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Feedback Talk as a Means of Creating, Ratifying and Normalising an Institutionally Valued Teacher Identity

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TITLE

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ABSTRACT

This article examines language teacher identity negotiated in situated, work-based talk. Using a linguistic ethnographic approach, micro analysis of extracts from post observation feedback between experienced teachers and supervisors is supplemented with ethnographic data. Analysis reveals that during feedback talk, one particular identity is co-constructed, ratified, and prioritized by teachers and supervisors: a teacher proficient in and enthusiastic about technology. This identity is related to a broader, macro context of government and institutional initiatives. Feedback talk operates to fashion and normalise this identity, and the repeated identity production reifies institutional priorities and helps maintain popular macro discourses favouring technology in education. The prioritised identity is realised through talk, teacher development, and teaching practice, as teachers make evident processes of learning connected to educational technology and describe using technology-related classroom activities. Teachers are complicit in co-constructing this favoured identity, showing a connection between teacher agency and broader power structures.

INTRODUCTION

Interest in language teacher identity (LTI) is growing (Barkhuizen, 2017). According to De Costa and Norton (2017), teacher identity construction involves a '*complex ecology*' (p.5) of macro (societal, political), meso (institutional), and micro (social activity) practices. This article draws on these ideas and Olsen's (2011) notion of identity as a cultural study of persons-in-practice. Against the macro backdrop of a government-led curriculum change which mandated iPads as the main teaching and learning resource in federal tertiary institutions in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), this article focuses on a specific micro-level practice of teachers and supervisors in one of the tertiary institutions. Through an analysis of post observation feedback talk, this article shows how one particular identity is repeatedly constructed and ratified in situated, work-based interaction. Analysis reveals that feedback talk serves as a means of normalising or conforming teachers to a institutionally valued identity: that of a teacher proficient in and enthusiastic about the use of technology.

This article focuses on experienced, in-service teachers, a body of professionals under-represented in LTI research. Eschewing interview and narrative methods more common in LTI, this article examines LTI negotiation during work-based talk, aligning with the view of identity as interactionally accomplished in situated practice and emergent through talk. A linguistic ethnographic (LE) framework is used to combine linguistic and ethnographic data, allowing a detailed analysis of how a particular identity emerges and coalesces through social and discursive practices within an institution.

IDENTITY

Drawing on poststructuralist perspectives of language and meaning, this article aligns with the view of identity as social (Morgan & Clarke, 2011), active (Antaki & Widdicombe, 1998;

Sarangi & Roberts, 1999a), performative (Block, 2017; Butler, 1990) and situationally emergent (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005): '*a matter of **doing** rather than **being***' (Jones, 2016, p.136, original emphasis). Identity is defined by Gee (2000) as '*being recognized as a certain "kind of person" in a given context*' (p. 99) and by Bucholtz and Hall (2005) as: '*the social positioning of self and others*' (p.586). Both definitions highlight the co-construction of identity through situated engagement with others. While teachers' identities can be constituted through their participation in concrete practices and tasks (Trent, 2014) or ways of acting, dressing, or moving (Block, 2017), this article recognises the importance of talk in forming identities. Identities emerge and develop in interaction (Benwell and Stokoe, 2006; Gee, 2000). Taking a dialogic view, Olsen (2011) adds that language acts as both a process in constituting identity and a product in which identity is made visible. Drawing on the view of identity as embedded in situated practices and achieved in interaction, this article examines identity negotiation in naturally-occurring, situated talk.

Language teacher identity and context

Within LTI research, only a limited number of empirical studies have looked at how teacher identity is shaped by institutional context. Mostly set in developing countries experiencing pedagogy reform, all highlight a relationship between teacher identities and workplace change. Tsui (2007) examined institutional and personal influences on a teacher's identity in a context of changing methodologies in an English department in China. To gain legitimate participation to the teaching community, the teacher in Tsui's study had to demonstrate competency by aligning his practice to the communicative methodologies sanctioned by the institution. Clarke (2008) emphasized the power of discourse and community in shaping identity in his description of the dynamic and context-dependent nature of novice teachers' developing identities during educational reform in the UAE. Similarly, Liu and Xu's (2011)

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research looked at how a Chinese EFL teacher had to shift her identity to align with new liberal discourses. As the teacher reinterpreted her identity in relation to what was happening in the institution, she repeatedly experienced (and tried to close) a gap between what she was expected to become (a designated identity) and how she identified herself (an actual identity). While Tsui (2007) and Liu and Xu (2011) describe teachers having to shift identities to survive imposed change in teaching methods, Trent (2014) examined early career English language teachers' attempts to introduce innovation in their schools in Hong Kong. Trent argues that this implementation allowed the teachers to position themselves (and be positioned) as particular types of teachers. Trent also suggests that the implementation of innovation can be blocked or restricted if scope for the exploration of particular identities is denied to teachers. This in turn can marginalise the identities teachers are seeking to construct.

While these studies further our understanding of the relationship between identity and context, they also highlight two important gaps in the literature. Firstly, it is significant that all involve new or early career teachers. Although experienced teachers make up most of the teaching profession, they are severely under represented in teacher identity research (Eren-Bilgen & Richards, 2015; Farrell, 2011). Instead, studies focus almost exclusively on novice or student teachers. In a recent review of LTI research, Cheung (2015) calls for '*more systematic research on the formation and negotiation of the professional identity of experienced teachers*' (p. 179). By examining the situated practice of in-service teachers, this article aims to contribute to filling this gap.

Secondly, all of the studies reviewed above use interview data. Despite a substantial body of research in medical and business contexts looking at how identities are negotiated during

institutional interaction (e.g. Antaki & Widdicombe, 1998; Sarangi & Roberts, 1999b), few researchers in the field of education (and fewer still in language teaching) have examined teacher identities as emergent in naturally occurring, work-based talk. Instead, much of the research uses interviews (e.g. Clarke, 2008; Trent, 2014) which often feature narratives (e.g. Barkhuizen, 2017). Although interviews can provide a window onto teachers' identities, few of these studies allow that interview interaction shapes as well as reveals identity (Miller et al., 2017) and as a socio-culturally loaded communicative activity, an interview can influence how participants promote themselves (Rapley, 2001). This article examines identities as they emerge in the ongoing talk during post observation feedback meetings (discussed in the next section), jointly negotiated and accomplished between colleagues. As such, it aligns with the view that the practices in which teachers routinely engage in are central to processes of identity formation.

Post observation feedback and identity

Common to teacher education courses, evaluation regimes, and peer review programs, the post observation feedback meeting takes place after an educator, mentor, supervisor, or peer has observed a teacher's lesson. Feedback meetings are a discursive space in which participants construct professional identities (Vasquez and Urzúa 2009). Despite this, I have found only three studies examining identity in feedback, all focusing on pre-service teachers.

Urzúa and Vásquez (2008) extracted occurrences of the future forms *will* and *going to* produced by novice teachers during mentoring sessions. When talking about the future, teachers simultaneously communicated an image of themselves as confident/knowledgeable/assertive and hesitant/inexperienced. Vásquez and Urzúa (2009) analysed instances of reported speech and reported mental states from mentoring and

supervisory meetings with novice teachers. Through direct reported speech, the teachers highlighted accomplishments and developing expertise, thus presenting themselves as skillfull and confident. In contrast, reports of mental states highlighted uncertainty, gaps in knowledge, or negative feelings and emotions, thereby indexing the identity of an insecure, unskilled novice.

Although Urzúa and Vásquez (2008) acknowledge the role of the mentor to be '*unquestionably essential*' (p. 1938) in constructing identity, in both studies they decided against including mentors' talk in their analysis, focusing instead on teachers' isolated speech acts. In contrast, Riordan and Farr (2015) studied face to face and online interaction between student teachers and tutors, drawing on a corpus of informal peer discussions, formal post observation feedback meetings, and online reflective blogs. During narratives, participants constructed both novice and knowledgeable teacher identities as they recounted difficulties and reported mental states and thoughts in hypothetical direct speech. These results are similar to Vásquez and Urzúa's (2009). However, Riordan and Farr's analytic method reveals the importance of an interactional partner in identity construction. Their study also shows that contextual differences such as the interactants (peers or tutors) and the formality of the interaction influences the identities constituted. They contend that both formal and informal discussions allow student teachers different ways of making sense of themselves as teachers in order to develop professionally.

METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

Background

This article features extracts from a larger data set (Donaghue, 2016) of audio recordings of post observation feedback meetings between 17 English language teachers and four

supervisors, collected over four years at a federal tertiary institution in the UAE. In the feedback meetings, various teacher identities emerged (see Donaghue, 2016) but one particular identity emerged clearly in every meeting: that of a technologically proficient teacher who valued the use of technology in language teaching. This is perhaps unsurprisingly because during the data collection period, the UAE government issued iPads to students and teachers in all federal tertiary institutions, mandated iPads as the main teaching and learning resource, and made a significant investment in support and training. This initiative, reflecting a global move towards incorporating technology in education, represented the largest adoption of mobile tablets for educational purposes in the world at the time (Gitsaki, Robby, Priest, Hamdan, & Ben-Chabane, 2013). The aim of the initiative was presented as improved student learning with proponents claiming that technology could '*transform the higher education student learning experience and post-graduate results in the UAE*' (Cavanaugh, Hargis, Munns, & Kamali, 2012, pp.2-3). It was proposed that the use of technology would promote progressive pedagogy, individualised learning, and student engagement in authentic learning opportunities (Cochran, Ben Halim, Khalil, & Gilroy, 2012). The ubiquity and dominance of one particular identity in the larger data set led me to further explore the relationship between feedback, context, and identity for this article.

Setting and participants

Study participants work in a one-year foundation program aimed at improving the English language proficiency of Arabic speaking students before they progress to English medium bachelor degree courses. The (mostly expatriate) teachers are well qualified (all have a master's degree and teaching diploma) and each has more than ten years' teaching experience. Two supervisors oversee the foundation programme (one at the women's campus, one at the men's). These supervisors' duties include carrying out annual appraisals

to determine whether teachers pass a probationary year and subsequently decide if teachers'

three-year contracts will be renewed. The appraisal includes an annual classroom observation

followed by a one-to-one feedback meeting between the observed teacher and supervisor. As

well as focusing on evaluation, this meeting also involves helping teachers to develop and

improve their practice.

Study participants were self-selected (emails were sent every semester for four years inviting

supervisors and teachers to participate). Table 1 details the original study participants. The

one-to-one meetings were audio-recorded by the participants and the researcher was not

present. All teachers except one (Eric) recorded only one meeting (Eric chose to record

three). During the data collection period two supervisors (S1 and S3) left the institution and

were replaced (by S2 and S4). The shaded teachers in Table 1 feature in the extracts chosen

for this article.

Table 1: Original participants

supervisor and teacher		supervisor and teacher		supervisor and teacher	
Supervisor 1 (S1)*	Greg	Supervisor 2 (S2)*	Aoife*	Supervisor 3 (S3)*	Eric *
	Lance		Keith*		Anisa
	Michael*		Dan		
	Eric*		Jake*	Supervisor 4* (S4)	Eric*
	Selina		Aisha		Anna
	John		Joseph*		
	Niamh*				
	Senan				
	Jim				

*Participants who also agreed to be interviewed

In every feedback meeting, the identity of a pedagogic user of technology emerged as

dominant. Teachers positioned themselves, or were positioned, at points on a continuum

between those able and those unable to claim this valued identity. The data extracts for this

article were chosen on the basis that they are 'telling cases' of teachers at different points of this continuum. Informed consent was gained to use data for publication purposes and pseudonyms are used in this article to ensure anonymity.

Data and analysis

This article uses a linguistic ethnographic approach to data collection and analysis. LE is an interpretive approach which studies local and immediate interaction embedded in wider social contexts (Copland & Creese, 2015). Audio recorded feedback meeting extracts represent the core data in this article. Talk, however, does not exist in a vacuum but is influenced and shaped by contextual details (Erickson, 2004). To help understand what is happening in talk, I supplement the linguistic data with interview data. Semi-structured interviews with all four supervisors consisted of open questions asking about their experience of observation and feedback. I also conducted participant interpretation interviews with S2, S4 and the teachers who agreed to be interviewed in which I asked them to comment on selected salient episodes from their meeting transcript. I also add knowledge gained from my working experience at the institution. I worked closely with my research participants on a daily basis for thirteen years and had an intimate knowledge of them, the workplace, and institutional processes and structures. I was closely connected to the cycle of observation and feedback by my job which involved teacher development and support. Part of this involved providing one-to-one confidential counselling and both teachers and supervisors were used to talking to me about their job, their problems, and their ongoing development and learning, which may have contributed to their openness in interviews.

Linguistic analysis of the audio-recorded feedback meetings involved a three-level examination in order to identify how identities are enacted and negotiated. Firstly, a close

engagement with the data was achieved by repeatedly listening to recordings and making

detailed transcriptions. Transcripts were then segmented into thematically bounded units and

episodes were coded according to what participants were talking about (e.g. students,

technology, lesson activities), and what participants were doing through talk (e.g. justifying,

explaining, criticising, praising). The final stage involved microanalysis of salient episodes,

looking at how participants constituted identities. This was done by conducting a fine-

grained, turn by turn, analysis to answer the following questions:

- What identities are being made relevant?

- How is the speaker claiming an identity? What linguistic devices are being used?

- How does the other participant react?

- Are identities confirmed or rejected by the other participant?

- How is this confirmation or rejection managed?

I layered onto the transcripts information gathered from interview data and notes drawn from

my knowledge of the setting and participants (see Appendix B for an example annotated

transcript).

RESULTS

Table 2 summarises this section which is structured to reflect a continuum showing teachers

able or unable to claim the institutionally valued identity.

Table 2: Featured Extracts

Extracts	Participants	Identities constructed
1, 2, 3	S1 and Greg S2 and Keith	Supervisors construct a positive valued teacher identity: a proficient, confident, creative user of technology for pedagogic purposes.
4, 5	S1 and Greg S2 and Keith	Teachers successfully claim the 'technologically proficient' identity.

6	S2 and Aoife	The supervisor positions a teacher as lacking in technological expertise.
7, 8	S3 and Eric S2 and Dan	Teachers position themselves, and are positioned by the supervisor, as moving towards the valued identity.

Supervisors creating a valued identity

Extracts 1, 2 and 3 below are representative of the larger data set which has many instances

of supervisors praising teachers' use of technology (see Donaghue, 2016). In Extract 1 the

supervisor (S1) produces a long turn in which he constructs a positive 'technologically

proficient' identity for the teacher (Greg):

Extract 1 (see Appendix A for transcription conventions)

1	S1	everything was good you had a lot of activities the technology that the
2		students were able to use I was very (.) shocked actually to say for
3		foundations em you know they were making their movie makers and they
4		were showing me the stuff they had already produced (.) em I hadn't seen
5		anyone use the macmillan online dictionary before (.) people mention it but
6		em I don't see it that often so it was good to see all the different things and
7		the hot potatoes the vocabulary cloze I remember that you created on your
8		own (.) I mean that takes a lot of time and effort tha- that stuff makes class
9		fun I mean the time flew I couldn't believe how quickly it went by

S1 catalogues the number of applications (movie maker, online dictionary, hot potatoes) used

in the lesson and highlights the teacher's skill through favourable comparison to others (4-5).

S1's realisation that students were able to use technology caused a reaction of disbelief: S1

was '*very shocked actually*' (2) that students at this level (in their foundation year) could

make movies (3). S1 uses overtly positive adjectives and expressions: '*good*' (1, 6); '*fun*' (9);

'*the time flew I couldn't believe how quickly it went by*' (9). S1 also comments on the time

and effort the teacher had invested in creating activities (8) and on the novel use of the

Macmillan online dictionary (5). Through these actions, S1 attributes to Greg the identity of a teacher using technology in an interesting, original and creative way.

Later in the same meeting with Greg, S1 reads aloud a summary he has written on an observation form (part of an appraisal document):

Extract 2

1	S1	Greg's class showed how much eh foundations are capable of if you guide
2		them in their use of technology (.) their work on the country project using
3		moviemaker was impressive Greg has built the knowledge and patience to be
4		so creative in the classroom the students enjoyed the vocabulary web quest
5		and tho- em though the vocabulary cloze an original a Greg original via hot
6		potatoes which I put here you might wanna give PD for new teachers

S1 again refers to the students' proficiency with technology, this time explicitly acknowledging Greg as responsible for fostering their '*impressive*' work (3). Greg is described as knowledgeable, patient, and creative (3-4), positive attributes all based on the use of technology. Greg's proficiency and originality with technology is such that S1 recommends he share this expertise with other teachers (6). Greg is thus ascribed a positive identity involving technological knowledge, creativity, originality and expertise and is upheld as a model for other teachers.

In Extract 3 below, a second supervisor (S2) uses the same means to construct a positive identity for the teacher (Keith):

Extract 3

1	S2	yeah so you're obviously more confident and I think it's improving all

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2		the time (0.2) the fact you're using BB9 trying out video all of that (0.5)
3		and the fact you're exploiting the technology to assist the learning
4		process not just (0.5) you know what can happen in observations (0.3)
5		it's kind of like look at this bright and shiny thing that I have and this
6		bright and shiny thing and there's no sort of link or connection between
7		what's going on but you know it was well done

Like S1, S2 describes the use of technology in positive terms: '*confident*' (1); '*improving*' (1); '*well done*' (7). S2 also comments on the pedagogical use of technology: '*you're exploiting the technology to assist the learning process*' (3-4) rather than just using '*bright and shiny*' (6) technology purely to impress an observer.

In these extracts, supervisors constitute their version of a good teacher: a proficient, confident, creative user of technology in teaching.

Successfully claiming the valued identity

The following data extracts feature Greg and Keith (the same teachers from Extracts 1, 2 and 3) positioning themselves as technologically proficient. In Extract 4, Greg explains his use of the Microsoft application OneNote. At the time of this feedback meeting recording, a small group of teachers were experimenting with this application following a series of professional development workshops on using OneNote to organise and record lesson notes and materials. OneNote later became mandatory with all teachers expected to record and keep lesson notes and materials on a shared drive. In this extract, Greg explains his idea to use OneNote to curate students' home and self-study work.

Extract 4

1	Greg	every student's got a a [homework OneNote file and eh I don't

2	S1	[mm:::::: ok
3	Greg	know let's have a look at Reem e:m she'd one of the weakest students (.) and
4		em th- they're all the same format basically
5	S1	ok
6	Greg	em reading portfolio they have to [describe (xxx) stuff here
7	S1	[right
8	Greg	so I'm not chasing a whole bunch of paper
9	S1	ok
10	Greg	e:m [(xxxx)
11	S1	[you need to show do a PD on this
12	Greg	this is their writing portfolio and again they eh they screen clip
13		[their eh writing portfolio stuff in e::h
14	S1	[a:h
15	S1	you almost need to show this to the year one teachers
16		[because they are so unprepared
17	Greg	[yeah
18		well that's what I'm doing it in 175 *(module code)* this is what I'll take to eh
19		I'll se- I'm putting this up as a template they can use it if they want to
20	S1	ok
21	Greg	I'll do it today this screen clip their Clarity Tense Buster scores their Inside
22		Reading results [in so basically eh
23	S1	[m:::::h
24	Greg	(0.2) I can I can just mow through the class looking at one thing or two things
25		just looking at that folder yeah sorry
26	S1	wow no but this is stuff that's cool

At the beginning of the extract, in an interactionally confident and powerful move, Greg takes control of the floor (his later comment '*sorry*' (25) shows recognition that he has been dominating the discussion). He also takes control of S1's computer as he starts searching a shared drive for an example file: '*Let's have a look at Reem*' (3). During this extract, Greg outlines the benefits of his system: '*I'm not chasing a whole bunch of paper*' (8), '*I can just*

mow through the class' (24). He demonstrates knowledge of technology by clicking through the program folders expertly, referring to software programs (21-22) and using a specialised vocabulary item '*screen clip'* (21). He also offers to share his idea with other teachers: '*I'm putting this up as a template they can use it if they want to'* (19). Through these actions Greg claims the identity of a teacher expert in and creative with technology. Throughout this exchange, S1's responses are either positive response tokens (2, 5, 7, 9, 14, 21, 23) or suggestions that Greg gives a professional development session about this for other teachers (11, 15). This clearly indexes an identity of expertise for Greg, strengthened by the comparison with other less knowledgeable or '*unprepared'* teachers (16). S1 ends with overt praise: '*wow ... this is stuff that's cool*' (26). Thus, S1 co-constructs and verifies Greg's claimed identity.

As Greg shows S1 his ideas for OneNote, he claims the competence valued by the institution. Interestingly, this extract shows that Greg has more confidence, knowledge and expertise than the supervisor. This expertise enables Greg to subvert a common asymmetric relationship in which the institutionally more powerful and authoritative supervisor has greater discursive rights. In Extract 4 Greg chooses the topic (while appropriating S1's computer) and has longer turns, both of which are usually the domain of the interactant with more status (Drew & Heritage, 1992).

Prior to Extract 5, the supervisor (S2) asked Keith how he thought his lesson had gone. Extract 5 is part of Keith's response:

Extract 5

1   Keith   I was really happy with how it worked although it took some hunting to

2		FIND a video
3	S2	yeah
4	Keith	u:m that didn't have words on it I specifically wanted them to come up with
5		the words [from the visual prompt I was really happy with the way
6	S2	[uhuh
7	Keith	that worked and I'm LOVING working with Blackboard nine it has S:O
8		much potential
9	S2	yeah
10	Keith	I just use it ALL the time now it's it's become a really central feature now
11		eh I love it because students are reading and responding to everybody else's
12		work
13	S2	mmhm
14	Keith	and you might remember with this particular (.) activity the students they
15		watched the visual prompt video [then they went
16	S2	[mmhm
17	Keith	off and and we linked it to I actually WROTE the text to go along with the
18		with the video and they read that as a blog entry
19	S2	yeah
20	Keith	they were actually when I checked it they were COMMENTING on it just
21		of their own accord (.) without me even ASKING them to comment so I
22		thought well that's good they're INTERESTED in it you know
23		[like I don't even have to say
24	S2	[yeah
25	Keith	listen you must write a comment
26	S2	mmhm
27	Keith	they were just be- we we'd done a little bit of work on blogs already so
28		they've already got it oh that's interesting I'll add my my two bob's worth↓
29		
30	S2	ok that's good
31	Keith	so I was really happy to see that I didn't have to PUSH it
32	S2	mmhm
33	Keith	they were naturally just interested i:n (.) in it themselves
34	S2	yeah↑

35   Keith   the blogs are d- really suitable for the kind of work that we're doing I think
36

In this long turn, Keith gives a positive evaluation of his lesson, attributing its success to the extensive use of technology (a video, Blackboard (VLE), and blogs). Keith emphasises his repeated use of technology: '*I just use [Blackboard] ALL the time now it's become a really central feature now*' (10). Like the extracts previously discussed, Keith uses positive language to talk about technology: '*I was really happy with how it worked*' (1); '*I was really happy with the way that worked*' (5-7); '*I was really happy that I didn't have to push it*' (31); '*so I thought well that's good*' (21-22). Keith becomes positively effusive at times: '*I'm LOVING working with Blackboard nine it has S:O much potential*' (7-8); '*I love it*' (11). He emphasizes his commitment to technology as he relates the effort it took to find a suitable video (1-2) and to write the blog entry (17-18). All of this enables Keith to project an identity of a teacher experienced, enthusiastic, proficient and confident with technology.

As in Extracts 1 and 2, Keith's students are also portrayed as technologically proficient. They collaborate and share work via technology (11-12). Keith emphasizes the resultant increase in student interest, motivation and independence (note the stressed words): '*they were COMMENTING on it just of their own accord … without me even ASKING them to comment*' (20-21); '*they're INTERESTED in it*' (22); '*I didn't have to push it … they were naturally just interested … in it themselves*' (31-33). This description echoes the discourses prevalent at the time in the UAE hailing technology as a means to greater student engagement (Cochran et al., 2012).

Like Greg in Extract 4, Keith positions himself as a technologically proficient and enthusiastic teacher. Keith seems to work harder at this than Greg which may indicate that

Keith is 'playing the game' and emphasizing the aspects of the lesson he knows the supervisor will value. By prioritising technology in this way, Keith is complicit in perpetuating the institutionally valued identity.

Unable to achieve the desired identity

In Extract 6, the supervisor (S2) raises the topic of technology, specifically the teacher, Aoife's, use of the Microsoft application PowerPoint in her lesson:

Extract 6

1	S2	you got into the topic by using the power point
2	Aoife	yes yeah yeah
3	S2	and how comfortable are you with power point because you seem very
4		comfortable with it
5	Aoife	well em I've made myself a bit more comfortable and on Richard Black's
6		advice I bought myself one of those gadgets which Helen has and I don't
7		know what you call it (*laughs*) em (.) um I I don't know what you call it but it
8		moves on it [moves
9	S2	[oh like a clicker
10	Aoife	a clicker yeah and so you can stand at the back of the room and
11		[move it on and i-it
12	S2	[mm
13	Aoife	Richard said he thought that would be a really good idea especially with a
14		class like that
15	S2	yeah it means you can stay amongst them [and you don't have to
16	Aoife	[mm yeah yeah
17	S2	keep going back to that [(the thing) yeah
18	Aoife	[so since I've purchased that (0.2)
19		I feel I'm em a bit more au fait with technology
20	S2	no I mean I was pleased to see it

S2 comments positively on Aoife's use of PowerPoint: '*you seem very comfortable with it*' (3-4). Although this comment looks on the surface to be a positive evaluation, it actually positions Aoife as lacking technological proficiency. In the institution, the ability to use PowerPoint was considered a basic and taken for granted skill, but Aoife has become only '*a bit more comfortable*' (5) with it. S2 knew Aoife struggled with technology and found the implementation of iPads difficult, something she talked about in an interview:

> *When we were presented with* [ipads] *that's when I panicked a lot because I felt even though I'd been teaching for 40 years, I suddenly felt de-skilled. And there was a pressure on us to sort of use the iPad every day, do things in a different way* (Extract from Aoife's interview)

S2 may have raised the topic and praised Aoife '*I was pleased to see it*' (20) to encourage her, but he may also want to stress the importance of continuing to achieve mastery of the competence required by the institution. Aoife describes her situated learning as she becomes '*a bit more au fait with technology*' (20) with the help of an expert community member (Richard Black, 5-8). However, she is still very much on the periphery, lacking expertise with the more complex and sophisticated software and applications used by Greg and Keith. In fact, Aoife became increasingly marginalised because of her continuing lack of proficiency with technology and left the institution a year after this meeting was recorded. This shows the importance of a shared repertoire (in this case technological skill) for participation and engagement in this teaching community.

Points on the continuum

In this section, data extracts show teachers who do not share Greg and Keith's privileged position as technologically proficient but neither are they positioned at the opposite end with Aoife. Instead, they occupy points between the two. Extract 7 features Eric who inches himself towards being able to claim the institutionally valued identity as he describes his growing proficiency with technology:

<u>Extract 7</u>

1	S3	it was nice to see them [using their laptop [em pens as well
2	Eric	[yeah yeah
3	S3	(which) is that something you normally have them do?
4	Eric	it's something that I s- been doing this semester
5	S3	°good°
6	Eric	em (.) I I think you know wh- I think when I came in I certainly my my first
7		em observation with Lena was that you know I it's need to make more use of
8		the technology this is like a year ago so I feel gradually you know I I've
9		finished my ICDL
10	S3	yes
11	Eric	and I'm y- ye- obviously iPads this year I feel quite comfortable with the
12		technology but there IS a [way way of
13	S3	[good
14	Eric	trying to (.) y- y- I suppose blend it into the lessons get the balance right as
15		well
16	S3	oh yes yes I mean [it shouldn't lead the class [it should be
17	Eric	[so [yeah
18	S3	it sh- should [support it and ENHANCE it
19	Eric	[yeah yeah
20		yeah so I've I've definitely and OneNote as well I fi-I've found em you know
21		in the last couple of months I'm definitely much HAPPIER with it and sc-
22		copying stuff to OneNote as well it's quite useful

Eric describes his progress as he contrasts his former self as a teacher new to the college and inexperienced with educational technology ('*when I came in'*, (6) '*a year ago*' (8)), with his current identity of a teacher using technology more confidently '*I feel quite comfortable with the technology*' (11-12). This '*gradual*' (8) journey started with advice from a previous observer (Lena, 7) who recommended that Eric needed to make more use of technology. This journey has involved time, effort, and learning, including doing a certified computer course: '*I've finished my ICDL*' (8-9) and changing his practice to incorporate more technology. Eric constructs an identity of an emergent technology user which S3 co-constructs with praise: '*good*' (5,13). Eric however doesn't have Greg and Keith's confidence and expertise. He uses modifiers with weaker adjectives, for example '*quite comfortable*' (11) and '*much happier*' (21), and describes his use of technology as fairly recent: '*this semester*' (4); '*in the last couple of months*' (21). Interestingly, Eric also refers to OneNote. In Extract 2, Greg is a confident, even creative user of the application. In this extract, Eric is still mastering it: over '*the last couple of months*' (21) he has become '*definitely much HAPPIER with it*' (21).

Eric echoes S2 in Extract 3, stressing the importance of thoughtful integration and judicious selection of technology: '*but there IS a way of trying to ... blend it into the lessons to get the balance right*' (12-14). This produces an immediate and emphatic agreement from S3: '*oh yes ... it shouldn't lead the class ... it should support it and ENHANCE it*' (16-18). Interestingly, a comment from an interview with Eric directly contradicts this sentiment:

> *I think I did a Web Quest. It was probably okay but you know I was trying to do a lesson using technology rather than trying to teach something. And again, the feeling is that's what I was expected to deliver rather than (.) technology was driving what*

happened in the classroom rather than the students or the learning needs (laughs).

(Extract from Eric's interview)

This comment suggests that Eric is 'playing the game' (Copland, 2008). From a previous observation Eric learned the value that gatekeepers place on technology:

[the previous observer] *said was that it was a very good lesson, very TEFL-y, but there was no technology and she made it very clear that at [the institution] I was expected to use more technology in the classroom.* (Extract from Eric's interview)

Eric now realises the type of lesson he should be doing for an observation:

Well obviously now it's using the iPad, so umm (laughs) you know, whether that's you know I suspect if I was to do a brilliant type of lesson, but without using the iPad, then it wouldn't really matter. (Extract from Eric's interview)

In his next observed lesson, to align with the prioritised identity, Eric deliberately displayed the 'bright and shiny thing', prioritising the use of technology over the students' needs. In the feedback meeting, however, he claims the opposite in order to reproduce the discourse favoured by gatekeepers that technology should be used to enhance learning, not be used for its own sake. Thus, Eric skillfully and deliberately moves himself closer to the institution's 'designated' (Liu and Xu, 2011) identity.

In the final extract, S2 suggests how the teacher (Dan) could have improved a speaking

activity in which the students talked about their dream house by using an animation software

called Xtranormal to create an example or model:

Extract 8

1	S2	um I've seen other teachers use xtranormal which is I don't know if you're
2		aware of?
3	Dan	mm mm (*indicating 'no'*) °sorry°
4	S2	it's a it's great it's great fun (*smile voice*) um (.) it's a website where you can
5		(0.1) it has characters that you give dialogue and it animates them
6	Dan	oh I HAVE seen that [not in English teaching but I've yes [(xxx)
7	S2	[yeah [yeah and it's you can
8		exploit it just stay away from the S and M pigs
9	Dan	[(*laughs*)
10	S2	[(xxxxxxxxxx) them in there (*laugh voice*)
11	Dan	I've heard yeah eh-
12	S2	but it's that's quite good you know you can sort of i- cos it's it's very it's still
13		very sort of you know Stephen Hawking
14		[language (*imitates computer voice*) but you can you can at least
15	Dan	[mmhm
16	S2	you know you can get one of the animals says to the other one so you know
17		what's your dream house I I would live in
18	Dan	(*laughs*) [right
19	S2	[you know that's (with the)
20	Dan	xtranormal?
21	S2	yeah with an ex eh Sarah is a whiz kid with it (.) Maureen uses it quite a lot as
22		well
23	Dan	all right↑

S2 starts by referring to other teachers who use Xtranormal and his description '*it's great it's*

great fun' (4) and smile voice show his approval of the software and its pedagogic use. Dan's

apology for not knowing about it (3) emphasizes the divide between him and '*other teachers*' (1). S2 comes back to these teachers at the end of the extract and his description of Sarah as a '*whiz kid*' (21) emphasizes her skill and expertise. S2 mentions these teachers so that Dan can ask them for help, positioning them as experts and Dan as a learner. However, S2's suggestion that Dan uses Xtranormal means that S2 knows Dan has the considerable technological expertise the program requires, probably positioning him as more technologically proficient than Eric in Extract 7.

Summary

The analysis above demonstrates the value of examining identities negotiated in situated discourse (surprisingly rare in LTI research) as it reveals how identities emerge and are co-constructed. Benwell and Stokoe (2006) contend that despite the '*enthusiastic use*' (p.34) of the term 'discourse' in identity theory, researchers often overlook the processes of identity construction: '**how** *exactly are identities discursively produced or performed?*' (p.35, original emphasis). The analysis in this section shows how feedback participants '*talk into being*' (Heritage, 1984) the identity of a skilled, enthusiastic user of educational technology. Supervisors do this by using positive language to describe classroom activities involving technology, commenting on the variety, enjoyment and interest generated by them. They make comparisons between teachers, favouring those who use technology. They recognise the teacher's role in developing technical expertise in students, and praise creativity and originality with technology as well as the time and effort involved in preparing activities involving technology. Teachers do this by demonstrating knowledge and expertise, describing students' collaborative and independent work, describing their technology related learning and professional development, and showing how they have incorporated technology into their practice.

DISCUSSION

In studies conducted by Tsui (2007) and Liu and Xu (2011), novice teachers report an identity shift to survive imposed change in teaching methods. This study extends their research in three important ways. First, by analysing situated institutional talk, this study shows identity negotiation 'live' i.e. teachers 'doing', rather than talking about, identity. This study therefore '*grasp[s] practices from the inside*' (Roberts & Sarangi, 1999, p.474) in the '*very moment of their accomplishment*' (Bourdieu, 1977, p.3). This is important because teachers (and supervisors) may not always be aware of the identities they are constituting (Farrell, 2011) or prioritising. This method also highlights the contribution of an interactional partner in identity construction (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005; Gee, 200). Second, this study involves experienced teachers and shows that they continue to build new identities throughout their career. For some this can engender confidence and acceptance, while for others this process is challenging. In addition, despite teachers having similar and extensive teaching experience, an institution can favour or marginalise individuals depending on their ability to claim a valued identity. This knowledge is important in understanding how to support in-service teachers. Third, this study provides a unique picture of a group of in-service teachers at different levels of acceptance in the teaching community according to their ability to claim the institutionally valued identity, enabling comparison between individuals.

Identity work as a normalising mechanism

The data analysed above suggest that a function of feedback in this context is conformity: identity work during feedback acts as a means by which participants absorb the actions and meanings of the community and fit themselves, or are fitted, into a particular identity mould. Data extracts show that talk during feedback creates and ratifies a particular valued identity

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and that identity work reflects, illuminates and inculcates institutional values. Feedback talk reveals teachers' understanding of themselves and their teaching practice in terms of the institutionally valued identity as they describe changing their practice to align with the values and goals of the institution. Through designing and carrying out technology-related activities with students, teachers constitute and embody the valued identity through concrete classroom practice. As teachers claim the institutionally valued identity, they also make evident prior learning and development. For example, they experiment with technology, take technology related courses, and individual experts help others to learn. In an interview, S2 painted a very positive picture of technology-related teacher development:

> *And with like the use of the tech in class, for example I was behind a lot of these annoyances or innovations, depending on which side of the fence you sit. But when you see people making good use of Blackboard or tech or the iPads (.) particularly people for whom you know it's a challenge (.) you know aren't naturally techy, that I find satisfying. It's not all down to me, but I've been behind a lot of it and it's good to see people embracing it and improving as teachers as a result.* (Extract from S2's interview)

This comment makes clear S2's influence in the push to use technology and it is obvious which *'side of the fence'* S2 sits on. For S2, it is axiomatic that good teaching involves technological expertise so it is unsurprising that S2 values a 'techy' identity. As a gatekeeper, S2 uses institutional criteria and standards which inevitably reflect favoured identities, but he also has personal prejudices and preferences which influence his assessment. His preferences influence teachers' classroom practice (or at least what they display in their observed lesson),

and their choice of what to learn and how to develop (or what learning and development they choose to highlight in the feedback meeting).

The teachers in this study have therefore internalised a 'normalising gaze' (Foucault, 1979). This 'unobtrusive but insistent' (Farrell, 2000) shaping of identities acts as a conforming mechanism, a non-coercive form of disciplinary power (Foucault, 1979), as Farrell (2000) explains:

> *Control is exercised most effectively in the workplace where work practices regulate the identity of workers rather than their actions, when work practices control how workers see themselves and experience their working lives. If this can be managed then workers can be expected to practice self and peer surveillance, forms of surveillance far more comprehensive than could be managed by more obtrusive means.* (p.18)

This article constitutes a unique and critical examination of the discursive work of post observation feedback in normalising teachers to an institutionally prioritised LTI. Through highlighting the work that feedback talk performs in positioning experienced teachers as institutionally valued or disvalued, and creating and reifying institutionally favoured identities, this article makes an original contribution to both post observation feedback and LTI research.

Teacher agency

Trent (2014) suggests that teachers can exercise agency by pursuing innovative practices which contribute to them fashioning their *'own desired professional identities'* (p.76). Miller

et al. (2017) recommend that language teacher education programs include critically reflective action projects and support networks to help teachers push against normative forces and resist social conditioning. These suggestions imply a view of agency as autonomous and deliberate action and also imply a division between agency and structure. However, the data extracts featured in this article show that in feedback talk with authority figures, teachers are complicit in and contribute to constructing and maintaining the favoured identity, perhaps both consciously and unconsciously. The co-construction of jointly negotiated identities suggests that identities desired by individuals and those promoted by agents of power can be difficult to separate. These findings question whether teachers have the freedom, desire, or awareness to construct alternative identities. Findings also intimate that it may be unrealistic to suggest teachers try to diverge from institutionally favoured identities, especially if they are mandated by managers responsible for renewing employment contracts.

Instead of exercising agency by constructing alternative identities, some of the teachers in this study astutely and deliberately claim a valued identity in order to remain a legitimate participant in the teaching community. For example, Eric's awareness of the institutional pressure to conform to a certain identity makes him actively choose to align to rather than resist the favoured identity in order to keep his job. This illustrates a considerable degree of agency which may be typical of many teachers in this situation. However, this deliberate conformity may impact negatively on teaching practice and student learning. If Eric's belief that supervisors prioritise the use of technology over students' learning needs is widely accepted (and this sentiment was echoed repeatedly by the teachers I spoke to in job-related counselling sessions), teachers may not openly pursue the position of using technology judiciously and selectively to enhance learning. This could weaken their professional

development, classroom practice, and student learning, impacting negatively on the institution.

CONCLUSION

Through analysis of data extracts from post observation feedback meetings, supplemented with interview data and participant researcher knowledge, this article shows how a particular identity is created and ratified during situated practice. Feedback talk is shown to fashion and normalise a valued identity and repeated production of this identity reifies institutional priorities and helps maintain popular macro discourses favouring technology in education. Data reveal that teachers are complicit in co-constructing the favoured identity, which raises questions about teacher agency, the identities teachers choose to claim and embody (and why), and how much scope or awareness teachers have to resist normative forces. The constructed image of what it means to be a good teacher in this context influences teachers' practice, their learning, and their professional development (and perhaps limits other practices and learning).

Data extracts highlight the co-constructed nature of identity work, demonstrating that the analysis of naturally occurring institutional interaction is an illuminating window onto LTIs. Analysis of situated talk reveals both the 'what' and the 'how' of identity work, i.e. which identities are made relevant and the processes and means by which these identities are accomplished. This article also demonstrates that combining linguistic and ethnographic data enables a detailed analysis of how particular identities emerge, coalesce, or are marginalised through social and discursive practices within an institution.

This study suggests three practical implications for teachers, supervisors, institutions, and researchers. The first is for those responsible for teacher education and development to look at post observation feedback with a critical eye to examine the influence of institutional power and expectations on teacher identity. Feedback is often construed as having the dual purpose of evaluation and development. More research is needed to establish if conformity is also a common function, as the analysis in this article suggests it might be. Secondly, institutions must become cognisant with the identities they are prioritising. One way of doing this could be for supervisors to take part in professional development activities aimed at raising awareness of the identities they are enforcing, and the kind of teaching and learning these identities promote. This could be done through guided analysis of feedback (and other institutional) talk. The final recommendation is for researchers to examine the interaction between teachers without authority figures (e.g. peer observation feedback, professional development groups or sessions) to investigate which identities emerge, whether they differ from or conform to those which are institutionally valued, and how these identities impact on professional development and classroom practice.

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APPENDIX A: Transcription conventions

[	the point of overlap onset
(0.3)	an interval between utterances (3 tenths of a second in this case)
(.)	a very short untimed pause
WORD	capitals indicates a stressed word
we:ll	lengthening of the preceding sound
↑	rising intonation, not necessarily a question
↓	falling intonation
◦ ◦	noticeably quieter than surrounding talk
(xxxx)	a stretch of unclear or unintelligible speech

(guess)   indicates transcriber doubt about a word

(*sighs*)   additional information

(*laughs*)   laughter

eh, ah, um   fillers

mm/mmhm   backchanneling indicators

non-standard forms: cos (because); yeah (yes); wanna (want to); ok

APPENDIX B: Annotated transcript (speaker names redacted)

uploaded as separate document