. The body can go through numerous alterations (colour lenses for the eyes, whitening/depigmentation of skin, straightening and colouring of the hair, alteration of the shape of the nose through aesthetic surgery, etc.), but a person's 'race' will not be affected by the physical changes as the genetic transmission prevails over the physical appearance.

The history of race is very much connected with colonial history (Simon 2008) when colonists wanted to reinforce their domination over colonised populations. In French Indochina, miscegenation,[2] i.e. interracial couples or relationships, was not desirable as it threatened the ideological power hierarchy between races. In this case, this imposition of racial categories was made by the French administration (Chludzinski 2008). In the case of Malaysia, race was introduced by the British colonists (Goh 2008, 109) who were in need of categorisation in order to reinforce their power. In their racial classification of the indigenes of Malaya, Malays and Orang Asli/Aborigines were opposed to the *alien* (Lee 2007, 119), namely Chinese and Indian migrants and their descendants. The aliens were considered as birds of passage and their integration into the Malayan population was not a priority for the British administration. Yet, racial classification later proved to be unsuccessful as certain indigenous groups of Malaysia did not match the general racial description of the autochthonous races as defined by the British. Asmah Hj. Omar (1983, 27) cites the case of the Dusun of Borneo who have a fairer skin tone than the other tribes but are still indigenous. Thus, she considers that "any attempt to give a general definition of the indigenous peoples [of Malaysia] according to their physical features may (…) prove to be unsatisfactory". The Malaysian racial categorisation is also associated with language. The