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Relational work and identity negotiation in critical post observation teacher feedback

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Abstract

This article responds to the call for more empirical research to further our understanding of how identities are produced and performed in discourse. Data extracts from dyadic post observation feedback meetings between an experienced teacher and two supervisors are analysed. Analysis focuses on the relational work participants do to achieve identities in interaction. Analysis reveals delicate and complex negotiation processes as participants claim, ascribe, challenge, and relinquish local identities. Analysis shows that identities are emergent, relational and co-constructed, and that (im)politeness is an interactional resource used to construct identities. This article extends previous research by comparing interactants' relational work. Analysis of data extracts from two different meetings in which a supervisor points out the same teaching problem (poor instructions) with the same teacher enables a comparison of how identities are achieved. One supervisor uses politeness strategies while the other adopts aggressive and critical behaviour to claim and ascribe the same identities. In both instances the teacher resists but then co-constructs his negative ascribed identity. Within a linguistic ethnographic framework, micro analysis of feedback talk is supplemented with ethnographic interview data to enable a contextualised examination. Ethnographic data reveal the influence of institutional goals on local identity construction and relational work.

1. Introduction

Discourse is an important locus for the study of identity (Antaki and Widdicombe, 1998; Benwell & Stokoe, 2006; Bucholtz and Hall, 2005). The rise of post-structuralist theories of language and meaning in recent decades has seen a parallel shift in the understanding of identity, moving away from a core, essentialist view towards a conceptualisation of identity as emergent and relational (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005). This means that rather than a pre-determined, fixed psychological attribute that a person *has*, identity is now seen as active and performative. From this point of view, identity is a verb, something that a person *does* in situated social practices whilst pursuing practical goals (Antaki and Widdicombe, 1998;

Sarangi and Roberts, 1999) i.e. identities are performative (Butler, 1990). One way of performing identities is through social interaction: "identity is constructed, maintained and negotiated to a significant extent through language and discourse" (Varghese et al., 2005: 23). Benwell and Stokoe (2006) note the "enthusiastic use" (p.34) of the term 'discourse' in identity theory, but maintain that empirical studies are rare, with few researchers engaging with actual situated examples of language use. They contend that research overlooks the following questions:

> ...**how** exactly are identities discursively produced or performed? What is the process or **mechanism** by which the individual speaker takes up positions in discourse...? (p.35, original emphasis)

This article responds to a call for more empirical research to further our understanding of how identities are negotiated in discourse (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006; Dobs, 2014; Garcés-Conejos Blitvitch, 2013; Locher, 2008) by providing analysis of talk between an in-service English language teacher and two supervisors during post observation feedback meetings.

There is a growing interest in language teacher identity (Barkhuizen, 2017), underpinned by the belief that a better understanding of teacher identities can provide insight into teachers and their practice (Varghese et al., 2005). Much of the research employs interviews (e.g. Liu and Xu, 2011; Trent, 2014) often featuring narratives (e.g. Barkhuizen, 2016; Tsui, 2007). Narratives elicited in research interviews can provide important insight into teachers' identities. However, it is rarely acknowledged that the situated, sequential, and jointly produced talk in interviews can actively constitute and perform teacher identities, and that, as a socio-culturally loaded communicative activity, an interview can shape how participants promote themselves (Rapley, 2001). Identity is co-constructed through engagement and dialogue with others in local contexts (Benwell and Stokoe, 2006; Bucholtz and Hall, 2005). As Bucholtz and Hall (2005) point out, identity is relational:

> ... identities are never autonomous or independent but always aquire social meaning in relation to other available identity relations and other social actors (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005: 598)

Haugh (2008) and Miller (2013), for example, demonstrate how an interviewer's contributions play a part in the discursive enactment and negotiation of an interviewee's identity.

This article argues that the field of education should follow the lead of researchers in business and medicine (e.g. Heritage & Sefi, 1992; Holmes at al. 1999; Raymond & Heritage, 2006), and expand the methods used to investigate teacher identity to include analysis of the ways in which teachers negotiate identities during situated institutional interaction. Accordingly, this article examines how identity is discursively accomplished during work-based talk.

2. Review of literature

2.1 Theoretical orientations

This article examines the "interpersonal or relational side of language in use" (Locher & Graham 2010: 1) and is rooted in the field of pragmatics and in theories of identity and (im)politeness. According to Locher (2008), the use of language for enhancing, maintaining and challenging relationships in interpersonal communication has been described in various ways: as facework (Brown and Levinson, 1987), identity work (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005), rapport management (Spencer-Oatey, 2005), and relational work (Locher and Watts, 2005). This article draws on Locher and Watt's (2005) concept of relational work: "the 'work' individuals invest in negotiating relationships with others" (Locher and Watts, 2005: 10). Unlike Brown and Levinson's (1987) view of polite behaviour as cognitive, individualist face threat avoidance at utterance or speech act level, the concept of relational work views politeness as discursive and linked to genre practice norms (Locher and Watts, 2005). Importantly, the concept of relational work also allows examination of the full spectrum of interpersonal linguistic behaviour: polite, appropriate, inappropriate and impolite.

Locher (2008; 2011) proposes merging (im)politeness research with the study of identity, within a postmodernist constructivist orientation. Using Bucholtz and Hall's (2005) framework of identity, Locher (2008) demonstrates the close alignment between relational work and identity. Bucholtz and Hall (2005) define identity as "the social positioning of self and other" (p. 586) and propose a framework consisting of five identity principles. Identity is (1) emergent (i.e. not pre-existing) and is therefore social and cultural. Identity has different dimensions (the (2) positionality principle): macro level demographic categories; local, ethnographically specific cultural positions; temporary and interactionally participant roles (e.g. advice-needer, advice-giver, evaluator). Identities are indexed through linguistic means (the (3) indexicality principle) and are (4) relational i.e. acquire social meaning in relation to other identity positions and social actors. Finally, because identities are relational, they are also (5) partial: deliberate and conscious while also unintentional and habitual; a result of

self and others' perceptions and representations while also part of larger ideological and material processes.

Locher et al. (2015) highlight the alignment between Bucholtz and Hall's (2005) conceptualisation of identity and relational work:

> The two research strands on relational work and identity construction can be combined in a straightforward manner since identity is by definition relational and because both approaches emphasize negotiation and emergence (p. 5)

Locher (2008) explicitly links relational work to identity: "relational work refers to the ways in which the construction of identity is achieved in interaction, while identity refers to the 'product' of these linguistic and non-linguistic processes" (p.511). In this article, a close and detailed microanalysis of data extracts from two different one-to-one post observation feedback meetings is carried out, drawing on the concept of relational work by looking at how identities are achieved in interaction.

2.2 Empirical studies

Researchers within the field of pragmatics have highlighted the importance of understanding the connection between identity, face, and politeness (Garcés-Conejos Blitvich, 2013, Georgakopoulou, 2013). Despite this, however, the relationship between these phenomena is still unclear (Garcés-Conejos Blitvitch, 2013). One reason for this may be the limited number of empirical studies providing examples of how they unfold in 'real' talk. A small number of researchers have investigated the ways in which interactants use (im)politeness to perform identities, but empirical research is still scarce (Dobs, 2014; Garcés-Conejos Blitvitch, 2013; Locher, 2008).

Within this limited body of work, previous studies have focused mostly on the use of impoliteness as an interactional resource to index particular identities. For example, Garcés-Conejos Blitvich (2009) shows how some American news programme hosts used impoliteness as a linguistic index to create a confrontational identity and position themselves as different to peers who adopt a more traditional stance of neutrality. Students in Dobs' (2014) study of classroom discussions used scorn and condescension to form coalitions and index the we-identity of an experienced traveller. In Mullany's (2008) case study of a manufacturing company in the UK, woman managers used impoliteness strategies such as interrupting, mock politeness, and sarcasm to enact powerful identities in relation to their male colleagues. Garcés-Conejos Blitvich and Sifianou (2017) show how Greek nationalist

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party members used moves of verbal aggression such as anti-normative and aggressive discourse as indirect indexes of an anti-establishment, anti-elite, strong, male protector identity. Garcés-Conejos Blitvich et al. (2013) demonstrate how television talent show judge Simon Cowell constructed three local identity categories (authoritative judge, cruel but witty judge, and witty executioner) by scorning and ridiculing contestants, claiming greater turn taking rights, and asserting the need to give honest advice. These studies support Garcés-Conejos Blitvich and Sifianou's (2017) contention that behaviour broadly relating to (im)politeness is tied to identity construction.

The focus of this article includes the use of (im)politeness as a way of indexing identities. However, my interest is also in how participants use (im)politeness to negotiate identities i.e. the processes of relational work. In addition, the analysis in this article is not limited to impoliteness but analysis is open to the full spectrum of linguistic behaviour, including politeness. My interest also lies in 'real life' interaction. Garcés-Conejos Blitvich (2009) and Garcés-Conejos Blitvich et al. (2013) analysed televised interaction in which impoliteness is explicitly and deliberately manufactured, expected, and even desirable, for the purposes of entertainment. Conclusions from these studies may however be of limited relevance to institutional interaction

Other studies have looked at how interactants use relational work to negotiate identities but these are scarce. Dobs (2014) and Locher (2011) both examine the use of impoliteness in response to unwanted assigned identities. Dobs (2014) showed how students used impoliteness strategies such as scorn, ridicule, an aggressive and defensive tone, withholding politeness, and making others feel uncomfortable to claim and resist different identities. In Locher's (2011) study of online interaction between a user and advisor in a technical support forum, both interactants used face aggravating behaviour such as implying lack of care, explicitly labelling behaviour as rude and impolite, criticism, and sarcasm to reject unwanted ascribed identities. Students in Dobs' (2014) study also employed impoliteness strategies to vie for the same identity and to co-construct self-ascribed identities. Miller's (2013) study, in contrast, focuses on politeness strategies. She shows how an interviewer and interviewee displayed orientation to each other's identities by signalling some topics as delicate (by, for example, hesitating or using mitigation) and others as non-delicate. This orientation simultaneously constituted the other as having a particular identity e.g. socially aware, pro-English, and pro-immigrant. Miller (2013) concludes that relational work and identity occur in a concurrent and co-constitutive process:

(a) relational work is understood as a constitutive aspect of identity construction and

(b) identity construction is understood as a necessary process for mobilizing relational work. (p.76)

This article contributes to current discussions about the interconnectedness of (im)politeness and identity (Garcés-Conejos Blitvitch, 2013; Garcés-Conejos Blitvitch et al., 2013; Garcés-Conejos Blitvitch and Sifianou, 2017; Locher, 2008, 2011; Miller, 2013; Spencer-Oatey and Ruhi, 2007) by examining the ways participants use relational work to negotiate identities in situated institutional interaction. This article also extends previous research by adding layers of analysis. Analysis of data extracts in which two supervisors point out the same teaching problem (poor instructions) with the same teacher in two different meetings enables a comparison of the relational work they each do. In addition, influenced by Copland's (2011) contention that "it is through conjoining linguistic and ethnographic approaches that a detailed, contextualised analysis emerges" (p. 3832), this article supplements linguistic analysis with ethnographic data from interviews in which participants were invited to comment on the feedback meeting extracts.

3. Methodology

3.1 Setting and participants

Data were collected in the United Arab Emirates at a federal tertiary institution in which the medium of instruction is English. Teachers are mostly expatriates from a variety of English-speaking countries. The extracts in this article feature one English language teacher (Eric) and two supervisors (S2 and S3) who are department heads and former English teachers (S2 left the institution and was replaced by S3). All work in a foundation year programme focused mainly on improving students' English language skills so they can progress to English medium bachelor degree courses. The teacher and supervisors are well qualified and have at least ten year's teaching experience. The supervisor carries out lesson observations as part of every teacher's annual appraisal. This process helps determine if a new teacher passes the first probationary year and whether post-probationary teachers can renew their three-year contract. These high stakes observations are followed by a one-to-one feedback meeting between the observed teacher and supervisor, the purpose of which is to discuss the lesson with a view to improving practice.

3.2. Data collection and analysis

The extracts featured in this article are part of a larger data set of 19 feedback meetings (with four supervisors and 17 teachers) collected over a period of four years (Donaghue, 2016). Meetings were recorded by the feedback participants (i.e. the researcher was not present). Two episodes from the larger data set have been chosen for this article. By fortuitous chance, three of the original 19 feedback meetings featured the same teacher, Eric (a pseudonym), with three different supervisors, each recorded a year apart. Two of these meetings feature the supervisor giving the same negative feedback: poor instructions. These two episodes have been selected for this article to enable an extra layer of comparison analysis. A third episode was chosen to show how Eric, when invited at the beginning of a meetings to evaluate his lesson, claimed positive teacher identities.

I followed the British Association for Applied Linguistics (2006) ethical guidelines, including gaining informed participant consent and assuring participants of anonymity and confidentiality. The original study was also subject to a rigorous ethical approval process by a university in the UK. The 19 participants in this study gave their written consent for recorded data to be used in publications and conference presentations. In addition, I contacted the three participants in this article, sending them the extracts I intended to use and their interview comments, and received permission to use these in this article. I have ensured anonymity by giving Eric a pseudonym and giving the two supervisors numbers instead of names. In addition, I have not named the institution (there are many federal tertiary institutions in the seven emirates of the UAE and thousands of English language teachers working in them) and I have not revealed the time of data collection.

Linguistic analysis of the audio recorded meetings involved a three-level engagement process: (1) transcription and 'noticing'; (2) segmenting discourse into thematically bounded episodes; (3) a fine-grained, turn by turn microanalysis of these episodes. To examine the process of identity negotiation, I used some conversation analysis (CA) tools at the microanalysis stage. CA requires the analyst to provide empirical evidence for participants' orientations by showing how they use language and turn taking organization to create and negotiate topics, tasks and identities (Piirainen-Marsh, 2005). This process is useful because it directs analytic focus to participants' interpretation and evaluation of unfolding talk and illuminates how they view themselves and each other. In particular, subtle analysis of the use of interactional features such as delays, prefaces, indirectness, mitigation, hesitation, silence, and laughter to mark 'delicate' 'dispreferred' or problematic talk shows the relational work participants employ to negotiate identities (Miller, 2013).

Audio recorded meeting extracts represent the core data in this article. However, feedback talk does not exist in a vacuum but is influenced and shaped by contextual details (Erickson, 2004) such as relationships, prior interactions, and institutional priorities. Hak (1999), recommends that CA linguistic analysis should be embedded in and regulated by an "overarching (…) ethnographic endeavour" (p.448). I find convincing Hak's assertion that the "observability" of linguistic analysis is:

> considerably enhanced by the analyst's detailed knowledge of the work activities and the work setting, and in particular also of the participants' perspective of the tasks at hand, acquired by ethnographic fieldwork and interviews. (Hak, 1999: 448)

I have therefore supplemented micro analysis with ethnographic data within a linguistic ethnographic framework. Linguistic ethnography (LE) is an interpretive approach which studies how local and immediate interaction is embedded in wider social contexts (Copland and Creese, 2015). Linguistic data in this article are supplemented with data from interviews. I sent participants feedback extracts in the form of short audio clips and transcriptions. They read, listened to, and then commented on the extracts in interviews. These data-focused interviews proved to be interesting and illuminating and added much insight to my analysis.

4. Analysis and discussion

This section analyses and discusses data extracts from two one-to-one feedback meetings with Eric, an English language teacher, and two supervisors, S2 and S3. The first extract in Section 4.1 shows the professional identities that Eric claims at the beginning of his meeting with S2 as Eric evaluates his lesson. Having established the '*kind of person*' (Gee, 2000: 9) Eric wants to be recognised as, the following extracts look at how participants negotiate the threat to Eric's projected identity when the supervisors point out a problem in his teaching. The second set of data extracts (Section 4.2) are from the same meeting with S2, recorded in Eric's second year at the institution. The third set (Section 4.3) are from a meeting with S3, recorded in Eric's third year. These feedback meeting extracts are supplemented with interview data.

Prior to the lesson observation, the teacher sends the supervisor a lesson plan. As the supervisor observes the lesson he/she completes an institutional observation form which consists of a list of criteria focusing on aspects of teaching and space for making comments. At the subsequent feedback meeting, the participants have these two documents to hand.

4.1. Eric's identity claims

Extract 1 comes after S2 asks Eric to 'talk through' his lesson. Eric responds to this directive and takes a long turn expressing his opinion of the lesson, starting with a heavily mitigated positive evaluation (1-2). The analysis which follows highlights Eric's use of various linguistic strategies to position himself as a knowledgeable, experienced, reflective teacher.

<u>Extract 1 (see Appendix for transcription conventions)</u>

```
1    Eric   ok e::m (2) I would say gen- generally °sort of° RE:latively
2           happy with it but I think that there's some some of the
3           things that I DI:D e:m + that I planned to do that i- is +
4           I'll be interested in your opinion in THAT because there was
5           + I think it was + I think em in hindsight at the end I I
6           felt it was very teacher centered↓ e:m + also I think em +
7           that the students I <I'm aware in the back of my mind is
8           that I feel that> reading is a weak SKILL so I I planned in
9           my lesson plan to give the students ten minutes reading em I
10          think was it s- sign- sustained silent reading + is what I
11          said
12   S2     mm mmhm↑
13   Eric   em I think it's a good idea and it's valuable + em because
14          <at the end of the day> we're thinking about the HEATE and
15          the IELTS and we WANT them to read em but but I think you
16          know maybe for an observed LESSON maybe I could've presented
17          that differently and made it more of a jigsaw reading + em
18          maybe've had sort of I don't know parts of the reading
19          broken it up more had some had some things on the wall had
20          it a lot more interactive em and I did THINK about doing
21          that + em but but also I was sort of thinking from the from
22          the point view of you know I'd like them to sit down and
23          READ a reasonably long chunk of paragraph so I I think you
24          know if I was giving feedback on the LESSON I I would
25          definitely sort or I would discuss that or debate it em you
26          know I think it's valuable to do some time but I wouldn't
27          want to do that all of the time
28   S2     right ok
29   Eric   em so I I do think it was teacher centered em also I I read
30          the text out with the class asking them questions and again
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31          that's that's very teacher centered but I I found that I I
32          sort of felt that them listening to my pronunciation
33          sometimes with me reading helps with THEIR pronunciation and
34          reading em and it again it's not maybe not a good technique
35          to use too often↑ em and it is certainly open to criticism
36          but I think for the level of learners I I think it's
37          valuable for them em you know if I if you're talking about
38          an IELTS level six you wouldn't do that with a higher band
39          of student
40  S2      that's right
41  Eric    but I I think for them that's that's why I did it em and I
42          would say it IS quite teacher centered but I felt that it
43          has value for those students
```

Eric's preamble before getting to the evaluation of his lesson: '*ok e::m + I would say gen-generally sort of*' (1) and his repetition, pauses, and hesitation show he is orienting to problematic interaction, probably because he is about to produce a dispreferred turn in the form of self-praise (albeit heavily mitigated). Immediately following Eric's hesitant positive evaluation '*°sort of° RE:latively happy with it*' (1-2) is the contrast conjunction 'but' which again mitigates the positive evaluation as Eric then indicates that '*some of the things I DI:D*' (3) may be open to criticism. Eric weaves a self-critical thread throughout his turn, maintaining the emergent idea that the lesson had flaws (*it was very teacher centred* (6); *I wouldn't want to do that all of the time* (26-27); *I read the text out with the class asking them questions and again that's … very teacher centred* (29-31); *it's not maybe not a good technique to use too and it is certainly open to criticism* [34-35]). At the same time, however, he positions himself as reflective, analytic, and self-aware with the use of mental verbs and phrases (aware; feel; think), and by presenting alternative ideas (15-19). In addition, by talking about his students, their weaknesses and needs (8-9), Eric also constitutes an identity of a responsible, caring, knowledgeable, experienced teacher and by using teaching jargon, for example *teacher-centred, sustained silent reading, jigsaw reading, HEATE, IELTS* (both English language exams), he projects an experienced teacher identity involving knowledge.

Eric also indicates his familiarity with the feedback event in various ways. For example, his discussion of how he could have done things differently (16-20) is typical of and central to post observation feedback discussion. The ability to provide alternatives also indicates experience as this is something with which inexperienced teachers often struggle. His

acknowledgement of the display element of the observed lesson: '*maybe for an observed lesson maybe I could've presented that differently*' (16-17) adds to this sense familiarity. Eric also casts himself briefly in the role of assessor (23-25), adding to his experienced teacher identity projection. His 'double-voicing', i.e. talk which shows that the speaker has a heightened awareness of, and responds to, the concerns and agendas of others, is also an anticipatory move to dilute possible criticism (Baxter, 2014).

Thus, as Eric acknowledges that some might argue with his 'teacher-centred' approach and his decision to read aloud a long text, while also defending the lesson as being valuable for his particular students, he constructs the identity of a knowledgeable, experienced, reflective teacher.

4.2 Eric and S2

In Extract 2, S2 raises a problem: in S2's opinion, Eric's instructions were unclear and the students didn't know what to do. Giving instructions is a fairly basic teaching skill, and this topic is perhaps something an observer would expect to talk about with a novice rather than experienced teacher. This sequence therefore involves a challenge to Eric's earlier identity claim of a knowledgeable, experienced teacher. S2 uses a variety of politeness strategies (e.g. a long preamble and hesitation) to soften the challenge to Eric's claimed identity.

<u>Extract 2</u>

```
1   S2     and you asked the students to talk about it
2          [now this was an interesting stage↓
3   Eric   [yeah
4          mm
5   S2     because + y-you said two things you said TALK about it
6   Eric   mm
7   S2     and then you said talk about the differences and changes
8   Eric   mm
9   S2     and then you gave them an option of pairs and possibly
10         groups + and then you said talk about it again
11  Eric   yeah (rising then falling intonation)
12  S2     ok
13  Eric   mm
14  S2     now then you came over to the FIRST group
15  Eric   yeah
```

```
16  S2     and you were conducting the discussion
17  Eric   mm
18  S2     now what you DIDN'T see
19  Eric   mm
20  S2     is that all ROUND you
21  Eric   mm
22  S2     the other boys were just + looking
23  Eric   YEAH↑ (quite loud)
24  S2     at what was going on while you were + talking to that
25         first group
26  Eric   yeah
27  S2     now if (there) had been a MODEL + in the lesson plan
28  Eric   yeah
29  S2     then that would've been + ok but you'd given an
30         instruction
31  Eric   yeah
32  S2     the s- you were d- y- you then went to a group to talk
33  Eric   yip
34  S2     and the other students weren't + carrying on what you
35         wanted them to do
```

S2 appears to adopt a neutral stance at the start of this sequence with a description of how Eric set up the task (1-10). However, his repetition of an active verb structure (you + verb [1,5,7, 9, 10]) emphasizes Eric's agency and responsibility. Eric's rising then falling intonation (11) suggests discomfort and perhaps indicates that he suspects S2's view of these classroom actions to be critical. There is then a pause in the conversation (12-13) where S2 seems to expect a response from Eric. S2, having brought up Eric's instructions, perhaps hopes that Eric will pursue the idea himself, enabling S2 to avoid delivering critical feedback. However, Eric utters only a brief acknowledgement token (13). S2 is therefore obligated to resume the narration (14). Eric's anticipation of critical feedback is confirmed (20-22). S2 points out the problem of the students not doing the activity (20-25) and he also stresses the negative auxiliary (18), which emphasizes Eric's lack of awareness. S2 assumes a critical stance by ending the story with the negative result of Eric's actions.

S2's description of Eric's behaviour and its result assigns Eric the identity of poor instruction giver. Delicacy indicators suggest he is doing relational work to mitigate the threat to Eric's knowledgeable, aware teacher identity. S2's critical comment is extensively delayed with a

long narration of Eric's classroom actions and he pauses before '*looking*' (20). Eric's loud response is unusual and may indicate he is also orienting to S2's talk as problematic. The orientation to delicacy by both participants indicate they recognise the threat to Eric's identity as he is ascribed a disvalued, negative identity.

S2 then goes on to explain that the students didn't know what to do because Eric didn't model the activity (27) and his instructions were not clear (29-35). Indicators of delicacy continue as S2 points out what Eric should have done. Although S2's criticism is clear ('*the other students weren't + carrying on what you wanted them to do*' [30]), he introduces the idea of a model in a conditional sentence, choosing to talk about a hypothetical positive situation: '*now if (there) had been a **model** + in the lesson plan … then that would've been + ok*' (27-29). He also pauses and hesitates (lines 27, 29, 32, 34). As S2 demonstrates superior knowledge and awareness, he claims several local identities: problem identifier; problem solver; adviser. These claimed identities, however, simultaneously position Eric as oblivious to a (fairly basic) teaching mistake. S2's use of delicacy indicators show that he is aware of the threat to Eric's identity he is engendering through these actions.

Eric's response is an explanation/defence (underlined in Extract 3 below) in which he blames the failure of the activity on the students rather than his instructions i.e. with higher-level students of other nationalities (i.e. not Emiratis) his activity would have worked:

<u>Extract 3</u>

```
1    Eric   I I think + that's I think that's in a way em maybe at the
2           moment maybe my teaching is more and again with this sort
3           of level maybe more teacher centered is with HIGHER levels
4           I I think and and sort of obviously different  ling- well
5           different nationalities often you know if you set
6           different groups or tables as it was yesterday a
7           discussion normally they get on with it whereas I do find
8           HERE quite often you know the group that you work with
9           will then they'll discuss what you want THERE but when you
10          go to the next table or the next group to monitor THEM you
11          know I feel as though I'm sure that when I went on to the
12          next one the first group more or less stopped because I'd
13          gone
14   S2     °mm°
15   Eric   so I I do sort of feel as though that sort of exercise I I
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```
16          don't feel maybe with with lower levels HERE em + wor-
17          works as well as it might elsewhere I I don't do it as
18          much as I I as think be-
```

Eric produces an account even though it was not explicitly sought (he could have agreed with S2). By doing so, he assumes a temporary stance of defence which suggests that he may not have fully accepted S2's criticism and may also indicate he is resisting the poor instructions giver/unaware teacher identity.

Eric's explanation is fairly incoherent because it is couched in so much mitigation and hesitation (indicated in italics). The beginning of Eric's turn is also modified by a lengthy prequel. Eric starts a new narrative i.e. the notion of context ('*maybe at the moment*' [1-2]) and level ('*with this sort of level*' [-32]) being responsible for the task failure. Eric has reframed S2's observation (students didn't know what to do because of unclear instructions) into students knowing what to do but not participating in the discussion unless a teacher is present. This reinterpretation constructs a problematic identity for the students, allowing Eric to shift blame from himself to them. The stress on 'here' (8) reinforces the uniqueness of the current context (i.e. the students) as the reason for the lack of success of the activity. These moves of blame shift constitute an attempt by Eric to partially reclaim his knowledgeable/experienced teacher identity. The fact that Eric is willing to shift blame to his students may indicate the strength of Eric's self-presentational concerns i.e. positioning himself as knowledgeable and competent is more important than the negative picture he paints of the students. However, Eric's use of epistemic modality i.e. repeated use of the modal adverb '*maybe*', mental process phrases i.e. '*I think*' '*I feel*', and hedges ('*sort of*') communicates a stance of uncertainty and lack of confidence/commitment, perhaps because he is aware that blaming the students is unlikely to impress the supervisor. While this may be a deliberate ploy because Eric anticipates S2's disagreement, it also undermines Eric's attempts to convincingly project a positive identity. This uncertainty also co-constructs S2's identity as problem identifier and the more knowledgeable/aware interactant.

The next two turns are pivotal. S2 produces an affiliatory turn of agreement, strengthened by the modifier '*absolutely*' (1). This turn seems to be purely relational work as it becomes clear in following turns that S2 dos not actually agree with Eric's re-casting of the situation. S2 also starts this next turn with 'well' which suggests a dispreferred turn will follow (Pomerantz, 1984) and his hesitation also seems to indicate a 'but':

Extract 4

```
1  S2    well you you're absolutely right so + s s-
2  Eric  I'm not sure if you've got a solution or a suggestion
```

Eric's interruption (2) looks strategic. Linguistic clues in his previous turn indicate that he lacks confidence in his defence and may anticipate disagreement from S2. Eric's move in line 2 represents concession but he doesn't completely relinquish his valued identity of competent teacher (he doesn't agree with S2's criticism). Instead he validates S2's identities of problem identifier/solver and advice giver, and constructs a new identity for himself: advice seeker. This is skillfull and subtle relational work. Eric's new identity position enables S2 to return to a critique of Eric's instructions without having to return to the unaware/unknowledgeable teacher identity. S2 can now respond to Eric the advice seeker:

<u>Extract 5</u>

```
1   S2    well yes because setting the I mean the + the notion of or
2         the concept of talking about
3   Eric  mm
4   S2    would would IN FACT be something you'd think about for one
5         of your higher level [level four groups
6   Eric                       [mm              mm
7   S2    but REALLY for eh a a group of this + level
8         [of ability in speaking [you need to set
9         [mm                     [mm
10  S2    them immediate and clear outcomes
11  Eric  ok
```

S2 confirms that the activity was unsuitable for Eric's low-level class. There is hesitation (1,7) but S2's use of '*in fact'* and '*really'* (4,7) make his utterance definite and unambiguous. S2 starts with the deontic modal 'would' (4) which suggests an advisable, general state but this is strengthened and made more specific when he comes back to his original point in line 8 with '*need to'* which conveys a stronger sense of obligation. Eric's earlier co-construction of the advice seeker identity means S2 doesn't need to do use politeness strategies to mitigate his message. Eric's '*ok'* (rather than his customary 'mm') in line 11 indicates acceptance.

Because of Eric's new advice seeker identity, S2 can then repeat his point and go on to give Eric suggestions for improving his instructions:

```
1   S2    so one of the things could've been we could've given them
2         three questions
3   Eric  yeah [ok
4   S2         [or you could've said report back on the four main
5         things
6   Eric  mm
7   S2    yo- or you could've given them a little piece of paper
8         [wi- with that instruction or
9   Eric  [mm                              mm
10  S2    you could've given them headings like transport or
11        [culture or buildings
12  Eric  [ok ok               ok
13  S2    and they would've had something tangible to discuss and
14        when you went to each group you could've pointed
15        [at something and [then and done and directed them
16  Eric  [yeah             [yeah ye:ah
17  S2    towards the discussion but as it was they just had
18        [this sort of (global) notion that
19  Eric  [(sov-) bit too general
20  S2    they needed to have a chat about the teacher wanted them
21        to have a chat about sort of Dubai then and now
```

S2 chooses the modal 'could' (1,4,7,10) to present a series of suggestions as he again performs an 'advice giver' identity (which helps him fulfil the meeting goals of helping the teacher to improve his practice). In line 19, Eric's use of a synonym for global (*general*) shows that he understands S2's point.

Eric then engages in further discussion:

Extract 7

```
1   Eric  yeah maybe maybe something just off the top of my head
2         something like if you had maybe four people's different
3         opinions or something like that and tried to match them or
4         [(xxx)
```

```
5   S2    [that's possibly a little complex for
6         [but that (xxxx)
7   Eric  [yeah (xxxx) simple language no I ca- I I see what you
8         mean I think it's a good idea no I think it's a good idea
```

Eric's willingness to discuss alternatives, although not exactly matching S2's suggestions (5), enables him to perform the local identities of advice accepter and interested responder, while also co-constructing S2's advice-giver identity. Eric's double acknowledgement that S2's advice is a '*good idea*' (8) shows he accepts S2's suggestions and Eric also signals a stance of appreciation, again reinforcing S2 as an advice-giver and confirming Eric's advice-acceptor position.

S2 and Eric have negotiated a series of local identities, some potentially problematic. Both have done delicate and subtle relational work to help them achieve the complementary identities of advice giver/advice receiver. Eric's interview comments indicate that these processes resulted in alignment:

> *Generally, I felt it was kind of relatively sort of positive and there was constructive sort of feedback that I thought was useful. I felt as though I'd been given some good advice and he'd, I don't think he said anything that I did was wrong, just that this could have been better, you could have done that here and that there. We had quite a good conversation, you know?*

S2's only comment about this feedback meeting focused on his own goals for the meeting:

> *There were four or five points that I wanted to get over to [Eric]. It wasn't a bad lesson but it was a C. It was a C so I did need [Eric] to know and take on board those issues.*

The alignment that S2 and Eric achieve enables S2 to carry out his institutional duty: Eric engages in dialogue, explores suggestions, and accepts S2's feedback. This is corroborated by Eric's interview comments:

> *He was saying that he didn't feel that I'd modelled an example. So maybe that's something about my instructions and giving directions that I could improve on. That was something that I thought that's quite a good point, that I took away and thought about and took on board.*

4.3 Eric and S3

The extracts in the previous section suggest that the feedback meeting goal of helping Eric identify and solve problems in his teaching practice was accomplished. However, Extract 8 below is taken from a meeting a year later and the supervisor (S3) raises the same problem - poor instructions and no model. At the time of this feedback meeting, S3 was unaware of S2's feedback a year earlier as the feedback report had not been saved (usually an observation form is saved in the teacher's file and can be accessed by subsequent observers). S3 observed Eric in his third year, making this observation important as it contributed towards management decisions on whether to renew Eric's three-year contract. In Extract 8 below, S3's behaviour differs from S2. She is direct and critical as she positions herself as knowledgeable and Eric as ineffectual. In the following extracts, Eric again tries to defend himself but this time his defence is explicitly rejected, reinforcing the contrasting identities of expertise (S3) and incompetence (Eric).

<u>Extract 8</u>

```
1   S3     a:m so the instructions for the pair work
2   Eric   mm
3   S3     + I mean I've written
4          [in here the very basics [which you probably [know↑
5   Eric   [mm                     [mm                  [mm
6   S3     but I've written them down again is why didn't you +
7          get them to model it↑ (strong rising intonation)
8   Eric   mm
9   S3     (2) [I mean (laughs)
10  Eric       [I think the only thing I can think is probably you
11         know because I'm thinking about the time and I'm
12         worried about the timing then I'm I think I was
13         probably-
14  S3     yeah
15  Eric   wanting to kind of launch into it and-
16  S3     yeah but [more time I think I [said at the end
17  Eric            [and                 [yeah yeah
18  S3     more time↑ + spent o:n + more time spent on the actual
19         DELIVERY
20  Eric   mm
21  S3     and the instruction
22  Eric   mm
```

```
23  S3     will mean more time [spent on the [learning
24  Eric                       [mm            [mm
```

S3 starts with a boundary marker 'so' to indicate a shift in topic (1). In lines 3-6, S3 refers to the institutional observation form on which she has written comments prior to the meeting. This immediate reference to the form enables S3 to project two powerful identities: institutional representative and assessor. S3 has identified the same problem as S2 in Extract 2 but, unlike S2, S3 uses no preamble and cuts straight to the problem (1). The question: '*why didn't you + get them to model it*?' (6-7) is an indirect criticism and the strong rising intonation indicates surprise and even disbelief. It is also a negative interrogative which is clearly a reproach as it presents 'modelling it' as the (not achieved) ideal. This positions Eric as lacking, even incompetent. At the same time, S3 also positions herself as a person who has superior knowledge, the right to ask Eric to account for his actions (or lack of actions), and the right to ask a question with a critical stance. S3 then comments in line 4 that this is a '*very basic*' issue which she says Eric '*probably knows*'. The implication, however, is that he doesn't know, which again positions Eric as lacking basic teaching knowledge. Unlike S2, S3 makes no attempt to mitigate her reproach.

S3's question obliges Eric to respond but instead he only utters '*mm*' followed by a long, two-second silence. Eric's silence could indicate an unspoken disagreement with S3's evaluation, an inability or reluctance to respond, and/or an orientation to identity threat. S3 breaks the problematic silence with a filler and a laugh with which she seems to try to reduce tension. Eric does not respond to the laugh invitation (Jefferson, 1984) which may be another indicator of resistance/disagreement. Eric is forced to account for his actions and his ensuing response (10-15) is a highly mitigated (highlighted in bold) defence (highlighted in italics):

```
10  Eric                        I think the only thing I can think
11         is probably you know because I'm thinking about the time
12         and I'm worried about the timing then I'm I think I was
13         probably-
14  S3     yeah
15  Eric   wanting to kind of launch into it and-
```

Eric's inability to give a convincing defence reinforces the problematic identity instigated by S3 and the delay and mitigation he employs may be indicators that he realises he can't defend

himself against this assigned ineffectual/incompetent teacher identity. S3 then interrupts Eric's account (16) and rejects it (16-23). S3's interruption indexes power and authority and this is strengthened by her rising intonation after '*time*' and the drawn out '*o:n*' in line 18, which seem to be floor holding devices. The stress on '*delivery*' (19) also suggests that she feels she is making an important point and doesn't want to be interrupted. The modal verb '*will*' (22) indicates certainty and confidence in her opinion. Through these actions S3 performs an identity involving epistemic authority while at the same time, by rejecting Eric's account/excuse, positions him as less knowledgeable. S3 has also assumed the role of advice giver which, unlike S2 in Extract 6, is unsolicited. As well as strengthening her advisor/superior knowledge identity, this also casts Eric in the role of advice-needer. Again there are few mitigating strategies involved in these actions and S3 assumes an explicitly judgemental and critical stance.

S3 then makes another move of explicit criticism:

Extract 9

```
1    S3     because eh the (sighs) the other problem I had is it
2           wasn't just that activity that [they didn't do
3    Eric                                  [mm
4    S3     right they didn't do any of it right ↓ + from
5           [my- where I was sitting
6    Eric   [mm                                      mm
7    S3     I mean + they we:re + those who were doing it the two or
8           three who were doing [it are were boys who
9    Eric                        [mm
10   S3     could do it [anyway the REST were babbling in
11   Eric               [yeah yeah
12   S3     Arabic very quietly [+ to get the answers↓ and they
13   Eric                       [mm
14   S3     were then filling them in or they [WEREN'T filling
15   Eric                                     [mm
16   S3     them in but how did you CHECK if they had done it? Can
17          you remember? ANY of it?
```

Her challenging stance is obvious: there is a sigh (1), there is an explicit acknowledgement of a new problem and S3 confirms the previous point as problematic (1-2). This critical stance is communicated baldly with no linguistic cushioning to soften it. This is followed by silence (4) which may indicate Eric is unable to reply and/or that he is orienting to identity threat. S3's falling intonation and pause indicates a transition relevance place which suggests she expects Eric to respond. S3 breaks the silence by commenting: '*from where I was sitting*' (4-5) which

may be a modifier made in response to Eric's silence. S3 then produces a triple question: '*but how did you CHECK if they had done it? Can you remember? ANY of it*?' (16-17). This is confrontational. Eric is given no time to answer the first two questions and the stress on '*any*' in the third seems to suggest Eric's inadequacy. In addition, the use of 'hyperquestioning' i.e. repeated questioning within a turn leaving no opportunity for response, signals that the questioner considers the addressee problematic (Roberts and Sarangi, 1995). S3 is assigning Eric a problematic identity while asserting her right to ask these openly challenging questions.

S3 has again produced a critical question to which Eric must now respond:

Extract 10

```
1   Eric   em (sniffs twice) (3) e::m
2   S3     can you remember? (voice sounds further away)
3   Eric   [I think I I-
4   S3     [cos it's the same method
5   Eric   yeah I mean I think I tried to go to different groups and
6          to walk around to keep an eye on what they were doing
7          (rustling sound)
8   S3     yeah↑ (voice from a distance)
9   Eric   so I sort of felt as though they WERE + doing it
10  S3     no ↓ (clipped, falling intonation)
11  Eric   ∘ don't think so∘
```

Eric hesitates and there is a three second silence followed by another hesitation (1) all of which indicate that Eric is unable to answer. S3 prompts Eric again, pushing him for a reply (2) and as Eric starts to reply, S3's overlap seems to hint at a specific answer (4). Eric gives a response (5-6, highlighted in bold) but it is very hesitant (indicated in italics) - there is a long pause before '*doing it*' (9). His account is then rejected baldly '*no*' (10) with clipped, falling intonation clearly indicating confidence in her assessment. Eric's quiet comment in line 11 perhaps represents agreement with S3 and/or a point of concession. Eric has perhaps realised that this explanation, like the previous one in Extract 8, is so weak that rather than help him re-claim his valued identity of competent, knowledgeable teacher, it has in fact served to co-construct the disvalued identity of unaware, ineffective teacher that S3 has ascribed him.

S3 then goes on to explain why Eric's account is wrong:

Extract 11

```
1   S3     a lot of the time↓ I mean you did you walked around
2          [the groups so you
3   Eric   [mm
4   S3     were monitoring but what you monitoring and actually
5          SAYING to them + was you were telling them the TASK
6          again (1) because the instruction hadn't been clear
7          enough
8   Eric   ok
9   S3     so although your INTENT was to monitor
10  Eric   yeah
11  S3     you ended UP having to explain [to them what to do
12  Eric                                  [explain again
13  S3     (short laugh) and THEN somebody else took your attention
14         [so what was actually happening [was when you
15  Eric   [mm                             [mm
16  S3     were getting feedback ok all right guys
17  Eric   mm mm
18  S3     like when you got the feedback and they had they had the
19         question [wrong
20  Eric            [yeah
21  S3     was one student
22  Eric   ok
23  S3     almost every time they choral responses [were coming
24  Eric                                            [mm   ok
25  S3     from one boy↓
```

S3 uses few mitigating strategies. Her stance continues to be overtly critical while again projecting an identity of epistemic authority for herself: Eric was unaware of the problem but S3 could see what was '*actually happening'* (14). Like S2 in Extract 2, S3 narrates the actions from the point of view of Eric's agency and responsibility. S3's contrast between Eric's intent (9, note the stress this word carries) with what he ended up having to do (11) highlights the ineffectiveness of Eric's instructions. S3 ascribes Eric the same identity as S2: Eric is unaware of problematic instructions and of the students' resulting inability to do the activity. However, S3, unlike S2, shows little concern for Eric's face needs. S3 keeps pushing Eric for an explanation after he has conceded and has shown he is unable to defend himself. Her criticism is mostly unmitigated and although there are some orientations

to delicate talk (some hedges: 'I mean'; 'from where I was sitting', and some laughter), she flouts the established norm of mitigating criticism found across the larger data set.

In his interview, Eric said he thought S3's behaviour was aggressive:

> *It was more an interrogation than learning opportunity. [S3] was rather aggressive and like an interrogation. She dismisses my explanation with 'no' actually on several occasions.*

Eric also said that the way S3 delivered the feedback was unnecessary:

> *I think I felt her observation about modelling was fair enough and a good observation. I don't think she needed to go on at the length or tone she did. I agreed with her but she was like a dog with a bone. I said several times that I did. It's like a loop.*

In the feedback meeting, Eric's minimal responses (consisting mostly of short response tokens like 'mm') and his reluctance to speak are a manifestation of the fact that he has no plausible response to S3's criticisms. However, they may also indicate that he has become sensitive to the identities being co-constructed for him. This interpretation is supported by his interview comments. On reading these extracts, Eric identified the disvalued identity of incompetence and added the affective notion of being '*frightened*':

> *Probably I sounded sort of very incompetent in this [meeting], and useless. Or frightened. I think because she's quite critical really.*

Eric also recognised S3's claimed identity of power and superior knowledge:

> *You can tell who the senior person is and it's a lot of it about seniority, I think, and power, and 'I think this, you're wrong, basically. Whatever your explanation is, it's not as good because this is what I think.'*

S3 also picked up on the same relational identities:

> *To me, I sound patronising and maternalistic and he sounds incoherent, possibly because I went into critical mother mode and keyed right into the child in him. Or he sounds incoherent because he didn't know what I was trying to say and so he let me fill*

in the gaps for him. Either way it's painful listening. It's also clear to me that I wanted to find the words to tell him his lesson wasn't anywhere near good enough, but without hurting his feelings.

S3's mother/child metaphor highlights the power asymmetry of the identities co-constructed in the feedback meeting. S3 expressed concern about hurting Eric's feelings and described the extract as '*painful listening*'. Eric also referred to feelings of discomfort:

I just remember not enjoying, I wouldn't say I enjoyed any of this. I was sort of wanting to get out probably as quickly as possible.

Eric's comment about '*not enjoying*' the feedback session is revealing. Eric has not learned from his mistakes in the first lesson observation, despite him acknowledging the worth of S2's feedback. Here, Eric's comment focuses on the ways in which S3 delivered her criticism and how he felt, rather than the message she was trying to convey. This means that both sets of feedback, although delivered in different ways, have been ineffective: Eric has not recognised the recurrence of a basic (and therefore significant) problem in his teaching.

The feedback genre allows behaviour such as criticism, making suggestions and giving advice which might be considered face threatening (or even impolite) in other circumstances (Copland, 2011). However, it is common for these moves to be '*adorned with at least a piece or two of politeness jewellery*' (Tracy, 2008: 187). S3, however, dispenses with 'politeness jewellery' and chooses to directly challenge Eric's 'knowledgeable, experienced teacher' identity. S3 explained that the reason for this was goal achievement:

Having watched him teach, I was really disappointed to see how ineffective he was and horrified that he thought it was all okay. I was probably also very disappointed in myself, because I had hired him, and until that observation, I had assumed - because I liked him and his student feedback was always great - I had assumed that he was an effective teacher. I also am pretty sure this was a contract renewal observation and having seen how ineffective he was and listened to him fail to provide a reasonable response to questions which I thought were simple, I was becoming worried that in-house teacher training would not help him improve to the level that would enable him to renew his contract. Non-renewal of his contract would have been a personal disaster for him and a political disaster for me.

S3's concerns go beyond the situated interaction to wider concerns for both herself and Eric. S3 could have done more positive relational work and addressed Eric's identity needs, but this may have impacted on her goal of improving his teaching (and saving her own face as the manager who hired him).

5. Conclusion

The analysis above shows how identities are discursively produced. The data extracts reveal that identities are emergent (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005): they shift and change as talk unfolds. Identities are also relational (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005): a claimed identity (expert, advisor) is accomplished, in part, by ascribing a negative 'other' identity (unaware teacher, poor instruction giver, advice needer). Identities are also shown to be co-constructed: the teacher consciously (and perhaps unconsciously) co-constructs positive identities for both supervisors while at the same time co-constructing an ascribed, negative identity for himself.

Because the two data episodes feature the same teacher and the same teaching problem, this article extends previous research by adding an extra layer of analysis in the form of comparison. Both supervisors claim and ascribe the same identities for the teacher and for themselves. However, they achieve these identities in different ways: one uses a variety of politeness strategies, while the other is more direct, even aggressive. Interactants' relational work shows that (im)politeness is used as an interactional resource for the co-construction of identities (Dobs, 2014). Aggressive behaviour is used to index relational identities and politeness is used to mitigate tension arising from the non-verification of an identity claim. These processes provide empirical evidence that (im)politeness is tied to identity construction (Garcés-Conejos Blitvitch, 2013; Garcés-Conejos Blitvitch and Sifianou, 2017). The analysis above also demonstrates the warranty of supplementing local linguistic data with ethnographic detail to add insight into how talk is culturally situated within the wider network of institutional processes and goals (Copland 2011; Garcés-Conejos Blitvitch, 2013; Spencer-Oatey, 2007).

The data extracts above show that the post observation feedback meeting is an event in which teachers and supervisors articulate, construct and negotiate identities. Both supervisors featured in this article highlighted the complex and difficult nature of critical feedback in interview comments:

> *We're dealing with human beings, so if you're undermining their very being because they've been teaching so long in a way that is not satisfactory, and I've had that on a few occasions, then that's a difficult conversation* (S2).

It's excruciating listening to me struggling to find the right words to explain that [the teacher's] lesson was not up to my or the management's expectations. It was a fraught situation with a lot of things going on in my head (S3).

Although there is a body of research looking at post observation feedback talk (e.g. Copland, 2011; Farr, 2011), no previous studies have looked at how identities are negotiated during these meetings. The data featured in this article suggest that there is a need for further empirical research, especially in talk involving critical feedback, to enhance our understanding of how observers and teachers manage identities in feedback interaction. The analysis above also shows the insights gained through analysing how participants negotiate identities during situated, work-based talk. This leads me to a plea for language teacher identity research to be extended to include more analysis of institutional interaction, rather than relying so heavily on research interviews with teachers.

This study also has professional implications. Teacher educators have few institutional professional development opportunities and seldom, if ever, study aspects of their own feedback practice. All four supervisors in my original study (Donaghue, 2016) welcomed the opportunity to talk about feedback in their research interviews. They all expressed a keen interest in the results in general, and in their individual interactions, supporting Kitzinger's contention that '*practitioners value having the opportunity to watch/listen to their interactions and to reflect on performance*' (Kitzinger, 2011: 104). The post analysis discussions I had with supervisors in which we examined and discussed salient data extracts from their feedback meetings have been mutually beneficial, giving me added insight into my analysis and giving them a greater awareness of their practice. The extracts also stimulated much discussion about feedback in general and contextual difficulties, convincing me of the benefits of using discourse extracts with observers as a means of examining practice and promoting professional growth.

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Appendix: Transcription Conventions

[indicates the point of overlap onset

+   pause of up to a second

(3)   pause of a specified number of seconds

WORD	indicates a stressed word
we:ll	the::: indicates lengthening of the preceding sound
-	a single dash indicates an abrupt cut-off
↑	rising intonation, not necessarily a question
↓	falling intonation
° °	utterances between degree signs are noticeably quieter than surrounding talk
< >	speech faster than surrounding talk
(xxxx)	a stretch of unclear or unintelligible speech
(guess)	indicates transcriber doubt about a word
(*sighs*)	additional information
(*laughs*)	indicates laughter
eh, ah, um	fillers
mm/mmhm	backchanneling indicators

non-standard forms included: cos (because); yeah (yes); ok