20. Communicating Identity in Intercultural Communication

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When studying intercultural communication, the question automatically arises of the identities through which individuals encounter each other and how this encounter can be analyzed. When an Italian and a Swedish surgeon jointly perform an operation in Zurich, their national identities are not necessarily important. What is relevant under the given circumstances is that both are surgeons, can communicate with each other, and who has more experience in performing particular surgical procedures. In order to discuss, in the second part of the article, the various procedures which set cultural categorization as relevant, in the first part the conceptualization of "identity" will be outlined.[1]

1. Social identity

The concept of *social identity* arose in social psychology and was, among others, developed by the social psychologists Henri Tajfel, Joseph Forgas and Jim Turner. Tajfel (1982: 2) defines the concept of social identity as follows:

> Social identity will be understood as that *part* of the individuals' self-concept which derives from their knowledge of their membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership.

Social identity is thus the part of an individual's self-concept that is derived from her/his knowledge of her/his membership in social groups and from the emotional significance with which this membership is endowed. Tajfel's emphasis on "part" can be understood if one considers the other part of the self-concept, 'personal' identity. The concept of this division of the 'self' into two parts goes back to the social psychologist George Herbert Mead. In his major work, *Mind, Self and Society* (1934), he developed an interactionist paradigm of identity that contains the reflexive ability of the subject to behave toward himself and toward others. Identity accordingly has two components:

i. a social component, the so-called 'me' and
ii. a personal component (also the personal, individual, subject or self) component, the 'I'

Mead thereby paved the way for the later concept of the 'social' vs. the 'personal' identity, without, however, himself using these terms. The social component of identity worked out by Mead develops through the growth of the individual into his socio-cultural surroundings and is derived from

identification with various social collectivities, such as, e.g., a family, sport association or peer group of which the individual understands himself to be a part. Social identity is thus a part of the self worked out in the socio-cultural life context. Personal identity, to the contrary, refers to the uniqueness of the individual in connection with his unmistakable life history (Hillmann 1994: 350-53) and is "something like the continuity of the I" (Habermas 1968). Krappmann (1978: 39) summarizes this dichotomy as follows:

> Obviously, identity is both simultaneously: the anticipated expectations of the other and the individual's own answers. G.H. Mead took this dual aspect of identity into account in his concept of the self, which contains a "me" that is the adopted attitudes of the other, and an "I," the individual's answer to the expectations of the others.

Although most authors usually speak of 'identity' in the singular, "each social identity is just one among many […] which each individual possesses" (Schwitalla & Streeck 1989: 237), because "the uniqueness of individuals lies in their blend of multiple social and personal identities" (Meyerhoff 1996: 215). We all take various roles in everyday life (as daughter, girlfriend, member of a sport club, etc.), affiliate with various social groups and thereby mark out a variety of social identities. Individuals construct their social identities on the basis of various socially and culturally relevant parameters, such as nationality, gender, age, profession, lifestyle, etc. (Duszak 2002: 2 and Keupp et al. 2002: 68). The concept of social identity must therefore be understood as multi-sided and very dynamic.

Today it is commonplace in social psychology to think of identity as the processual and never-ending task of each person (see Brabant, Watson and Gallois in this volume), but this was not always the case. In the older literature there were occasionally static concepts which portrayed biography and identity "as something stable, permanent and unchangeable" (Keupp et al. 2002: 22). Such approaches, which portray identity as a sort of goal to be achieved, can however not be upheld in view of empirical studies and an increasingly multi-facetted society. Already Mead (1934) pointed in his interactionist approach to the constructive and negotiated character of social identity and emphasized that identity is by no means a quantity that is set once and for all, but rather is constantly being negotiated in interaction. More recently, this important aspect has often been emphasized, thus, e.g., Duszak (2002: 2) has written, "social identities tend to be indeterminate, situational rather than permanent, dynamic and interactively constructed."

1.1. Modern Patchwork Identities

If the construction of identity, as described above, is a lifelong process, this dynamism and changeability simultaneously pose the danger of an inconsistent identity. Our modern world is marked by accelerated processes of change, greater geographic and social mobility, freedom to form attachments, the pluralization of life forms and worldviews, and progressive individualization. Thereby each individual's possible identity spectrum has considerably increased: "While earlier the development of identity was much more strongly marked by the position into which one was born, modern man is forced to choose among many possibilities, and this struggle of youth with the required choice of a self-definition is […] referred to as an identity crisis" (Oerter and Dreher 1995: 348; Baumeister 1986; Luckmann et al. 1981).

A key term in the contemporary process of finding an identity is 'possibility of choice': "modernity confronts the individual with a *complex diversity of choices* and … at the same time offers little help as to which options should be selected" (Giddens 1991: 80, emphasis added). Where previously there was little possibility of choice, today individuals face a life-world variety of experiences that on the one side frees them, but on the other side leaves them deeply insecure and partly overtaxed. Schäfers (2001: 92) points out that identity problems only arise in social systems like the present ones. Giddens (1991: 81) aptly describes this situation with the insight: "[W]e have no choice but to choose."

Certain basic, self-evident aspects of our society are put in question and shaken by new alternatives. Today there are, e.g., various models of the most important social group upon which society is based: the family. The emancipation movement brought about the possibility for the classical role models of the devoted mother and housewife and the father as family breadwinner to be challenged and revised. Certainly there are still a large number of families with traditional role assignments, but besides this, today there are also some families where the wife 'brings home the bacon' while the husband takes a parental leave of absence. In addition, there are single mothers and fathers, commuter families, homosexual couples with children, so-called 'patchwork families' that result from the founding of families after respectively terminated partnerships, etc. Family relationships are today anything but clearly defined and therefore no longer serve to the same degree as previously as stable references for identity. The family is only one area of societal life that has lost stability in the course of socio-cultural change; besides it one can name class membership, nation, professional world, religion, gender and generational relationships, sexuality and many others. Keupp et al. (2002: 87) therefore speak of the "dissolution of guarantees of coherency" and affirm that "even the core stocks of our identity constructions – national and ethnic identity, gender and body identity [have lost] their quasi-'natural' quality as guarantors of identity."

In the 1960s James Marcia, a student of Erikson, developed the identity model of his teacher, by constructing a differentiated model with four different identity states, the "identity status model" (Marcia 1966). He distinguishes among a) "achievement," i.e., an earned or developed identity, b) the "moratorium," a currently ongoing struggle with various value questions, c)

“foreclosure,” the adopted identity, mostly through the adoption of the value conceptions of the parents, and finally d) “identity diffusion,” a state in which individuals have not yet reached a firm position on values. In order to grasp a person’s current identity status, Marcia posed youthful subjects a series of questions in the frame of an “identity status interview” (concerning professions, religion, politics, etc.). His empirical studies (Marcia 1989) showed that the share of youth with diffuse identities had increased after ca. 1984 from 20% to ca. 40%. Marcia thereby offered an early proof that youth are becoming less inclined to “commit themselves to stable, binding and obligating – and in this sense identity-giving – relationships, orientations and values.” (Keupp et al. 2002: 81).

This tendency has increased in recent years. In the so-called 'fun society' of today hedonistic, media-, experience- and consumer-oriented values play a commanding role, which simultaneously entails a large number of new possible identifications. Penelope Eckert (2000: 14) describes the situation of youth in modern times as a “marketplace of identities,” and Baacke (1987) describes the life worlds of youths as “surfing between various experiential worlds.” The result of these expanded possibilities of choice are modern identities that Elkind (1990) refers to as “patchwork identities.” Such an identity is, as the metaphorical concept reveals, pieced together from individual “patches,” namely partial-identities, and possesses no unified identity core. Oerter and Dreher (1995: 354) point out that persons with patchwork identities can be very successful, but no longer fulfill “the 'classical' criteria of a worked-out, integrated identity.” In a patchwork-self, “value attitudes and customs are juxtaposed with no ties and in part contradict each other.” (ibid The classical question of identity research, namely of how the individual succeeds in achieving a consistent identity from a variety of possibilities and thereby experiences herself, despite all the differences, as not torn, but rather coherent, thus is becoming increasingly important in modern times. Keupp and other psychologists take up Elkind’s concept in a study entitled *The Patchwork of Identities in Late Modernity* and come to the conclusion that in many situations individuals by no means achieve a unified self (2002: 196). This is, however, neither possible nor necessary, since, “the constancy of the self does not consist in resolving all differences, but rather in enduring the resulting tensions and mastering constantly recurring crises.” Modern identities are thus, on the one side, marked by more possibilities, to which the virtual communities of the internet have made a not inessential contribution, and, on the other side, however, also by more uncertainties. The construction of identity in youth can therefore take the form of an “open and often chaotic process of search.” (Eckert et al. 2000: 17).

1.2. Social Categorization

Besides the so far presented complexity and changeability of social identity, the meaning of the 'other' forms the second central aspect for the constitution of the 'self'. As the initially formulated definition of social identity by Tajfel and others and the discussions above have made clear, this part of individual identity is derived from simultaneous membership in specific groups and demarcation from

other groups: the development of a person's identity must be understood as "interdependent and inter-subjective" (Keupp et al. 2002: 138). We develop our identity not in a vacuum, but rather in and through the constant comparison of the self with other individuals and groups: "Only by comparing ourselves with others can we build up our affiliations and our non-alignments" (Duszak 2002: 1). Turner (1982: 17) therefore brings the concept of social identity together with a further central concept of identity research, social categorization:

> Social identification can refer to the process of locating oneself, or another person, within a system of social categorizations or, as a noun, to any social categorization used by a person to define him- or herself and others. […] The sum total of the social identification used by a person to define him- or herself will be described as his or her *social identity*. Social categorizations define a person by systematically including them within some, and excluding them from other related categories. They state at the same time what a person is and is not.

Identity can thus only be grasped in a social context. Anyone who wants to do research on the social identities of individuals must therefore of necessity also take into account the relationships of these individuals to other persons and groups (Keupp et al. 2002: 67 , Oerter and Dreher 1995: 361, Strauss 1969: 44), for from an "anthropological perspective identity is a *relationship* and not, as everyday language supposes, an individual characteristic" (Goussiaux cited in Keupp et al. 2002: 95). Identity and alterity are inseparably bound to one another, and hence Goussiaux formulates the question of identity not as 'Who am I?', but rather as "[W]ho am I in relationship to the others, who are the others in relationship to me?". Tajfel & Forgas (1981: 124) express this relationship with the intuitive formula: "We are what we are because they are not what we are." This fundamental aspect of relationships of social identity is constantly being emphasized in identity and categorization research. Since creating affinity with or respectively demarcation from others is often achieved using linguistic means, it is especially linguistic studies that have been dedicated to these processes (recently, e.g., Duszak 2002, Hausendorf and Kesselheim 2002, Androutsopoulos and Georgakopoulou 2003). Already in 1959, Anselm Strauss asserted: "Central to any discussion of identity is language" (1969: 15). Articles with titles like: "We, They and Identity" (Sebba and Wootton 1998), "Us and Others" (Duszak 2002), and "Us and Them" (Zhou 2002) point to the fact that without the 'they' no 'we' can exist.

Representations of self and other are embedded in processes of social categorization. Already Goffman (1963: 2) linked the term social identity and the concept of social category together: "When a stranger comes into our presence, then, first appearances are likely to enable us to anticipate his

category and attributes, his '*social identity*'." He thus refers to the individual's category membership as social identity. In every interaction individuals consciously and unconsciously place themselves in relation to others and thereby perform a stranger- and self-categorization. Duszak (2002: 2) even speaks of the "impossibility of *non-othering*" (emphasis in original) and refers to social identities as the products of categorization processes "that fulfill the human needs of organizing experience for future access and use."

The concept of social categorization goes back to the sociologist Harvey Sacks. In the mid-1960s Sacks studied interaction processes, which he referred to as *social* or *membership categorization*. His *Lectures on Conversation* (and related topics from the social sciences), held in the 1960s and 1970s at the University of California, were first published by Gail Jefferson in 1992, after Sacks's death, and thereby stimulated new interest in categorization research. Sacks defines "membership categories" very broadly (but also very statically) as "known things," as units of societal knowledge.

1.3. Category Variety

There are a great variety and number of categories. Sacks (1992) refers to a small number of category collections that are applicable to everyone, such as gender, age/generation, confession, nation, etc., as basis collections. Some categories are more persistent than others: for example, individuals, other than transsexuals, usually retain their congenital biological gender for their entire lifetime, and we usually never change our nationality. Besides this, there are many categories to which people belong for only short periods of their lives. Between the ages of ca. 13 and 19 years persons belong to the age category "teenager," which, however, only constitutes a transitional stage and is followed by other age-related categories. Unlike such transitional categories, there are permanent ones which people keep for a lifetime, e.g., ethnic membership ("Asian"). In everyday life we encounter special categories that can be traced back to lifestyle preferences, as for example, heavy metal fan, environmentalist, inline-skater, and sexual preferences (heterosexual, homosexual, transvestite) and many others (Spreckels 2006).

There are categories that, without contextual knowledge, are neutral or at least can be (Portuguese, student, barber) and those whose designation can by definition contain an evaluation, thus, e.g., derogatory designations and invectives like Wog, Pollack or suck-up, idiot, slut, etc. This type of category, in which societal evaluations are anchored, are of particular interest to Jayyusi (1984) in her study *Categorization and the Moral Order*.

Often it makes a difference whether it is a matter of a self- or strangers' categorization. The category *greenie* (*Öko*), which is often named in the group communication of the girls in Spreckels's study (2006), is more of a strangers' categorization. Even if a dictionary merely refers to this short word as a 'humorous' term for a 'supporter of the ecology movement', the particular designation is

often used in a derogatory sense. Members of the category would therefore probably not categorize themselves as *greenies*. The politically incorrect word 'nigger', if used by a white, is an expression of racism, while the same word, if used by a black, is a playful adaptation of the racist expression and a consciousness profession of his ethnic origin (see chapter 18 by Reisigl in this volume). A jocular adoption of a strangers' attribution observed from outside was also studied by Schwitalla & Streeck (1989: 249) in a group of working-class youth who are viewed by adults as bothersome and unpleasant. By identifying with this strangers' attribution ("mir falle iwwerall uff" – "we stand out everywhere") they are performing an inversion of values. Categories can thus be used for discrimination, but they can also be played with.

1.4. Social categories versus social groups

It is important to differentiate between the two concepts of 'social category' and 'social group', which are sometimes used as synonymous. Sacks himself emphasizes this difference (1979: 13).

> We're dealing […] with a category. They're not groups. Most of the categories (women, old people, Negroes, Jews, teenagers, etc.) are not groups in any sense that you normally talk about groups, and yet what we have is a mass of knowledge known about every category, any member is seen as a representative of each of those categories; any person who is a case of a category is seen as a member of the category, and what's known about the category is known about them […].

Besides Sacks, other researchers point to the important distinction between groups and categories. Thus, e.g., Turner writes (1982: 169): "In general … [a] group has been conceptualized as some (usually) small collection of individuals in face-to-face relations of interaction, attraction and influence […]" and demarcates from it social categories that he, drawing on Tajfel, refers to as the result of "discontinuous divisions of the social world into distinct classes" (Turner 1982: 17).

Often it cannot be determined to what extent categories coincide with reality, for in a certain sense we only create reality through categorization (Kesselheim 2003: 72). But this is exactly where we confront the danger of social categories. Kesselheim (p. 72) points out that categories are not completely arbitrary just because they are "created," "for they must prove themselves in societal action."

Each category is related, according to the respective circle of usage, to various "category-bound activities" (Sacks 1992: 568), thus 'typical' activities for all members of the category. We expand the Sacksian concept to the term "category-bound features," proposed by Jayyusi (1984: 35),

thus category-bound characteristics that besides activities and modes of behavior also include aspects such as category-bound external appearance (clothing, hairstyle, political symbols, etc.), convictions, competencies, rights, etc.

Besides such categories, which refer back to a societal knowledge stock, there are also categories that are only understood by a narrow circle of persons (e.g., a community of practice, see Meyerhoff and Marra in this volume). Such categories that are accessible only to a limited extent arise in the frame of common experiences. Hausendorf (2000: 14) points out that making links with existing categories and creating one's own categories are often closely linked.

Tajfel (1959) has pointed out that categorization processes can occur not only inductively, but also deductively, i.e., "the assignment to a category of some attribute perceived to characterize an exemplary member." The categorization thus occurs deductively, if one knows that an individual belongs to a specific category and on the basis of this knowledge imputes to him certain 'typical' attributes. Conversely, it occurs inductively, if one assigns a person to a category on the basis of certain category-typical attributes. Both sequence directions of categorization often unavoidably include stereotyping.

1.5. Stereotyping as part of categorization

Whether we want to categorize or not: Categorization processes are unavoidable in our everyday interactions. We continually and automatically categorize our environment, i.e., we assign persons, animals or also objects to larger units in order to structure the complexity of our experiences: "There is nothing more basic than categorization to our thought, perception, action, and speech. Every time we see something as a *kind* of thing, for example, a tree, we are categorizing." (Lakoff 1987: 5) In his study *Women, Fire and Dangerous things*, George Lakoff goes even further when he asserts that, "without the ability to categorize, we could not function at all, neither in the physical world nor in our social and intellectual lives" (1987: 6). That means that we must categorize in order to make the world understandable, for categorization means simplification. But it is precisely in this simplification that we find a danger of stereotyping and thereby as a consequence the danger of developing prejudices.

Categories are often very large units that of necessity entail reducing individuals to one or a few attributes, equating them with other representatives of the category and thereby robbing them of their individuality. Such a large category as, e.g., 'women' or 'blacks' or 'Italians' makes it clear how problematic it can be to subsume individuals under a unit on the basis of an individual attribute, even though they differ from one another on the basis of countless other attributes. By categorizing we decide which attributes of persons are to be set as relevant and which are not: "The way in which things [or respectively persons] are classed together reveals, graphically as well as symbolically, the perspectives of the classifier" (Strauss 1969: 20).

Categorizations are especially problematic when persons are refused certain rights merely on the basis of their membership in a specific category, when, e.g., women receive lower salaries for the same work merely on the basis of their biological gender, or when people are treated as potential criminals on the basis of their skin color. Lakoff (1987: 85) writes in this regard: "[…social stereotypes] are used in reasoning and especially in what is called 'jumping to conclusions'. […] Stereotypes are used in certain situations to define expectations, make judgements, and draw inferences." If social categories are linked with stigmata, these are automatically transferred to each individual member. But just as categorization is unavoidable in human interactions, so is stereotyping: "it is useless to talk of trying to eradicate from the human mind the tendency to stereotype, to designate nastily, and to oversimplify," writes Anselm Strauss (1969: 21). With Lakoff, he regards this tendency, however, as typically human: "This is not to say that humans are brutish, but that they are thoroughly human" .

Harvey Sacks himself linked his concept of "category-bound activities" with that of "stereotypes" (1992: 568). With both concepts it is a matter of the generalizing ascription of behavioral modes to individuals as representatives of specific larger units. Although Sacks sees the dangers that such a generalization can entail, he emphasizes a certain value of categorizations (1992: 577). Many other scientists besides Sacks have emphasized the connection between categories and stereotypes and offered various definitions, of which a few will be briefly summarized.

Thus, e.g., Allport writes (1979: 191): "… *a stereotype is an exaggerated belief associated with a category*. […] A stereotype is not identical with a category; it is rather a fixed idea that accompanies the category" . This means that Allport also sees the proximity of both concepts, but separates them. Two other definitions of 'stereotype' neglect the concept of 'category' and instead introduce other central concepts. Schwarz and Chur (1993: 52) conceive the term "stereotype" as "a mental representation in which aspects of an area of reality are crudely generalized and strongly reduced to a few (in part not even applicable) attributes."

After a critical discussion of various approaches, Quasthoff formulates a definition that shifts the linguistic realization of stereotypes to the center of attention:

> A stereotype is the verbal expression of a conviction applied to social groups or individual persons as their members that is widespread in a given community. It has the logical form of a judgment that in an unjustifiably simplifying and generalizing way, with an emotionally valuing tendency, ascribes or denies to a class of persons certain qualities or modes of behavior. Linguistically it is describable as a sentence (1973: 28)

According to this definition, a stereotype therefore represents a verbal form of stating a conviction. Thereby the first important step was taken to making a formerly entirely social-psychological concept of stereotype for the first time understandable from a linguistic perspective. Twenty-five years later the author herself criticized her concept, however, insofar as it was presumably too static, and demanded the “dynamization of stereotype research” (Quasthoff 1998). Since she, similar to Sacks, understands “stereotypifications as components of social categorizations” (1998: 47), this more dynamic approach likewise applies to categorization research. The goal of more recent categorization research has been to work with a process-oriented concept of stereotypes that makes it possible to empirically understand stereotypes and categories with the aid of conversation analysis as interactively produced constructs.

In categorization it is always a matter of more than a pure assignment of persons to larger units and of the thereby achieved structuration, or respectively simplification, of the world. Interactants often categorize with a specific intention, which can be conversation-organizationally conditioned. Thus Sacks (1992: 40) already stated that categorization questions often appear at the beginning of a conversation, because they are suitable, as an important component of everyday knowledge, for starting conversations with strangers. Categorizations can, however, be employed beyond the discourse level for the purpose of social organization. Quasthoff (1998: 47), e.g., points out that connected with stereotypifications and social categorizations are “processes of alliance formation or respectively of the demarcation and exclusion of those present or absent.” Categorization processes thus crucially determine the social framework of a group; they are a possibility for 'social positioning' (Davies and Harré 1990; Wolf 1999). Interactants can categorize cooperatively or dissent from categorizations. The cooperative negotiation of a negatively connotated 'other category' usually leads to alliance formation against it. Simultaneously, these processes influence the interactive formation of group identity.

Kesselheim (2003: 57) names two essential lines of tradition that pursue such a more dynamic conceptualization of categorization: For one thing, he mentions the British Manchester School, which has further developed the concept from a sociological (and social-psychological) perspective. As representatives of this research approach he names, among others, Antaki, Edwards, Hester, Jayyusi, Widdicombe. On the other hand, he names linguistic work on categorization in the German-speaking countries, such as the Bielefeld “National Self- and Other Images in East-European States – Manifestations in Discourse” project and the “Communication in the City” project of the Institute for the German Language (IDS) in Mannheim (Kallmeyer 1994). From the first research strand arise concepts such as “identity-in-interaction” (Antaki & Widdicombe 1998), which, in the frame of linguistic research on social identity, has proved to be an extremely fruitful instrument.

“The student of identity must necessarily be deeply interested in interaction for it is in, and because of, face-to-face interaction that so much appraisal – of self and others – occurs,” writes Anselm Strauss (already in 1969: 44). If one wishes to study a complex phenomenon like identity with

the aid of conversation analysis as an interactively produced phenomenon, identity must be conceptualized differently than was for a long time the case in social psychology. Deppermann and Schmidt point out that earlier social scientific concepts of identity cause great problems for the empirical study of identity in conversations, because they often refer to "abstracting constitutional dimensions of identity which can not or can only in a highly rudimentary form be drawn into the study of everyday action episodes" (2003: 27). "The current concepts of identity thus seem to have too many assumptions, to be too macroscopic and too much weighted with empirically irredeemable implications to offer a foundation appropriate for the subject-matter to use in the study of everyday interactions" (2003: 28).

For this reason, ethnomethodological conversation analysis and discursive psychology (Edwards and Potter 1992; Potter and Wetherell 1987) developed an interactionist concept of identity that can be much better grasped empirically. Stuart Hall points out that identities are positions that interactants take in discourse (1996: 6). Identities are accordingly understood as everyday world resources with the help of which individuals can better position themselves. Already in 1990 Davies and Harré introduced the concept of "positioning" as a more dynamic representation of identities in conversation. They define "positioning" as "the discursive process whereby selves are located in conversations as observably and subjectively coherent participants in jointly produced story lines" (1990: 48). In conversations we assign various positions to ourselves and to others, and from them we observe and evaluate the world. "Position" appears to the authors as "the appropriate expression to talk about the discursive production of a diversity of selves" (1990: 47) and they therefore propose this term as an alternative to more static models such as that of the 'role', or Goffman's concepts of "frames" and "footing" (Goffman 1974, 1981).

Like Davies and Harré, the social psychologists Antaki and Widdicombe (1998) emphasize in their concept of 'identity-in-interaction' the importance of discourse or respectively interaction in doing research on identities. Already the title of their collection *Identities in Talk,* which gives an overview of various constructivist theories of identity, points to the discursive negotiation of identity. Widdicombe summarizes, "the important analytic question is not […] whether someone can be described in a particular way, but to show *that* and *how* this identity is made relevant or ascribed to self or others" (1998: 191). Thus it is not a matter of studying who conversational partners are in terms of their demographic data, but rather of studying locally identifiable, discursively produced identities which interactants select from a broad spectrum of possibilities and set as relevant. At the center of this new concept of identity is who or what conversational participants locally identify each other as being in the microcosm of the interaction, why and in what manner (with what linguistic means) they do this. Identity is thereby "regarded as an everyday world resource with which societal members themselves perform identity work, categorize and interpret their social world and thereby also construct their own identity" (Deppermann and Schmidt 2003: 28).

A source of orientation for identity research from a linguistic viewpoint is in addition the concept of 'acts of identity' of Le Page and Tabouret-Keller (1985), which up to the present has been widely received. This approach, developed in the frame of (socio-linguistic) Creole research, regards linguistic practice as 'acts of identity' and thereby produces the important connection between speech variation and identity (P. Eckert 2000). According to this, individuals adopt linguistic patterns as an expression of their identification with specific reference groups. Youths can thus express their membership in specific youth cultural groups and scenes by employing the appropriate vocabulary. In a newer study, Auer and Dirim (2003) show how non-Turkish youth perform various 'acts of identity' by acquiring Turkish.

2. Communicating identity in intercultural encounters

Intercultural scenarios have a variety of effects on the communication of identity. Ethnic and national identities can be set as relevant simply because the way a behavioral mode is marked by culture first becomes clear in a foreign culture. Whereas, for example, for many Germans punctuality represents an inconspicuous aspect of normality, in a foreign cultural context it suddenly becomes a characteristic of one’s own 'being German'. Besides that, there is the influence of specific national stereotypes that belong to active knowledge stocks. The ethno-comedies that are currently popular in some Western countries play with the knowledge of such stereotypes by humorously exaggerating them (Kotthoff 2004).

Many identity categories are interwoven in their cultural typification. Thereby the space-time scope of the categories is in each case hard to determine. What is regarded today as the typical manner of a young woman lawyer from Munich will not differ in many contexts from that of a woman lawyer in London, Stockholm or Chicago. Gender, class, profession, age, and style influence each other and together with nationality and ethnicity produce a context-dependent type. The young urban professionals who serve as an example here can show their individual identity through a specific styling as more or less fashion-conscious, more or less status-conscious and much more. In Russia such a woman will possibly be immediately identified as coming from the West. Wearing low-heeled shoes and not using much makeup can, for example, become symbolic difference markers for this type of woman, indices of a cultural membership that is not in a strict sense national. West-East could become a flexible demarcation line for the female yuppie. Such habitus phenomena of clothing and body presentation are sometimes divested of their status as normality in the foreign culture. Something that does not attract attention at home suddenly indicates elsewhere cultural difference. The space in which normalities go unchallenged can range from a close 'community of practice' to diffuse communities with comparable consumption habits, lifestyles, attitudes and values (e.g. 'Asian cultures' or 'the West').

In this section we wish to go into the communication of national and ethnic identity. Language plays a role in the attribution of ethnic and national identity. As was pointed out in the first part of this chapter, we do not view identity as something constructed through institutions, individuals and 'discourse' within an 'imagined community', but as situated in the life world. In many sciences, national identity is utilized as a category for causal and/or variable analysis, often generating important statistical data for various policy requirements and institutional actors. As Hester and Housley (2002: 2) point out, the emergence of national identities has been located within important social and economic transformations, developments and historical fissures. They regard the work of Billig (1995) on the everyday routines and practices of 'banal nationalism' as the most notable attempt to move beyond the theoretical matrix surrounding the social reproduction of nationalism and identity. The two authors also recommend Bechhofer, McCrone, Kiely and Steward (1999) as a study which investigated national identity among Scottish landowners and the Scottish cultural elite. Bechhofer et al. (1999: 530) state:

> It is relatively straightforward to argue that national identities are not essentially fixed or given. This is usually taken to mean that such identities are open to manipulation, most obviously by the state and its institutions so that people come to think of themselves as ‘nationals’ in a fairly unproblematic way […] Our argument, on the other hand, is that national identities depend critically on the claims which people themselves make in different contexts at different times. But the processes of identity work rest not simply on the claims made, but on how such claims are received, that is validated or rejected by significant others.

Nationality and ethnicity can overlap. Often there are political disputes about which ethnic group can imagine itself as bearing the state. Right-wing circles often avail themselves of such slogans as 'France for the French' and thereby contribute to the marginalization of immigrants (see chapter 18 by Reisigl in this volume).

Below we attempt to further illuminate a few linguistic and non-linguistic forms of communicating cultural identity and alterity.

2.1. Formations of 'us' and 'them' by national identity categorization

Koole and Hanson (2002) examine the display and use of national identity categories in classroom interaction in the Netherlands. 'Moroccan' is the teacher’s membership categorization (outlined above), which is challenged by the pupils. The teacher adopts the position of a knowledgeable actor in

discussions of topics from the everyday experience of her students. Koole and Hanson in particular show how the teacher employs the national identity category 'Moroccan' in a deterministic, deductive manner. In response, Moroccan students challenge not so much the national identity category as such, but its meaning in terms of category-bound activities. They also show how difficult it can be for a teacher to participate successfully in the student-centered approach that is advocated for multi-ethnic classes today. The interactional practices and competencies required for such participation appear to be largely incompatible with the teacher's acting as the one who knows (2002: 212). The authors show in detailed transcriptions that even when all participants recognize a category such as 'Moroccan', this does not imply that they agree on all the attributes of this category. In one lesson, the class discusses the practice of bathing and taking showers, and the teacher claims that, in contrast to Dutch children, Moroccan and Turkish children are taught that boys and girls should do this separately. A Moroccan girl challenges the teacher's category predicate that Moroccan boys and girls never bathe together. She tells about her family in which she (seven years old) had a bath together with her eight year old brother. The teacher sets her counter-example apart as an exception to the rule. Her family is more liberal.

In another case (2002: 221), the teacher works with a category that links wearing headscarves to religion. This category knowledge allows the teacher to select an answer from the children that is in line with her knowledge, and to neglect answers ("we wear them at home") that are potentially, or actually, not in agreement with this knowledge. She seems to aim at having her category knowledge confirmed, rather than at having the students relate their experiences with headscarf practices, as the authors discuss. Teachers such as the one presented by Koole and Hanson have often been trained from a transfer perspective and have received their education from knowledge-transferring teachers, not from a construction model of learning and education. The authors conclude that they faced a problem of interactional competence in the school environment (see chapter 16 by Scherr in this volume).

2.2. Formations of "us" and "them" by communicative style

Communicative style (see chapter 9 by Kotthoff in this volume) is another possibility to index and/or symbolize a certain social identity. There are many studies of how young people in urban settings use vernacular, linguistic creativity, playfulness, polyphony, and bricolage as resources for "acts of identity" (Le Page and Tabouret-Keller 1985, Irvine 2001). Distinctive patterns of bilingual speech among adolescents frequently make use of stylized immigrant speech varieties that function as group consolidating resources (Androutsopoulos and Georgakopoulou 2003). In contemporary multi-ethnic urban environments 'language crossing' can be observed, i.e. the use of minority languages or language varieties which do not belong to the speaker, e.g. German youths using English or Turkish (Auer and Dirim 2003), Anglo youths using varieties of Jamaican Creole in England or African-American

vernacular English in the USA (Rampton 1995, Cutler 1999). As an interactional practice, language crossing foregrounds ethnic group relations and at least partially challenges traditional conceptions of ethnicity.

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For more see the article

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