CONSTRUCTION OF PERSONAL IDENTITY THROUGH LINGUISTIC DEVICE:
AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL LINGUISTICS ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study aims to explore the crucial role of language in constructing and expressing individual and group identities across diverse social and cultural contexts in Vietnam. This study integrates theoretical frameworks from Gee's work on discourse and identity, and Bucholtz and Hall's principles on the linguistic construction of identity.

Methods: The study employs a mixed-methods approach combining ethnographic observations, in-depth interviews, and discourse analysis to gain deep insights into the complex interplay between linguistic practices and identity formation processes.

Results: The key findings reveal that language serves as a powerful tool for constructing multifaceted identities, with linguistic choices functioning as identity markers, enabling the expression of group membership, the establishment of boundaries, and the negotiation of power relations within and across communities. These findings provide deep insights into understanding the role of language in shaping identities in Vietnam.

Discussion: The study has practical applications in developing comprehensive, equitable, and culturally-sensitive language resources, educational strategies, and language policies to recognize and value the linguistic diversity of multilingual communities.

Keywords: Language, Identity, Identity Construction, Identity Negotiation, Linguistic Practices.

CONSTRUÇÃO DE IDENTIDADE PESSOAL ATRAVÉS DO DISPOSITIVO LINGUÍSTICO: UMA ANÁLISE LINGUÍSTICA ANTROPOLOGIAL

RESUMO

Objectivo: Este estudo visa explorar o papel crucial da linguagem na construção e expressão de identidades individuais e de grupo em diversos contextos sociais e culturais no Vietname. Este estudo integra referenciais teóricos do trabalho de Gee sobre discurso e identidade e os princípios de Bucholtz e Hall sobre a construção linguística da identidade.

Métodos: O estudo emprega uma abordagem de métodos mistos que combina observações etnográficas, entrevistas aprofundadas e análise de discurso para obter insights profundos sobre a complexa interação entre práticas linguísticas e processos de formação de identidade.

Resultados: As principais conclusões revelam que a linguagem serve como uma ferramenta poderosa para a construção de identidades multifacetadas, com as escolhas linguísticas funcionando como marcadores de identidade, permitindo a expressão da pertença a um grupo, o estabelecimento de fronteiras e a negociação de relações de poder dentro e entre comunidades. Estas descobertas fornecem insights profundos sobre a compreensão do papel da linguagem na formação de identidades no Vietname.

Discussão: O estudo tem aplicações práticas no desenvolvimento de recursos linguísticos abrangentes, equitativos e culturalmente sensíveis, estratégias educacionais e políticas linguísticas para reconhecer e valorizar a diversidade linguística de comunidades multilíngues.

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INTRODUCTION

Language plays an instrumental role in constructing and negotiating individual and group identities across diverse social and cultural contexts in Vietnam. As speakers from various backgrounds interact and navigate their sense of self in an increasingly interconnected society, comprehending the intricate interplay between linguistic practices and identity formation has become paramount (Gee, 2022; Bucholtz & Hall, 2021; Pavlenko, 2021). Therefore, the study of the current issue holds significance in illuminating the complex reciprocal relationship between linguistic choices and identity processes. The study can provide valuable insights into the assertion of identities, establishment of group boundaries, and negotiation of power dynamics within and across communities by examining how individuals and communities use language as identity markers (Mendoza-Denton, 2021; Pavlenko, 2021; Wei, 2022).
Previous studies have delved into identity formation in multilingual milieus (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004; Pavlenko, 2021), language's role in shaping identities among youth and minority groups (Mendoza-Denton, 2008, 2021), and digital spaces' influence on language and identity negotiation (Darvin & Norton, 2022; Norton, 2013). These investigations have unveiled how linguistic practices contribute to identity construction, expression of group membership, and navigation of social dynamics. Within Vietnam, researchers have explored identity formation in educational contexts (e.g., Nguyen, 2018), language's role in developing ethnic and regional identities (e.g., Tran, 2021), globalization and language contact's impact on identity negotiation (e.g., Vu, 2022), and the linguistic construction of gender identities (e.g., Pham, 2020). However, these studies have primarily focused on specific communities or domains, leaving a gap in understanding language's broader roles across diverse settings.

While previous research has made valuable contributions, these studies have predominantly concentrated on particular communities or contexts, leaving a void in our comprehension of the overarching roles language plays in identity construction and negotiation across various social and cultural realms within Vietnam (Bucholtz & Hall, 2021; Gee, 2022; Pavlenko, 2021). Therefore, we need to conduct further research using a mixed-methods approach to comprehensively examine how language influences identity construction and negotiation in various Vietnamese contexts. Exploring linguistic practices across educational, professional, and digital spheres can provide insights into the intricate interplay between language, identity processes, and sociocultural factors.

In order to bridge the above-mentioned research gap as well as satisfy the set purpose, the study looks for answers to the following questions:

How do Vietnamese speakers use language choices and practices to create, express, and navigate their complex identities in a variety of social and cultural contexts?

How does language function in the Vietnamese setting to help communicate group membership, set borders, and manage power relations within and between communities?

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The study of language and identity has a rich theoretical background, drawing from diverse disciplines and scholars. Gee (1996: 131) introduced the concept of discourse as a socially accepted association among ways of using language, other symbolic expressions, and
artefacts of thinking, feeling, believing, valuing, and acting. This laid the groundwork for understanding how language usage shapes identities. Bucholtz and Hall (2005) further advanced the field, outlining principles for analyzing the linguistic construction of identity, such as Emergence, Positionality, and Indexicality. Their later book, Linguistic identity across contexts (Bucholtz & Hall, 2021), explored how identities are negotiated across diverse settings. Researchers have also examined identity and language learning in multilingual contexts. Pavlenko and Blackledge's (2004) and Pavlenko's (2021) explored the complexities of identity negotiation through language choices. Pavlenko (2021:4) asserted that interlocutors negotiate identities on a situational basis using both linguistic and non-linguistic semiotic means.

The role of language in identity development among youth and minority groups has been explored by Mendoza-Denton, who highlighted how linguistic practices contribute to the construction of identities within marginalized communities. Digital spaces have also been recognized as influential in shaping identities, as discussed in Darvin and Norton (2022). They argued that digital technologies have created new spaces for identity construction, negotiation, and resistance (Darvin and Norton 2022: 2). Moreover, researchers like Preece (2016, 2020) and Wei (2011, 2022) have explored the intersections of language, identity, and belonging, offering insights into the sociocultural factors influencing identity formation processes, such as ethnicity, gender, and social class. Wei (2022: 1) noted, language and identity are inextricably linked, and our identities are constantly being negotiated and renegotiated through our linguistic practices. This rich theoretical background, encompassing works from scholars like Gee, Bucholtz, Hall, Pavlenko, Mendoza-Denton, Darvin, Norton, Preece, Wei, and others, provides a comprehensive lens for analyzing the roles of language in constructing and negotiating identities across diverse social and cultural contexts.

2.2 ANTHROPOLOGICAL LINGUISTICS

Anthropological linguistics studies language and culture, emphasizing how language both reflects and develops cultural practices, beliefs, and social systems. It takes a comprehensive approach, understanding the complex interactions between language practices and sociocultural environments through ethnographic techniques and discourse analysis. One of the foundational works in this area is Hyme's (1974) ethnographic approach. It established the concept of ethnography in communication, emphasizing the importance of examining language in its cultural context. Hymes stated that the study of language must be grounded in
the study of its use within the patterned contexts of situations (Hyme, 1974: 4). Another remarkable scholar is William Labov (1970), a prominent academic known for his innovative studies on linguistic variety and change. Language is a social phenomenon, and linguistic patterns must be understood in relation to the social patterns that they express, according to Labov, who emphasized the importance of studying language within its social and cultural milieu (Labov, 1970: 7). Gumperz's (1982) work has greatly enhanced our understanding of interactional sociolinguistics and how language shapes social connections and identities. Gumperz underscored the significance of contextual analysis, asserting that the contexts and ways of speaking in which an utterance occurs, in addition to the literal meaning of the words employed, determine its meaning (Gumperz, 1982: 1).

Woolard (2022) has made significant contributions to the field's advancement in the twenty-first century. Woolard examines the various ways that language and culture interact, emphasizing the value of looking at linguistic processes in the context of their sociocultural settings. According to Woolard (2022:3), the intertwining of language and culture is complex and multifaceted, necessitating a holistic approach that takes into account their dynamic interplay.

2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

This study explores the role of language in constructing and negotiating identities in Vietnam, integrating Gee's Discourse and Identity work and Bucholtz and Hall's principles on linguistic construction. The research aims to understand how individuals and communities use language to express and negotiate identities in various domains, including education, workplaces, and online platforms. The study contributes to understanding the complex interplay between language, identity, and sociocultural dynamics, ultimately informing policies and linguistic resources for inclusive identity expression.

2.3.1 Gee's groundbreaking work on discourse and identity

Gee’s work has been a seminal contribution to the fields of sociolinguistics and discourse analysis. This theoretical framework provides a comprehensive lens to examine the intricate relationships between language, social practices, and the construction of identities, making it widely applicable for analyzing various topics. Central to Gee's framework is the distinction between Discourses (with a capital D) and discourses (with a lowercase d).
Discourses encompass ways of being, thinking, valuing, and behaving that are socially recognized and associated with particular groups, communities, or institutions. Discourse, on the other hand, refers to the actual linguistic elements employed in specific contexts and situations.

Gee's conceptualization of identity is a key aspect of this framework. Gee perceives identities as dynamic and multifaceted constructs, negotiated and constructed through language and social interactions within discourses. Closely related is the notion of social languages, which are varieties of language used by different social groups or communities, reflecting their unique identities, values, and practices. Furthermore, Gee emphasizes the importance of situated meanings, highlighting how words and phrases take on specific meanings within particular discourses and contexts. This notion is complemented by the concept of intertextuality, which recognizes that texts and utterances are interconnected with other texts and discourses, creating a web of interconnected meanings.

2.3.2 Bucholtz and Hall’s principles on the linguistic construction of identity

Bucholtz and Hall's (2005) principles on the linguistic construction of identity provide a valuable framework for analyzing the role of language in shaping and expressing identities. Discourse analysis and sociolinguistic studies widely use this theoretical approach because it provides insights into how individuals and groups construct, negotiate, and present their identities through linguistic choices and interactions. A central tenet of this framework is the idea that identities are discursive constructs, not fixed or predetermined but actively constructed and negotiated through language use and social interactions. Bucholtz and Hall's notion of subject positions highlights how individuals occupy various positions within discourses, influencing their linguistic choices and identity expressions. Furthermore, the principle of performativity emphasizes that identities are not merely represented but actively performed and constituted through language and social interactions. The concept of indexicality is also crucial, as it recognizes that language use and linguistic choices can index or point to specific identities, ideologies, and social meanings. Bucholtz and Hall's framework acknowledges the interconnectedness of discourses and identities through the principle of interdiscursivity, which suggests that discourses and identities draw upon and reference other discourses and identities. Moreover, Bucholtz and Hall's principles recognize that the construction and expression of identities are context-dependent, shaped by specific social, cultural, and institutional contexts.
3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 RESEARCH METHODS

A mixed-methods approach is used in the research to combine qualitative and quantitative techniques in order to provide a thorough knowledge of the intricate interactions between language practices and identity development processes.

Qualitative methods: These techniques are applied to investigate how language usage and identity expression are shaped by subtleties and contextual circumstances.

- **Ethnographic observations** include researchers immersing themselves in a range of social and cultural contexts (such as public areas, workplaces, and universities) in order to record and observe how language is used to create and express identities in everyday situations;

- **In-depth interviews**: Semi-structured interviews are carried out with speakers from various backgrounds in order to acquire an understanding of their viewpoints, experiences, and the underlying reasons behind the language choices and identity construction they make;

- **Quantitative methods**: These techniques help to detect correlations, patterns, and trends in the data and offer an alternative viewpoint to the qualitative conclusions. They consist of:
  
  Discourse analysis examines how language is used to create and negotiate identities by methodically analyzing linguistic patterns and characteristics in a variety of texts and speech samples.

The data gathering techniques used for each methodology are compiled in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methods</th>
<th>Qualitative</th>
<th>Quantitative</th>
<th>Research Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethnographic observations</td>
<td>Fieldnotes, audio/video recordings</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Question 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-depth interviews</td>
<td>Interview transcripts</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Question 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discourse analysis</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Text/speech samples</td>
<td>Question 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.2 DATA COLLECTION

Various data gathering strategies were utilized in order to gain a thorough grasp of the intricate relationship between language practices and identity formation processes in Vietnam. The methods and procedures utilized to compile a vast and varied dataset are described in the following steps.

3.2.1 Step 1: Ethnographic observations

The researchers conducted their research in a range of social and cultural contexts, such as public spaces (markets, parks), workplaces (offices, factories), and educational establishments (universities, schools). In order to monitor spontaneous language use and contextual variables that can affect identity construction, researchers recorded audio and video recordings during these observations and took thorough field notes.

3.2.2 Step 2: In-depth interviews

To acquire a deeper understanding of the viewpoints, experiences, and underlying motives guiding language choices and identity building, semi-structured in-depth interviews were carried out with participants hailing from a variety of backgrounds. To ensure the validity of the participants' answers, these interviews were videotaped and subsequently verbatim transcribed.

3.2.3 Step 3: Discourse analysis

A wide range of written and spoken samples, including recorded conversations, academic papers, corporate documents, social media posts, and public presentations, were gathered by academics in order to objectively analyze language patterns and trends. The samples used were deliberately chosen to reflect different settings and domains where language and identity meet.
3.3 DATA ANALYSIS

Gee's discourse and identity framework and Bucholtz and Hall's linguistic development of identities principles serve as the frameworks for the systematic approach that the data analysis procedure takes. The steps involved in the analysis are as follows:

3.3.1 Step 1: Examine language choices within particular discourses

Using Gee's theory, the analysis looks at the subsequent ways that language choices within particular discourses influence identities:
   a. Code-switching practices;
   b. Register negotiation strategies;
   c. Conversational models;
   d. Power dynamics.

3.3.2 Step 2: Analyze the principles of identity construction

The examination looks at the emergent, positional, and indexical aspects of constructing a personal identity employing the framework of Bucholtz and Hall's linguistic formation of identity concepts:
   a. Emergent principles: How identities arise through dynamic language use in social interactions;
   b. Positional principles: How identities are formed through the stances and positions taken by speakers in interactions;
   c. Indexical principles: How linguistic forms index or signal specific identities, ideologies, and social meanings.

3.3.3 Step 3: Integrate findings from both frameworks

A thorough grasp of how language choices, discursive practices, and contextual factors interact in the construction and negotiation of personal identities is provided by the analysis, which incorporates the insights from Gee's discourse and identity framework (Step 1) and Bucholtz and Hall's principles (Step 2).
4 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 LANGUAGE CHOICES WITHIN PARTICULAR DISCOURSES

This section examines the deliberate use of language strategies by Vietnamese speakers to create and convey their complex identities in a range of social circumstances. It explores two main phenomena: register negotiation, which is the process of changing one's linguistic style to fit the communication context, and code-switching, which is the alternation between languages or dialects by speakers. Through the analysis of these behaviors, the study reveals that language choices may function as potent markers of identity, empower people to proclaim their ethnic pride, draw borders within groups, and negotiate intricate social processes. The approach offers priceless insights into the complex interactions that exist between language practices and the processes of identity development.

4.1.1 Code-switching as an identity marker

Code-switching is a linguistic phenomenon in which Vietnamese speakers tend to switch between their native language and several foreign or second languages they have acquired in a single speech or conversation. This is common in multilingual contexts and serves as a powerful identity identifier for multilingual speakers. The primary competence of code-switching is the ability to blend various languages fluently and frequently within a single sentence or conversational turn. The results show that the speakers in the three settings are considered multilingual speakers because, beside their Vietnamese mother tongues, they simultaneously utilize several foreign languages, including English, Chinese, Japanese, etc. Furthermore, they often switch between their native languages and other languages in their daily conversations because they have unlimited access to a wide range of linguistic repertoires and materials. Eventually, this linguistic phenomenon will bring them great convenience, allowing them to communicate complex ideas, bridge cultural divides, and articulate their diverse identities with authenticity and complexity.

Accordingly, language is a potent instrument that modifies our views, communicates our inner ideas, and creates cross-cutting relationships. Every language variation serves as a tribute to the tremendous diversity that exists in our world. It is a tapestry woven with cultural, identity, and personal experiences. Therefore, language users may create detailed self-portraits that encapsulate their essence by using language as a canvas and brush for identity formation.
At this point, code-switching is a distinctive example that allows speakers to move between languages, express their identities, and establish connections with people from similar backgrounds.

To illustrate this point, the following conversation between a professor and his student in setting 1 is a case in point, in which both use code-switching in their conversation.

(1) Professor: Okay class, today we'll discuss the concept of l'identité in postmodern literature. Can someone define l'identité for us? Yes, Nguyen?
Nguyen: L'identité refers to one's sense of self or identity.

In this example, both the professor and his student use the code-switching strategy between English and French. By doing this, they demonstrate their knowledge of the scholarly discourse when using the French phrase "l'identité," but they use English to give a more subtle explanation, perhaps to make sure they understand. The student may exhibit their knowledge and negotiate their many language identities by code-switching while staying connected to their cultural heritage.

Table 2 summarizes the results of personal identities expressed through the use of the code-switching strategy in communication by Vietnamese speakers in three settings. These results are quantitatively collected from the interviews through the levels of agreement or disagreement with the expression of personal identities.

Table 2
Linguistic strategies for code-switching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code-switching</th>
<th>Setting 1</th>
<th>Setting 2</th>
<th>Setting 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University</td>
<td>Workplace</td>
<td>Public Places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethic affirmation</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linguistic demonstration</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural boundaries</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linguistic communitive ties</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>275%</td>
<td>209%</td>
<td>148%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 reveals that code-switching is a common strategy for multilingual students and academics to demonstrate language proficiency and reaffirm cultural identities. In the workplace, code-switching occurs at a rate of 209%, primarily due to language community links and cultural borders. This highlights the need to manage cultural subtleties and foster a sense of community among coworkers with similar language backgrounds. Public spaces show a lower frequency of code-switching (148%), possibly due to the casual nature of interactions.
However, code-switching remains relevant for establishing group connections and claiming one's identity, even in informal settings. It is also used for ethnic affirmation (40%) and cultural boundary marking (43%). The data suggests that code-switching is a contextually adaptive behavior, with the specific communication needs and sociocultural dynamics of each situation influencing its functions and frequency.

From another aspect, the results from the observations made in three contexts show the frequency and volume of code-switching across several linguistic units (words, phrases, and sentences). Table 3 gives a comparative summary of the applications of code-switching in different situations.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code-switching</th>
<th>Setting 1 (University)</th>
<th>Setting 2 (Workplace)</th>
<th>Setting 3 (Public Places)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Words</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phrases</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentences</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 shows that code-switching is a highly contextual and dynamic phenomenon of language use, with patterns and manifestations that alter dramatically between various communication settings. In public spaces, it is more common at the word level, but less common at the sentence level. In academic contexts, code-switching is common due to the need to combine technical terminology from other languages, such as English, while in public settings like metropolitan markets, speakers occasionally use foreign words or phrases to indicate meanings or aid in conversation. Moreover, the study emphasizes the need for context-sensitive and subtle strategies when researching code-switching activities for language scholars and linguists. Investigating the many forms and purposes of code-switching within specific social, cultural, and institutional settings is crucial, rather than interpreting it as a monolithic phenomenon.

In sum, code-switching is evaluated as a powerful tool for Vietnamese speakers to strategically construct group borders, and proclaim their complex identities in various settings. Through this linguistic trait, linguists and language researchers can learn about how language choices reflect and affect power relations, ideologies, and sociocultural realities by examining the contextual elements that influence code-switching habits. This knowledge can help create more inclusive and culturally sensitive language resources, educational strategies, and policies while recognizing and valuing the varied linguistic repertoires of multilingual populations.
4.1.2 Register negotiation

Vietnamese speakers use this second linguistic phenomenon to construct personal identities during communication. We can understand register negotiation as a linguistic trait that involves strategically adjusting a speaker's language use to suit the situational context and communicative needs. In addition, it involves the purposeful selection and use of specific linguistic features, vocabulary choices, and tones, collectively referred to as registers. Thus, the ability to effectively negotiate registers is a crucial aspect of linguistic competence and the identity construction process.

The research results show that respectful language is essential for register negotiation because it conveys reverence, civility, and respect. Also, it supports speakers in establishing social relationships, recognizing power relationships, and comprehending cultural norms. Second, technical jargon is important because, in academic or professional contexts, it denotes language users' expertise and trustworthiness. In casual situations, using slang and colloquialisms is essential for establishing rapport and asserting one's involvement in social or cultural groups. Finally, courteous language is critical in register negotiations because it conveys consideration, politeness, and respect. By employing proper formality, expressions of gratitude, and courteous manners of address, speakers can effectively navigate social settings and project desired identities. The results collected from the interviews about the uses of these linguistic aspects through the levels of agreement or disagreement are summarized in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4</th>
<th>Linguistic traits in register negotiation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Code-switching</td>
<td>Setting 1 University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respectful language</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical jargon</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slang</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courteous language</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>241%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 shows that in universities, technical jargon is commonly used, but excessive dependence on specialist vocabulary can hinder communication and alienate unfamiliar individuals. In the workplace, a balanced approach is seen with polite terms (51%), slang (67%), and respectful language (72%), reflecting both formal and informal communication styles.
However, the prevalence of slang (67% in the workplace) may compromise professionalism and make communication clearer. In addition, public spaces also show a language environment that fosters an informal culture and may hinder participation in complex debates. Slang is most frequently used (84%), while polite and respectful language are used (67%) and 57% respectively. In reality, Vietnamese speakers going against linguistic diversity argue that slang undermines equal access and participation by marginalizing certain groups. On the other hand, the proponents of linguistic freedom argue that slang's popularity is a reflection of language's natural growth and people's need for self-expression, opposing strict linguistic standards that would impede authenticity and cultural vibrancy.

For the formation and negotiation of identity in social and cultural contexts, register negotiation is an essential instrument. It aids in defining group membership and managing power relationships. This linguistic phenomenon is very important for researching language and identity in Vietnam because it shows how Vietnamese individuals negotiate and express their complicated identities in different contexts by using language choices. Examining respectful language techniques, technical terminology, colloquial idioms, and courteous language might help to improve this knowledge. An example from an office meeting in which an employee says something to his superior is a case in point.

(2) Thưa sếp, theo tôi việc áp dụng phương pháp mới sẽ giúp tối ưu hóa quy trình, nâng cao năng suất làm việc đáng kể.

Excuse me, sir, I believe implementing the new method will help optimize the process and significantly improve work productivity.

In this instance, the worker bargains for their pay by utilizing formal language áp dụng phương pháp mới "implementing the new method", tôi ưu hóa quy trình "optimize the process" and courteous language Thưa sếp "Excuse me, sir". This conveys professionalism and deference to their superior. The formal tone and power dynamic established by this register choice are suitable for a professional environment. By using industry-specific technical terms, the worker also conveys competence and authority. In general, the employee may effectively navigate the professional setting by register negotiation, respecting hierarchies and communicating their intended identity as a skilled worker.

Table 5 offers guidelines for modifying a Vietnamese speaker's linguistic register. A balanced approach is advised in an academic setting, with a focus on courteous communication, high technical vocabulary, mild colloquialisms, and moderate respect. The tone of the workplace should be more casual but yet respectable; high degrees of reverence, technical
words, colloquial language, and politeness are required. Formality rules while dealing in public settings, demanding extreme reverence and courteous discourse while avoiding technical jargon and colloquial expressions. This framework is a helpful tool for adjusting communication models, allowing for efficient and suitable interactions in a variety of social and professional contexts.

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Register negotiation</th>
<th>Setting 1 University</th>
<th>Setting 2 Workplace</th>
<th>Setting 3 Public Places</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deferential language</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical vocabulary</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colloquial expressions</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polite language</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 illuminates how Vietnamese speakers strategically negotiate linguistic registers across various social contexts to construct and express their multifaceted identities. The high usage of technical jargon in the academic sphere of universities clearly highlights the need for accurate language to effectively transmit disciplinary knowledge and signify scholarly skill. The use of colloquial phrases simultaneously promotes a balance between formality and informality, enabling instructors and students to uphold academic rigor while fostering a sense of community. On the other hand, the unique pattern of the professional environment in workplaces is characterized by a high frequency of polite conversation, colloquial idioms, and respectful language. This language repertoire reflects the complex dynamics of managing power dynamics, fostering professional connections, and maintaining a courteous environment that fosters cooperation and the development of shared identities among coworkers. Notably, the widespread use of courteous language in all three settings—workplaces, public areas, and universities—highlights the importance of courteous communication and manners in Vietnamese culture, which goes beyond situational limitations.

4.2 SOCIAL INTERACTION MODELS

This section examines the ways in which Vietnamese speakers create and manage their identities in social encounters by using unique conversational models and deftly navigating power dynamics. It looks at the complex patterns, norms, and discursive techniques that speakers use to control interpersonal interactions, create hierarchies, and declare group
membership. Through an examination of these interactional models, the research reveals the critical function that language fulfills in constructing identities, promoting relationships, and reducing or enhancing power imbalances in a variety of sociocultural settings. The research provides insightful information on how language habits, social interactions, and identity formation processes are mutually dependent.

4.2.1 Conversational models

The unique conventions and patterns that speakers or groups use while speaking to one another are known as conversational models. Word selections, turn-taking patterns, politeness techniques, and nonverbal clues are only a few of the language elements that make up these models. Sociocultural contexts profoundly ingrain conversational models, which play a crucial role in the formation and expression of individual and collective identities. Their relevance in identity building and negotiation stems from a number of important features they display.

First, conversational models are linguistic characteristics used by individuals and groups to express their identities and navigate social dynamics. They include vocabularies, idioms, dialects, and language variants connected to social groupings or identities. These models can reflect social roles and power structures, and speakers often modify their conversational tenor in response to the situational environment and interlocutors. In addition, conversational models can also reflect cultural origins, beliefs, and values. Through their conversational styles, Vietnamese speakers and groups can negotiate their social hierarchies, set group boundaries, and declare their identities. Nonverbal communication, such as body language, gestures, and facial expressions, can also enhance the identity conveyed by spoken words. Finally, conversational models help researchers understand how Vietnamese speakers and groups use language in social interactions to create, negotiate, and express their complex identities.

Consider the following example:

(3) Cuộc đời giống như một cánh đồng đầy gai góc. Càng đi càng gặp nhiều chông gai, nhưng điều quan trọng là ta phải cứng cáp, kiên trì như đài sen vươn lên từ bùn lầy, vươn tới ánh sáng...

English:
Life is like a field full of thorns. The more you walk, the more thorns you encounter, but what's important is that we must be resilient, persevering like a lotus rising from the muddy pond, reaching for the light...
In this example, the Vietnamese speaker uses the narrative model, which pertains to metaphors and cultural proverbs to express their personal values, beliefs, and life experiences. He compares his life's challenges to a field of thorns, acknowledging the inevitable obstacles. Meanwhile, the metaphor of a resilient lotus represents perseverance and determination to overcome adversity. These elements serve as markers of the Vietnamese speaker's cultural heritage and ethnic minority identity, celebrating their values and personal philosophy. The use of vivid imagery and metaphorical language allows the speaker to convey complex ideas and emotions concisely, fostering a deeper connection between the speaker and the audience. This approach effectively expresses the Vietnamese person's authentic self and resonates with others who share similar experiences or values.

Table 6 provides a comparative analysis of language register negotiation in public spaces, workplaces, and universities, highlighting the weight given to communicative components like turn-taking patterns, nonverbal communication, politeness techniques, and narrative models.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conversational models</th>
<th>Setting 1</th>
<th>Setting 2</th>
<th>Setting 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University</td>
<td>Workplace</td>
<td>Public Places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative model</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politeness strategies</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonverbal communication</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional dialects</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turn-taking patterns</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table above shows how common different parts of conversational models are in public places, workplaces, and universities. Based on the results, we can say that workplaces have a lot of nonverbal communication, turn-taking patterns, and small amounts of regional dialect use, while universities have a lot of story models and politeness methods. Politeness methods are more popular in public spaces, while story models, regional accents, and turn-taking patterns are less common. Furthermore, the research highlights the importance of contextual modifications in conversational models to accommodate communication requirements and manage identities, and highlights the complex interactions between language, identity, and sociocultural variables, as individuals and communities use language traits, social behaviors, and cultural allusions to create and navigate their identities. Last but not least, the study emphasizes the importance of considering situational needs and power dynamics, as well as the dynamic and adaptable nature of language in identity building.
4.2.2 Power relation models

Language's role in creating, negotiating, and reflecting social hierarchies and power dynamics in a variety of circumstances is known as power relation identity. It investigates the ways in which language decisions and behaviors are used to establish, contest, or uphold power dynamics between Vietnamese speakers and communities. Two linguistic features that are central to the construction and expression of power relation identities are honorific language, address forms, discourse strategies, and rhetorical devices.

First, honorific language and address forms are used to signal social status, hierarchical positions, and respect for interlocutors. In a formal workplace setting, employees use specialized titles or honorifics to acknowledge power differentials, while informal address forms convey familiarity and solidarity. Discourse strategies and rhetorical devices are crucial in constructing power relation identities, such as interruptions, topic control, and strategic rhetorical questions. Teachers can assert their authority in classrooms, while students challenge this dynamic by interrupting or shifting the topic. We extract an example from Setting 2 to illustrate this point.

(4) Các em có hiểu bài không? Bây giờ, hãy chuẩn bị lấy tập và bút ra để viết.
Do you all understand the lesson? Now, please take out your notebooks and pens to write.

By asking rhetorical questions and giving instructions in the example above, the teacher can establish and strengthen their position of authority over the pupils. On the other hand, students may try to negotiate their identities and exert agency within the classroom setting by interrupting or changing the subject.

Furthermore, identities related to power dynamics can be fluid and dynamic, subject to change depending on the context and social factors. For example, in cross-cultural interactions, individuals might need to navigate power relations based on cultural norms and expectations. To bridge cultural gaps, establish common ground, or assert cultural identity and values, individuals can employ linguistic choices and discursive strategies. In addition, power relation identities can intersect with other aspects of identity, such as gender, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status, creating complex and multifaceted power dynamics. For example, a female teacher from a minority ethnic background may need to navigate power relations in terms of her professional role as well as gender and cultural norms.
Table 7 summarizes the distribution of linguistic features related to power relation models across different settings in Vietnam, including universities, workplaces, and public spaces. It outlines the relative frequency of using honorific language, address forms, discourse markers, and rhetorical devices to construct and negotiate power relations and hierarchies among Vietnamese speakers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Power relation models</th>
<th>Setting 1 University</th>
<th>Setting 2 Workplace</th>
<th>Setting 3 Public Places</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Honorific language</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address forms</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discourse markers</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhetorical device</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table shows that power relation models vary across different settings, reflecting the interplay between language choices, social hierarchies, and power dynamics in the surveyed settings. In university contexts, honorific language and discourse markers are prevalent, highlighting the role of academic authority and formal communication. In the workplace, honorific language and address forms are more balanced, fostering rapport and shared identity among coworkers. The low frequency of discourse markers suggests a more relaxed and informal communication style. Public places have a low frequency of honorific language and rhetorical devices, indicating a more casual and egalitarian environment. Vietnamese speakers tend to use fewer formal markers of hierarchy and authority, fostering familiarity and informality in interactions. On the other hand, Vietnamese speakers use address forms as a common linguistic tool to establish and maintain social relationships, balancing formality and informality. The distribution of power relations models is shaped by specific social expectations, norms, and hierarchies, emphasizing the importance of situational awareness in effectively negotiating power relations.

In short, the study explores the use of language and discursive techniques in Vietnamese settings to create, negotiate, and maneuver social hierarchies and power dynamics. It emphasizes the use of rhetorical devices, address forms, honorific language, and discourse markers as linguistic tools to evaluate power dynamics, promote solidarity, create authority, and subvert existing hierarchies. The study reveals that the distribution and frequency of power relations models in Vietnamese settings vary, with academic environments emphasizing formal communication and academic authority, while employers use honorific language and address
forms more equitably, promoting camaraderie and shared identity. In public settings, honorific language and rhetorical techniques are less common, indicating a more relaxed and equal atmosphere. The study also highlights the dynamic and flexible nature of power relation identities, which can change and interact with other facets of identity, such as gender, race, or socioeconomic class, to produce intricate and multifaceted power dynamics.

4.3 PRINCIPLES FOR PERSONAL IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION

This section delves into the fundamental ideas that guide speakers' language construction and negotiation of their personal identities in a variety of settings. Three fundamental concepts—the emergent nature of identity through dynamic language use, the positional nature of identity through stances taken in interactions, and the indexical nature of identity through linguistic cues pointing to specific social meanings—are analyzed. A close examination of these principles reveals the complex ways in which discursive techniques, language choices, and contextual circumstances interact to produce the complex and dynamic processes of identity building that Vietnamese speakers go through. The analysis's conclusions can guide initiatives aimed at promoting greater linguistic inclusivity and identity recognition.

4.3.1 Emergent principles

Emergent principles posit that the dynamic and situational use of language in social interactions gives rise to identities, rather than a fixed or preset identity. Language practices continuously develop, negotiate, and co-create identities. This concept emphasizes how many social, cultural, and environmental elements shape identity development, which is fluid and dynamic in nature.

Diverse language traits, including code-switching, register negotiation, and discursive techniques, are indicative of the embryonic character of identity. When constructing and expressing their complex identities, speakers may switch between languages, dialects, or registers depending on the situation and the Vietnamese speakers they are speaking to. Other factors that may influence the formation of identities in conversation include the use of certain language elements like discourse markers, rhetorical techniques, and narrative styles. Emergent principles can form and negotiate a person's cultural, ethnic, gender, and professional identities, among other components of their identity. One way that someone could create their cultural identity is through language use, such as the use of metaphors, idioms, or allusions to particular
cultures. Similar to this, the usage of gendered terminology or certain speech patterns can influence the formation of gender identities. The following data example illustrates how language use shapes identity:

(5) Bạn biết không, tôi là một người Việt Nam đích thực. Tôi rất tự hào về văn hóa và truyền thống của mình. Chúng ta phải giữ gìn những giá trị quý báu này, đừng bao giờ quên nguồn cội của mình.
You know, I am a true Vietnamese. I am very proud of my culture and traditions. We must preserve these precious values, never forget our roots.

Through a variety of language choices, the speaker in this case builds and emphasizes their ethnic and cultural identity as Vietnamese. The expression người Việt Nam đích thực (a real Vietnamese) and the focus on maintaining customs and cultural values help to define their Vietnamese identity. Furthermore, a sense of shared duty and communal identity are created by the imperative verb form phải giữ gìn (must maintain) and the inclusive phrase chúng ta (we).

Through an emergent principles analysis of this case, we can see how the speaker's identity as a Vietnamese individual arises dynamically through language usage. In the context of this particular conversation, the speaker's identity is shaped and constructed by their unique language choices, such as imperative forms, inclusive pronouns, and cultural allusions.

In short, the emergent principles emphasize language's function in negotiating and changing identities via social interactions, highlighting the dynamic and situational aspects of identity production overall. Researchers may learn more about how Vietnamese speakers create and maintain complex identities in a variety of social and cultural situations by investigating language practices and discursive techniques.

4.3.2 Positional principles

Positional principles posit that individuals form identities through their connections within specific social settings. These principles emphasize that identities are continually contested and molded by the positions Vietnamese speakers choose in relation to one another, rather than being predestined. Vietnamese speakers use language and discursive techniques to shape these positions, thereby shaping the identities they convey. Positional principles also emphasize how Vietnamese speakers place others and themselves through language in relation to different aspects of identity, such as gender, ethnicity, social status, or occupations. For instance, the use of inclusive or exclusive pronouns, honorifics, titles, or address forms can
position speakers as outsiders or members of specific groups. Positional principles help construct and negotiate identities associated with power, expertise, or marginalization. Take into consideration the following example:

\[(6)\] Với nhiều năm kinh nghiệm trong lĩnh vực này, tôi có thể khẳng định rằng phương pháp này sẽ mang lại hiệu quả tốt nhất. Các bạn có thể hoàn toàn tin tưởng vào đánh giá của tôi.

With many years of experience in this field, I can confidently assert that this method will yield the best results. You can fully trust my assessment.

In this instance, the speaker establishes their authority and expertise by highlighting their wealth of knowledge and making the claim that they can offer a trustworthy assessment. The imperative các bạn có thể hoàn toàn tin tưởng (you can totally trust) and the phrase tôi có thể khẳng định (I can confirm) are used to stress their authoritative stance. As a result, the speaker's identity of authority and trustworthiness are created by this posture. Additionally, language tactics can be used to negotiate and fight positional principles. Hedging, mitigation, or indirectness, for example, are strategies Vietnamese speakers use to dispute prevailing discourses or to remove themselves from certain positions. On the other hand, they might create desired identities and express certain subject positions by using rhetorical questions, aggressive language, or other techniques.

By examining positional principles, we, as researchers, can get insights into how Vietnamese speakers place themselves and others, and how these positionings contribute to the development and negotiation of complex identities, by looking at the language choices and discursive techniques used in different circumstances. The positioning principles emphasize language's vital role in navigating and constructing complex relationships and identities within social interactions, highlighting the dynamic and contextual aspects of identity development.

### 4.3.3 Indexical principles

From the analysis of indexical principles, we can see that linguistic forms can indicate specific identities, ideologies, and social meanings. These principles emphasize how speakers use specific linguistic features to signal their affiliation with or distance from certain social categories, stances, and personas. Indexical processes involve creating semiotic links between linguistic forms and social meanings, allowing language to serve as an indexical ground for constructing identities. Various linguistic resources, such as accents, dialects, styles, registers,
code choices, and discursive strategies, can function as indexicals of identity. For example, a regional dialect can indicate a speaker’s geographical origins, while specialized jargon can indicate expertise. Code-switching between languages can also index multilingual, ethnic, or cosmopolitan identities. These indexical processes are deeply embedded in sociocultural contexts and draw upon shared ideological associations between linguistic forms and social meanings within a community.

Consider the following example:

(7) Nói thiệt luôn nhé, tui đâu muốn dấy dưa với việc này đâu. Mệt cả người à nha! To be honest, I really don’t want to get involved in this mess. It's too tiring, you know!

From this example, we can see that the Vietnamese speaker uses a number of indexical resources in this utterance to create a certain identification position. The discourse particle nhé and the informal pronoun tui (I) indicate a relaxed, everyday register connected to youth culture. The pragmatic phrase nói thiệt luôn (to be honest) denotes an open and sincere attitude. The phrase à nha is a discourse particle that indicates a feeling of solidarity and shared experience with the other person. All of these indexical components work together to create a laid-back, fresh, and approachable character.

Through the analysis of indexical principles, we can acquire knowledge about how Vietnamese speakers deliberately use language forms to indicate their alignment with or detachment from specific identities, ideologies, and societal meanings by examining indexical principles. This viewpoint offers a comprehensive understanding of how identities are produced, negotiated, and navigated through linguistic practices by highlighting the complex relationships between language, identity, and sociocultural settings.

5 CONCLUSION

The study explores the role of language in constructing and negotiating individual and group identities in Vietnam. It uses a mixed-methods approach, including ethnographic observations, in-depth interviews, and discourse analysis, to understand the complex interplay between linguistic practices and identity formation processes. The research reveals that language serves as a powerful tool for constructing multifaceted identities, enabling the expression of group membership, boundary establishment, and negotiation of power relations. Multilingual speakers use code-switching and register negotiation to affirm ethnic pride,
maintain linguistic community ties, and navigate diverse social settings. Conversational models and discursive strategies also play a crucial role in shaping identities.

While this study has provided valuable insights, it is essential to acknowledge some limitations. Firstly, conducting the research within the specific context of Vietnam may limit the generalizability of the findings to other sociocultural contexts. Additionally, the study focused primarily on urban settings, potentially overlooking the unique linguistic practices and identity negotiation processes in rural areas. Furthermore, the research primarily examined identity construction from a group perspective, leaving room for further exploration of individual experiences and narratives.

We can make several suggestions for future research based on the findings and limitations. Firstly, comparative studies across different regions or countries could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the role of language in identity construction and negotiation, accounting for cultural and linguistic diversity. Secondly, longitudinal studies could offer valuable insights into the dynamic and evolving nature of identity formation processes over time, capturing the shifts and transformations that individuals and communities undergo. Additionally, future research could delve deeper into the intersections of language, identity, and other social factors such as gender, age, or socioeconomic status, exploring the multi-layered and intersectional nature of identity construction. Finally, incorporating innovative methodologies, such as digital ethnography or multimodal discourse analysis, could shed light on the impact of digital spaces and multimodal communication on identity negotiation processes in contemporary society.

REFERENCES


