Emma Mileva

Identity and interaction: a sociocultural linguistic approach

Marry Bucholtz and Kira Hall (2005)

The article proposes a framework for analyzing identity within linguistic interaction. It is based on five principles: Emergence, Positionality, Indexicality, Relationality and Partialness. Identity is produced by linguistic resources that are broad and flexible – labels, stances, styles, and even languages and varieties.
Identity is a relational and sociocultural phenomenon manifesting in a discourse rather than a structure expressing fixed social categories.
Definition of identity: *Identity is the social positioning of self and other.* (p. 586).
Identity operates on multiple linguistic levels simultaneously – vowel quality, turn shape, code choice or ideological structure, and all these receive social meaning.
The emergence principle
People's sense of self and their individual mind are reflected in a form of discourse. Identity emerges from concrete conditions of linguistic interaction and is not a pre-existing source of linguistic or semiotic practices. It is a social and cultural phenomenon.
Ex. Hijras boy who refers to himself as female (using female pronouns) => violating the associations between linguistic forms and specific social categories.
The positionality principle
Identity includes macro-level demographic categories such gender, age, social class. The same time, it includes local, ethnographic/cultural positions. And lastly, identity is being represented by temporary and interactionally emerged roles (e.g. joke teller, listener etc.)
The indexicality principle
The notion of indexicality: linguistic forms semiotically linked to social meanings. It is closely related to cultural beliefs and values, and can be found on all levels of linguistic structure.

a) overt reference of identity categories or labels. Ex. derogative use of the word 'hjira' when used by the father of the guy who becomes a hjira.
b) implicatures or pressupositions – lesbians or gay men using gender-neutral references to lovers to avoid hostile reaction.
c) stances – evaluative, affective or epistemic behaviour in a discourse.
   The link ling form-social identity is not direct but mediated by stances:

Ling form	=>	stances (forcefulness, uncertainty, etc)	=>	social category (gender)

Indexical ties are inherently ideological, starting their creation from "a set of interactional norms for particular social groups" (p. 596).
Style in traditional view is seen as the intraspeaker variation of language use (Labov, 1972), third wave sociolingusitic approach defines it as "a repertoire of

linguistic forms associated with personas or identities" (Eckert 2000, Shilling-Estes 2004). Social meaning of style definitely requires ethnographic investigation.

d) languages and dialects can express identity as well.

The relationality principle

Identities are never isolated. They gain social meaning through interaction with other identities in the discourse. This interaction includes similarity/difference, genuineness/artifice, and authority/delegitimacy.

The partialness principle

This principle challenges the old view that social life is coherent. Reflexive ethnography and especially postmodernism see the identity of individuals as fractured and discontinuous localized in a discoursive context.

Identity is inherently relational, partial and a result of the contextual discourse where it ideologically interacts with other identities.

REFERENCES

Bucholtz, M. and Hall, K. (2005). Identity and Interaction: a Sociocultural Linguistic approach, *Discourse Studies* 7(4–5): 585–614.

Eckert, P. (2000) *Language Variation as Social Practice*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell

Labov, W. (1972) 'The Isolation of Contextual Styles', in *Sociolinguistic Patterns*, pp. 70–109. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Schilling-Estes, N. (2004) 'Constructing Ethnicity in Interaction', *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 8(2): 163–95.