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HERNÁNDEZ FAJARDO, JEIMY LIZETH

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# Discourse and Identity: Features of Language Classroom Interaction\*

JEIMY LIZETH HERNÁNDEZ FAJARDO\*\*

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\*\* Jeimy Hernández is a full-time professor at Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia. She holds a postgraduate degree in Educational Management and is member of ENLETAWA (Enriching Language Teaching Awareness) research group. correo electrónico: jeimy.hernandezfajardo@gmail.com  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7267-6438>

## **Abstract**

Identity is a continuous process linked to social interaction, in which language and social experiences play an important role (Mead, 1934). The objective of this study was to analyze how the foreign language teacher shapes and builds her professional identity in the classroom interaction. For this, Conversation Analysis (CA) was carried out and the interactive features on which communication is supported in the classroom were identified and interpreted. A twenty-minute English class was recorded, three minutes of it transcribed, and five extracts analyzed. The results showed the interaction characteristics: repair, question and answer system (questioning), and the use of non-verbal communication. The analysis of interaction features allowed to conclude that, according to the proposed theory, the construction of the teacher's professional identity is a process in continuous transformation. Transformation that takes place in the classroom interaction and is perceptible through the change in the habitual actions that occur when interacting or when the teacher executes new actions as a product of this interaction.

**Keywords:** identity, classroom interaction, conversation analysis.

## **Discurso e identidad: características de la integración lingüística en el aula**

### **Resumen**

La identidad es un proceso continuo que está ligado a la interacción social, en la cual la lengua y las experiencias sociales juegan un rol importante (Mead, 1934). El objetivo de este estudio fue analizar cómo el profesor de lengua extranjera moldea y construye su identidad profesional en la interacción dentro del aula. Para esto, se implementó el análisis de la conversación (AC) y se identificaron e interpretaron los rasgos interactivos sobre los cuales se soporta la comunicación en el aula. Se grabó una clase de inglés de veinte minutos, se transcribieron tres minutos de esta y se analizaron cinco extractos. Los resultados evidenciaron características propias de la interacción: reparación, sistema de preguntas y respuestas (questioning) y el uso de comunicación no verbal. El análisis de estas características de la interacción permitió concluir que, acorde con la teoría propuesta, la construcción de la identidad profesional del docente es un proceso en continua transformación. Transformación que tiene lugar en la interacción dentro del salón de clase y es perceptible a través del cambio en las acciones habituales que ocurren al interactuar o en la ejecución de nuevas acciones por el docente, como producto de la interacción.

**Palabras clave:** identidad, interacción dentro del aula, análisis de la conversación.

## Discours et identité: traits caractéristiques de l'interaction dans la classe de langues

### Résumé

L'identité est un processus continu lié à l'interaction sociale dans laquelle la langue et les expériences sociales jouent un rôle important (Mead, 1934). L'objectif de cette **étude** est celui d'analyser la manière dont l'enseignant de langues **étrangères** façonne et construit son identité professionnelle dans l'interaction dans la classe. Pour ce faire, une analyse de conversation (AC) a **été** mise en **œuvre** et les traits interactifs sur lesquels la communication s'appuie en classe ont **été** identifiés et interprétés. Un cours d'anglais de 20 minutes a **été** enregistré, 3 minutes ont **été** transcrites et cinq extraits en ont **été** analysés. Les résultats ont montré les caractéristiques de l'interaction, à savoir: réparation, jeu question-réponse et emploi de la communication non verbale. L'analyse du déroulement de ces caractéristiques de l'interaction qui, ayant eu lieu dans la salle de classe, a permis de conclure que, selon la théorie proposée, la construction de l'identité professionnelle de l'enseignant est un processus en transformation continue, laquelle transformation se déroule au cours de l'interaction dans la classe, mise en **évidence** au travers la mutation des actions habituelles qui se produisent lors de l'interaction ou dans l'engagement habituel de nouvelles actions envisagées par l'enseignant, **conséquence** de la dite interaction.

**Mots clés:** identité, interaction dans la classe, analyse de la conversation.

Discurso e identidade: características da interação da sala de aula de língua

### Resumo

A identidade é um processo contínuo que está ligado à interação social no qual a linguagem e as experiências sociais desempenham um papel importante (Mead, 1934). O objetivo deste estudo foi analisar como o professor de língua estrangeira molda e constrói sua identidade profissional na interação em sala de aula. Para isso, foi implementada a análise de conversação (CA) e identificados e interpretados os recursos interativos nos quais a comunicação é apoiada em sala de aula. Uma aula de inglês de 20 minutos foi gravada, 3 minutos dela foram transcritos e cinco trechos foram analisados. Os resultados evidenciaram características da interação: reparo, sistema de perguntas e respostas (questionamento) e uso da comunicação não verbal; A análise do desenvolvimento dessas características da interação permitiu concluir que, segundo a teoria proposta, a construção da identidade profissional do professor é um processo em contínua transformação e que essa transformação se dá na interação em sala de aula, perceptível através da mudança nas ações habituais que ocorrem ao interagir ou na incursão habitual de novas ações consideradas pelo professor, produto da interação.

**Palavras-chave:** Identidade, interação em sala de aula, análise da conversa.

## **Introduction**

Over the years, research on identity increasingly focuses on sociocultural, linguistic, anthropological, discourse analysis, and social-psychology elements (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). Furthermore, as Mead (1934) stated, identity is a continuous process that is linked to the social interaction in which the language and the social experiences play an important role. This identity construction process constantly changes, as Connelly and Clandinin (1999) affirm, identity is more a sociocultural relationship and phenomenon that occurs in contexts of discourse interaction, rather than an isolated thought presented individually in people's minds, this is how these authors define identity as the social positioning of oneself and the other.

Based on the previous theoretical frameworks, professional experience is determined by pedagogical practices, particularly by those which take place through interaction in a classroom setting. A specific question concerning the identity building process, particularly with reference to the professional identity of teachers, comes up: how is this process of continuous change and construction evidenced through professional experience? This paper aimed to identify the main features of interaction in a classroom setting and define how they influence the process of professional identity construction in teachers. In doing so, it contributes to establish an empirical approach for the behavioral description of said process, thus evidencing theoretical approaches about this phenomenon.

## **Theoretical Considerations**

### **Discourse and Identity**

Discourse is a popular concept that is used in many ways which leads easily to a confusion. Discourse usually means actual instances of communicative action in the medium of language, although some define this term as a "meaningful symbolic behavior" (Blommaert, 2005, p.2). Wodak and Van Dijk (2000) explain it as a communicative event that is used to share ideas or beliefs, which means that it is a verbal interaction act. Foucault (1980) defines discourse as a certain way of speaking, that regulates what is sayable or unsayable, what counts as a meaningful or meaningless statement. The research carried out by De Fina (2018) points out that human communication is about exchanging information, doing things, expressing feelings and emotions, but also, in a crucial way, it is about transmitting to each other what type of people we are, what geographical or social community we live in, or where we are in relation to ethical, moral, and even political aspects. Although we use language to transmit a perception or image of ourselves, we also use it to identify, classify and judge others. From these and many other ways, language and discourse are essential to construct and negotiate identity.

All these concepts, ideas and contributions are a preamble to what this study wants to reveal in terms of interaction inside the classroom. So, it is necessary to know what happens in the classroom and how important classroom talk is. It is

important to highlight that, mostly through language and discourse, teacher's identity is constructed, maintained, and negotiated (Gee, 1996; MacLure, 1993).

### **Teacher's Identity**

The construction of teachers' identity is influenced by culture, environment, social contexts and experiences, among others, besides, it is stated that these identities change over and over again, they are not constant. Just as anyone can change their views or perceptions of something, someone or oneself, so can teachers. They are not an exception. Traditionally, the cognition about a specific topic is a relevant part in the teacher's professional knowledge. Until few decades ago, most of the people believed that knowledge of the subject matter was enough to be a good teacher (Hoyle & John, 1995). Nowadays, that belief has changed because the complexity of teaching is not recognized and the teacher's new conceptions, such as the teacher as a classroom administrator or learning facilitator, etc., because teaching is more than transmitting knowledge (Beijaard et al., 2000). Something important in this way of thinking is the understanding of the multiplicity of our lives (Clandinin et al., 2009) since they are made up of multiple facets and elements that make each person someone with different and special characteristics.

Teachers' experiences that they have lived in front of their work group, involving their own aspects that at the same time contribute to their particular way of teaching, constructing in an unconscious way, their own professional identity. Bearing in mind all the above, important aspects that make up the professional identity of a foreign language teacher will be explored next.

### **Language Teacher's Identity**

An aspect that involves teachers in regard to their practices is the time they take to explain a new topic when teaching a foreign language. Foreign languages teachers tend to control the class, and their talk extends more than the talk of a teacher that explains a topic in their mother tongue; as it is mentioned, teachers in a foreign language (FL) environment tend to control the way their class flows. Teachers manage the process of asking questions, pre-allocating turns and maintaining the topics during the classroom interaction; equally, students normally respond to the teacher's questions. These kinds of behaviors presented in the language classroom interaction regarding roles, power, and language choice, help to portray an interpretation of what makes a language teacher (Fajardo, 2013). Another aspect that involves the language teacher's identity is the way they restrict or allow learners' interaction (Ellis, 1998), thus, they control both, the topic conversation and turn-taking, since the teacher is the one who orchestrates the interaction and controls the content and the procedures of the learning process.

According to Walsh (2013), the habitual ways of speaking could help to construct identities for teachers in the classroom since identities are shaped by how that person uses words and content. An example of those patterns and features of

classroom interaction that emerge from classroom discourse is display questions which people ask to see if the person they are speaking to knows the answer. In an FL classroom, this normally means questions teachers ask learners to see if they understand or remember something. Display questions can be compared to referential questions, which are questions people ask because they do not know the answer and demand more information and thought for generating longer responses (Brown, 2001). Additionally, the repair is found, this is another relevant interactional feature to mention since it is the way the participants manage the communication issues. Seedhouse (2004) defines repair as “the treatment of trouble occurring in interactive language use” (p. 34), that means, any problematic issue presented in the interaction. It is important to highlight that as all languages, they are a potential source of trouble for participants and therefore repairable (Skuse, 2012). Repair could be done in four different ways (Liddicoat, 2007):

- self-initiated/ self-repaired: the speaker of the repairable item both indicates a problem in the talk and resolves the problem;
- self-initiated/other repair: the speaker of the repairable item indicates a problem in the talk, but the recipient resolves the problem;
- other initiated/self-repaired: the recipient of the repairable item indicates a problem in the talk and the speaker resolves the problem;
- other initiated/other repaired: the recipient of the repairable item both indicate a problem in the talk and resolves the problem.

Liddicoat (2007) also believed that repair is designed to tackle the problem as quickly as possible, for this, different *positions of repair* might be identified which are locations relative to the trouble source. Having this information in mind, it is important to say that mostly, repair is done by the teacher based on teacher’s perception about the topic or pedagogy.

On the other hand, it is relevant to remark nonverbal communication as an interactional feature. It is only a part of the total process of communication, however nonverbal cues may play an important role since they have a great impact on the teaching-learning process success. Bambaeroo and Shokrpour (2017) show in their research how non-verbal communication is highly reliable in the communication process, so if the recipient of a message falls between two contradictory verbal and non-verbal messages, logic dictates that we push them towards the non-verbal message and ask them to pay more to non-verbal messages because non-verbal cues frequently reveal the intention of the sender of the information and reflect their reactions. It was found that the more teachers used verbal and non-verbal communication, the more effective students learning process and progress.

This overview of the topics mentioned above, shows the importance of classroom talk and its respective analysis to discover many different aspects that

teachers display without being conscious of what they are doing, shaping in this way their professional identity.

## Methodology

*Conversation Analysis* (CA) focuses on language as social action; according to Sacks (1979), CA is an approach that focuses its attention on social interaction and every day speaking interaction. These statements give the idea that CA centers on the intention for saying what it is said instead of the aspects that describe the speakers themselves (knowledge or behavior), turning natural situations into the necessary evidence to inform about what really occurs behind the talk. Every detail is potentially relevant; that is the reason why CA is used for analyzing interaction processes such as the consequence of one type of action to what happens next within interaction, and why CA prefers to work in situations where everything flows in a spontaneous way to see deeply what is really happening and what the interactions in the conversations are. Bearing this in mind, CA is the prevailing key in the analysis of the data gathered to interpret the natural conversation inside the classroom and see how different interactional implications shape and construct the professional identity of the teacher.

In order to analyze the dynamic of talk-in-interaction with its variations, a 20-minutes English class was video-recorded as a data gathering technique; from that video, almost 3 minutes were transcribed, and 5 extracts were analyzed, being these extracts, the instrument used for analyzing the data gathered through the transcription system adapted from Van Lier (1988b) and Johnson (1995):

T	Teacher
S	Student
↑↓	Marked shifts into higher and lower pitch in the turn
[	Point of overlap onset
]	Point of the overlap termination
(0.2)	Interval between utterances (in seconds)
##	Description on nonverbal actions
:::	Lengthening of the preceding sound.

Conversational analysis (CA) was applied as the research methodology for analyzing and interpreting the data, which means that the data was initially transcribed without unmotivated looking, then, once the transcription was achieved, the researcher decided to move into some extracts that revealed some issues in the classroom discourse.



## Setting

This study was carried out in a private institution in Tunja, Boyacá, Colombia, where a one-to-one private English class was the focus chosen to analyze what talk-in-interaction reveals. The student was about 12 years old. It is important to highlight that the context and environment for this class seemed to be comfortable for both, student and teacher.

## Research Question

How does a language teacher shape and construct professional identity in classroom interaction?

## Data Analysis and Discussion

After video recording, transcribing and selecting the extracts, data was analyzed in order to give an explanation of what was found by the researcher in the following lines

This first extract takes place at the beginning of an English class when the teacher starts the topic about animals.

- |    |  |      |
|----|--|------|
| 01 | T: Ok ↓ let's continue with our lesson about the animals [ the animals at the zoo. |      |
| 02 | S:   | [yes |
| 03 | T: Ok ↓ Do you remember the video that we saw the last (0.2) session ↑             |      |
| 04 | S: yes   |      |
| 05 | T: the video (0.2) about the animals   |      |
| 06 | S: yes   |      |

The extract begins in turn 1 when the teacher starts the conversation with precision using a discourse marker (**ok**); in this case, the word “**ok**” does not have an interactive function, it is more a word that the teacher uses to impose herself in front of the student and make sure she could manage the class environment and be empowered to start the class. Once she gets students' attention, she introduces the topic with a statement (**let's continue with our lesson about the animals**) that reveals that the topic was previously taught.

In turn 2, it is noticed that the student overlaps the previous talk with the intention of letting the teacher know that she is following her, understanding what the teacher is saying. In turn 3, once again teacher uses the word “**ok**” which could be in this case a way to give feedback to the student based on her previous intervention to



So, to repair what the student was about to say, in turn 11, it is seen that the teacher identified the problem and decided to repair it, producing here a repair type: other initiated/other repaired (**turns 10 and 11**). Also, it can be seen in this turn that the teacher uses extra help, and adopts an affiliative repairable form by means of a strategy she considers will help the student to understand better the question asked by using her fingers and counting (*[ you know one, two, three [ ten, twenty ((##using her fingers##))*). In turn 12, the strategy used by the teacher in the previous turn worked well because of the overlapping made by the student (*[ ah:::!*), pleasing the teacher and letting her know that she knows now the answer; so in turn 13, it is seen how student right away gives the right answer (*Five!*), producing here another type of repair which is other initiated/self-repaired; right here it can be seen how the dynamics of social action works since the turns are complementing each other showing us what occurs in the previous talk that complements the next one producing a successful interaction.

This case focused on the influence that *repairing* has in teacher's talk. Moreover, it is seen how repairing is an important aspect that characterizes the teacher, being herself the one who initiates and carries out the repairing of the trouble source. This aspect is the way the participants manage the communication issues (Seedhouse, 2004) and it is important to mention it since the repair is mostly done by her, based on her perception about the topic or pedagogy, on what she considers is more relevant to adjust during the classroom talk. Here, the teacher keeps constantly incorporating the repair as a pedagogical strategy to clarify doubts. On the other hand, it is seen that this teacher uses different pedagogical resources to make herself understandable and turns to gestures and signs to reinforce her explanation. This can be considered as part of her identity as a teacher because it is inferred by this, she is the kind of teacher that helps, explains, reinforces, and does not go ahead until making sure her students understand completely. Studies previously made, show how communication involves both verbal and non-verbal language, and how these aspects contribute highly to interaction. As some researchers remarked, it is also necessary to interpret patterns of life, like social actions and social construction of life in classrooms through language. This in particular refers to discourse norms, expectations and strategies that participants create through their daily interactions (Rashid, 2014).

The next extract (3) focused on repairing aspects and the great effects they have in classroom interaction:

- |    |  |
|----|--|
| 30 | S: its eyes is big   |
| 31 | T: its eyes are [ because it has two eyes ((##showing the number<br>with her fingers##)) |
| 32 | S: [are =  |
| 33 | T: the eyes are. It's plural   |

34           The eyes ↑

35           S: it's plural

In turn 30, it is evident a trouble source (*its eyes is big*) and it is identified by the teacher (turn 31). It is noticed that the student does not realize what the problem is, which is a situation that leads the teacher in turn 31 to initiate a repair (*its eyes are*), producing here a type of repair (other initiated/other repaired) and in addition to this, she gives an extra explanation (*because it has two eyes*) in order to make the student understand the main purpose of her explanation which is to correct the mistake the student was making. Besides, it could be said here there is a first position repair because the source of the problem in turn 30 was repaired in the next turn (turn 31). Moreover, from the transcription of the extract, in turn 31, the role of the gestures made by the teacher, when she reinforces her explanation by showing the number with her fingers, confirm the repair once again. This last aspect in particular gave a hint of the kind of teacher she is because she uses her pedagogical resources to make herself understood. This can be considered as part of her identity as a teacher because it could be inferred by this, she is the kind of teacher that helps, explains, reinforces the topic. Then, in turn 32, it is seen how the repair of the teacher had a big effect on the student in terms of social actions since in this turn the student incorporates what was repaired (*are =* ). Also, in this turn it is noticed that the student identifies and assimilates the mistake, and although the teacher does not point out specifically the word “*are*” to repair the mistake, the student does identify the source of the problem and incorporates the repair in her turn (32). On the other hand, in terms of identity, it is relevant to highlight that the student knows that the teacher is the one who knows the topic, and if teacher repairs something while interacting is because the teacher is correct, so the student in this turn recognizes the role of the teacher, that is the reason why she affiliates with the teacher’s repair. In turn 33, it can be observed that the teacher keeps incorporating the repair as a pedagogical strategy to clarify doubts (*the eyes are. It’s plural*), but without being pleased with this situation, in turn 34 it is identified a clarification request made by the teacher (*the eyes are* ↑ ). It is noticed a sequence of the repair that is repeated because despite the fact the problem was tackled in the previous turns, the teacher keeps incorporating the repair, that is called extended repair or reconfiguration of repair because the teacher not completely satisfied to have pointed out the mistake, explained it or made the student incorporate the repair in her interaction, she keeps insisting with it. Finally, in turn 35, it is observed that there is so much ascription in terms of identity that it is no longer enough to know that the problem was “*are*”, but now the student also assimilates all the teacher’s pedagogical movements because the situation went from being “*are*” explained, understood and incorporated, but now the student wants to reaffirm the extra information given by the teacher (*it’s plural*), showing us now all the rebound effect that the repair has in language interaction. To summarize, it can be seen how repair is the way the participants manage their communication issues.

Going deeply regarding interaction, it is found that this is a teacher that focuses more on the quality of the communication rather than the quality of interaction since she chose first the quality of the language in use. It is seen the identity of a language teacher that wants to fully accomplish with all the grammar rules because she understands that her role as a teacher seems to be more closely to promoting a pedagogical movement that allows her first of all to tackle a specific problem instead of opening a space for more meaningful interaction. Even if the student could answer with a perfect pronunciation, what it is really important in this part is to intercept the problem found and repair it. This allows to question if this teacher turns to unique traditional elements that describes her professional identity since she knows she has been prepared and knows deeply the subject matter and the knowledge of this topic proves she is a good teacher (Hoyle & John, 1995).

Looking over at the following extracts (4 and 5), pedagogical aspects instead of interactional ones are revealed.

- |    |    |   |
|----|----|---|
| 42 | T: | and the ears↑ what happen with the ears ↑             |
| 43 | S: | ears big  |
| 44 | T: | the ears:::↑  |
| 45 | S: | am big  |
| 46 | T: | the ears::: ↑   |
| 47 | S: | is big  |
| 48 | T: | is::: ↓ because:::((showing the student two fingers)) |
| 49 | S: | is because b[ig                                       |
| 50 | T: | [no::: what are you saying ↑ = the ears are<br>big    |
| 51 | S: | are big   |

In turn 42, there is an intervention of the teacher asking for specific information using a referential question since she wants the student to give longer information to describe what they are talking (*and the ears↑ what happen with the ears ↑*), as it is seen, the second part of the question formulated in turn 42, more than providing information to the student, this element wants to reassert a pedagogical concept; since the first part of the question is already clear and understandable, what the teachers really wants with the second part is to try to help the student focalize what she needs to achieve. This second element is so effective that it evidently manages to channel the student's response, as seen in turn 43 (***ears big***). This second element has a pedagogical purpose that the teacher imposes before having an interactive purpose or establishing communication; this occurs particularly in the classroom and goes

hand in hand with learning the language. Because although the teacher first tries to obtain longer information as it is seen in turn 42, she fails, due to the student's response (43). But what the teacher does is to give information in such a way that it helps the student to respond to what she wants to hear, since she is the authority; and this attempt is so successful, that it occurs repetitively in the classroom because beyond having communication, there are pedagogical intentions different from what is elicited in interaction and communication. All of this is an interactive movement that the teacher gives to help the student grasp what she wants. At the end, there is an answer from the student, an answer that although is grammatically misplaced, is a suitable answer for the question in terms of interaction and communication. In turn 43, even though the student answered the question, it is seen that the student answers the question with a word order mistake (*ears big*); due to this, the teacher in turn 44, not being completely pleased with the student's answer, decides to reorganize the question with the intention of letting the student know that is making a mistake and must correct it (*the ears::* ↑). In turn 45, the student understands the teacher's desire and continues giving an answer that she thinks is correct (*am big*), but once again she fails, to which in turn 46, the teacher uses the same question with a higher intonation (*the ears::::* ↑), trying this time to give feedback with this question, letting the student know once again that she is making a mistake, even if it is a different mistake; there is a great effort from the teacher for repairing what is wrong, that is the reason why she uses different strategies such as re-stating the questions or using different voice intonation, producing here a repair type named other-initiated/other-repaired. It is also seen that from the first time the teacher reorganized the question in turn 44 and then in turn 46, there is not extra information in the way the teacher asks the questions (*the ears::* ↑), thus, this could be one of the reasons the student gives a wrong answer since she does not realize which one is the mistake and what the teacher wants her to correct.

In turn 47, the student tries with other possible answer (*is big*) but it is again incorrect, so the teacher in the next turn (48), first, repeats the student's answer with a low intonation to make her hesitate of her answer and then turns to a common strategy when teaching: body language, showing the student two fingers, while saying the word "*because*". Here, the teacher tries to help the student understand better the situation, showing with her fingers a possible hint for the student to correctly answer the question. Evidently, the teacher gets the student to be engaged with the communication, even though the student knows there is a problem of meaning and proper use of the language. It is also seen that the teacher tries to reorganize and paraphrase the sentence, using once again a pedagogical movement (*is::* ↓ *because::(showing the student two fingers)*) because probably the "stretching" seen in the turn makes the student understand that there is something wrong. Because, even though the communicative goal is achieved by the student, what it seems more important is to achieve a pedagogical goal; this is probably one of the reasons why the student provides a not strong answer in terms of communication, she gives an answer that hardly meets the requirements, instead, it is strong in terms of the demand for pedagogy in the classroom. And evidently, the communicative load is

lost because there is an interest in focusing on the language. It can be noticed all the movements that the teacher has, to achieve “a repair”, because there is a problem in the middle of the interaction, and it cannot be missed. On the other hand, the student also gives some movements trying to reach and satisfy the teacher’s demands more in pedagogical terms than in communicative terms. All of these interactive maneuvers depicted in this excerpt were done trying to solve a problem that had been going on for 5 turns, and the entire interactive load was concentrated on repairing rather than interacting.

The extract shows that in turn 49 the student knows something is wrong, so she decides to incorporate the word “*because*” (*is because b[ig]*) previously said by the teacher, trying in this way to please the teacher because she is aware that the teacher is the authority and the one who has the knowledge and capacity to teach, and it is seen also the student’s identity and the role she is taking in that conversation. One more time, it is evident a mistake, so here the teacher in turn 50, interrupts in a disaffiliate way what the students is saying; in this part it is shown the teacher is reacting to the student’s incorrect answer when saying “*[no:: what are you saying ↑]*”, with a nonstandard tone and expressing frustration, giving feedback and letting the student know she keeps making mistakes and what she is saying to the moment is completely wrong. Then, in the same turn, the teacher gives the student the only answer she wants to listen to: “*= the ears are big*”. Finally, in turn 51, the student repeats what the teacher previously said, pleasing her. It is noticed along this extract that the teacher’s pedagogy seems to be based on grammar accuracy more than in setting real interaction opportunities since it is evident that teacher wants to hear the correct answer from the student, even though she knows the student is struggling with the answer. Here, it is seen that the teacher wants desperately to make the student realize what the mistakes are, using different strategies that let notice how the teacher’s identity is, supporting the idea that knowledge of the subject matter is enough to be a good teacher (Hoyle & John, 1995).

56. T: OK, now↓, what was the:: (er) smallest animal that you saw in that video
57. S: the small animal is[ the::
58. T: [ the smallest
59. S: The smallest animal is ((inaudible))
60. T: (0.3) the rabbit ↑ ok ↓

Extract 5 begins in turn 56 with a discourse marker “OK” followed by the word “now↓”; these are used to hold the floor so that the student may be focused on what the teacher is about to ask, as a way to keep in touch with the student, and to check if the student is following her. It could also be a way to express that it is time to move on other kinds of questions related to the topic, and that the mistakes made in previous

turns are put behind. Then, when she says “OK, now↓,” it is followed by a sample of adjacency pair initiated by the teacher with a referential question that requires an answer from the student (*what was the:: (er) smallest animal that you saw in that video*). Firstly, with this question, the teacher aims to sustain interaction, so she continues to ask questions in order to keep the conversation going. Nonetheless, it is also found that the teacher hesitates in the kind of question she is about to ask, maybe due to she does not know what else to ask at that point, or because she does not know if the student could answer correctly.

In turn 57, it is seen that the student understands the question and knows what the teacher wants, because she incorporates the words used previously by her teacher, to form a long answer in the answer she is giving. However, in doing so, she makes a mistake (*the **small** animal is[ the:::)*). The teacher then, in turn 58 interrupts her student which is disaffiliate, and proceeds to immediately repair the mistake, being worried once more for grammar mistakes, instead of seeing the progress that the student is making in terms of interaction. The student knows once again that her teacher is correcting her, so she accepts the repair and incorporates it successfully in the next turn (59). In turn 60, the teacher gives feedback to the student by repeating the answer given in the previous turn ((0.3) *the rabbit* ↑ *ok* ↓), letting the student know somehow with this repetition, that she was correct. Then, the teacher concludes the turn by saying “ok” and tells her student that it is time to continue with the conversation.

An important aspect to highlight along extracts 4 and 5 is the big influence that questions have in teacher’s talk, primarily referential questions which are questions you ask because you do not know the answer and demand more information and thought for generating longer responses (Brown, 2001). These kinds of questions along the extracts are very common since the teacher used them constantly as a strategy for managing her class, thus, re-direct what is need it during the interaction. It is noticed, these kinds of questions allow the teacher to analyze the situation and decide when to stop or keep asking them to advance in the conversation. So, it should be very crucial for teachers to study their use of language and student’s language in the classroom and take into account some strategies suggested by Walsh (2013): improving questioning, making the classroom more communicative, improving interaction decision making and finally dealing with reticence in order to improve classroom interaction.

It is important to analyze deeply what happens inside the classroom interaction for teachers to discover what could go wrong within the discourse so they can reflect on this to change their points of view and look for better ways to improve; for instance, to ask appropriate questions so as to increase the learner’s involvement, encouraging them to participate and interact. In terms of language knowledge and identity, this teacher can show that her main purpose as a language teacher is to be focus on the linguistic code rather than the interactive power that communication can arise in the classroom; as Nunan (1987) stated, interaction is controlled by the teacher. Bearing these important aspects in mind, different things could be concluded, first, identity



plays an important role being this a facilitator in classroom talk, even though identity is constructed by classroom talk instead of classroom talk being constructed and shaped by identity (Beijaard et al., 2000). And second, which makes a contrast to the previous aspects mentioned in the theory, it is hard to change teachers' perceptions about their knowledge and how they teach a class, because these kinds of beliefs or ideas cannot be solved just through analyzing their interaction in class; it is necessary to go deeper in understanding how their experiences, and professional talk-in-interaction issues affect somehow (positively or negatively) to the language teaching-learning process.

## Conclusion

Conversation Analysis (CA) was the methodology applied whereby it was possible to define three features of the interaction within the classroom (repair, questioning: question and answer system, and non-verbal communication). The analysis of said features showcased how interaction within the classroom may be the cornerstone from which teachers could be able to shape and construct their own professional identity. That is to say, as language classroom interaction features were being developed, it became clear that the teacher would model her actions and, depending on students' reaction, change her behavior accordingly which is a clear example of a pedagogical change that came to be as the natural outcome of an interaction process. With that in mind, it is possible that features of language classroom interaction can help understand not only the professional identity of teachers, but also how they are shaped and constructed through classroom interaction; as pointed by Beijaard *et al.* (2000), identity is constructed by classroom talk instead of classroom talk being constructed and shaped by identity.

Conversation Analysis was an appropriate methodology for the description of the interaction that takes place within the classroom; this description allowed to answer the research question and fulfill the general objective of the study, since the analysis of the interactional features generated an approach to the process of construction of the language teacher professional identity within the classroom where the results of the research allowed to establish a coherence of the empirical evidence with the theoretical approaches by confirming that said process takes place in the interaction.

Being aware of classroom developments, can lead teachers not only to effectively enhance their professional domain and the teaching-learning process experience, but also to discover how to create awareness of their professional practices, reflect upon their role as language teachers in the classroom, and how their professional practices can positively or negatively affect their students.

## Final Thoughts

Based on the findings, certain features that characterize the professional identity of the teacher are revealed; taking into account said results and contrasting them to the theory, other questions and appreciations arise, allowing constant reflection towards the analysis and construction of the teacher's professional identity.

For instance, one may wonder what would happen if, in the classroom setting, a language teacher instead of overemphasizing on the knowledge of language use, create opportunities for a much more authentic communication in terms of interaction. Would this lead us to more convenient forms of pedagogy for teaching the language? Is the vision the teacher has about their own professional identity controlling what should or should not be taught, based on their cognitive and pedagogical perception? Does that vision remain stable or could it change over the time? Similarly, it is important to highlight that teachers, as it is already known, are subject to different contexts that force them to resort to changes that, in turn, cause teacher's professional identity to shift. However, the question remains: which are the circumstances that produce these meaningful shifts or how often should they occur to change or reaffirm the teacher's professional identity?

As previously stated, identity changes and feeds itself constantly, based on current and previous experiences and on context among other factors. That being said, it is frequently encountered features of stable or monolithic identities which are difficult to modify due to the fact that those features that form their identity are based on their own cognitive and pedagogical conceptions. This issue in turn, makes us think up to what point those identities have already been established and if they could be transformed. As years go by, it has become evident that the making of a teacher's identity is greatly influenced by both education and cognitive and pedagogical processes. Considering that, what would be the role of education in a teacher's professional practice? Could education be a part in the pursuit of exploration in professional development processes? Understanding professional development as everything a teacher does after finishing undergraduate studies (courses, Master's degree, job experience, etc.), how can it contribute to the teacher's development?

When taking a look at the training process of a teacher, many questions arise: what would the role of the faculty of education be in said training, and which part of the curricula could be reformulated to aid future professional development? How does academic background prepare teachers to know what is best for them when defining their professional identity?

All these unanswered questions, which emerge from this research, encompass important elements that could give way to progress in the construction of identities, seen from an educational perspective. This inquiring process could in turn, lead to reflection and a state of permanent rethinking of teachers' professional identity, so as to allow a shift in their own vision or conception of self-identity, derived from their own questioning about their professional, investigative, cognitive and even emotional practices.

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