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Kirsi-Marja Toivanen

Multiple Identities at Work

Discursive Construction of Work Identity of Young Business Professionals

UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

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ABSTRACT

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This research aims at understanding how work identities of young business professionals are discursively constructed in interpersonal interaction. Premised on social constructionism, the current study sees identities and meanings of identities as multiple and dynamic. The research data were collected by observing and interviewing six primary participants in international companies of different sizes. The methodologies of Cultural Discourse Analysis and Positioning Analysis were applied to the qualitative data, which included transcribed video and audio recordings, researcher field notes and some screen captures. The results show that the discursively constructed work identities are indeed multi-faceted and situated. Optimal distinctiveness was created by resisting fixed identity categories that included negative positioning and othering. On the other hand, the discourses constructed a merged 'international' identity that was associated with an open mindset, valuable expat experiences and the ease of communication in lingua franca English. In workplace relationships, positioning was often implicit and embedded in humour, left-handed compliments or nonverbal communication. However, explicit third order positioning between gendered occupational groups took place outside the immediate communicative situations. In the workplace, discursive positioning was less common in hierarchical role-relationships than in peer relationships. The discourses of identity and transition jointly created meanings of young professionals who make independent, sometimes non-traditional career choices. On the other hand, the narratives reflected face concerns about how such decisions are perceived by others. In the 'juggler' discourse, the work and nonwork boundaries appeared fluid and permeable, while the competing 'isolated employee' discourse produced a clearer distinction between private and work domains. The study contributes to the understanding of millennial work identity in the diverse and changing world of work. From the perspective of interpersonal communication, millennials do not form a homogenous group of employees, but their work identity and identity positions are continuously re- and co-constructed in their relationships through communication in and outside workplaces. The results of this study can be used to develop in-company communication and communication studies and curricula in business education.

Keywords: identity, construction, discourse, interpersonal communication, positioning, role-relationships, social interaction, work

TIIVISTELMÄ

Toivanen, Kirsi-Marja
Moninaiset identiteetit työssä – Nuorten liike-elämän ammattilaisten työidentiteetin diskursiivinen rakentuminen
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Tämän väitöstutkimuksen tavoitteena on ymmärtää nuorten liike-elämän ammattilaisten työidentiteetin diskursiivista rakentumista. Sosiaaliseen konstruktionismiin nojautuen identiteetit ja niiden merkitykset nähdään moniulotteisina ja dynaamisina. Tutkimuksen aineisto on kerätty havainnoimalla ja haastattelemalla kuutta nuorta työntekijää erikokoisissa kansainvälisissä yrityksissä. Laadullinen aineisto koostuu video- ja audiotallenteista, tutkijan kenttämuistiinpanoista ja joistakin kuvakaappauksista. Aineisto on analysoitu yhdistämällä kulttuurista diskurssianalyysiä ja positiointianalyysiä. Tutkimus osoittaa, että diskursseissa rakentuvat identiteetit ovat hyvin moninaisia, joustavia ja tilanteisia. Pysyviä identiteettikategorioita vastustamalla rakennettiin merkityksiä, joilla voitiin optimaalisesti erottautua silloin, kun identiteettiin liitettiin negatiivisia assosiaatioita tai toiseuttamista. Toisaalta diskurssit rakensivat kansainvälistä hybridi-identiteettiä, johon liitettiin positiivisia assosiaatioita, kuten avoin mielenlaatu, arvokkaat kokemukset ekspatriaattina ja englanninkielisen viestinnän helppous. Työpaikan interpersonaalisessa viestinnässä positiointi oli usein implisiittistä, ja se piiloutui toiseuttavaan huumoriin, kömpelöihin kohteliaisuuksiin tai sanattomaan viestintään. Kuitenkin positiot sukupuolittuneiden ammattiryhmien välillä tulivat eksplisiittisesti julkilausutuiksi vuorovaikutustilanteiden ulkopuolella. Positiointia esiintyi enemmän työpaikan vertaissuhteissa kuin hierarkkisissa, organisatorisiin rooleihin perustuvissa vuorovaikutussuhteissa. Työidentiteetti- ja muutosdiskurssi synnyttivät kohdatessaan merkityksiä, joissa nuoret ammattilaiset näyttäytyivät aktiivisina toimijoina ja itsenäisinä omien, joskus epätavallisten urapolkujen rakentajina. Toisaalta muutostarinat heijastelivat kasvojen menettämisen pelkoa. Identiteettidiskurssissa rakentuvan 'jonglöörin' rajat työn ja muun elämän välillä olivat läpäiseviä ja muuttuvia, kun taas toisaalta 'eristyneen työntekijän' diskurssi tuotti selvärajaisimman eron yksityisen ja työelämän alueiden välille. Tutkimus lisää ymmärrystä milleniaalien työidentiteeteistä monimuotoisessa ja muuttuvassa työelämässä. Interpersonaalisen viestinnän näkökulmasta milleniaalit eivät näytä muodostavan yhtenäistä työntekijäryhmää, vaan heidän työidentiteettinsä ja identiteettipositionsa rakentuvat ja muotoutuvat jatkuvasti työhön liittyvissä ja työn ulkopuolisissa vuorovaikutussuhteissa. Tutkimuksen tuloksia voidaan hyödyntää kansainvälisten organisaatioiden sisäisen viestinnän ja liiketalouden alan viestintäopintojen kehittämisessä.

Asiasanat: identiteetti, rakentuminen, diskurssi, interpersonaalinen viestintä, positiointi, rooleihin perustuvat suhteet, sosiaalinen vuorovaikutus, työ

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FOREWORD

The impetus to carry on research on identity construction among holders of BBA degree at international workplaces came from my professional practice. As a lecturer in an International Business programme in Finnish higher education, I had met and taught hundreds of students from different backgrounds all pursuing the same BBA degree and aspiring an international career. Over the years, I have witnessed many success stories and some other with less dazzling outcomes. I have seen many changes in HE, as well as in the national and global business environment, which have made me less confident about the contents of the courses we offer. Especially two questions have puzzled me: What is intercultural communication today and what are the communication skills that are of vital importance for future professionals in international business?

As my interests have been dispersed across the different fields of language and communication studies, I started looking into a specific subject that would integrate intercultural, interpersonal and organisational communication. It appeared that identity, especially social and more specifically relational identity, was a topic that had acquired research interest in all three. Identity in this doctoral thesis is seen as social and discursive construct that is produced in interaction. As such, identity is multiple and fluid rather than a stable cognitive schema of who one is. In fact, people represent the different identity facets and negotiate their identity positions with others in various social encounters and contexts.

My original desire was to conduct naturalistic inquiry on authentic workplace communication in organisations that employ multinational staff or operate in different geographical areas (Frey et al., 1999). However, due to practical challenges in data collection in fast-spaced business, this ambitious aim had to be narrowed down to a more feasible project. I am very thankful to those six companies that allowed me to conduct field research in their premises and to my respondents who agreed to be both observed and interviewed during their busy days at work.

My doctoral studies have been an identity project to me personally. Having a long career as a lecturer in vocational and tertiary education, it has been a challenge to become a student and researcher and to combine these three identity facets into the same storyline. Moreover, at the same time I have been a mother, a wife, a divorcee, a patient, an expat, a wài guó rén and many more. Crossing the disciplinary boundaries has also meant stepping away from my academic comfort zone and searching for and negotiating my place and position in a different social and communicative environment. At times I have felt alien even when I have been in my home country and able to use my native language. I hope this personal experience has not biased my endeavour, but rather helped me to be more sensitive to the stories of my informants.

In my identity process I have received enormous support from my supervisor Leena Mikkola, who is the most encouraging academic I have encountered. She has been able to ask the right questions and say the right words

when I have been about to quit. Similarly, Professor Anu Sivunen, the other supervisor of my research Tarja Valkonen, adacemic staff and the fellow-students of Interpersonal Communication at Jyväskylä University have been a great support. Professor Emerita, Maarit Valo, you were the person, who helped me to redirect my research and find renewed interest in identity. I also want to thank Associate Professor Heidi Hirsto, and Senior Lecturers Anne Kankaanrinta and Leena Nissi for their careful review of and insightful comments on my manuscript.

Special gratitude goes to William and Ester Otsakorven säätiö for their generous assistance throughout this process. Their support has not only been financial, but they have provided me with an interdisciplinary community and peer group where we have been able to share our research projects as well as also our lives. I want to express my thanks to the board of Otsakorpi foundation for their trust in and patience with my prolonged endeavour. Especially Docent Kai Myrberg and the Executive Director Mari Kurkan deserve all my appreciation for their continued support and encouragement. Likewise, I want to thank my institutional overseers, Ph. D. Anneli Airola and Ph.D. Liisa Timonen. My fellow students and doctors of Otsakorpi foundation, thank you all for the interesting discussions during our seminars and other memorable encounters. I also want to thank Adam Lerch for language revision of the manuscript.

There are more persons to whom I'm greatly indebted to, but it is not possible to mention everyone by name. Last but not least, my family, Veikko and Heidi, my dear sisters and close friends, thank you for surrounding me with love, hope and joy and for giving me needed reality checks. The deepest gratitude goes to the Logos, the Reason giving meaning to my life and identity.

Jyväskylä 01 January 2021

Kirsi-Marja Toivanen

FIGURES

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rationale and Aim of the Study

The future of work has become more unpredictable than ever due to demographic changes, disruption, digitalisation and the proliferation of information (Yoost & Peterson, 2015). The megatrends and global forces are not only influencing the geo-political balance, societies and labour markets, but also communication, social relationships and power relations at the organisational and interpersonal levels. Neither businesses nor individual employees can remain static, but they need dynamism and flexibility to succeed in the volatile environments. International business has always necessitated professionals to cross time zones, national borders and economic, political, cultural and linguistic boundaries. Today more and more of that work is done with the help of digital tools and communications technology. Employment conditions and job opportunities have also transformed in significant ways. Secure, life-long, linear careers with one or a few employers have turned to overlapping projects and less traditional, boundaryless careers in boundaryless organisations (e.g. Banai & Harry 2004; Cappelli, 2006; FAME Consortium, 2007.). On the other hand, not all global careers have become boundaryless, which means that international assignments have diversified and have become less easy to anticipate and prepare for (Baruch & Reis, 2015; Baruch et al., 2013). Against this backdrop, it is considered both important and interesting to study what happens to work identity in these unpredictable, fragmented and unsettling conditions of work (LaPointe, 2011; Heikkilä, 2019). This research is especially interested in how the work identities of young business professionals are discursively constructed in the changing landscapes of international companies.

The new ways and contexts of work demand the modification of employee skill sets (e.g. Oksanen, 2017; World Economic Forum, 2016). Qualifications alone do not suffice, but people also need to develop their competences continuously to manage in the transformation of work (Finnish Government, 2018). The World Economic Forum (2016) lists social skills among the core work-related skills required by future jobs in all industries. According to WEF, these so-called soft skills include capacities and abilities to interact and communicate, to bring people together, to reconcile differences, and to understand and adjust one's actions and reactions in relation to those of others (World Economic Forum, 2016). Social skills are difficult to be substituted by automation and are especially needed in high-skilled, well-paid jobs (Autor, 2015; Deming, 2017.) Moreover, the need for interpersonal and intercultural communication skills is growing because of increased co-working in shared physical and digital working environments. Diverse work communities and dynamic workplace cultures necessitate agility, flexibility and the ability to negotiate one's place in the changing social settings. In all this, identities, whether personal, social or corporate, are at stake. (Alasoini & Houni, 2019; FAME Consortium, 2007; Leidner, 2009; Preece, 2016; Valenduc et al., 2006; Vallas, 2009; World Economic Forum, 2016.)

The relationship between work identity and soft skills, such as communication or interpersonal relationship skills, is interesting, complex and worth further investigation. It has been argued that attaching professional identity to the demands of soft skills in the job market may have various social and personal implications. On the one hand, it has been asked if these soft skills can be regarded as skills or whether they are personal qualities which, if overemphasised, have potential to distort competition and lead to ill-defined and discriminative criteria when selecting individuals for recruitment or promotion (Bailly & Léné, 2012). On the other hand, emphasising soft skills has been seen to give rise to a new type of identity work where individuals need to create themselves a valued professional identity and promote the desired self-brand (Du Gay, 1996; Mäkinen, 2012). This self-formation requires employees to be engaged in boundary management in the contexts of new work (Ylöstalo et al., 2019). How work identity is constructed and negotiated in and through interpersonal communication in the dynamic environments of international business is the other question that this study tries to find answers to.

In dynamic workplace interaction, tasks, relationships and identity are communicated simultaneously (Valo & Mikkola, 2020). However, what comes to identity research in the context of work, Miscenko and Day (2016) point out that the dynamism of interpersonal work identity is still underexplored despite a growing research interest in individual work identity, multiple identities and organisational identification. Harwood (2016, 6) states that in the communication discipline, social identity has often been studied within the limits of its "traditional" areas. This study aspires to integrate the perspectives and research traditions of interpersonal, organisational, business and intercultural communication to analyse how situated identities are discursively constructed in interpersonal relationships in international companies. This communication research also draws from the theorisation and research traditions of several other disciplines in the humanities and the social and behavioural sciences. The aim is to be engaged in "informed conversation across field and paradigmatic boundaries" (Brown, 2015, 23). Premised on social constructionism, discourse analytic approaches into communication research can offer one feasible way to investigate the dynamic construction of work identity at the interpersonal level.

Research on the work identity of young professionals in today's knowledge industry is also needed for the future development of vocationally oriented higher education. During the past decades, higher education has undergone several structural and curricular changes, which might have also influenced the way how occupations and professional skills are described and classified, and what competences are considered relevant for employment. The aim of the Bologna Process has been to converge degree structures and qualifications in Europe based on voluntary participation and autonomy of higher education institutions (European Commission, 2018). The Tuning Project, which followed and was launched to increase transparency of education, introduced the competence-based curricula and degree programmes (González & Wagenaar, 2005). Alongside harmonisation, there has been a countertrend which gives institutions and professionals-to-be more freedom to plan and implement degree studies. The European Commission has predicted that the meaning and scope of education are shifting from obtaining degrees and qualifications towards self-fulfilment and developing soft skills (European Commission, 2020). Due to the changes in the job market and professional work, the occupational requirements and work roles of knowledge workers have become multifaceted and hybrid, and some of the professional boundaries characterising the industrial age have consequently blurred (Caza & Creary, 2016). This blurring is already visible in the variable tasks and job descriptions of the participants of this study, whose occupations cannot be put into only one category of the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08, 2008). Although the six main informants of this study have obtained the same BBA degree in Finnish higher education, they come from different national, linguistic and school backgrounds. Moreover, their rather generic BBA education in international business has enabled them to be recruited into different types of jobs, organisations and fields in different geographical areas. The work-related identities of BBAs may, therefore, be more multiple and diverse than of those in nationally or regionally regulated professions, whose work and professional identity is, at least partly, based on specific training, certification or licences.

This study aims at understanding how work identities of young business professionals are discursively constructed in social interaction at the level of interpersonal communication. On the one hand, this study is interested in how young business professionals present and position themselves and others in interpersonal communication and, on the other, how discourses construct work identities in workplace relationships in diverse organisational contexts. By analysing and describing discourse at the micro-level and by paying attention to the processes and contexts of discursive identity construction at the meso-level, the study purports to understand the dynamic interaction between identity, communication, work, workplace relationships and organisation. This study on work identity construction is premised on the needs created by societal changes and the ongoing transformation of work. Theoretically, the objective is to understand the complex phenomenon of work identity construction of young professionals at the level of interpersonal communication. Alongside this objective, the study aims at contributing to practical applications. It seeks to develop communication studies in BBA education in order to better cater to the needs of individuals, communities of practice and organisations operating in the rapidly changing business environments.

The study strives to answer the following two questions:

1. What facets and meanings of identity of young business professionals are being discursively produced and made salient in the context of work?
2. How are multifaceted and relational work identities discursively (co-)constructed and positioned in interaction?

To find answers to these questions, six young business professionals have been job-shadowed to gain rich understanding of their daily interactions with others in international workplaces. Further information has been obtained by interviewing the participants. The data have also been complemented with some screen captures from online sources, such as LinkedIn or corporate websites.

Because BBAs' domains of work and communities of practice vary, there is no unitary speech community in which the discursive construction of work identity could be studied or to which it could be generalised. Their work environments are culturally and linguistically diverse, yet the form and nature of this diversity vary depending on the size, structures, location, geographical expansion and affiliations of the organisation they work in. Moreover, because of some recent organisational changes, part of the communities of practice (CoP) or discourse or speech communities cannot be considered very stable. The six companies where fieldwork has been conducted can be called international either because of the geographical scope of their business and/or the composition of their staffs. Four out of the six are medium-sized. Three of them are manufacturing companies in the forestry and wood products industry and in mechanical and chemical engineering. One globally operating company provides IT solutions and services. Two of the companies are micro- or small-sized enterprises and they operate in entertainment and tourism, respectively. (See also Tables 1 and 2.) Four companies have English as their corporate language, although other languages are also used within the company, as well as with suppliers and customers. Two of the companies do not have a language policy. Each of them provides a unique context for investigation and, therefore, this study does not aim at generalisability, neither does it make comparisons between the participants or organisations. On the contrary, the attempt is to provide a suggestive, yet meaningful picture of the richness and dimensionality of work identity and its construction in diverse, international companies. Complex workplace environments, such as the ones in this research, are challenging for communication and discourse studies but they need to be investigated (Măda & Săftoiu, 2012; Stubbe, 2001).

1.2 Philosophical Underpinnings

Identity can and has been approached and researched from different philosophical orientations and with various foci. Based on the philosophy of Aristotle and Plato, essentialism assumes that every human being has inherent properties which define his or her identity. Essentialism views social identity through distinctive and immutable group attributes and differences between social categories. From the essentialist perspective, the aim of research is to discover the essence, i.e. the true identity. (Rolfe, 2008.) The present study does not support the essentialist notion of stable identity or fixed social categories, neither does it aim at discovering their true essence. However, from the point of view of lay theorising, essentialist beliefs are natural and occur around the globe, enforcing prejudices and intergroup biases. Essentialist thinking can also lead to the avoidance of interaction between social groups, which needs to be considered in this research, where identity construction is studied in social interaction. (See also Chao & Kung, 2015.)

While essentialism sees individual or social identity as fixed, non-essentialists speak about fluidity and situational identities in plural (e.g. Woodward, 1997, 12). In many ways, this is in line with the ideas of Social Constructionism, which sees identity as a construct produced in social interaction. Social Constructionism proposes that social interaction between two or more people or between groups constitutes social structures and cultures (e.g. Galbin, 2014). In Social Constructionism, interaction and communication are interdependent because it is through communication that the social world and meanings are created (Leeds-Hurwitz, 2009, 893-894). The Weak or Moderate Social Constructionism makes its claims on a social reality that exists because of social agreements and shared meanings. This study holds some of the assumptions of the Weak Social Constructionism that acknowledges the dependency of cultural and social structures, meanings and beliefs on crude facts, that is the physical world. (Goldman & Blanchard, 2016; Leeds-Hurwitz, 2009, 893; Cromby & Nightingale 1999, 3.) When it comes to identity, there are some biological and physical attributes exist outside discourse and which may play a part in discursive identity co-construction, but these qualities do not define identity.

Identities that are multiple, fluid and under construction can only be studied and known by analysing the discourses that produce them. Nevertheless, discourse studies can look into the social construction of identity at different levels. While the micro-social constructionism approaches identity from the perspective of individual narratives produced by people, macro-social studies look at the various discourses that surround the personhood (Burr, 2015). The latter approach sees an individual as a sum of the subject positions in discourse that she occupies and which she can accept or resist (Burr, 2015, 143). The current study operates mostly at the micro- to meso-levels. It attempts to analyse discourses where identity is under construction and positioning in interpersonal communication in diverse communities of practice. At the micro-level, the study is interested in the interpersonal interaction in dyads and small groups. The meso-level approach is included in the study to contextualise interactions in workplaces, organisations and industries. Although the six companies form a setting where identities are discursively constructed and interpreted, they themselves are also communicatively constituted and sustained (e.g. Cooren et al., 2011; Kuhn, 2017; Putnam et al., 2016). In this study, however, the focus is on interpersonal more than on organisational communication. The bottom-up approach is enabled by rich and versatile, qualitative data.

Because of my ontological and epistemological standpoint, I use the terms 'construct' and 'construction' in this paper to imply that work identities are not stable or given, but flexible and subject to change. Thus, it is not possible to take a still picture and claim that we have captured their essences or true meanings. On the other hand, work identities have both history and context. They are not constructed out of nothing, neither "written socio-linguistically on a *tabula rasa* in a socio-historical vacuum" (Coupland, N., 2001, 18). On the contrary, we bring our past to these workplace encounters, where we not only reconstruct something from the existing memories, experiences and thoughts, but may also reinforce or deconstruct preconceived ideas and socio-cultural meanings.

The current study is interested in how work identities are (co-)constructed in interpersonal communication. These mundane, everyday interactions at work, the small d's, produce identities and social worlds but are also bound up with other social practices and power relations (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000 and 2011; Gee, 1999; Fairhurst & Putnam, 2004). I am trying to be suspicious of and have a critical stance on taken-for-granted assumptions, ideas and social systems, although the starting point of this study is not that of Critical Discourse Analysis, CDA. The expressions of power and ideology, the big D discourses, have implications for what it is permissible for different people to do, and how their being or behaviour is legitimised (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000 and 2011; Gee, 1999; Fairhurst & Putnam, 2004; Kärreman and Levay, 2017, 74). I acknowledge that the social, cultural and political structures surround and are embedded in the discursive construction of identities at workplaces and, therefore, the questions of power, dominance, equality and bias cannot be ignored in this study. (See also Risager & Dervin, 2015, 12-16.)

When researching identity as social and discursive construction, the researcher has to be aware - not only of his or her own ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions - but also how her informants view the reality and themselves and others in it. Because identities are relational and reflexive, the researcher needs to reflect on her own position and assumptions, as well as her dialogue, for example, with the interviewees when collecting and analysing her data (Carbaugh et. al. 2011; Collier, 2005, 241-2; Coupland & Brown, 2012, 1; Gergen, 2009; Risager & Dervin, 2015, 4 and 12-13).

1.3 The Intricate Relationship between Discourse, Communication and Other Interwoven Concepts

This study on identity construction is a discourse analytic inquiry into interpersonal communication. Discourse analytic research conducted by communication scholars reflects a multi-disciplinary, yet a distinctive perspective on social interaction (Tracy, 2001, 727-8). The closely connected concepts of discourse, communication, interaction and language are all important for this research undertaking. Yet, because of their slightly different meanings in neighbouring disciplines, they need specification. I hold a similar view with Fairhurst and Putnam (2004) that discourse and communication are related, but not synonymous. *Communication* refers to the field of the current study as well as the verbal, vocal and nonverbal, i.e. symbolic means and processes of conveying and sharing information, ideas, thoughts and emotions. Yet, communication is more than the exchange of information or messages; it is a relational process in which meanings, identities and relationships are created and negotiated (Braithwaite & Baxter, 2008, 4).

Within the communication discipline, this study focuses on *interpersonal communication* that takes place in dyads and small groups. Theorisation in interpersonal communication is often also interested in how interaction creates bonds and sustains relationships between people. This perception is especially emphasised in, what Braithwaite and Baxter (2008) call, discourse- and interaction-centred theories theories of interpersonal communication. The types and functions of workplace relationships can range from very close and intimate friendships to the formal role- and task-based relationships where the main function is the exchange of job-related information (Mikkola & Nykänen, 2020). Kram and Isabella (1985, 119-124) differentiate between three types and functions of peer relationships at work: 1) information peers who exchange work-related information and have low levels of self-disclosure and trust, 2) collegial relationships, where both work-related and personal information is shared and which allow self-expression and emotional support, and 3) special peer relationships, with a strong sense of bonding and greater self-disclosure and self-expression, that replace formal roles. The present study is not focusing on relationships as such. However, the relational dimension is always present when people communicate at work (Valo & Mikkola, 2020). Furthermore, relationships can be considered as the site where meanings are created and identity positions negotiated in interaction. The study investigates identity construction in both coworker and supervisor-employee relationships, and in the interviewer-interviewee interaction. The relationships and encounters with customers and business partners have been left outside the scope of this study.

My approach to relational work identity is discursive. Benwell and Stokoe (2006, 4) state that, "who we are to each other, then, is accomplished, disputed, ascribed, resisted, managed and negotiated in discourse." *Discourse* is an ambiguous and dynamic concept (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002; Phillips & Hardy, 2002; Pietikäinen & Mäntynen, 2009, 22). In this study, I use discourse to refer to the use of language and nonverbal communication in meaning construction. Discourse is, therefore, a form of social action that plays a part in construing meanings and the social world (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, 5). Because identities and their meanings are constructed in social interaction, they can be studied by paying close attention to communication practices and language use in contexts, i.e. by analysing small d discourse.

The discursive approach sees work identity as situated in the contexts where it is produced. *Situatedness* is created through contextual factors, for example, who is communicating with whom, and when and where their interaction takes place. The study first considers the immediate, primary environments of identity co-construction. Through a bottom-up approach, it then also relates the interpersonal identity construction to the wider organisational and socio-cultural contexts where the discourses are embedded. Although the organisational environments in this study can be called multicultural, I prefer to use the terms *diverse* and *diversity* to avoid associating multiculturalism with its essentialised and mechanical definitions that focus on ethnicity or idealising multiculturalism as harmonious social integration or empowerment of minorities. In addition to diversity, the concepts of *intercultural* or *interculturality* are sometimes used when referring to the dynamic processes when people negotiate their identities, otherness and power relations, or when they recreate new forms of hybrid, universalised identities and fusion third cultures (Adair et al., 2006; Earley & Mosakowski, 2000; Kim, 2001, 194; Lavanchy et al., 2011, 19). Interculturality, as this research views it, relies on a notion of *culture* that is understood in a non-essentialist way as a hybrid, processual, contextual and discursive concept rather than a cohesive entity or a fixed container of values, mindsets and behaviours (Dietz, 2018; Ganesh, 2015; Piller, 2009; Virkama, 2010).

International business is one of the many arenas where hybrid identities and cultural fusions are construed, often using English as a Lingua Franca (ELF). *Language* is never unproblematic from the point of view of qualitative research, and it is especially true with discourse analysis. Discourse studies are not interested in language as a linguistic system, but rather what is being done when language, action and the context interact (Pietikäinen & Mäntynen, 2009, 18). Although linguistic resources play an important part in the analysis, it is the forms of social action that are being studied (Ahearn, 2001). Even when the interlocutors use the same language variant or when one language is accurately translated into the other, interlocutors assign language specific, personal and situated meanings. Language is constitutive also at the interpersonal level when meanings are not only created but also negotiated and changed in interaction. Language is loaded with meanings at the surface level of words, expressions and genres, but also at the deeper levels of cultural, philosophical and ideological meanings. The study holds the assumption that language is value laden and powerful. Ng and Deng (2017) discuss the dynamic language-power relationships in communication. The Power behind Language approach includes the idea that power is either revealed or reflected in language, while the Power of Language research is interested in how language maintains existing dominance, unites and divides people and groups or creates influence through words, oratories, conversations and narratives (Ng & Deng, 2017). Ng and Deng discuss World Englishes and English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) as examples of extralinguistic power behind the language and relate it to social identity processes and accommodating and non-accommodation behaviours among and between native and non-native speakers. Similar power-language relationships have been found when professionals, for example lawyers, use their language to maintain dominance.

1.4 Structure of the Thesis Report

This qualitative study is reported as a monograph in one volume. The first chapters have discussed the rationale, aims and the philosophical and conceptual underpinnings of research. The first section also introduces some of the key concepts and underlying conceptions. However, identity is more thoroughly discussed in Chapter 2. After more general discussion on social, relational, cultural and postmodern identities, the focus is then narrowed to the discursively constructed work identity.

Chapter 3 introduces the research questions, methodological choices and data of the current research. The study combines a couple of discourse analytic methods to investigate identity construction in the domain of work. Cultural Discourse Analysis and Positioning Analysis stem from different disciplinary and theoretical backgrounds. However, they have a common ideological foundation in social constructionism, according to which meanings and situated identities are created in variable contexts of social interaction. To answer the research questions, two ethnographic data collection methods of observation and informal, conversational interviews have been employed. The qualitative data includes video and audio recordings, transcriptions and researcher field notes. Moreover, some screen captures of social media, email messages or company websites have been used as secondary data. The methodology section also introduces the participants and contemplates on the researcher's role and identity in discourse analytic studies.

The first parts of the report follow a rather conventional monograph structure. However, the results are presented and discussed in subchapters, each of which forms a rather independent whole. The reason for unconventional structure and style in reporting is that the study has employed more of an inductive and data-driven than theory-driven strategy and it has not been possible to anticipate all emerging themes in the data while constructing the theoretical framework for the study. Against this backdrop, Chapter 4 includes even some new theoretical perspectives that have not been discussed in the earlier chapters, such as humour in identity positioning. Finally, the results are drawn together in the conclusion. The last part of the monograph also includes the evaluation and limitations of the study and implications for education and further research.

2 DISCURSIVE IDENTITIES IN WORKPLACE INTERACTION

2.1 Aspects of Identity

Identity forms a broad and contested subject of study in different disciplines. The diverse traditions, starting points and purposes are manifested in the multiple ways how identity is conceptualised and operationalised. The definitions of identity range from cognitive constructs and unique conceptualisations of self to multiple and multifaceted social identities formed through associations with various social categories (Coupland & Brown, 2012, 1). The present study is anchored on the constitutive approach of interpersonal communication (Manning, 2014), but it also borrows from the theorising of the organisational, intercultural, socio-linguistic and socio-psychological research traditions. It is interested in multifaceted social identities and especially in relational work identities of young professionals, which are discursively constructed in work-related communication in international business. In the following chapters, I first introduce how identity has been conceptualised and defined in socio-psychological, organisational and communication research traditions and then discuss the fluidity and multiplicity of identities in transitions. Chapter 2.3 deliberates identities in the domain of work and professional life. The last part of this chapter integrates the theoretical approaches into the perspective of this particular research, which is an ambitious attempt to look into the discursive processes that construct relational identities at work.

Social Identity and Identity Categories. Over the years, the Social Identity Theory (SIT) (Tajfel 1981 and 1982; Tajfel and Turner 1979 and 1986) has established itself as the main theoretical basis for identity research in several disciplines. SIT defines identity as affiliations and identifications to different groups and social categories. Tajfel sees social identity as part of the individual's self-concept, which derives from her awareness of belonging to a social group (or groups) and the value and emotional significance of that membership (Tajfel 1981, 255). According to SIT, identity is about belonging (ingroup) and similarity, but at the same time about difference from those with whom we do not associate (outgroup) (see also Benwell & Stokoe, 2006, 25.) Tajfel (1978) states that social categorisation helps us in organising and understanding the social environment, but that it is through comparison social categories are linked to social identity. Categorising, although in itself a neutral concept and natural human activity, has often been linked with negative stereotyping, prejudice, othering and discrimination, although social categorisation is malleable and prejudice against the outgroup is not inevitable (Liberman et al., 2017). Self-categorisation Theory (SCT), developed by Turner (1985 and 1987) and his colleagues looks into the processes by which people categorise themselves and others and define themselves in terms of membership within different social groups. Although SIT and SCT were developed hand in hand and often introduced together as a social identity approach, they conceptualise identity slightly differently. In SIT personal and social identities form a single continuum, while, according to SCT, self-categorisation happens at different hierarchical levels, making personal identity more or less independent from group memberships. Both can, however, work and be salient at the same time. (Abrams & Hogg, 2010; Trepte & Loy, 2017.) Despite their differences, both theories stem from similar interactionist metatheoretical frameworks that connect social context with identity processes and "prioritises the reciprocal relationship between intergroup relations and self-conception" (Abrams & Hogg, 2004: Abrams & Hogg, 2010, 180). Although both SIT and SCT speak about social interaction, they do not explain what role interaction has in identifications. They have a cognitive approach to identity and, therefore, neither of them can sufficiently address the complex and dynamic systems of how social identity or identifications are constructed in communicative interaction (Paulsen et al. 2004; Scott, 2007). They do offer, however, several useful concepts that have been developed further by other identity scholars (Ellemers et al. 2003). SIT has also been used to create a theoretical framework for different types of communication research on identity (e.g. Pisarski & Ashworth, 2013; Soliz & Giles, 2014; Willemyns et al., 2003). For example, the convergence – divergence dimension of the Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) draws upon the concept of positive distinctiveness of the Social Identity Theory (Giles, 2019, 427).

Multiple Identities and Identity Salience. As people belong to several social groups, they also have multiple social identities that are invoked and enacted in various social situations. According to Stryker's Identity Theory (1980), identities have salience which is the probability or likelihood that a given identity is invoked in a situation. Multiple identities are organized into a salience hierarchy, which determines which of the many identities are invoked as people orchestrate their roles and interpret the role behaviours of others. In organisational contexts, salience is claimed to depend on subjective importance and internal preferences of an individual, as well as the situational relevance defined by the social context and external norms (Asforth & Johnson, 2001; Stryker, 1980). Stryker proposes that structural constraints are ambiguous, and therefore individuals have more options and can invoke more than one identity.

However, as a situation becomes embedded within social structures, the salience hierarchy becomes a good predictor of what identities will be used in interaction with others. (Stryker & Burke, 2000.)

Like the Social Identity Theory, the Identity Theory by Stryker (1980) understands the relationship between the individual and society as reciprocal and inseparable. However, while SIT emphasises social aspects, the Identity Theory focuses more on the individual. (Hecht et al. 2005, 260.) In the Identity Theory, identity is not the product of social structures, but there is room for individual agency within the opportunities and restrictions that the changing structures provide (FAME Consortium, 2007). Stryker's theorization also includes the aspects of commitment and emotions and relates them to identity. When a person enacts a certain role and receives feedback that generates positive emotions, she becomes more committed to the identity. Consequently, the commitment to identity moves it higher in the salience hierarchy, which further increases the chance of this identity to be performed in the future. (Turner, J. H. 2013, 336.)

The Social Identity Theory and Identity Theory have also other profound differences. While SIT emphasizes group identification and self-esteem as a member of a social category, Identity Theory is more interested in the enactment of roles. According to Stets and Burke (2000), in SIT identity is a cognitive outcome, i.e. 'who you are', but Stryker's Identity Theory sees identities as behavioural outcomes of 'doing'. They also state that SIT studies centre around intergroup relations, but the research interest of the Identity Theory is more on intragroup structures. Despite their many differences, Stets and Burke propose that these two identity theories could and should be merged because both 'being' and 'doing' are essential to identity (Stets & Burke, 2000). What comes to this study, both theoretical orientations provide conceptualizations that can help to understand the construction of identities in dyads and small groups in different organisational settings. Yet, it is the Identity Theory that is closer to the focus and interests of this research because it pays attention to the behaviour and 'doing' of identities, as well as to structures and relationships inside groups and social categories. The salience hierarchy of identities in the work domain can also add an interesting perspective to the study. However, salience is not studied from the perspective of how important a certain identity is to an individual but from the viewpoint of how multiple identities are enacted in interaction (cf. Ashforth & Johnson, 2001, 32).

Levels of Social Identity. According to Brewer and Gardner (1996), there are three types of self-concepts, which they call the personal, interpersonal (relational) and collective identity. The personal identity is the 'individuated' self that is derived from self-evaluation of personal traits. The two types of social identity can be separated based on the type of bonds and relationships. The relational identity depends on close, dyadic relationships or membership in small, face-to-face groups or networks formed of dyadic relationships. Collective identity, on the other hand, does not require personal relationships with group members, but is associated with the ingroup as opposed to outgroups. (Brewer

& Gardner, 1996; Sedikes & Brewer, 2002). Brewer (2001) divides identity into four faces, which are a person-based, relational, group-based and collective identity. According to Brewer (ibid.), person-based social identity emphasises the importance of the membership of a specific social category to the individual. Another 'me' identity is the relational identity that defines self in relation to others in role-based dyadic relationships or in groups consisting of interpersonal relationships. Brewer (2001, 118-119), referring to Turner's Self-categorization Theory, calls group identity as a "depersonalized" sense of self, where there is a shift from 'me' into 'we'. The person identifies with the group as a whole and creates more salient boundaries between groups. Brewer makes also a distinction between group-based and collective identities by stating that a collective identity refers to "a socially shared image that invokes specific collective values and ideals" (Brewer, 2001, 120). Moreover, she sees collective identity to be an important term in collective action and identity politics (id., 119). Still, Brewer does not consider any of the faces of social identity primary or prior to the other.

Relational Identity. Relational identity seems to be a well-suited concept for my endeavour to study identity construction in interpersonal relationships, which consist of role-based dyads, and rather close-knit groups and social networks in workplace contexts. Relational identity has attracted research interest among those studying organisational behaviour (e.g. Randel & Wu 2011; Sluss & Ashforth, 2007; Zheng et al., 2014). Sluss and Ashforth (2007) claim that the notion of relational identity has contributed to our understanding of social identity and its focus on what happens between two individuals in interaction when the group prototypes are "softened by personalization". In her 2001 article, Brewer likens relational identity with Markus and Kitayama's (1991) 'interdependent self'. Brewer's definition of relational identity includes close, familial and occupational role relationships, as well as groups and networks consisting of such interpersonal relationships. Thus, relational identities also apply to, for example, collegial relationships and work teams, something that interpersonal communication in general and this research in particular are interested in.

Relational identities have also been approached from the perspective of communication and discourse studies. Tracy and Robles (2013, 23-26) state that relational identities exist alongside other identities and can change from moment to moment in interaction through discursive practices, such as language selection, turn-taking, gestures or choice of style and stance. In the organisational context, the situatedness of relational identity can be seen, for example, when manager-employee relationship of a formal business meeting becomes an egalitarian coworker relationship during a break in a coffee room. It can, therefore, be difficult to distinguish relational identities from group or institutional identities without considering the space and time where identities are produced. A discourse analytic approach to communication can enable to analyse the dynamic relationships that exist between the different levels and aspects of social and relational identities in different contexts. (See also, Benwell & Stokoe, 2006.)

Cultural Identity. Globalisation and more frequent cross- and intercultural contacts have increased the interest in social identity and especially in cultural identity as one of its facets. Ting-Toomey (2005, 214-215) defines cultural identity as a sense of belonging, association or membership affiliation with, or the emotional significance attached to the larger culture. Collier and Thomas's (1988, 113) definition includes both identification with and acceptance to a cultural group. Often cultural identity is used in close connection with ethnicity, which can be considered to stem from one's national origin, race, religion or language (Ting-Toomey, 2005). In everyday discussions, especially among laypeople, nationality, or even economic or political area and state can be lumped in with culture as if they were synonymous to it and an integral part of the canvas of cultural identity. Because of their complexity and ambiguity, the notions of culture and cultural identity should be defined and treated carefully in research.

This study does not use the notion of cultural identity, because it is difficult to distinguish it from other aspects of group-based or collective identities. The Identity Management Theory (IMT) by Imahori and Cupach makes a distinction between cultural and relational identities. In IMT, cultural identity implies the person's identification with and acceptance to a group that has a shared system of symbols, meanings and behavioural norms (Collier & Thomas 1988, 113). This definition includes nationalities and ethnic identity as well as other cultural layers. On the other hand, relational identity is based a shared culture between two people (Imahori & Cupach, 2005, 197). It refers to a system of meanings that two people have negotiated and created together and that helps them to coordinate meanings and behaviour in this specific, dyadic relationship (Imahori & Cupach 2005, 197; Wood 1982, 76). Imahori and Cupach (2005, 197) state that relational identity is narrow in scope and relatively stable, but its salience and intensity can vary even within one communicative encounter. According to Imahori & Cupach (2005, 198), a communicative situation can include interpersonal, intracultural and intercultural interaction. Other conceptualisations that create links between relationships, identity and culture can be found in Baxter's (1987) definition of relationships as mini-cultures and in the Third-Culture Building Model by Casmir (1999).

2.2 Identities in Transition

Postmodernism has contested the definitions of identity. In post-modern thinking, identities are not stable and consistent, but fluid, multifaceted and fragmented. Klyukanov (2008/2005, 12) states that identities, similar to cultures and meanings, are not something but are constantly becoming something in a certain place and time. Hall (1994) holds a similar view and states that identities are under constant transformation and positioning. According to Woodward (1997), identity can be seen as an interface between subjective positions and socio-cultural situations, which helps us understand who we are and how we relate to each other and the world we live in. Woodward (1997, 12) refers to both symbolic and social processes that produce, mark and sustain identities and rejects the essentialist view which sees identity and group identification as unchanging. Like Woodward, Sherry (2008) sees identity as a fluid construct and as a social process "in which individuals and groups regard themselves as similar to, or different from, each other" (Sherry, 2008, 415.) Postmodern identity research is interested the identity processes, discourses, positions and power (in)equality, which are often studied from critical or interdisciplinary standpoints. Lahti (2013) calls for the integrative, dynamic and processual approach to identity, which combines interpretive and critical interpersonal communication and studies the construction of identity in everyday workplace interactions in relation to larger social, political, and historical forces. The current research is mainly interpretive, yet the discursive positioning of identities allows to investigate the power dynamics in relationships and interpersonal communication.

Performative Identity. Judith Butler has contributed to the increase of critical studies on performative and discursive identities (Sherry, 2008, 415. Butler (1990) defines identity as performative, which means that identities are created and sustained through discursive and bodily acts. According to Butler, a person is not constructing her identity, but the self is the effect or the product of discourse (Moore, 2017a). However, Butler (1990) states that being constituted or produced in discourse does not mean that identities are determined by discourse. Instead, there is room for individual agency when a person acts and perform her identity in a way that disrupts the taken-for-granted identity categorizations.

Moore's Performative Face Theory combines Goffman's theorization of face with Butler's theory of performativity and the discourse of power. Moore (2017a, 264) summarizes her Performative Face Theory into four main principles:

1. Discourses circulate in negotiations of face.
2. Negotiations of face have histories.
3. Negotiations of face reinscribe relations of power by sedimenting identity categories.
4. Negotiations of face are subversive when they denaturalize taken-for-granted identity categories.

Such a critical approach to identity work and face negotiations can give insight into the complexity of identity constructs and contribute to the (re/de)construction of predetermined identity categories (McCall, 2005 and Moore, 2017a).

Cultural Identity in Postmodern. Followed by the postmodern turn, many intercultural researchers have started to look at the concepts of culture and cultural identity from the perspectives of interpretive and critical paradigms, and there have been attempts to redefine, deconstruct and reconstruct, or denaturalize these notions (e.g. Bauman, 2011; Dervin, 2011; Holliday, 2015 and 2016; Lahti, 2013; Lahti, 2015; Mendoza et al., 2002; Ogay & Edelmann, 2016; Piller, 2011; Primecz et al., 2011; Romani et al., 2018; Wilczek-Watson, 2015). Jameson (2007, 203-5) takes a critical stand on empirical studies where culture and cultural identity have been operationalized and limited to the levels of national and ethnic culture due to either political, philosophical or practical reasons. Jameson, referring to, for example, Triandis (1989) and Sussman (2000), claims that a broader notion of cultural identity could lead to research results and conclusions where other factors, such as vocation, language, gender and power could actually be more salient features of identity than nationality or ethnicity (also Aritz & Walker 2010, 37 and Risager & Dervin, 2015). Poncini (2002) refers to several other researchers who share the same concern for analytic stereotyping when research focuses solely on cultural differences and problems in communication and ignores the fact that there are many other factors involved in multicultural business settings. Jameson (2007, 218) notes that cultural identity is affected by personal relationships and, therefore, it would be important to study the interconnection between relationships and a person's cultural identity.

Intercultural, Transcultural and Hybrid Identities. Migration, travelling, technological advancement and the transformation of social realities offer individuals new possibilities to encounter 'otherness' and new cultural forms. Sussman (2000) argues that usually cultural identity becomes salient after cultural transitions. It is as if encountering otherness is the prerequisite for the cultural categorization of self. When the forces of globalism and the global market economy aim at unifying and harmonizing the identities of global citizens, individuals and groups may feel a greater need to reinforce their local or individual identity as a counter-reaction. On the other hand, new cultural forms and influences allow more opportunities to choose and mould identity. If the dialectical adaptation between deculturation and acculturation succeeds, the person develops what Kim calls an intercultural identity—a hybrid and flexible definition of self (Kim, 1995, 180). Sussman (2000, 359), referring to Hermans and Kempen (1998), Oyserman and Markus (1993) and Oyserman, Sakamoto and Lauffer (1998), states that increasing cultural contacts result in cultural hybridisation and layered or bicultural identities. When individuals live among several cultures, they, as transcultural people, negotiate different identity positions and at the same time create new cultural hybrids. Tranekjær (2015, 126) offers a definition of cultural identity "as a hybrid performance of various cultural memberships that are actualized and enabled by the specific interactional context".

Fragmented, Patchwork and Chameleon Identities. According to Hall (1992, 280), postmodern, fragmented identities are composed of multiple, contradictory and intersecting discourses, practices and positions. Keupp et al. conclude that today people do not achieve a unified self, but rather what they call a patchwork of multiple identities (Keupp et al., 2002, 196). According to Ang (2001, 6 and 17), hybridity or the "condition of in-betweenness" blurs the boundaries and unsettles the identity. Despite the challenges in cultural adaptation, hybridity or fluidity do not necessarily lead to identity crises. For example, Choudhry (2010), who studied the identity of multi-ethnic young people in Britain, states that these individuals have adopted a so-called chameleon identity, which help them to maintain coherence and function successfully in several cultural contexts. Howard (2002, 387) discusses the postmodern, multiple identities in connection with authenticity and concludes that authenticity does not mean that a person stays true to self and her background forever, but instead remains an authentic self in each context and relationship.

Despite their diversity, the young professionals studied in this research all represent so called millennials or generation Y with multiple options and sources for identity construction. Their online work and diverse work communities enable variable intercultural and interpersonal encounters and allow individuals and groups to create new forms and combinations of identity. The multitude of identity alternatives makes this group interesting for identity research. Many of the participants also face changes and transitions in their professional or personal lives. By investigating the discursive practices, it is possible to better understand the hybridity and fluidity of identities of professionals in international business. To avoid stereotyping, I do not use cultural identity as an analytic category or compare the participants based on their nationality or ethnicity, although they come from different backgrounds.

2.3 Identity at Work

This chapter discusses the concepts of work, occupational, vocational and professional identity and later considers their relationship with the concepts of career, role and agency. Although the focus of this research is on discursive construction of identity in the domain of work, I conclude this chapter with an overview of identity work that takes place at and across the boundaries and borders between work and nonwork. In this study, I most frequently use the term work identity and occasionally also a term of work-related identity, both of which occur also elsewhere in research literature. I consider these terms more inclusive than, for example, occupational or vocational identity (FAME Consortium, 2007, 13).

Work identity can be considered as one of the many facets or dimensions of social identity, but it is also closely attached to the self-esteem and personal identity of an adult person (e.g. Elsbach, 2004; Dutton et al. 2010; Saayman & Crafford, 2011; Sluss & Ashforth, 2007). On the other hand, work identity is also multifaceted and made of several components or aspects that are not necessarily all performed at the same time. It can be regarded as a combination of educational, occupational, professional and career identity, competences, various organisational roles and work relationships. Work identity is said to be constituted in group and inter-group relations, and organisational collaboration and it is this relational aspect of work identity that makes it interesting to the current research (Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003). Holmes (2006c, 167 and 186) states that at the workplace people are constantly engaged in the process of constructing different aspects of interpersonal and inter-group identity, as well as the meanings of professional status, team solidarity, authority, responsibilities, gender category, group affiliations or distinctive workplace culture.

Career identity is a term that has been used to refer to discursive practices of performing and negotiating identity positions when people narrate sequences of work-related experiences (LaPointe, 2010 referring e.g. to Fugate et al., 2004). This approach to identity has been considered fruitful for research and important for individuals in identity construction, especially when contexts and boundaries of careers are changing (Fugate et al., 2004). In the constructionist approach to work-related identity, the narrator is co-authoring the career story with the audience, for example with the researcher, while her agency allows her to choose among alternative identity positions (LaPointe, 2010). In a way, identity narratives form a link between the personal sensemaking and interpersonal impression management (Fugate et al., 2004; Stokes, 1996). Moreover, the construction of identity in this approach is analysed as situated in the given social contexts. Discursively constructed work and career identity will be discussed more in the following chapter.

A very widely used identity concept in the management and educational research is also that of professional identity. Professional identity has been studied, for example, among teachers, physicians, engineers, nurses and social workers during and after university studies (Ursin & Paloniemi, 2019; Ryynänen, 2001; Hatmaker, 2013; Jorgenson 2002; Wiles, 2013; Traynor & Buus, 2016; Zayts, & Schnurr, 2014). The terms profession and professional identity are not only associated with work in a special industry, but also often with education where specialised training and qualification have been acquired. Thus, professional identity often has a developmental and career perspective. For example, Glaser-Segura et al. (2010) have this viewpoint in their study on the development of BBA students' professional identity in Romanian business education. In a workplace, professional identities cannot be separated from the institutional context (Schnurr 2012, 110 citing Hall et al., 1999, 295). For Schnurr (2013, 124), identities are complex constructions that integrate macro- and micro-level categories, roles, and positions. According to Schnurr (2012, 110), professional identities are also inter-relational and characterised by multiple and complex interactional processes. Because identities gain their meaning in relation to each other, in the context of companies, it means that if there is a supervisor there is also a subordinate, and if there is a leader there also has to be a follower (ibid.). Davies (2003, 191–194) speaks about paired professional identities which are not only based on a binary division of being or not being something but often also on the devaluation of the other professional or the other occupational group. Although the above definitions of professional identity are very close to what I mean by work identity, I consider work identity to have wider applicability and therefore be more suitable for my research project. It is a useful concept because it is situated in the workplace, explicitly relational and readily seen as something one does rather than who one is (Worth, 2016, 1311).

Terms such as role-based identity and organisational identification have also been used in identity research in organisational contexts. Workplace identities are intertwined with organisational and occupational roles. Roles have been defined as sets of expectations and responsibilities associated with particular social positions (Bucholtz and Hall 2005; Holmes et al., 1999; Roberts & Sarangi 1999). Individuals can either adapt and reinforce or challenge and reject such role expectations in their construction of identities for themselves and others (e.g. Holmes and Schnurr, 2006). The connection between role and identity is ambiguous and complex – yet said to be particularly strong for professionals (Pratt et al., 2006). When asked to tell who they are, people often respond with what they do. On the other hand, we are often asked what we do to find information about our social position and connections, income level or educational attainment (Brown et al., 2007, vii). Pratt et al. (2006, 255–6) suggests "what one does (work behaviours) is often compared with expectations about who one is (identity assessments)". As an outcome of long educational and socialisation processes, professionals view themselves through the goals, values, norms, and interaction patterns associated with their roles at work and often in contrast to the work of other professional groups (Abbott, 1988; Becker et al., 1961; Reay et al., 2017; Freidson, 2001).

In this study, roles are also seen as social and discursive constructs, and therefore not as stable or predetermined job titles or status markers. As Carbaugh (1994) states, roles are negotiated and arranged between individuals and organisations. Apart from the institutional roles, employees may have, what Organ (1990) calls, extra-roles as a part of their organisational citizenship behaviours, e.g. a role of a motivator, mentor or housekeeper. These roles, in turn, have been found to correlate with organisational identification (Ashforth et al. 2008; Chen et al. 2013; Chughtai and Buckley, 2009; Edwards & Peccei, 2010; Van Dick, 2001). Bucholtz and Hall (2005), Sluss and Ashforth (2007) and Stryker (2007) among others see professional role identities as relational and thus embedded in interactions. Persons in different roles define themselves in relation to each other through ongoing interaction (Sluss & Ashforth, 2007).

The relationship between roles and positions in interpersonal interaction is complex but reciprocal. On the one hand, positions can be crystalized into roles; on the other, roles can be seen as "pre-positioning" (Harré, 2012; Henriksen, 2008; Hirvonen, 2016). Position, however, is a broader concept than the role, because it can also refer to groups and larger social entities, even cultures (Harré et al., 2009; Hirvonen, 2016; Jones, 2013). Positions are also more dynamic and discursive than roles, and can refer to intergroup relations (Hirvonen, 2016 and 2020).

When investigating identities in the context of work and organisations, status and power relations should also be considered. Professional identities are always to some extent related to power (van de Mieroop & Clifton, 2012). Wallace (2002, 2) defines work identity as a "person's sense of who he or she is, constituted through his or her positioning within the particular relations of power in the workplace". In this study, analysis methods rooted in Positioning Theory are used to investigate the discursive construction of identity in the different power relations of the workplace.

Professional identities and power relationships are sometimes also discussed in connection with the concept of agency. Professional agency can be understood as possibilities and actions to influence, make choices and to take stances that affect one's work and professional identities (Collin et al. 2015; Eteläpelto et al. 2013; Harteis & Goller, 2014; Vähäsantanen & Eteläpelto, 2015). Usually agency is seen from the perspective of an individual, but its role has also been discussed in the development of work communities and in the renegotiations of work-related identities in changing practices and circumstances at work (Eteläpelto et al. 2013, 62). The current study is focusing on discursive identity construction at work, not on professional agency as such. Yet, the concept of discursive agency used in positioning theory is discussed briefly in the next chapter.

Boundaries between Work and Nonwork Identities. When discussing the construction of work identity in the changing work environments, it seems important to consider also the other, nonwork domains of life. The borders or boundaries between work and nonwork and work and family have been widely studied e.g. from the perspectives of Boundary Theory by Ashford et al. (2000) and Work/Family Border Theory by Clark (2000). Flexible employment and distributed work arrangement, such as home-based teleworking, can make the boundaries between private and professional domains permeable and blurred (Fonner & Stache, 2012). Employees need to make their personal decisions on the flexibility of their work-nonwork boundaries, but also negotiate them with others. Smartphones and other boundary-blurring mobile devices that are used on a continuous basis in interpersonal communication for work and private matters impact the everyday management of identity (Kossek, 2016; Martinez et al., 2012, 513). In online environments, boundary management is not only about balancing and dividing time, space and people between work and personal life, but also about the management of privacy and offline and online identities. Today, employees are often encouraged to use social media also at work. It might be difficult to construct a univocal online identity that represents the different roles and facets of identity and is representative in all relationships, whether coworkers, business partners or family members and close friends (Fieseler et al., 2015; Wilson et al., 2012). To solve this dilemma, individuals may create several accounts or separate audience zones, or use different channels and online platforms for different social groups they relate to (e.g. Jukuri, 2013; Seargeant & Tagg, 2014, 9). Privacy control in networked communication settings is, however, not solely in the hands of an individual, but the boundaries are collaboratively regulated with a multiplicity of interaction partners (Lampinen et al., 2011). This can make online identity construction a very complex, interpersonal activity. The young professionals of this research can be called digital natives. They have grown in the world characterized by medialization and globalization. Despite their multitasking ability and extensive use of technology-mediated communication for professional and personal purposes, it is claimed that their generation is aware of the potential risks of constant availability and connectivity, and that they prioritize good work-life balance (Liesem, 2017; Gronewold & Wenzel, 2009). This research is not about online identities as such, but because of the prevalence of ICT at work, they cannot be completely overlooked.

2.4 Identities in Communication and Discourse

The relationship between communication and identity is intricate and complex. In the current study, communication is not revealing identity, but identities are constructed in communication. This view of the constitutive role of communication is in line with the Communication Theory of Identity (CTI), according to which, identity is more than just presentation in communication; it is also discursive. CTI does not focus on roles or structures, but rather on identity processes in interaction (Hecht et al. 2005, 260-261). Hecht (1993) and Hecht at al. (2005, 262) borrow from postmodernism and see identity as layered (see also Ting-Toomey, 2009). In CTI, identity resides in four layers or loci, in a person, in enactment or communication, in a relationship and in a group or community. All layers penetrate each other, intersect and work simultaneously, but they can be analysed separately or in various combinations (Hecht et al. 2005, 263). CTI has ten common axiomatic propositions that define identity. First, identities have individual, social, and communal properties and they are both enduring and changing. Identities are affective, cognitive, behavioural, and spiritual. They have both content and relationship levels of interpretation and involve both subjective and ascribed meaning. In CTI, identities are codes that are expressed in conversations and which define membership in communities. Moreover, identities have semantic properties that are expressed in core symbols, meanings, and labels. Identities also prescribe modes of appropriate and effective communication and they are a source of expectations and motivations. The tenth axiom sees identities as emergent. (Hecht et al., 2005, 263–264.) What comes to diversity, Hecht, Warren, Jung and Krieger (2005, 258-9) highlight the differences between the Asian, African and Greek concepts of identity and suggest that the Communication Theory of Identity (CTI) combines the holistic Asian and African concepts and a Western more polarised understanding of identity. They also propose that CTI is able to take both individualist and collectivist ideas into account.

Cultural Identity Theory (CIT) by Collier (1998; 2005) and Collier and Thomas (1988) shares the same perspective on discursive constitutions of identity as Communication Theory of Identity. Both theories also suggest that cultural identity may vary in scope, salience and intensity. Unlike CTI, CIT considers the broader contextual forces in cultural identifications and sees the relationship between identity and institutions and social structures bidirectional (Collier, 2005, 253). Ting-Toomey (2009) associates Collier’s Cultural Identity Theory with macro-societal and critical-interpretive theorizing. Cultural Identity Theory sees cultural identifications as multiple and even contradictory (Collier, 2005, 249). Identities are negotiated, advanced and resisted through multiple discursive and dialectic tensions in relationships (id, 252). The dialectical tensions perspective can also be found in Baxter and Montgomery’s Relational Dialectics, which is not exactly an identity theory, although it has been applied to identity research, for example, by Merrill (2018). Organisational communication is also interested in, what it calls, dialectical tensions drawn from relational dialectics (Woo et al., 2017). Both in interpersonal and organisational communication contradictions are nested in social construction, but with different foci (ibid). The current study is more interested in tensions in identity work in interpersonal communication in workplace relationships, rather than tensions emerging in organisational structures.

Face and Identity. The concept of face has been very important for many scholars in interpersonal communication (Braithwaite et al., 2015). Symbolic Interactionism and Goffman's theory on face observe identity through roles or positions that an individual performs in social interaction and which are then internalized (Owens at al., 2010). Domenici and Littlejohn (2006) connect identity with Goffman's facework, which they define "as a set of coordinated practices in which communicators build, maintain, protect, or threaten personal dignity, honour, and respect" (Domenici & Littlejohn, 2006, 10-11). Dominici and Littlejohn, referring to Goffman (1959), Ting-Toomey and Cocroft (1994) and Tracy and Tretheway (2005), state that individuals present themselves differently in different relational contexts, i.e. they remake or renegotiate their identity when they interact with others. They see identity as multifaceted and dynamic and make a connection between the three levels of identity and the three types of face, which they have borrowed from Lim and Bowers (1991). They link the autonomy face with personal identity, fellowship face with social or relational identity and competence face with community identity. Their concept of community identity includes groups, organisations and cultures. Identity Management Theory also uses the concepts of face and facework, which it has borrowed from Goffman (1959 and 1967) and Brown and Levinson (1978) (Cupach & Imahori, 1994). In interaction the persons avow or claim identities and assign or ascribe identities to others (Imahori & Cupach, 2005, 198). In this way the speakers reciprocally maintain each other's face (Metts, 2000, 80). Imahori (2002) has identified four sets of strategies that people use to cope with identity problematics and face threats, such as identity freezing and stereotyping. The strategies include self and other positive face support, mutual positive face support, for example, through humour and laughter, and mutual negative face support through avoidance (Imahori and Cupach, 2005, 201).

Identity in Discourse. Identity is one of the most popular research subjects in discourse analytic studies (e.g. Varjonen et al., 2009). From the perspective of discourse analysis, identities are always social, because they are constituted in human interaction and are therefore also studied as linguistic and social acts. According to such a definition, identities are also flexible and multiple, because people create new, contextual and fluid definitions of themselves and others through language (Jokinen et al., 1999, 68). Pietikäinen and Mäntynen (2009, 15) state that language use is defined and delimited by its context and the surrounding discursive practices, as well as speakers' skills and preferences. The discursive construction of identity can take place at the micro-level, where identities, social categories and inclusion or exclusion are constructed in interpersonal interaction. On the other hand, identities can also be produced in parallel and intersecting discourses at the macro level. Therefore, the discursively produced social identity can refer to either how individuals identify themselves and others with social categories in their interaction or how they are discursively constructed in discourse.

2.5 Identity Positions

In this study identities are viewed as social and discursive constructs, i.e. products of social interaction, but also as processes where self and other are discursively positioned. According to the positioning theory, identities are always jointly (re)produced (Davies & Harré, 1990; Davies & Harré, 1999; Harré & Moghaddam, 2003a and 2003b; Harré & van Langenhove, 1991, 1999a and van Langenhove & Harré, 1999). Positioning theory is not only interested in how speakers position themselves, e.g. reflexively in narratives, but also how they are being positioned by others in interaction (e.g. De Fina & Georgakopoulou 2012; Jones 2013). In this reciprocal process, a person positioning herself is also positioning others while being simultaneously positioned (Harré & van Langenhove 1991, 398; Jones, 2013; van Langenhove & Harré 1999, 22; Zelle, 2009). Positioning theory by Harré and others conceptualises the 'other' as an integral part of the dynamic identity process. It provides a useful framework for investigating identity work. According to Andreouli, positioning can help understand the relational and dynamic character of identity, but it necessitates that identities are studied as they are being done here and now (Andreouli 2010, 14.1.-14.4).

The discursive-positioning approach to identity is anchored in the epistemological discursive psychology of Edwards and Potter (Edwards 1997; Edwards and Potter 1992; Potter 1996; Potter and Edwards 1999, 2003). It sees identities as having a performative rather than referential quality. In other words, identities are not something beyond the text or talk, but locally situated and produced in discourse (Korobov 2013). Korobov (2001) explains the view of Positioning Analysis on identity as follows:

> "…identities are discursive, meaning that identity is immanent and made relevant in the ongoing, fine-detailed patterns of "talk". As talk, identity is done through the use of things like turn taking, topical shifts, contrasts, repairs, lexical and pronoun choice, formulaic expressions, language varieties, intonational patterns, figures of speech, and so on. …identity does not refer to an overarching structure of the individual who synthesizes and organizes various conversations and social practices. Nor does it paint a picture of the "subject" as an ideological effect, or as simply the site for the study of socio-political repertoires, thus obviating an analysis of the linguistic construction of agency and volition. Rather, identity is seen as the local, or "ethno"-ways in which talk is used in interactive contexts to evince the local display of perspective, or the positioning of self vis-à-vis the other, and vice-versa."

Referring to Bucholtz and Hall (2005), Schnurr concludes that discursive identity is not only being done when people explicitly categorize themselves or others, but also constructed through more implicit intersubjective positioning and other indexical processes throughout their interactions with others. As one of the examples of such indexicality, Schnurr gives the use of professional terms and jargon (Schnurr 2013, 124).

Bamberg investigates identities in "small stories" and everyday narratives arising from talk-in-interaction (Bamberg, 2003). Such narrative studies see identities as unfinished projects rather than self-contained representations of self and focus on the interactional and performative aspects of identity construction (Georgakopoulou, 2006b, 83-84). The positions that the speakers project, enact and co-construct in their narratives during the interviews also attribute agency to them. In this research, agency is discursive. It is a negotiated and renegotiated capacity to act in the given socio-cultural context. Ahearn (2001, 112) calls agency "the socioculturally mediated capacity to act". From the perspective of positioning theory, agency is also connected with power, i.e. the rights, responsibilities and ownership that emerge and are construed in discourse. In this research, discursive (or narrative) agency is a link in between the free will of an individual and the social forces that influence people's actions from the outside.

2.6 Identity in the Current Study

In this research, *identity* is understood and studied as a social and discursive construct that is emergent and evolves in interactions with others (see e.g. Bucholtz & Hall, 2005; Cameron, 2002; Shnurr, 2013). The notion of discursive identity makes a shift from the private domain of an individual to the social one also when a person is narrating his life story. From this perspective, identity is not a set of attributes, but rather the process of *identification* (Bamberg et al., 2011). From the constructionist perspective, identification is a dynamic and continuous process of constructing and being constructed in interaction. Another discursive process in identity construction is *categorisation*, which can be considered to include the various identities available in a given communicative situation, but also the kinds of 'broad labels' that are more generally used in public discourse in a given place and time (Bamberg et al, 2011, 274). The dynamism of identity is also captured in the *positioning* theory according to which people continuously position themselves, are positioned by others, and position others (Davies & Harré, 1990; Bamberg et al., 2011).

Although this research has its premise on the theorisation of social identity, it does not approach identity from the perspective of the individual's affective attachment, sense of belonging or cognitive associations with social groups. The integrative approach used in the study means that both personal and social identities are understood as 'social', because identity is constructed and constituted in social interaction. Identity is perceived and studied as it is expressed and enacted in communication "with, against or despite, but certainly in response to others"(Josselson, 1994, 82). My research focuses on, but is not limited to, relational identity that derives from interpersonal interactions and personalised bonds that are created and maintained in dyadic relationships and small-groups of a work community (Brewer and Gardner, 1996; Miscenko & Day, 2016; Sluss and Ashforth, 2007; Tracy, 2002; Tracy & Robles, 2013).

Relational identity can be distinguished from the cognitive self-concept as well as from the shared sense of belonging to larger, more impersonal social categories, such as organisations or ethnic groups (Brewer & Gardner, 1996). Although the personal, relational and collective identities can be set apart, it does not mean that identity or its different levels and aspects are compartmentalised. On the contrary, the interpersonal level of identity helps integrate the personal and collective levels of identity (Sluss & Ashforth, 2007). Considerations on the different conceptualizations of identity have led to a conclusion that the several aspects or layers of social identity may appear separately or together in different combinations and be more or less salient in different communicative situations.

In this study, the concept of work identity is preferred over a more common, and often taken-for-granted term of professional identity (Cheney & Ashcraft, 2007). Miscenko and Day (2016), with a reference to Gecas (1982), define work identity as a "collection of meanings attached to the self by the individual and others in the work domain". Thus, work identity is not just one's self concept as an employee or professional, but entails different meanings that are discursively created in interaction with others. In the organisational context, relational identity is often based on occupational or organisational roles, such as supervisor-employee or coworker-coworker. However, there can also be other role-relationships at work, for example spouse-coworker or special peer relationships, that are involved in identity construction in the work domain (Kram & Isabella, 1985). Moreover, some of the organisational roles – and consequently also professional or work identities – are 'nested' or embedded in each other, such as the manager, departmental head, supervisor and colleague, the salience of each can differ from situation to situation (Ashforth & Johnson, 2001). In organisational life, some of the identities can also cross-cut the role-based identities within the workplace and even go beyond organisational boundaries (ibid.). Additionally, in this research, interviewee-interviewer and observer-participant role-relationships are considered. Because relational identities are interactional, they may change from one situation to the other and, therefore, it is important to understand work identity as situated in the course of interaction (Tracy, K. 2002; Tracy & Robles, 2013; Tracy & Tretheway, 2005).

Role-based work identity is also dependent on organisational hierarchy and structures (Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Sluss & Ashforth, 2007). For this reason, identities are also studied as identity positions that are being negotiated, i.e. assigned, accepted and maintained, or opposed and rejected in discourse. This perspective relates the concept of identity with the notion of power. My definition of identity will also leave space for individual agency, i.e. the reflexive capacity of individuals to negotiate their identity (e.g. LaPointe, 2010). Identity in this research is, therefore, not the deterministic notion produced by big D discourses, neither the cognitive concept of self-construed identity. As Nikander

(2009, 875) suggests, through discourse analysis it is possible to narrow the gap between structural contexts and the discursive agency of individuals.

On the one hand, the study investigates the work identities and identity facets that are being constructed and enacted in interaction and, on the other, the communicative acts and discursive practices that produce the identities in work-related discourses. Discursive practices in this study include several types of communicative strategies and activities that are performed to create meanings and construct identities. In their simplest form, discursive practices in identity construction can include the use of metaphors or a specific language, dialect or professional jargon. They also include speech acts, for example, the verbal, vocal and nonverbal ways of addressing others or introducing and positioning oneself in a social setting. More complex discursive practices that can be associated with identity construction include, for example, stance, genres and narratives (Tracy & Robles 2013). When the analysis moves further from the textual and micro level to look at identity construction in wider contexts of work communities, organisations or industries, discursive practice can also refer to the mesh of small 'd' discourses that justify existing arrangements, maintain the status quo and legitimise social order (Potter, 2008). The strength of a discursive approach to identity is in its ability to display the complexities and flexibility of identities at different levels, both in interpersonal and organisational communication (Way, 2012; Tracy & Robles, 2013). As discursive and relational constructs, work identities also allow the coexistence of individuality and social connectedness (Zhang et al., 2014).

This study uses two types of approaches to identity construction in relationships. First, it looks into relational identities that are being constructed and enacted in mundane everyday interactions in the workplaces, and secondly those that are produced in research interviews in the interviewee-researcher relationship. Interviews also have a potential to produce narrative identities when the interviewees reconstruct their past experiences and relate them to their perceived present and imagined future. The narrative identities that are discursively co-constructed in the interviewee-interviewer interaction connect the facets of social identity with the personal level of self and give the situated identities both histories and futures.

I believe that it is the interpersonal level that is especially interesting for the discursive analysis of identity in the domain of work. The interpersonal level can help to understand the dynamics, boundaries and tensions between different levels and facets of identity at work, e.g. such as the discursively produced career identity of an individual, the multiple and evolving group identities of the workplace and the collective organisational identities. Jenkins (2008, 37–38) states that in organisational and institutional settings the individual and collective identifications come into being in interaction and "are routinely entangled with each other". Consequently, I have not been able to limit my study solely to the interpersonal level of work identity but will look at the ways in which the different frames and aspects of identity emerge in the interactions. Because employees have multiple memberships and roles, and the members of workgroups change, identities become fluid and group boundaries permeable in organisations (Paulsen, 2003; Stohl & Putnam, 2003; Zhang, 2007). Additionally, the forms of work and employment relationships are becoming more varied, which causes the boundaries between work and nonwork and work and private domains to be more flexible and permeable, as well. Similarly, professional and career identities become more fluid.

Work identity in this study combines several aspects, such as educational, occupational and career identities. It is social and relational and intertwined with organisational roles and relationships. As a discursive construct, the person's work identity is multifaceted, flexible and negotiable. Work identities are also situated in their immediate discursive and socio-cultural context, where they are being co-constructed in interaction. Moreover, work identities are also embodied and spatial and, for this reason, I have also observed the construction and negotiation of identities in nonverbal communication in the workplaces. This also allows for analysing the non-human agents in identity construction in the organisational contexts.

3 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESEARCH

3.1 Aims of the Current Research

This qualitative research aims at describing and understanding discursive construction of work identities of young business professionals. The identity construction is studied in workplaces that are characterised as international by their scope of action and culturally diverse by the composition of their staff. It has been considered important to investigate if the theorisation on social identity and identification provides valid explanations for the construction of work identity amid societal changes and the ongoing transformation of work. This research endeavour relates social identity with interpersonal communication by analysing the discursive construction of relational identity in the work domain. A more practical objective of this study is to develop communication curricula in BBA education to better cater to the needs of individuals, communities of practice and organisations operating in the rapidly changing business environment.

The current research on discursive identity construction aims at answering the following questions:

1. What facets and meanings of identity of young business professionals are being discursively produced and made salient in the context of work?
2. How are multifaceted and relational work identities discursively (co-)constructed and positioned in interaction?

Because identities are believed to be multifaceted, situated and therefore also fluid, the objective of the first question is not to uncover the essence of identity but the modalities of identity constructions and their different meanings. As an analyst, my aim is to consider multiple aspects of identity in order to understand more thoroughly what local categories and transitory identity positions are being constructed in the workplace contexts. Secondly, the research aims at explaining how the work identities and identity positions are discursively produced in interaction. The second question is derived from the core premise of Social

Constructionism and Discourse Analysis, according to which the social world, meanings and identities are constructed using symbolic resources.

The knowledge pursued in this study is qualitative, contextual and relative. Meanings are being interpreted by developing thick description of context-specific, multiple identities that are constructed and positioned by the participants. As often in qualitative inquiry, the research design in this study has been emergent rather than strictly predetermined (Creswell, 2007). The study shares some common features with naturalistic, ethnographic inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton 2002 and 2015) and a case study approach (Allen, 2017; Yin, 2003). It uses purposive sampling and employs two investigative strategies of observation and conversational interviews. However, the study differs from ethnographic research in that its main aim is not to investigate unifying cultural patterns of a group, but rather to understand the diversity, complexity, plasticity and situatedness of work identities and shifting identity positions.

The study focuses on the discursive construction of work identities of young business professionals who have been purposively selected to represent a diverse cohort of alumni with a BBA degree. Despite the narrow focus, it is believed that the study can contribute to the wider body of knowledge in interpersonal and intercultural communication as well as to the discourse on identity construction at and for work.

3.2 Choosing the Methodological Approach

The methodological choices of the present qualitative study are based on Social Constructionism, which views social realities, meanings and identities as discursive constructs (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Leeds-Hurwitz, 2009; Willig 2014, 341). According to this paradigm and qualitative discourse studies, language both presumes and constitutes social realities, which makes language and communication not only the primary source of data, but also the methodological and theoretical concern (Carbaugh, 2007, 167).

The study adopts a discourse analytic approach. Discourse Analysis (DA) is a series of interdisciplinary approaches and a family of different methods rather than a single way to analyse textual or other symbolic data in their social contexts (e.g. Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Johnstone, 2017; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002; Phillips & Hardy, 2002). The differences in various discourse analytic approaches and methods derive from differing ontological assumptions and the level of analysis (Jørgensen, & Phillips, 2002). Among others, Fairhurst and Putnam (2004) and Gee (1999) differentiate between the discourse 'd' and the Discourse 'D', where 'D' refers to more stable, often taken for granted ideas and social systems that are situated in time and place, in a certain cultural, historic, political and ideological context. This type of discourse analysis (DA) has been influenced by Foucault and it considers discourse as expression of power (Kärreman and Levay, 2017, 74). Some researchers of organisational discourse, such as Alvesson and Kärreman (2011, 1195), have argued that such a broad concept of discourse is vague and suggest that terms such as culture, ideology or social structure should be used instead.

Another analytic approach is associated with Potter and Wetherell's discursive psychology and it is interested in discourses with small 'ds' or discursive repertoires (Kärreman & Levay, 2017, 74). The small 'd' studies focus on language-in-use, in contrast with the big D, which investigates language plus "other stuff" (Gee, 1999, 26). Instead of adopting the concept of interpretive repertoire of discursive psychology, this study uses the term discourse, but not in the Foucauldian sense. On the other hand, discourse in this study is a broader concept than that of conversation analysis (Wooffitt, 2005). Discourses with small 'ds' are local, yet flexible ways of 'speaking appropriately' in specific social contexts. The analysis starts at the level of interpersonal interaction, but interpretations are not only based on the detailed analysis of turns and patterns of how verbal interaction is coordinated and organised. Instead, the analysis extends to the situated meanings of identity that are created in the specific relationship, and space and time of interaction adjunct to broader structures of organisations and industries. The difference of the methodology used in this research in comparison to Conversation Analysis lies in the type of research data and in the level of contextualisation. While conversation analysts scrutinize naturally occurring interaction, conversational turns and sequential organisation from a rather narrow, 'talk-internal' perspective (Kunitz & Markee, 2017), my discourse analytic approach tries to contextualise interaction in workplace relationships and in an interviewee-interviewer relationship, which means that discourse is considered to have wider interpersonal or social functions. The methodology of this study also has a more interpretive stance, when discourse is analysed and interpreted within the broader frames of physical and social contexts. I also partly aim at interpreting small d discourses in their organisational and cultural contexts whenever sufficiently grounded in interaction. (Wooffitt, 2005.)

The roots of discourse analysis can be traced back to Wittgenstein and the so-called linguistic turn (Frayne, 2017, 148). Despite their differences, all types of DA start from the same premise that meanings are constructed in language. They also have the same goal to understand social phenomena by paying close attention to the use of language in meaning making. The analysis can focus on the discursively created meanings or on their discursive construction and interpretation. Most of discourse analytic studies, however, try to answer both types of questions: what meanings are being created and how meaning making takes place. (Jokinen et al., 2016.) This study has this dual aim.

The data for discourse studies can be text or talk, and often DA researchers prefer naturally occurring written or spoken language (Potter, 2004). This study investigates identities as they are being expressed and enacted in interpersonal interaction. When people communicate, they say explicitly and implicitly who they are, and how they are related to each other. When studying the construction of meanings and identity in interaction, it is not enough to focus solely on language and verbal communication (Block, 2010; Norris, 2004). Language, if understood only as verbal communication, is just one of the modalities of social interaction (Mondada, 2016). In fact, it is difficult, if not impossible, to separate nonverbal and vocal from verbal communication in meaning making (Burgoon et al., 2011; Richmond & McCroskey, 2004). Yet, nonverbal communication can repeat, substitute, complement, accent or contradict what is being said (Bonaccio et al., 2016). It has been argued that people rely more on nonverbal cues in meaning making when the verbal and nonverbal communication are incongruent (Burgoon, 1994; Newcombe & Ashkanasy, 2000). Nonverbal communication has also been found especially meaningful for relational work when people express emotions and manage impressions in interpersonal communication (Burgoon & LePoire, 1999; Docan-Morgan et al., 2013; Xin, 2004). Remland (2006 and 2004) states that nonverbal communication has also a significant role in constructing identity, relationships and status in organisational contexts. When it comes to diversity and multicultural environments, including nonverbal communication can help the researcher avoid what Shi-xu (2009, 35) quoting Derrida calls "Western logocentric ideology" and allow the voice of the participants from more synthetic and high-context communication cultures to be heard.

Nonverbal communication has been operationalised for empirical observation as appearance, movement, facial and vocal behaviour, touch, space and time (Kudesia and Elfenbain 2013, Richmond, McCroskey, and Hickson, 2008). Of these components, especially appearance and space are considered relevant in identification (Kudesia and Elfenbain 2013, 806–807), and both are observed and analysed in this study. This research has a limited perspective on facial and vocal behaviour including only silence, pausing, sighing and segregates (hmm), smile and laughter with different intensities. Unlike Kudesia and Elfenbain, inherent features, such as the person's height, are not taken into account in this research, but appearance refers only to such external symbols as clothing, adornment and body ornamentation. Artefacts have also been found to be important in identity construction, social categorisation and in the constitution of power and dominance in workplace relationships (Schmid Mast & Cousin, 2013; Kudesia & Elfenbain, 2013). Elsbach (2004) suggests that, in addition to behaviours and titles, permanent, physical identity and status markers, such as office décor, are used in the categorisation and profiling of people at the workplace. Contrary to Elsbach's study, this research is not focused on the coworker's interpretation of identity markers. However, office arrangements and décor as part of the identity discourse have been studied and are further discussed in the results section.

During the past decades there has been a growing interest toward multimodality and mediated discourse (Norris, 2019). This interest in the embodied ways of communication in the material and spatial environment has also been referred as the embodied or spatial turn in social and behavioural sciences (Nevile, 2015; Mondada, 2016; Warf & Arias, 2014). Darvin (2018, 786) recommends that the researchers of identity, especially those involved in ethnographic research, should consider both face-to-face interactions as well as mediated communication in online and offline contexts. In the current study, the focus is on face-to-face encounters where both verbal and nonverbal communication play an important role. Interpretation and meaning making is not only based on verbal and vocal messages, but also body language, space and various artefacts. The video-recorded workplace encounters offer a possibility to do visual data analysis and study the participants' positions in space and the affordances space, furniture and other artefacts allow to their interactions (Jewitt, 2011; 2013 and 2014; Jewitt et al. 2016; Ledin & Machin, 2018; Ravelli at al., 2016). Space and material objects should not just be understood as the context or a neutral background for discursive identity construction in organisations, but as Mautner (2017, 403) states, a multimodal approach to the intertextuality of space, identity and discourse can lead to better understanding of how "social actors' choices on the micro level are dialectically linked with social patterns on the macro level". Although the data includes some screenshots and mediated interaction, identity construction in technology mediated communication per se has not been addressed. I also prefer nonverbal communication over multimodality, since it is an established concept in communication studies.

The relationship between discourse and context is also fundamental for all types of discourse analysis. However, it is often problematic to decide how much consideration needs to be given to the different contexts in which the discourse is produced, what these wider contexts are and how far beyond text the researcher can go in contextualisation to defend her interpretations and claims (Cheek, 2008). This research holds an assumption that the surrounding culture and society do not only have one-way influence on interpersonal communication at workplaces, but communication and interpersonal practices also sustain social order (Baxter & Asbury 2015; Moore 2017b). The current research is focused on the micro- and, to some extent, the meso-levels of analysis and interpretation. It starts by analysing interpersonal communication at the micro-level, but it also makes use of the information outside the specific interaction sequences and episodes, for example, by making references to the other datasets or interpreting the construed meanings in the specific spatial, temporal and social setting. The identity constructs and their discursive construction are described and interpreted, first in their immediate textual contexts and then in the context of communicative or discursive practise. Lastly, they are also discussed in the context of social practise. (Fairclough, 1992; Jokinen et al., 2016.)

This research takes an eclectic approach to the analysis of small 'd' discourse and combines the descriptive and interpretive modes of Cultural Discourse Analysis (Carbaugh & Boromisza-Habashi, 2015) and Positioning Analysis. Cultural Discourse Analysis is employed at the precursory stage to organise the emerging themes in the datasets, to locate the identity discourse and to find its connections to other discourses in the data. The methodology of the Positioning Analysis is applied to both observation data, i.e. interactions within the workplace and the narrative data produced in the conversational interviews (Korobov & Bamberg, 2004). Positioning Analysis enables to investigate the relational aspects of identity construction in interpersonal communication. It is also suitable for analysing both personal small stories and 'master narratives', thus having the potential to bridge the gap between micro-, meso- and macro-levels of analysis. Together with Cultural Discourse Analysis, Positioning Analysis is used to interpret the socio-cultural meanings of identity that are created.

Cultural Discourse Analysis (CuDA) is one of the hybrid discourse analytic methods that understands communication practices as formative of social life (Boromisza-Habashi et al., 2018; Carbaugh 2007a, 1). Its field-based methodology is derived from the Ethnography of Communication first introduced by Dell Hymes and John Gumperz in the 1960s (Covarrubias Baillet, 2009; Hymes, 1972; Philipsen & Carbaugh, 1986). The applicability of this approach to the current study is based on two focus areas of the methodology: firstly, the socially situated uses and meanings of words, their relations, and sequential forms of expression, and secondly, the ways verbal and nonverbal signs create and reveal social codes of identity, relationships, emotions, place, and communication itself. CuDA presumes that communication encompasses both explicit and implicit meanings. To interpret them, it uses five analysis tools, which it calls discursive hubs and radiants of meaning: 1) being, i.e. terms and forms of identity, personhood and face, 2) relating, i.e. social relationships and institutions, 3) feeling, i.e. emotion, 4) acting, i.e. sequential action, and 5) dwelling, i.e. concerns about the environment and the nature of things (Carbaugh & van Over, 2013, 144; Scollo & Milburn, 2018, xxxiii). Discursive hubs are verbally explicit and they can appear separately or in clusters. Hubs can also be nonverbal, e.g. symbols and gestures. However, explicit hubs are only part of a larger discursive web. To understand discourses in their socio-cultural context, it is also necessary to interpret implicit meanings. This includes, for example, implicit meanings about how one acts, or should act, as a certain kind of person may radiate from an explicit discursive hub of identity. (Carbaugh, 2007b; Carbaugh & Cerulli, 2013.)

Positioning Theory and Analysis also stem from the socio-constructionist approach and define identity positions through the sets the rights and duties associated with them. Potter and Wetherell, Harré and Davies and van Langenhove as the founders of this theoretical orientation were inspired by Austin's speech act theory (Kroløkke, 2009, 765). According to Korobov (2001), Positioning Analysis synthesises and reconciles the tensions between Conversation Analysis (CA) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), i.e. the tensions between the micro and macro. Positioning of identities can emerge at all analytic levels (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, 586 and 591-592; Kroløkke, 2009, 765, Schnurr et al., 2014). At the micro-level of discourse, identity can emerge as temporary interactional positions, such as that of a joker, but these interactional identity positions can also be associated to larger identity categories. At the same time, the ideological associations may shape who does what and how in interaction (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, 591). According to Zelle (2009), Positioning Theory enables the researcher to analyse identity issues in organisational settings, i.e. how identity is presented in positions and how positioning shapes identities and in turn behaviour. Positioning Analysis is able to describe the dynamism of the construction of identity, interpersonal relationships and membership categories by displaying how speakers creatively take or resist a position, "display irony about a position" or "take a position by resisting being positioned" (Korobov, 2017, 56). Positioning is a social and interactional practice. While a person positions self, she implicitly or explicitly also positions others (Harré & van Langenhove 1991, 398; van Langenhove & Harré 1999, 22).

Positioning Analysis distinguishes between the first-, second- and third-order positioning. The first order positioning takes place in interaction where people locate themselves and others, while the second-order, reflexive positioning, occurs when the participant challenges or redefines the positioning intended by the interlocutor (Jones, 2013; Kroløkke, 2009, 765-766). Third order positioning happens outside the original communicative situation. This type of accountative positioning may involve other persons than those who originally were involved in interaction (Bisel & Barge, 2011, 261). Self and other positioning can be tacit and unintentional, or deliberate, or even forced as, for example, in employee performance appraisals (Zelle, 2009, 3-4). However, the intentionality of positioning cannot be determined by mere investigation of social interaction (Van Langenhove & Harré, 1999). The Positioning Analysis examines how, on what occasions and in what kinds of interactional practices discourse constitutes identity (Korobov, 2013, 127).

Positioning Analysis studies talk-in-interaction by paying attention to the connections between positions, storylines and the force of the speech acts called positioning triad (van Langenhove and Harré, 1999, 18). Jones (2013) distinguishes several types of storylines, ranging from individual histories to stories co-constructed in interaction and to the "master narratives" created by culture. Thus, it is possible to apply this methodology at micro-, meso- and macro-levels of discourse. Positioning has sometimes been associated with intertextuality, because it creates connections between the ongoing conversation and prior interactions, as well as with broader ideologies (Gordon, 2015, 334). Social interaction involves multiple storylines, which often overlap and intersect in conversations. Consequently, the same utterance can be used to perform different speech acts within the different storylines (Hirvonen, 2016). In Positioning Analysis, the aspect of force in speech acts goes beyond the illocutionary force, i.e. the social meanings of the speech act. The force of the speech act, on the one hand, includes the position that a speaker has in a storyline. On the other, the response by another speaker constructs and reinforces it. Thus, the force refers to a speech act itself as a performative action, for example, suggestion or order and the perlocutionary effect, the consequences or responses, such as denial, or counterargument. (Hirvonen, 2016; James, 2013; van Langenhove & Harré, 1999.) Moreover, the self and other positionings have the power to change the storylines (Hirvonen, 2016 and 2020).

Slocum-Bradley (2010) has added identity as the fourth dimension to her analytic framework, which she calls the positioning 'diamond' (Figure 1 below). Because of the ambiguity of the concept 'position', she avoids the noun and uses the verb positioning for the various ways in which people use discursive tools to attribute characteristics, evoke identities, allocate rights and duties and invoke storylines (Slocum-Bradley, 2010, 91). Although the diamond has only four facets, Slocum-Bradley considers that her three-dimensional framework is open to more facets.

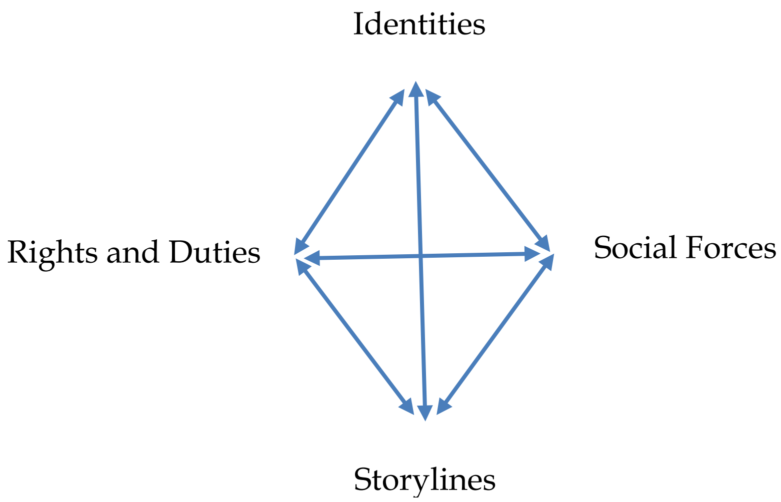

FIGURE 1 POSITIONING DIAMOND (SLOCUM-BRADLEY, 2010, 92)

Following Davies and Harré (1990, 1999), Slocum-Bradley sees identities as relational. Identities are constructed when people participate in discursive practices and allocate meanings to identity labels, whether categories (nouns) or attributes (adjectives). According to Slocum-Bradley (2010), all four positioning elements can be analysed and interpreted at three levels of discourse: 1) content, 2) interlocutors and 3) dominant discourses. However, she admits that not all levels are always relevant in all episodes. Slocum-Bradley (2010, 93) suggests that some of the misunderstandings and misinterpretations can be the result of the speaker and different audiences construing meanings at different levels of discourse.

Carbaugh (1994 and 1999) has applied positioning theory to study identities, or personhood in Carbaugh's (1994) terms, in cultural meaning systems. His analytic framework considers both explicit avowals and attributions, and implicated positions, so called "shadows" of identities (Carbaugh, 1994, 166 referring to Goodwin, 1990). Positioning of identities is subtle because each explication implicates another inviting inferences about the position. By explicitly stating that someone is something or resembles something, the speaker is implying to something that s/he is not. When speakers position themselves and others, some of the messages may become ambiguous or contradictory. For example, a speaker may explicitly claim to be a modest person but in the same token listing many accomplishments implicating something else. Sometimes this may also be done on purpose to create an image of being humorous. Carbaugh's (1994) analytic framework takes into account the elaboration of the avowed position, as well as rejection and ratification of the assigned positions, which correspond to the second-order positioning described earlier. Positioning, according to Carbaugh (1994), may also involve real or hypothetical persons who are not present, similar to what is called third-order positioning.

In this research, Positioning Analysis has been applied to data that were collected by observation and interviews, i.e. both interactional and interview data. It is believed that in interviews, the interviewee and the interviewer alike are involved in positioning and constructing meanings of identity. Bamberg and Georgakopoulou (2008) and Korobov and Bamberg (2004) have combined the Positioning Theory with the elements of narrative analysis. Their methodological approach also follows in the footsteps of social constructionists, such as Potter, Wetherell and Edwards (Edwards 1997; Edwards and Potter 1992; Potter 1996; Potter and Edwards 1999; Potter & Wetherell, 1987). As a methodology, Positioning Analysis applies ideas from ethnography, discourse analysis and ethnomethodology and has become an important analytical tool, for example, in interactional sociolinguistics (see for example De Fina et al., 2006). Discursive narrative analysis rejects unitary identity and holistic and developmental biography – instead it sees narratives as many depictions of multiple selves, each situated in particular contexts, and resisting those contexts (Squire, 2004, 116). Hyvärinen (2008, 457) concludes that the contextual approach to narratives of the positioning analysis actually directs "attention to the fact that narratives not only account for past experiences but position speakers within networks of social and cultural expectations". It can be argued that the methods of positioning analysis and discursive narrative analysis cross-fertilise each other and are able to bring a deeper understanding on the identity construction of the participants.

Identities are not just labels given to individuals or groups, but dynamic negotiations of who they are involving the aspects of power and status (Jones, 2013). The self and other positioning in the organisational and professional setting has been described as jousting or see-sawing between the positions of power and parity, expertise and equality (Boxer, L., 2001; Dyer & Keller-Cohen, 2000). Although this study is not premised on critical theorising, it does not deny the value of such approaches. Martínez Guillem and Toula (2018) have argued for a firmer cross-fertilisation between critical discourse studies and communication studies. Moore (2017b, 2), referring to Baxter and Asbury (2015), Braithwaite (2014), Braithwaite et al. (2015) and Manning (2014), state that interpersonal communication as a subdiscipline could be enriched by diverse perspectives and vocabularies, especially those made possible through critical theorising. There have been several proposals, though, how to incorporate a critical approach to interpersonal communication, for example by applying Butler's (1990 and 1993) Theory of Gender Performativity, Baxter's (2011) Relational Dialectics Theory, Langellier and Peterson's (2006) Narrative Performance Theory and Moore's Performative Face Theory (2017a and 2017b). The positioning approach chosen for this study is slightly more moderate than performativity (Baxter, J., 2008, 41). Positioning Analysis not only allows to observe identity construction at the micro-level but also to have a critical perspective on the discursive construction of institutional labels and social order, however, not in a deterministic way.

The analytic tools of Cultural Discourse Analysis were applied at the initial stage of this research to organise and locate the identity discourses in the data. There was also an attempt to test if the analytic tools of CuDA were applicable to describe and interpret identity construction in interpersonal communication in variable and diverse, multicultural environments. Because of the variety of socio-cultural contexts for interpersonal encounters, special cultural sensitivity and prudence was necessary when analysing and interpreting the meanings of identity. When the analysis proceeded, Positioning Analysis was used to study the relational dynamics in the identity construction case by case in storylines and episodes. The discursive approach on narratives was later adapted to the study to have a more thorough look into the longer, personal accounts that were created especially by two of the interviewees.

3.3 Participants

The primary participants for the current study were selected purposively through discretionary sampling from alumni who had received a Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) degree from an English-instructed program in Finnish higher education. In Finland, the BBA programmes are usually 3.5 years long, practically-oriented, undergraduate programmes provided by universities of applied sciences (UAS). The programmes consist of general courses on international business, but they also allow specialization. The graduates from BBA programmes in International Business have vast employment opportunities in private, public and third, i.e. non-profit sectors.

When looking for potential informants, the objective was to find persons who were currently employed by international companies and had more than two years of work experience. Additionally, the participants should have displayed the diversity and multiplicity of the holders of the BBA degree. Because the study was to explore diversity in international, multicultural workplaces, participants' ethnic and linguistic backgrounds and gender were used as selection criteria. Participants were also to represent the geographical areas from which students generally come to international business programmes in Finland. Four out of six participants originated from Europe and two from Asia. Finnish higher education institutions also receive BBA students of African and South American origins. However, it was difficult to find such alumni who would have met the employment criteria at the time of data collection. The ones who were contacted were either conducting further studies or on longer leaves of absence from their work. The six primary participants of the study are introduced in Table 1. The personal names have been changed, and some other identifiers, such as national or ethnic background or organisational affiliations, have been altered or disguised to protect the confidentiality and privacy of the respondents.

TABLE 1 PRIMARY PARTICIPANTS

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Origin/Current location	Education	Employer's line of industry	Position/ title	Main duties
Aleksis	male	in his late 30s	Eastern Europe/ Northern Europe	BBA	Manufacturing	Manager	Sales
Diana	female	in her early 40s	Central Asia/ Northern Europe	BBA, and Bachelor and MA (IT)	Entertainment	Junior specialist	Marketing & project work
Due	male	in his mid-30's	East Asia/ East Asia	BBA	Services, IT	Manager	Sales
Elisa	female	in her 40s	Northern Europe/ Northern Europe	BBA, MA (Econ.)	Manufacturing	Specialist	Purchasing
Maria	female	in her late 30s	Northern Europe/ Southern Europe & East Asia	BBA	Services, Tourism	Agent	Sales
Vera	female	in her mid-30s	Northern Europe/ Northern Europe	BBA, MA (Econ.)	Manufacturing	Assistant	Sales

In addition to the six participants, Diana's husband, also with a BBA degree from the same study programme, took part in the discussions that were recorded in a small, family-owned company, where he is one of the owners. He was not, however, shadowed in his day-to-day tasks. Because the data was gathered in company settings, the colleagues of other primary participants have also been similarly involved in daily interactions and in identity co-construction. They can be considered as secondary participants and their participation was based on the consent given by their employers.

To better understand the phenomenon of the discursive construction of work identities in different contexts of work, the study partially emulates a qualitative multiple-case study design. On the one hand, each participant in the specific organisational setting forms a separate case, but on the other, they all can be considered to form one case of young business professionals with a BBA degree. The cases (participants and organisations) have been purposefully selected to represent variation among BBAs and their employers, and they both individually and collectively contribute to the understanding of discursive construction of work identity among young business professionals. The purpose of the research is not, however, to make comparisons between the cases, as it has not been possible to control the various research contexts.

In multiple case study research, the findings are often first presented case-by-case before combining a cross-case synthesis of the results (Yin, 2003, 147). In this study, the order differs a little. To answer the first research question, the different datasets have been combined and the cases collectively form a cohort of young business graduates. This stage in the study uses the methodology of Cultural Discourse Analysis. The second phase employs Positioning Analysis to find answers to the second research question 'how'. At this stage, some more deviant cases are analysed separately and some cases have been paired based on the unifying contextual factors, such as job and tasks, the line of industry or company size category. The respective chapters 4.3 – 4.5 report the analysis and findings of separate cases or pairs of cases.

Ethical considerations are essential for all types of research but they are even more crucial when studying human subjects. In addition to the individual participants, this research project had to consider the anonymity, privacy and confidentiality of the work communities and organisations where the data was collected (Bryman & Bell, 2007). The study observes the ethical principles of research in humanities and social and behavioural sciences of the Finnish National Board of Research Integrity (TENK, 2012). The informed consent was granted by both the primary participants and their employers. However, the colleagues of primary informants did not personally give their consent in advance. Their participation was based on their employers' decision, and although the ethical obligation was in principle fulfilled, their participation might not have been absolutely voluntary (cf. Plankey-Videla, 2012). Yet, everyone was informed about the data collection and they had the right to withdraw from participation. Additionally, a privacy notice was made after the application of the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR, EU 679/2016). These documents defined how the data was going to be collected, used, stored and destroyed. The anonymity of individuals and organisations participating in the research was also ensured. To minimise the social or financial harm to the participants and the companies involved, I did not collect any financial data or record any situations or communication involving customers or transactions. Companies that were under restructuring and streamlining were excluded from the study, as it was thought that the research might cause damage to the company image or harm individuals.

The selection of primary participants was not only based on the availability of the BBA graduates or the organisations they represent, but the criteria mentioned above had to be met as well. Although the aim of the study was not to make comparisons between the cases, in a study with a small number of participants in diverse contexts, there is a risk of case-selection bias (Leuffen, 2007; Yamashita & Moonen, 2014). The selection bias was considered and there was an attempt to minimise it by not closing the selection prematurely (Fusch & Ness, 2015).

3.4 Research Data

3.4.1 Data Collection

Potential participants were first contacted through LinkedIn or email to inquire about their interest in and possibilities of taking part in the research. If the contacted BBAs met the selection criteria and gave their personal agreement, the inquiry and forms of informed consent were sent to their employers to receive permission for data collection among the personnel in the company premises. Knowing the informants personally and having their consent first helped in gaining access to the companies they worked in. When the permission to collect observational and interview data were obtained, field visits were scheduled and planned.

To answer the research questions, two types of field research methods were applied. First, the six purposively selected participants were observed in their workplaces during their routine day at work. This type of shadowing as a method of observation has been used in workplace contexts not only for research but also for apprenticeship training and mentoring purposes. Shadowing can produce rich, thick descriptive data for interpretation by reflecting both social actions and their explanations (Quinlan, 2008, 1483). The duration of observations varied from half a day to one day. Video or audio recordings were used whenever permitted by the companies. During the data gathering, it was not possible to video record all communicative encounters or use several cameras or observers. Therefore, kinesics through facial expressions, and hand and body movements were not analysed in detail. Instead, the research focused on more permanent and observable features, such as proximity and use of space, and personal appearance and office décor. Researcher field notes complemented the recordings.

Moreover, field work incorporated informal conversational interviews as part of the participant observations. Because the aim has been to study identity construction through a naturalistic inquiry, the interviews were not strictly structured, but had a more conversational form and took place in the settings where people conduct their daily work. Not only did the contexts differ, but different personal factors also influenced data collection. Some participants were more talkative and open about their experiences, feelings and relationships, while others focused more on facts and responded to questions only briefly. In addition to personal differences, relational, cultural and environmental factors could also impact the interviews. In this research, for example, my relationship with the participants and my ability to interpret them and their cultural messages as a Finnish female teacher-researcher varied. Sometimes the respondents may have also acquiesced because of face-concerns or as an attempt to please me with their answers. Their responses might have also been affected by what they see as normal and acceptable in the specific social setting – factors that may stem from their school and work history and different orientations to knowledge that is pursued and valued, i.e. different epistemologies.

The situational conversations and conversational interviews were connected to other social actions, and often the questions were triggered by the verbal or nonverbal social cues observed during shadowing (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011, 176-177). In the unstructured interviews, the participants were asked general questions on such topics of interest as their work, workplace and work community, without directly inquiring how they see themselves or others. In these open interviews, the respondents had more freedom to steer the discussion and talk about the issues that they considered important, as well as avoid topics that they would have thought to be too sensitive. Consequently, the interviews did not take on the same form. Some new and more specific questions were occasionally formed based on the observations on the workplace interactions. I was later able to use some the participants' replies to these specific questions to validate the interpretations that were based on observation. Contextual information on settings, events, individuals and their relationships was mainly gathered during observation. Company websites and brochures, as well as information collected from the participants via email or social media before and after the site visits were also available and used to complement the ethnographic data.

The data collection took place in six different companies in spring 2016. The companies ranged from global technological companies to micro-entities in the entertainment industry. In four of the companies, it was possible to collect data in person on site. One of companies did not allow any video-recording or photography on their premises to avoid any breach of confidential client or company information. The others did not object video recording, but even in them it was not possible to use multiple cameras or microphones. Many of the participants worked in different settings and workspaces during the day and the recorder was not able to capture their every word or move. Therefore, it was important to complement the video and audio recorded data with the researcher field notes. Two of the participants were working overseas, and it was not possible to conduct observations on site. In these two cases, observation and conversational interviews were carried out using video conferencing technology. In these two cases, the participants were not instructed what devices to use. Both of the participants were using a built-in webcam on their computers. This resulted in a rather limited possibility to observe the surroundings or any social interaction. During the observation they stayed in one room and I had to rely on their verbal accounts of what was happening. To minimise the effect of disturbances in web conferencing, the participants were given some prompts and general topics in a written format by email prior to the event and in the chat available in the web conferencing software during the observation. To ensure the credibility, especially regarding these two very different cases, email and social media tools were employed afterwards for participant validation and checking. I adopted so-called synthesized member-checking introduced by Birt et al. (2016), which is based on the idea of co-constructing knowledge with the participants even some months after the data gathering or the analysis.

Confidentiality was an additional challenge in the process. Qualitative studies, in general, often contain rich descriptions of participants and events, which make confidentiality breaches via deductive disclosure a concern (Kaiser, 2009). Participants' names were altered to ensure anonymity. However, it would have still been possible to identify participants based on their unique combinations of traits, such as their places of origin or residence, language and ethnic affiliations and occupational roles. Therefore, it was not only enough to use pseudonyms, but specific, identifiable information was in most cases generalised. In the data extracts generalised or altered information is given in parentheses, for example, (native language) or (Company X). Deleting, changing or generalising data poses another problem. It can make it difficult for those reading this research report to evaluate the interpretations made by the researcher. Privacy and confidentiality are, however, paramount concerns in research.

The six participants worked in companies that operated in different lines of industry and had varying sizes, organisation structures, locations and priorities. Furthermore, the employees' personal schedules and job descriptions varied. There were also other individual differences among the participants - some were very loquacious producing long narratives, while others required a more structured interview format. Although the objective of diversity was met, it became quite challenging to manage and later systematically analyse the variable sets of data.

3.4.2 Datasets

The types of data obtained through observational and interview methods are illustrated in Table 2. As can be seen, the amounts and types of data differ from individual to individual and from one company to another.

TABLE 2 DATASETS

		Interview transcript	Interaction transcript	Field notes	Video/audio	Screen captures (hyper-media)
Manufacturing industry	Aleksis	18 pp (7,088 words)	14 pp (tour 5,576 words)	1 pg (288 words)	105 min. video	2
Entertainment industry	Diana	10 pp (5,821 words)	8 pp (4,797 words)	2.5 pp (824 words)	86 min. video	2
Service industry, IT	Due	12 pp (9+3) (4,106 + 827 words)	N/A	notes 0.5 pg (109) words	32 min. video	4
Manufacturing industry	Elisa	6 pp (2,055 words)	10 pp (3,305 words)	5 pp (1,317 words)	83 min. audio	2
Service industry, tourism	Maria	12 pp (4,190 words)	N/A	notes 1 pg (325 words)	72 min video/ audio	3
Manufacturing industry	Vera	8 pp (2,982 words)	N/A (incl. in the field-notes)	1 pg (280 words)	83 min. video	4
Total		word count 27,069	word count 13,678	word count 3,143	461 min (378 min. video + 83 min. audio)	17

The column 'Interaction Transcript' in the table needs some explanation, as in three cases such data is not available. As described earlier, in two cases the observation was conducted via videoconferencing. The participants were working on computer in an office by themselves and there was very little, if any, spoken communication with others. What was observed was transcribed and added to the interview transcription or included in the field notes. A similar decision was made regarding Vera but for a different reason. The social interaction was not recorded in the video and therefore not transcribed. However, social interaction with colleagues was observed and recorded in the researcher field notes.

The datasets were complemented with some screen captures from the participants' LinkedIn profiles and the company websites and, in one case, from the company intranet. The complementary data included pictures, graphs and text and provided background information for the analysis. It was mainly used for contextualisation of the cases. However, when using multimodal data, text and images can actually cross-contextualize each other and both mutually and separately influence the interpretation (Lemke, 1998 and 2002). The meaning-making across modalities applies also to all datasets of this study.

Although English is the official company language in four out of six of the companies, Finnish was also commonly used in daily in-company interactions when the premises were located in Finland. At the conversational interviews with the researcher, the participants could choose between English or Finnish. Two of the participants chose Finnish, which is their mother tongue. Finnish was time to time also used by non-native Finnish speakers. The datasets also include occasional uses of other languages. Because English is not the native language of any of the participants, language transfer and direct translation from the speaker's mother tongue took place. Industry and company-specific jargon, which often derived from English, was also used. The use of different linguistic resources, as well as the transcription, translation and interpretation of verbal, paraverbal and non-verbal communication increased the complexity of the current research. For further discussion on translating and transcription, see for example Nikander (2008 and 2010) and Pietilä (2010).

The aim of this study has not been to compare different individuals based on their origin or current situation, neither to make comparisons between the different types of organisations or datasets. Instead, the purpose has been to display the diversity and multiplicity as they are manifested and created discursively in international workplaces. For this reason, the different amounts and types of data were considered as possibilities to better understand the multiple and dynamic ways of identity construction and the diverse realities of international business. The data ranges from ethnographic, observational data in the forms of audio and video files and field notes to the transcribed interviews and conversations. Despite the wide range, the amount of data is limited. However, the different types of data allow for a 'thicker description' of the contexts in which interpretations have been made (Denzin 1989; Geertz, 1973). I have depicted the verbal and nonverbal communication and social interactions in detail in the contexts they appear in order to enrich my understanding of work identity construction and positioning. To give readers a more comprehensible and reliable account of the events and the interpretations that were made, the study is reported with extensive quotations. (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011, 134-135.)

3.4.3 The Role and Identity of a Researcher

In qualitative research, the researcher's role is decisive and critical in the whole research process from the research design and data collection to the analysis and interpretation (Creswell, 2007). Taylor (2001, 17-18) discusses how the researcher's identity influences discourse analytic studies. Personal interests and ideological affiliations impact the selection of research topics. Gender, age and personal qualities may influence data collection. The researcher as the main instrument for qualitative analysis also interprets the data and may not be able to understand it in the specific contexts to which she is an outsider.

During the field visits, I was an observer-as-participant functioning in a role between detachment and objectivity on the one hand and familiarity and authenticity on the other (Frey et al. 1999; Lindlof & Taylor, 2011, 144-148). Although I was not involved in the daily business operations, I was included in the discussions that took place in the companies. I knew the six participants personally and was often introduced to the others in the workplace as a former teacher. In one of the companies, I was assigned an 'outsider' identity. When entering and moving around, I had to pass gates and several closed doors for which I needed a host. I was also given a visitor's badge. In the three manufacturing companies, I was toured around the facilities, when I also encountered employees who were not aware of who I was and why I was there. The purpose of my visit as a researcher was explained if it was asked by the coworkers. The observation periods were not long, and, as a visitor, I could not achieve an equal, unthreatening position in the work community (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011, 3). In this role, I might have had limited access to some people or activities and even certain types of language and communication. Participants might have also altered their behaviour to conform to or impress the visiting researcher. (Dewalt & Dewalt, 2002, 4; Kawulich, 2005.)

I also became a part and a producer of discourse when I interviewed and talked with the participants during their workday. As an interviewer, I co-authored the participant's narratives "occasioning in ongoing social interaction" (Georgakopoulou, 2006a, 239). Warren (2012, 132) defines interviews as a social encounter in which the time and place, "as well as the selves mirrored within it" are important. She cites Dingwall (1997, 56) who sees interviews as the outcome of a socially situated activity where both the interviewer and the respondent are engaged in role-playing and impression management. Furthermore, the relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee is asymmetric, and their roles are pre-allocated (Nikander, 2002, 63; 2012, 402; Vähäsantanen & Saarinen, 2013). According to Warren (2012, 132), interviewing acquaintances may pose special interactional problems, which was probably true in my case, as all the interviewees were my former students. There is power asymmetry both in the former teacher-student relationship as well as in the interviewer-interviewee relationship. Yet, the formal power relations can also shift and the boundaries may be breached in discourse (Vähäsantanen & Saarinen, 2013). This was occasionally evidenced in self and other positioning during the interviews. I have tried to describe the power dynamics of the interviews and attempted to be as reflexive as possible about the researcher bias and interviewer effect during the analysis and reporting.

3.5 Data Analysis

3.5.1 Transcription of Raw Data

The data-driven, qualitative analysis of this research started with the transcription of the audio and video recordings, and typing and editing of the field notes. Gee (1999, 88) states that transcription cannot be separated from the analysis, because the transcript never represents the objective reality, but it is based on researcher's theoretical judgements of what is relevant. Thus, transcription is never neutral, but selective (Gee, 1999; Jenks, 2011). I listened to and watched the recordings several times to have a general understanding of the scope and quality of my data. Converting the audio and video material to text by myself allowed me to familiarise myself with the data in more detail and to be immersed in it. The choices about transcription were based on the philosophical assumptions, theoretical framework and the methodological choices of the current research in which language use and communicative practices including nonverbal conduct constitute meanings, identities and social realities. In addition to ideological or theoretical influences, transcription is also influenced by the transcriber's skills, experience and training, as well as practical constraints, such as the quality of recording devices (Stubbe et al., 2003). It has been kept in mind that the level of detail of a transcription may enable or constrain the interpretations that are made from the data (Lapadat & Lindsay, 1999).

The speech in audio and video recordings was transcribed in the language that was used in each of the situations. Transcription always involves interpretation and judgement. Yet, translating the data at this point would have meant interpreting the participants' speech in such a way that some of the meanings could have been completely lost. Translation is, however, provided in square brackets in the data extracts in this report when the speakers have used some language other than English. The aim was to keep the transcription as true to the recorded data as possible. Accuracy and authenticity also meant that linguistic mistakes were not corrected. Furthermore, distinctive pronunciation, accents and filler statements were transcribed using symbols, such as asterisks, and 'eye dialect', i.e. non-standard spelling. To improve readability, conventional English orthography is, when necessary, given in parentheses in the data extracts. Moreover, some paralinguistic and nonverbal means of communication, such as pauses and gestures were recorded in the transcript, yet, not in the same detail as in Conversation Analysis (CA) (Stubbe et al., 2003).

Transcribing and coding vocal and nonverbal communication is often challenging, because it possesses varying degrees of importance, and may perform different social functions in different situations. Therefore, it was important to understand what nonverbal behaviour is important for transcription and for the specific analytic aims of this research. (Jenks, 2011.) As the speakers used varied rhythm and pace of speaking, it was not considered essential to time the pauses, but rather consider them in connection with the speakers' normal rate of speech. If the pause was perceived to be longer than the average pause duration of the interlocutor's normal speech, then the notation of three dots was used. The speaker's special emphasis or accentuation of words or syllables was indicated by underlining. Although paralinguistic features such as tone, pitch and intonation are important in communication and meaning making, they did not receive a special focus in this research. Similarly, it was not possible or even necessary to transcribe all nonverbal behaviour observed and recorded during the site visits. The analysis focused on facial expressions if they were accompanied with vocal expressions of emotions, such as laughter. Gaze and hand gestures, as well as proxemics and body positions were also marked in transcription notations whenever they had been recorded. Although it was not possible to systematically record all nonverbal behaviour, it was considered important to include whatever was available in order to better interpret the communication that constructed relationships, identities and identity positions. Moreover, the study was interested in the meanings created by artefacts, i.e. the material and visual representations of culture and identity as part of the discourses. The nonverbal behaviour was added to the transcription using double parentheses, such as ((laughs)) or ((turning his head down)).

The recorded audio and video materials included background noise, conversational overlaps, or low volume speech, which made it necessary to listen to the recordings several times to make sure the right words and expressions were captured. Unclear speech was marked into the transcription with an empty space inside the parentheses. Sometimes unclear words were comprehensible from the context and they were added inside the parentheses. The transcribed text was divided into lines and stanzas according to the speakers' turns, utterances and/ or breath groups. Moreover, line numbering was applied to the extracts quoted in this research report. The list of transcription symbols used in the data extracts are provided in Appendix 1.

3.5.2 Close Reading and Coding

Transcription was followed by close reading of the textual data. First, the analysis of the qualitative data followed a general inductive approach to find the emerging themes in the raw data. After careful reading and studying the transcripts, an initial coding scheme was designed, which was first tested on small data samples using Atlas.ti analysis software. Then another cycle of reading was done. Potter and Wetherell (1994, 52) suggest that in DA coding is not yet part of the analysis but rather a preliminary stage that makes the analysis manageable. In this research, coding was used to reduce and condense the data so that the key themes could be identified.

The first-cycle coding was based on decontextualized textual data. It was partly in-vivo, i.e. based on the actual words and expressions in the data and a partly descriptive summary of the emerging topic or action (e.g. Elliott, 2018; Saldaña, 2016). For example, the textual data included explicit expressions and verbalisations of identity, for instance, when people spoke about themselves, others and relationships. The linguistic forms in the data included, for instance:

- personal pronouns (I/you/s/he/we/you/they) + being (someone/ something/ part of something)
- personal pronouns (I/you/s/he/we/you/they) + belonging (to something)
- common and proper nouns (e.g. names, titles and other honorifics)

- adjectives (e.g. referring to national, ethnic or linguistic origin or a person's characteristics or traits)

The textual data also included demonstrative pronouns 'this', 'that', 'these' and 'those' and location words and adverbs, such as 'here' and 'there', which were sometimes associated with identification or categorisation. For example, Diana was making comparisons and excluding herself from 'these professional programmers' by stating: "I was quite tired from computers, because these professional programmers they have a bit different these big screens and they have regular computers." Moreover, the visual data available in video recordings, screenshots and field notes included symbols that were indexing some facets of identity or used in identity construction. Symbols, such as photos and other pictures, company logos, badges, uniforms or other types of clothing and accessories were also coded. At first, the observational data and interview data of each participant were kept separate. However, as the analysis proceeded, the datasets were merged to create more interpretive codes and conceptual categories (Saldaña, 2016). For example, the codes that were directly linked to explicit verbalisation of a certain country or nationality, as well national imaginary and symbols, such as a flag, were put together under code 'national identity'. Similarly, the codes 'understatement', 'joke', ´laughing at one's frozen video thumbnail' and 'ironic statement' were categorized under 'humour'.

Even though the current study concentrates on discursive identity construction, it was considered important not to ignore the other themes emerging in the data. It was necessary locate the identity discourse among the other discourses. Robyns (1994, 406) states that discourse or a discursive practice "defines itself in relation, or rather in opposition, to other discourses." Thus, the initial coding was not only concentrating on identity, but other emerging themes were also included.

The initial coding scheme included some 150 raw codes which were later reduced into 99 codes. The new set of codes was tested against the data. When the analysis continued, the codes were organised by different colours into 11 categories. At this stage, the formed categories were viewed against the analysis tools of CuDA. The largest categories, i.e. the most salient discourse hubs, corresponded to the premises or meaning radiants of CuDA: 'being' or identities (comprising 29 codes), 'acting' or communication (25 codes) and 'relating', i.e. relationships (21 codes). These three meaning radiants were also considered the most relevant for the current study on discursive construction and positioning of relational work identity in interpersonal communication. The discourse hub of 'dwelling', i.e. place or environment was also seen as important for contextualisation purposes. This category included seven (7) codes. The remaining codes related to work and tasks, competence and education, career development, transition and changes, resources (time and money), stress vs. relaxation and interculturality (e.g. differences in values or customs or depicted experiences of prejudice). They were subsumed under three separate categories despite the fact that they did not correspond to the analytic tools of CuDA. The meaning radiant of 'feeling' i.e. emotions by CuDA was not a separate category in the analysis. If feelings were expressed nonverbally or vocally, such as through smile or laughter, they were, however, coded and included to the category of 'acting', i.e. communication. In Atlas.ti, the code categories were organised into seven (7) code families that represent the intersecting discourses or hubs in the data. Three miscellaneous codes that did not fit into any of the main code families but were still considered relevant for the study were grouped into a residual category. The main code families are presented in Table 3.

TABLE 3 CODE FAMILIES

Name of the code family	Number of codes in the code family	Number of quotations	Description
Identity (CuDA radiant 'being')	29 codes	440	verbal or nonverbal identifications or categorisations of self or others
Communication (CuDA radiant 'acting')	25 codes	534	transmission of information or interpersonal communication and interaction
Relationships (CuDA radiant 'relating')	21 codes	244	e.g. interdependent roles, team structures and dynamics, networking
Interculturality	7 codes	72	e.g. perceived differences in cultural values or traditions, experiences of discrimination
Place and setting (CuDA radiant 'dwelling')	7 codes	70	physical locations, incl. e.g. countries or facilities, and online environments
Change and transition	5 codes	54	e.g. changes in an organisation or transitional phases in career or in personal life
Resources	2 codes	70	time and money
Miscellaneous (work-related)	3 codes	15	e.g. career development
Total	99 codes	1499	

There were three (3) codes 'trust and mutual understanding', 'office change' and ´job change´ which could basically belong to two code families, yet each of them was only included in one. The three miscellaneous codes related to work, but they were not explicitly about identity or identification.

By groundedness, the codes that were linked to the highest number of quotations were paralinguistic, nonverbal, verbal and technology-mediated communication (from 63 to 92 linked quotations each). The second highest category in terms of groundedness was that of identity, in which the most grounded code was language identity with 61 quotations. Moreover, the code 'time', which was placed into the category of 'resources', was attached to 50 quotations. These quotations included direct and indirect references to schedules, time pressure and balancing between work and leisure time.

After the coding was completed, I reviewed the data items and passages and tried to recontextualise them. It was realised that the code families created discursive webs. The 'identity' discourse related to, intertwined with, contrasted with or contradicted many other discourses. The discourse of change and transition was very much work-related and, for example, organisational restructuring, office relocation or career changes were discussed in close connection with roles and relationships. When discussing their work and career, some participants also disclosed parts of their personal lives, such as how being pregnant or terminating an intimate relationship had impacted them at the individual and interpersonal levels in and out the domain of work. Likewise, the discourses of adaptation, stereotyping and discrimination in the interview data were often associated with the relationships in and outside workplaces. Communication as a separate topic appeared frequently in the data in connection with ICT and information exchange as part of the everyday tasks and routines at work, but it was also associated with the interactions that form and maintain relationships and social order in the workplace. The other salient, however, more loosely connected, discourses in the datasets were those of time and money. Such discourse on resources, as well as other intersecting discourses in the data, provided later some contextualising cues (the term borrowed from interactional sociolinguistics) for the interpretation of the results.

3.5.3 Choices and Challenges in the Analysis

The analysis continued by revisiting the code family of identity. This category included such primary codes and attributes as language, ethnicity, nationality, gender, organisations, departments and teams, occupational and educational background, role or task-based identities, and identifications with the places of residence, work, or origin. To make sense of the data, abductive, more theory-bound reasoning was employed (Reichertz, 2014; Niiniluoto, 2018). There was an attempt to divide the 'identity' category into three subcategories based on Brewer and Gardner's (1996) and Sluss and Ashforth's (2007) conceptualisation on individual, interpersonal, and collective levels of identity. When the identity construct (or a facet of identity) was considered to belong to the category of collective identities, the speaker was supposed to present herself or the other person as a prototypical member of the group or to compare or contrast one social group with another. If the speaker was differentiating self from the other persons of the same ingroup, the identity was understood to be constructed at the individual level. Often the speakers were then referring to either personality traits, individual abilities or personal experience. The most interesting level from the perspective of the aims of this research was supposed to be the interpersonal level. At this level, interdependent identities were expected to be co-constructed and negotiated in interpersonal relationships.

In discourse studies, interpretative schemes can change during the process (Wetherell & Potter, 1988, 177), which also happened in this research. It was not possible to create fully exclusive categories based on the three levels of identity. The meanings of discursively produced identities appeared far more complex and fluid than anticipated. For example, in the extract below, the last reference to 'age' and 'not getting any younger' could refer to the speaker's own self-conception and experience at the individual level, but it could also be a more general comment on ageing.

Extract 1:
"Mie muistan silloin kun mie alotin täällä, [I remember when I started here,]
kun oltiin osa (toista yritystä), [when we were a part of (another company),]
niin sillon keski-**ikä** oli tosi alhanen, [so then the average **age** was really low]
tais olla siinnä vähän yli kaks'kymmentä. [might have been a little over twenty.]
Oisko ollu *kaks'kytseittemän* se keski-**ikä**.
[Maybe it was twenty-seven the average **age**.]
Niin sit on **tullu ikää**. [So, (I/we) have been **ageing**.]
Eihän tässä nuorruta. ((naurahdus))."
[Not getting any younger here.] ((A soft, suppressed laugh)) (Elisa, interview)

In the extract, the speaker is first talking about the average age of the work community. However, the use of impersonal expressions in Finnish, "*Niin sit on tullu ikää. Eihän tässä nuorruta*. ((*naurahdus*)) [So, (I/we) have been ageing. Not getting any younger here. ((a soft, suppressed laugh))]" could refer to the speaker's work community collectively or to her individually. With the adverbial 'here' and the use of passive voice, the speaker could also point to the specific interaction relationship between her and me or to our former teacher-student role relationship. Moreover, the last line could be interpreted to be a general, more impersonal comment about ageing. The use of '*tässä*' [here] followed by a stifled laugh, however, suggests that the expression is about the speaker, whoever she is relating herself to. The expression could be interpreted as a manifestation of all three levels of identity, yet, it has a relational function in which identity is discursively constructed for, with or in response to others (Josselson, 1994, 82).

There were also other identity facets that were not clearly either collective, relational, or individual, such as language and gender (see Tables 4 - 7 for examples). Identification with language(s) was discussed quite elaborately and explicitly by the participants in the informal, conversational interviews but it was more implicit in the observational data. In workplace interaction, language identity was constructed, for example, through professional jargon, local dialect, accents and loanwords. However, interpreting identity negotiations and positioning through the analysis of professional jargon and the use industry-specific terminology in in-company communication appeared somewhat challenging because I did not have enough knowledge of the industry or tasks that were performed and partly because my command of the specific language or discourse appeared insufficient. Gender identity was similarly constructed and performed at several levels. Although gender identity appeared as quite a salient identity facet, sexual orientation was not constructed explicitly at all, if not taking into account a very few times when a boyfriend, wife or husband were mentioned, which indirectly presumed membership in the group of heterosexuals (cf. Kitzinger & Wilkinson, 2003, 170). These few indirect references to significant others were coded and added either to the subcategory of 'other role-based identities' or to the category of 'relationships'. It had already become apparent during the deep reading of the textual data, that religion or spirituality were not very salient aspects of identity in the data collected in the work domain. Religious symbols appeared only in the national flags of the Nordic and some other countries. Additionally, some idiomatic expressions included the word 'god', but they were hardly used to identify with a specific religion or to construct spiritual identity.

Cultural identity was not used as a distinct analytical concept or category at any stage of the analysis. The reason for this decision was that cultural identity encompasses several levels and facets of identity, which might, and might not appear at the same time in the discourse. The word 'culture' was used by the speakers and then the contextual cues were used to code and further categorise it in each of the cases. For example, the occurrences of 'culture' were interpreted in three different ways in the extract below:

Extract 2:
INTERVIEWER: How was it to move to (the country, where Due now works)
and start your career there?
DUE: Ahh … it's quite a big move, actually,
coming from Finland =
=((looks up to the ceiling))=
after living in Finland
for, for almost three years
actually, it was quite a big move to (the country) but also exciting move.
Ahh … the nice part is that, actually, I started in (Company X) Finland
so, actually, now when I moved to (Company X)(the new country),
the **culture** inside the company inside is about the same,
so it's a little bit easier for me to adapt to the work life.
Of course.
And also coming to (the country) is coming back to (the region)
where I somehow have some of the background of the **culture**.
So, it's a, it's quite a nice, and easy to adapt in a way.
And I must say that the new experience,
adaptation when I was in Finland helped quite a lot move to (the country).
So, I didn't, I didn't encounter any of the **cultural shock** actually,
or not a very major one when I come to (the country).

The first occurrence of 'culture' in line 11 refers to corporate culture, the second one in line 15 to the regional culture to which the speaker is feeling some affiliation and the last one in line 19 to personal experience. The experiences of cultural adaptation, acculturation, culture shock or discrimination, although important to the identity, were not included in the 'identity' category but in the category of 'interculturality'.

At this point, none of the codes was deleted or merged with others but kept until the analysis was finished. The reason for not merging or disregarding any of them was that they appeared in connection with some other codes and themes and were thought to be helpful when interpreting the identity constructs and construction at the later stage of the analysis. The codes within the family of 'identity' were divided into four subcategories, which are presented in Tables 4-7. Table 4 includes some examples of identifications with groups on a more collective level, such as "we are Asian", whereas Table 5 illustrates some examples of how individuals were constructing individual identity referring to personal qualities or traits. As the examples show, even when creating distinctiveness and individuality, the participants were somehow involved in relating. This happened either by referring to how unique and different a person sees herself in terms of others or how others define and distinguish her from others in the ingroup. The category of Work Identities in Table 6 was composed of organisational or role-based identity facets. Here again, one of the examples, although referring to the manager roles in two companies, includes aspects of the managers' personal qualities in relation to the management style of each of the individuals. The identities that did not seem to fit into any of the three other categories, were grouped under the title of Ambiguous, Fluid and Hybrid Identities, presented in Table 7.

The next step in the analysis was to revisit the nodes and episodes where different identity facets co-occurred or were embedded. To understand what was going on, it was important to relate the identity discourse to the other discursive hubs, especially those of 'Communication' and 'Relationships'. For example, the role-based or occupational identities (in Table 6) appeared often in the same episodes with the discourse on gender or educational background and such connections were more closely scrutinised in the sequences and episodes where they appeared.

TABLE 4 IDENTITY AS GROUP PROTOTYPES

Occurrences of identity facets in the textual data (groundedness of codes)	Examples in the interview data	Examples in the observational data
racial identity (8) ethnic identity (8) national identity (33) regional identity (5) religious or spiritual identity (4) language or linguistic identity (61) gender identity (22) age identity (10) total (151)	"(ethnically different) people they look different and we are Asian, and of course I look Asian, but because we were living this, when I was 10 years we moved from south ( ) to north and north is basically in that time was fully (majority group) area, international, but anyway we spoke more (the majority) language" "...yleensäkin ottaen, että kun on hakenu jonnekin työhön, niin se on ollu aina plussaa, että on (x-maa)lainen.. [...in general, when (I) have applied for work somewhere, it has always been a plus that (one) is (of nationality x)] "That's why all my family was growing and living in this both culture like acceptance because *katolik* (Catholic) this religion events and all events were accepted" "se oli tälleen pohjoismaalaisena naisena aika yllättävää" [As a Nordic woman, it was quite surprising (to me)] "Miesten kanssa on niin helppo tehdä töitä, että ei se siinä mielessä oo, mutta tietysti välillä ärsyttää se insinöörimäisyys ((laughs))." [It's easy to work with men, but of course the engineering qualities (reference to professional stereotype) irritates at times ((laughs))] "…Because we are close to the Russian border so of course we have these (materials) in Russian language, as well…Yeah. For example, this final report we have in English, Finnish and Russian, because these Eastern European countries they understand Russian …and all others English and Finnish. For Finland, because we are located in Finland and it's number one market. I'm not selling to Finnish = ((smiles and points to himself)) …not yet."	National flag painted on the nails "to irritate" the male colleagues of another nationality during a sports event Use of idiomatic expressions or regional dialect Women have different tasks and they have their offices on a different floor. Women wear their own clothes, while men have company uniforms.

TABLE 5 IDENTITY BASED ON PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES AND SKILLS

Occurrences of identity facets in the textual data (groundedness of codes)	Examples in the interview data	Examples in the observational data
Identity based on competence (41), experience (24), physical or personality traits (28) total (93)	"Then I needed to find some security for computers, for the data. I needed to contact many companies like, this is also my work to contact these companies are related to the servers of the main like these kind of services and most of them they have English speaking support. That's why it is easier for (him) that I'm contacting, because the technical support they speak technical language." "He's having good ideas and he is jumping very fast and I'm more *dedicated* (directed) to the result…a lot to get results from everything." "So I probably think that they see that I have managed to work and think it's easy to communicate with people and, and, I think I'm rather punctual and very open with what I think and I think that it's a big thing also that I have, how you say, sopeutunut = (Interviewer: =adjusted?) good in this work team, or how you say this."	Elisa (speaking on the phone):"Mikä oli kikka kolmonen? Pitää kysyä viisaammilta. Esa taitaa olla eläkepäivillä..." [What was the trick three (System D or magic trick)? Have to ask the wiser people. Esa has a day off... (literally: pension day, i.e. he has a partial retirement plan and is therefore off work)…]

TABLE 6 IDENTITY AT THE WORKPLACE

Occurrences of identity facets in the data (groundedness of codes)	Examples in the interview data	Examples in the observational data
organisational identity (31) incl. identification with company (17), and department or team (14)	"We (the company) are the dealers of the producers so it's also part of the reputation." "Ja tiimi meillä on aivan mahtava. Siellä on tosi positiivisia ihmisiä ja oikein semmosia kannustavia ja hirmu mukava tulla töihin siinä mielessä aamulla." [And we have an absolutely great team. There are really positive people there and very, kind of, encouraging and it's really nice to come to work, in that sense, in the morning.]	Uniforms with corporate logos and colours, company symbols, posters in the office a small stuffed reindeer with (the company) logo
workplace identity (53) incl. role-, title-, or status-based (25) and task-based (28) identities	"I'm in the sales manager's position." "The one, in sense of, like, he is not like a leader, not considered as a leader, but he is the one who is basically just leading the meeting " (The speaker is comparing two workplaces) "The work was interesting because they didn't have that much experience in management. The leader was of course Saboor and also Tess and that was basically fully international company and basically, we tried to gather advantages from every member. And Saboor is really strong manager. He is checking everything, and he knows a lot but it is a bit different than to work with Panu. Panu is more business oriented and he is somehow definitely like sure about what he is given the strategy to work and he is still able to (get) people to implement, but Saboor was more like he was implementing but he would still do what he want…finally. He would do everything, but he will do everything he want. (smile)."	All salespeople have their offices on the same, ground floor, while administrative personnel occupy quieter, second floor offices.

continues

TABLE 6 (continues)

Occupational (educational or professional) identity (28)	“I believe it’s, how to say, it’s part of this work and who I am, because I don’t have that technical background” “I get to learn so much, because he already had one Bachelor from the financial side” “…and I was thinking about her maybe in that way, but then I was checking, checking and then I saw this kind of, you know, her diploma. She is a doctor, or candidate basically of technical sciences from MGU.”

TABLE 7 AMBIGUOUS, FLUID AND HYBRID IDENTITIES

Occurrences of identity facets in the data (groundedness of codes)	**Examples in the interview data**	**Examples in the observational data**
Ambiguous ethno-linguistic identity (5)	“I look (my ethnicity) but I don’t speak, and some people (of my ethnicity) may aggressively take it and that’s why it would be difficult for me to apply for work there. Because then they will notice my CV but there is no basically language. I speak, but of course it’s like my Finnish.” “.. uhm..this is a stupid thing, of course, but also there is a very bad attitude towards people like me who doesn’t speak their native language.” ALEKSIS: They are rather surprised when they hear me speaking (their language). They don’t expect a (native) person to be here to answer and they still think that I’m not really a (native), ‘cause they say I have an accent when I speak (my mother tongue). I don’t really feel that, but interesting comments. INTERVIEWER: And maybe it’s because of their expectation also that they = ALEKSIS: = As well. But it’s, when you speak in the native language, you can … understand or feel, feel more, how to say, this level of interest, because of the questions they ask.	”... sveitsiks sitten juttelivat mukavia ja sieltä tuli sitten vahvistus..” […and they had a nice chat in Swiss and the confirmation came from there.]

continues

TABLE 7 continues

Integrated vs. segregated work-nonwork identity (56) identity based on other role-relationships, e.g. family and kinship identity (40) or identification with other close relationships (16)	"I didn't want to just be a mother only, so I'm not bored with him (child), but I would, when I have two hours at work then I also more appreciate time with him." "Miusta on tullu aikuisiällä niin epäsosiaalinen. Tää työ vie niin paljon. Ei voi kaikkien kanssa olla yhteydessä, on rajatumpaa."[In adulthood/With age I have become so asocial. This work takes so much time. Cannot be in touch with all, it's more restricted.]	Children's schedules and drawings on the wall and photos on the windowsill A computer and a multi-cooker in the same room (kitchen) where the person works enabling her to combine work and household duties
international identity (21)	"I'm mentally international person" "For example, with (husband's) family, it was easy to integrate. They had also experience about international family. This ( ) aunt has a husband, international, like family." "Niin kyllä siellä on hyvin kansainvälistä porukkaa. On (paikalli)siakin siellä töissä, mutta pääasiassa ohjaajat on sitten kansainvälisiä, että Briteistä tai muualta. Saksasta taitaa olla ihmisiä."[So there is very international staff there. There are locals working there, too, but instructors (mentors) are international, from Britain or elsewhere. People from Germany, I think.]	multilingual materials or multicultural groups or not-local people introduced as "international" during the site visits
metaphorically construed identities (2)	"...kun on varattomana rantapummina ollu muutaman vuotta..." […after (I) have been a penniless beach bum for a couple of years.] ((Laughs))	Chairperson: ...on koulutettu, sellasella sirkusryhmällä, että Dean piti koulutuksen englanniksi ja mie tulkkasin sitten suomeksi.... […has been trained, by such a circus group that Dean gave training in English and I interpreted it into Finnish…]

The analysis of the episodes showed that the same data passages included several codes that were linked with different levels and facets of identity. The codes and analytic categories seemed to create complex discursive networks in episodes. In order to answer the first research question "What facets and meanings of identity of young business professionals are being discursively produced and made salient in the context of work?" the links and connections between the categories and themes were analysed. In the data passages, many aspects of multifaceted identity were performed and negotiated at the same time. There was also evidence of the fluidity and flexibility of identity, when the speakers moved from one identity position or membership in one group to another within the same episode. When they were managing their own identity, they were also often involved in reconstruing others' identities and their relationships. There were also some identity labels assigned to self or others that appeared in several episodes across datasets. One such emerging identity facet that appeared 21 times in the data was an "international" identity, which is exemplified and further discussed later.

The identity concepts and categories were not taken for granted but they were scrutinised more closely and critically (Foucault, 1972, 25-26). Positioning Analysis was employed to investigate if and how the conventional, stereotypical or normative identity categories and identity positions were accepted or resisted in the discourse. The episodes and utterances that included salient or otherwise interesting, often nonconforming identity constructs were further investigated to answer the second research question "How are identities discursively (co-)constructed and positioned in workplace interaction?". The unit of analysis consisted of speech acts in utterances and episodes. The data was first approached through the premises or hubs of 'acting' and 'dwelling' of CuDA, i.e. by paying attention to the sequential action and the contexts of communicative practices. Three different types of immediate contexts were considered. They are 1) the communicative event, i.e. sequence and episode, 2) social setting and 3) physical setting. Positioning became a useful analytic tool to investigate how the flexible identities are discursively produced in their immediate contexts. The positioning analysis was employed to find the first, second and third order positionings of identity. Later, there was also an attempt to analyse how the social order was construed in interaction by looking at the connections between rights and duties, the force of the speech acts and storylines. As the data includes both interview and observation data, it has been possible to analyse the interrelations between narrative identity and interactional identity positioning (e.g. Wortham, 2010). The identity positions were, thus, analysed in relation to personal stories and the storylines created in interaction. Occasionally, the so-called 'master narratives' or dominant discourses were also included provided they were sufficiently grounded in the interaction. Of the three levels of identity acts by Bamberg and Georgakopoulou (2008, 385) this study focuses on the second level, that is, how the persons position themselves and others on the here and now of interactive situations. However, the bottom-up approach also enabled to view how identities were sometimes positioned in relation to dominant discourses, such as diversity or gender. After analysing the ways and means of identity construction, the findings were further interpreted and discussed with the help of identity theories.

Analysing and interpreting nonverbal communication was somewhat challenging. As an observer, I might have not always been able to notice the subtle, nonverbal messages that were sent and received. The challenge of analysing nonverbal communication also emanated from my cultural, social and personal lenses to observe and interpret interactions of different individuals in various settings. Moreover, not all nonverbal behaviour is meaningful or has the same communication potential, so as a researcher I had to decide which nonverbal elements to focus on (Burgoon et al., 1989). Due to restrictions pertaining to video recording, most of the facial expressions and some other forms of subtle nonverbal behaviours had to be ignored.

The following Chapter 4 starts with the presentation of the general findings, which is then followed by a more detailed discussion of the main results. Of the multiple identity facets that were discursively produced, language and international identity are examined in greater detail. Although these identity facets were not always explicitly associated with work, they were interestingly salient in the identity discourses in the workplace contexts and, therefore, deserve special attention. The next chapter introduces three relational work identities and their discursive positioning. I have named these discourses as 'the boss is the boss', 'pretty assistants' and 'male engineers'. The following chapter 4.4 discusses identity construction in work-family relationships. This identity discourse is named as "a balancing juggler". Moreover, a competing "an isolated employee" discourse was identified. The last work identity discourse introduced in the results section is "a job hopper" identity. Although the second research question is already partly answered in the preceding chapters, Chapter 4.6 discusses it further and presents humour and laughter as strategies in work identity constructions and positioning.

4 CONSTRUCTING MULTIFACETED IDENTITIES AT WORK

4.1 Facets and Meanings of Identity in the Contexts of Work

The facets and meanings of work identity are central to this study. However, because identity is multifaceted and reshaped in discourse, it is not always necessary or even possible to separate the product from the process of identity construction. To better understand the multiple facets and the fluidity of work identity, I discuss them together with the discursive practices that produce them. Thus, the first research question "What facets and meanings of identity of young business professionals are being discursively produced and made salient in the context of work?" is answered alongside the second research question "How are identities discursively (co-)constructed and positioned in workplace interaction?".

In this chapter, I first present some general findings and then discuss some of the identity facets emerging in the data and their discursive construction in more detail. Because the identity facets and discourses that produce them are inexorably intertwined, it has not been possible to consider individual dimensions of identity in complete isolation. On the other hand, every aspect of identity cannot be scrutinised in one single study (Block and Corona 2016). Thus, this study is only able to provide a partial picture of discursive identity construction. I occasionally refer to the salience of identity facets. In this research, salience does not mean the importance or centrality of a specific identity facet to an individual but rather how noticeable it is in the data or how prominent it is in the identity discourse.

When analysing identity discourse in the data, various aspects or facets of identity were discovered (see Tables 4-7). The identity facets were more explicit and manifest in the interview data, when the participants were construing identity for themselves or for others. In the interviews, identity was observed through the personal, enacted and relational frames (Hecht, 1993; Jung & Hecht, 2004). The multi-frame perspective was necessary because the participants were sometimes only speaking about themselves but often also reflecting how the others see them or how they view themselves in relation to the others. Furthermore, as an interviewer, I was also taking part in identity co-construction, when the interviewees were presenting and enacting their identities for me. Different aspects of identity were also enacted in verbal and nonverbal communication at the workplace. However, the meanings of identity were more implicitly construed in the observation data, although radiating from the more explicit hubs of meanings.

The identity discourses were constructing some rather permanent, collective identity categories, quite distinctive work-related identities, as well as facets based on the roles and relationships in and outside work. Moreover, identity facets based on personality or physical traits, competence, or experience were identified. The data was collected at workplaces, and the themes discussed during interviews were also work-related. It is, therefore, noteworthy how many different facets of identity were enacted, performed or expressed in this context. The salience of facets differed, however, as can be seen in Tables 4-7. I had not expected some of the nonwork identities to be so salient in the data. It was also somewhat surprising that collective categorisation of oneself and others was so apparent.

As mentioned earlier, the attempt to organise identity discourses into the three layers of individual, interpersonal, and collective identity was not very successful. Instead, the identity facets were divided into the following types:

- prototypical identity highlighting similarity with or belonging to the group (151 quotations):
  - racial
  - ethnic
  - national
  - regional
  - religious or spiritual
  - gender
  - language
  - age
- identity based on personal attributes and skills highlighting uniqueness and distinctiveness from others (93 quotations):
  - age
  - personality
  - physical traits
  - competence
  - experience
- identity at the workplace (112 quotations):
  - organisational identity: identification with the company, department or team
  - workplace identity: based on status and titles (hierarchical structures or relationships), roles or tasks

  - educational and/ or professional identity
- ambiguous, fluid and hybrid identities (84 quotations):
  - ambiguous ethnolinguistic identity
  - 'international' identity
  - integrated vs. separate work-nonwork identity
  - metaphorically construed identity

One of the initial findings of the research was that identity was often construed through competing discourses of similarity and difference (or distinctiveness). Identities are often formed in binary oppositions although they do not necessarily exclude each other, but produce multiple, situated meanings (Woodward, 1997). The participants presented collective identity facets and their group affiliations when such prototype identities were associated with positive and favourable qualities. On the other hand, whenever the group identity prototype was attached with negative stereotyping, it was rejected, and the interlocutors highlighted their uniqueness and the facets of their individual identity. It can be concluded that on the similarity-difference dimension the identity discourse was constructing what Social Identity Theory calls positive distinctiveness. However, it was not only apparent as an ingroup versus outgroup phenomenon (cf. SIT) but also whether the individual or collective identity was more salient in the communicative situation. Moreover, the processes of identity construction were much more complex and dynamic when the different levels and facets of identity intertwined in the discourse. The personal, relational, professional and organisational discourses formed varying combinations of situated meanings. The extract below shows how the person is highlighting her person-based qualities which make her different from some other employees but, at the same time, make her part of the team.

> Extract 3:
> "but now when I've been here three years on and off
> I after school got the full job,
> so I probably think that they see that I have managed to work
> and think it's easy to communicate with people and, and,
> I think I'm rather punctual and very open with what I think
> and I think that it's a big thing also that I have, how you say, sopeutunut =
> (Interviewer: =adjusted?)
> in this work team, or how you say this.
> We have had some workers who maybe has done the work like quite good
> but then they have been so hard to deal with, like social (skills).
> There are lot of qualities,
> not like that you can do your work,
> but that you actually can be part of the whole work team."
> (touching and pulling her lower lip). (Vera, interview)

Sometimes it seemed more difficult to locate oneself or others in the social context, and then some fluid and hybrid identities were discursively created. The discourses of different identity facets co-existed, overlapped, intersected and sometimes also contradicted with each other. The discursive struggles and dialectical tensions constituted an ambiguous, multifaceted and multi-layered work identity that was associated with external organisational structures, temporary or more permanent roles, tasks at hand or competence and positions enabled or restricted by the person's work experience or educational history. The collective and individual levels of identity were also interconnected with role-based, relational identities that were enacted in interpersonal communication. For example, competence achieved through vocational training or higher education was an individual asset as well as a collective force that either unified an ingroup or created boundaries between different occupational groups at the workplace. Moreover, work identity was not always separate from the roles, duties and relationships outside the workplace. Identity discourse was also interconnected to some other workplace discourses mentioned earlier, such as discourse on change or resources, especially time.

The intersections of discourses in the data provided interesting and fruitful points for further analysis and discussion. When investigating the discursive hubs in the data and the webs formed by intersecting discourses, the attention was first drawn to two aspects: the facets of language and "international" identity. Language identity was linked to the highest number of quotations in the data (altogether 61 quotations). It appeared both as a discursive identity construct and a constructor of very complex identifications. The data also included quotations where the ethno-linguistic or national aspects of identity were presented as ambiguous. Although not all quotations were directly linked to work, it was decided that the role of language or languages in identity construction deserves further investigation. Secondly, some hybrid identities were also discursively constructed. Hybridised "international" identity was characterised by more positive associations, more ambivalent affiliations or less distinct identification than predetermined and more fixed social categories, which were resisted or decomposed in the discourse.

To be able to interpret the meanings of work identity that the discourses produced, the negotiations and positioning of identities were then scrutinised in three different work-related contexts: identities construed within organisational roles and structures, in spaces between jobs and at the interface of work and nonwork. As the process and product of discursive identity construction go hand in hand, the second research question "How are identities discursively (co-)constructed and positioned in workplace interaction?" is answered together with the first one. However, humour and laughter are discussed separately, because they were found to be an important discursive strategy to position identities and to simultaneously construct and maintain relationships and social order at work. Having a closer look at humour in discourse enabled the 'operationalisation' of some emotions and helped to understand the meanings or the radiant of 'feeling' in discursive identity construction. The main themes discussed in the following chapters are presented in Figure 2.

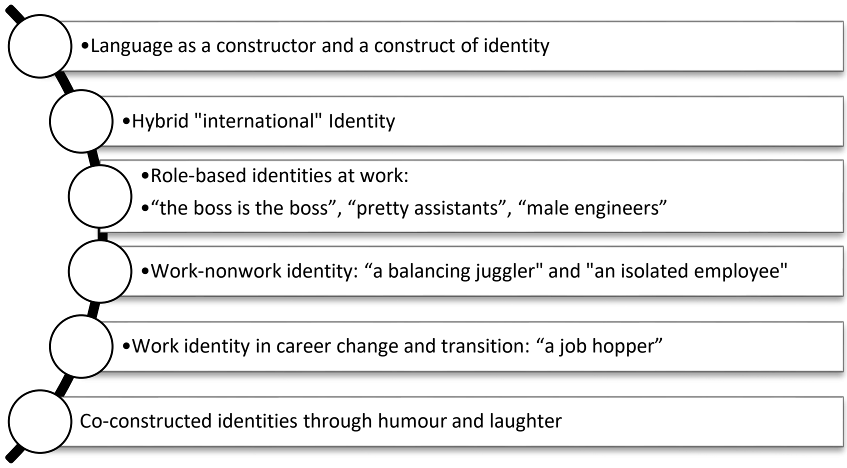

FIGURE 2 PROCESSES AND PRODUCTS OF DISCURSIVE IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION

4.2 Ambiguity of Ethno-Linguistic and National Identities

In the diverse, increasingly complex and interconnected world of international business, the notions of cultural, national or even ethno-linguistic identity appear ambiguous and equivocal. In public discourse cultural identity is often used unduly to categorise, generalise, stigmatise, or stereotype individuals or groups based on only few distinctive aspects, such as ethnicity, nationality, gender or religion. Although within communication studies cultural identity is mostly defined as dynamic and constantly evolving, there is still a considerable methodological-ideological divergence. The current study draws on the intercultural communication theories of identity where both identity and culture are viewed as complex and fluid and constantly evolving in interaction. Additionally, it adopts Jameson’s (2007) re-conception, where cultural identity is also viewed through several lenses in different contexts, for example, through vocation in the contexts of power and privilege, or in a hybrid culture of an international company.

For analytic purposes, the umbrella terms of culture and cultural identity were unpacked and decomposed and interpreted in the contexts (see Minkov, 2013, 10 and 18). In the data, culture and collective cultural identity were discussed, for example, in connection with citizenship, nationality, ethnicity, or language. References to culture and cultural identities were also found in the discourse on family and other close relationships, as well as in the narratives of a personal life history. The participants also used the term ’culture’ when they spoke about workplace or organisational culture, but often it was also discussed in connection or in contrast to the larger cultural categories.

In the data analysis, the concept of national identity seemed problematic as well. It was not always clear if the speakers were referring to a certain nationality, ethnicity, or language, because the words are in many cases the same in English. The notion of national identity has also been criticised because it may lead researchers to disregard or overlook other aspects of diversity, such as ethnicity, social classes, or gender (Hall, 1996, 611–618). The data included a few illustrative examples of enacted national identity. For example, one of the participants of this research was using a very bright nail polish. She had painted the distinctive symbols and colours of a national flag on her fingernails. When asked about it, she replied that she had done that to "irritate" her male coworkers during the upcoming sports event. The national team of her country of origin was to play against the national team of the country where she was working and where most of her colleagues were from. The flag on her nails could be easily taken as a clear marker of national identity. However, the implicit meanings inferred and radiating from the polished nails can be much more multiple and ambiguous if interpreting them in the specific workplace context.

In the next two subsections, I discuss the ambivalence and fluidity of language identity, on the one hand, and the hybrid 'international' identity, on the other. I will not focus solely on work identity but try to interpret the meanings of these two identity constructs in the contexts they appeared in the data. Through these two examples, I aim at showing why social identity, and work identity in particular, should be understood and scrutinised as a multifaceted, complex and fluid phenomenon, rather than a monolithic block and why there seems to be a need to decompose and redefine the concepts of cultural, national, ethnic or linguistic identity to study the increasingly diversified world.

4.2.1 Language as a Construct and a Constructor of Identity

Language is often seen as an important part of cultural or ethnic identity (e.g. Auer, 1998; Crystal, 2000; Fishman, 1989, 1991 and 1999; Lanca et al. 1994). However, this study shows that language is much more than one component of personal or social identity. Language as an identity facet is a fluid, dynamic and complex construct that is created and negotiated in interaction. At the same time, language either enables or disables identity co-construction and negotiations. Moreover, it would be methodologically unwise not to discuss the relationship between language, languages and identity when conducting discursive research. It is especially important in this study, because several languages, including English as a Lingua Franca, are being used in variable organisational contexts creating complex sociolinguistic realities.

In the datasets, language identity was the most salient of identity facets appearing in more than 60 episodes. It was attached to one's self esteem, relationships, integration to larger communities, as well as to one's ability to perform at work. Extract 4 illustrates how a language interpreted as the marker of the person's national or ethnic identity leads into misinterpretation and negative stereotyping.

Extract 4:
"I heard about many people,
especially men talking aggressively about Russian,
and then they talked like that
because we were speaking Russian.
But when we tell that we came from (country of origin)
then they were telling okay,
but from the first time they were angry about Russian." (Diana, interview)

Considering language as an innate and immutable characteristic confines the person to a certain ethno-linguistic identity and can easily give rise to exclusion, discrimination or even aggression, as in this case. In the extract above, the speaker is not, however, validating the given identity position. Instead she creates boundaries between different facets of her identity. Although she is a native speaker of Russian, she detaches herself from the ethnic group of Russians or from the citizenship of the Russian federation. In line 5, she explains how she rejects the assigned identity and resists the negative stereotyping attached to the Russian speakers in her environment. She feels association with the Russian language and enacts her language identity by speaking Russian in public. However, her national identity becomes salient when she is assigned negative identity position based on the language she speaks.

According to the Communication Theory of Identity, there are contradicting yet coexisting frames or loci of identity. In communication, identity gaps between the personal, relational and communal identity are inevitable, especially when the persons come from very different experiential domains (Jung & Hecht, 2004). In the previous example it is possible to see contradicting frames which have a potential to cause identity gaps because of the different domains of experience. Diana, with complex, multiple identifications interacts with a person from more monocultural background. The Identity Negotiations Theory explains these contradictions as dialectics or dialectical tensions between inclusion and differentiation when a person desires to have a positive personal and group-based identity but experiences that her identity and group membership are stigmatised in outgroup contacts (Ting-Toomey, 2005, 217-218). Both the contradicting frames or dialectical tensions can be observed at the level of meaning systems, i.e. in competing discourses (Baxter, 2011; Baxter & Montgomery, 1996).

Diana's language identity is even more complex than what can be seen in the previous example, because she is not fluent in the language of her own ethnic group. Extract 5 illustrates how she might be excluded from and stigmatised by the members of her ingroup because she does not satisfy the criteria of a 'native' speaker.

Extract 5:
"I look (my ethnicity) but I don't speak,
and some people (of my ethnicity) may aggressively take it
and that's why it would be difficult for me to apply for work there.
Because then they will notice my CV

but there is no basically language.
I speak, but of course it's like my Finnish." (Diana, interview)

To be considered as a native-speaker, she should have a perfect command of the ethnic language. In her interview, Diana further refers to some of the language-related tensions taking place in the politics, economy and in everyday encounters in her country of origin. These D discourses are reflected in Diana's own identity talk. The fluidity and multiplicity of Diana's identity become evident through the discrepancy of how she views herself, how others identify and position her, how she enacts herself in communication, and how society ascribes people like her. Aleksis is another person whose language identity is somehow questioned by his ingroup.

Extract 6:
ALEKSIS: They are rather surprised
when they hear me speaking (their language).
They don't expect a (native) person to be here to answer
and they still think that I'm not really a (native),
cause they say I have an accent when I speak (my mother tongue).
I don't really feel that, but interesting comments.
INTERVIEWER: And maybe it's because of their expectation also that they =
ALEKSIS: = As well.
But it's, when you speak in the native language,
you can … understand or feel, feel more,
how to say,
this level of interest,
because of the questions they ask.

The members of Aleksis' linguistic ingroup are doubtful if he really is a native speaker, because he represents a 'foreign' company situated outside the geographical area where the language is commonly spoken. His 'countrymen' apparently assume that they would be served in international English. Aleksis himself is othering them, as well, by referring to the members of his language group as "they".

Although the identity of a native speaker is contested in the above examples, in general, the versatile language competence including a native command of at least one language other than English appeared to be one of the main reasons for the BBA's to be recruited. Similar observations have been made in other professional contexts (e.g. Välipakka et al., 2016). Whether the first or second language, language was mostly construed as a positive aspect of personal and relational work identity.

Extract 7:
"Perhaps that was the reason why I got the place
that I can share two languages and two native languages, like. …
but when I moved here, I have understand
how much I can gain from being two, from being *bilang*, *bilingual*,
how you say? – ((looks down))
(The interviewer helps the speaker with the word.)

bilingual and I hadn't thought about it before
when I was living in (the country of origin).
And I feel that I just want to learn new languages." (Vera, interview)

Extract 8:
"Että englannin kielellä oon tehny näitä oman alan töitä täällä,
että kyllä tietysti (paikallinen) kieli ois sitten avannut paremmin vielä noita,
mutta kyllä tällä kielitaidolla on sitten ihan hyvin päässy töihin.
Et kuitenkin (minun maani kansa)laisia työntekijöitä *arvostettaan* ihan sitten myös sen vahvan englanninkielen ansiosta." (Maria, interview)
[So, I have worked in my own field in English,
but of course (the local) language would have given better access to those (jobs),
but this language ability has enabled (me) to get a job.
Actually, employees (of my nationality) are appreciated just because of the good command of English.]

Jaspal (2009) concludes that the boundaries of linguistic identity are permeable, and by adopting and using a language with a higher status, a person can gain access to the group with a better social position. English as a language of international business enjoys social and linguistic prestige, but also the local language, the language of powerful social groups within the workplace could bring benefits, as shown in Extract 8. On the contrary, using a language that evokes negative social representations or having an insufficient command of a more positively evaluated language can, in turn, lower the person's self-esteem and social position, as illustrated in the extracts below.

Extract 9:
"Take me as an example.
I have stayed here nearly nine, eight or nine years
I still don't feel that I have 100% adapted
because I don't speak the language.
It's important.
I know it's hard for the youngsters
when they come to study,
and have to learn additional language,
but it pays off." (Aleksis, interview)
Extract 10:
"I think when it comes to the foreigners
when they want to practice their language.
I have faced that situation.
If somebody as a native speaker shows arrogant kind of disrespect
or tries to make a joke about the way you speak
or something like that,
it triggers a fear for yourself to speak perfect,
and you may stop when people come to you
and they wonder why don't you speak (the local language)
or why don't you learn (the local language).
So, people have to be careful when it comes to everyone's development.
So, you have to be careful.
You have get them, along them in friendly work and try to exercise

> and my colleagues do pretty well towards me.
> I'm thankful for that,
> because I don't want to get that prejudice, you know,
> that somebody is making fun of the way I talk,
> because I'm not yet good
> and I don't want to, I want to, get that prejudice
> and because of that I like to continue when they come to talk with me.
> But I'm over that. (Aleksis, interview)

The above examples show that there is interdependence between language competence, self-esteem and the personal and professional identity. Moreover, language competence also plays an important part in ranking self among others, i.e. in positioning at interpersonal and collective levels. During the interview, Aleksis expressed hesitation and often asked for confirmation if he was correctly understood, for example, with a question "*Do you understand my English?*" or with a more rhetoric question "*How to say?*". By doing so he was offering me as an interviewer or former teacher a position of a competent speaker and positioning himself as a less competent speaker or language learner. Aleksis also described how his command of some technical terms in the company language or in the customers' dialects or "their own slang" causes him to feel insecure. However, he mentioned that he cannot ask his engineering colleagues for help, because it is not how people in this national culture work. Instead, he had developed his own strategies to compensate his insufficient technical knowledge and professional language skills, such as "I just say it in a very primitive way.", "I try to insist customers to do that (to use product numbers)…" or "And then based on my understanding, when I meet the customers here, and we use this ((points to the whiteboard)) and then if he is not here, I try to take the print screen …and send it by email just to understand." Aleksis position as a professional sales manager is threatened by his lack of technical terms. On the other hand, his interpretation of the culturally appropriate ways of working prevent him from requesting help from others.

All interviews conducted in English included frequent occurrences of non-standard language, hesitation, language interference and transfer, as well as code-mixing and code-switching, mixing or changing languages or language variants, which are typical in discourses of bilingual or multilingual individuals or communities (e.g. Anderson, 2006; Crystal 1987; Hadei et al., 2016; Schmidt, 2014). Although English was the official language in four out of six companies and also used in the other two, none of the primary participants of this study was a native speaker of English. Consequently, it was sometimes difficult to know if the word choices were accurately conveying the intended meanings. Sometimes the interpretation was difficult because of the homonyms in the language that was used. For instance, in Extract 4, it is not explicit if the men spoke aggressively about the language, nationality, or ethnic affiliation, or if they considered all of them to form a solid, non-breakable block. Similar challenges appeared when interpreting translanguaging and code-switching, which may indicate inadequate linguistic or communicative competence, but they can also be used deliberately to show mood, express an attitude or emphasise the point (Malik, 1994; Azlan & Narasuman, 2013). Sometimes they might even indicate communality and solidarity with the audience. Utterances which include language transfer and code-mixing and switching can similarly be involved in identity construction at personal, relational and cultural levels (e.g. Bolonyai, 2005; De Fina, 2007; Giampapa, 2004 and Farida et al., 2018; Rafi, 2017). Azlan and Narasuman (2013) found an interesting contradiction between the results of a questionnaire survey, where the informants reported that they used code-switching to emphasise the point, but were actually found to be more involved in group identity construction through code-switching during observation periods. Language transfer and code-mixing and code-switching have a potential to position the speaker and audiences in the socio-cultural context, as the short example below suggests.

> Extract 11:
> "…my Finnish colleague can say: "We are not selling you yapadapadoo (Yabba Dabba Doo)" ((smiles)). (Aleksis, interview)

The reference to the popular animated sitcom The Flintstones and the catchphrase by Fred Flintstone is an interesting one from the relational perspective. The expression creates an image of speaker, who is a chubby and down-to-earth, and probably somewhat unusual and cunning male 'engineer' but, on the other hand, is still an innocent and jovial family man. By citing his colleague, Aleksis seems to take up and validate the discursive identity position the person is constructing for himself or for the sales team of the company, to which Aleksis also belongs. The company where Aleksis works at the time of the interview is a formerly family-owned business in mechanical engineering, which had quite recently merged with another one. In this socio-cultural context, the explicit quote can 'radiate' various implicit meanings of not only the dyadic relationship, but also of the larger collective and organisational meanings.

In a project meeting conducted mostly in Finnish, a chairperson was using a word for a nationality to refer to the language used by others as in "…*sveitsiks sitten juttelivat mukavia*" […(they) had a nice chat in Swiss]. In this context, the use of an 'incorrect' word cannot be interpreted as a mistake. It is much likely a rhetorical device that was deliberately chosen to differentiate 'us' involved in the discussion in this meeting from 'the others' communicating elsewhere. It could also imply that the chairperson knew that there are four official languages in Switzerland, but that he was not sure which of them was spoken. At the surface level, the speech could be understood to be about the language or nationality, but, in fact, it seems to be more about constructing ingroup-outgroup boundaries, although the original Finnish expression did not include the pronoun 'they'.

The observation data of this study included examples of transfer between the speaker's first and second language, but additionally also switching between other languages, styles, dialects or professional jargon. This kind of code-switching seemed to be a conscious choice, as in the following extracts from a project meeting.

Extract 12:
CHAIRPERSON: ″Aivan. Juu-juu. Ymmärsin. –
((Someone is speaking simultaneously with the chairperson.))
Okei. Asia **bueno**. Millos sie saat sen listan matkaan?″
[Right. Yeah-yeah. I understood – ( )
Okay. It's **bueno** (The thing (is) **bueno**). When can you send that list?]

Spanish was not the first or second language of the speaker or anyone else in the meeting nor it is the company language. Therefore, the word <u>*bueno*</u> cannot be interpreted as language interference or switch caused by the lack of language skills or register. The reason here for code-switching is probably to emphasise the point that the interlocutors had reached mutual understanding. It also functions as a discourse marker, ending that part of the conversation between the two people. The second example of code-switching from the same meeting looks quite different.

Extract 13:
CHAIRPERSON: ″Ollaan ihan **helekkarin** huonossa ...tilanteessa tään kanssa kyllä,
että... ääh, ...on koulutettu, sellasella **sirkusryhmällä**,
että Dean piti koulutuksen englanniksi ja mie tulkkasin sitten suomeksi.
Anne voi kertoo, miten se meni. ((Some people are laughing.))
Että tuota ilmeisesti siitä nyt jotakin **tolkkuu** sitten saatiin.″
[Yeah, we are in **a hell of a** …situation with this
that…ahh, …has been trained, by such **a circus group**
that Dean gave training in English and I interpreted it into Finnish.
Anne can tell how it went. ((Some people are laughing.))
So that, apparently, it made some sense.]

The word "helekkari", as a switch of register, followed by a long sigh, expresses the speaker's emotional reaction, his frustration about the situation. However, the mood changes when he speaks about the group of trainers and uses the expression "circus group". He includes himself in this group and makes this self-ironical comment about the trainers and his role as the interpreter. Followed by laughter, the comment can be interpreted as self-deprecating humour, the aim of which might be to strengthen his affiliation with the group. The chairperson is constructing for himself two separate group identities, first as a member of the circus group and secondly also his membership with the project team present in the meeting. He also positions Anne as an external observant who can assess how successful the training was and who could maybe also position the chairperson more positively. The shift from mild swearing to irony can also be the means to alleviate some of the tensions caused by the situation, or he could try to draw back his earlier comment about how bad the situation really is. Crystal (1987) points out that code-switching can be used to establish rapport, and express solidarity with the group. Yet, the same rhetorical means could be used to exclude others, and build barriers between speakers and boundaries between the ingroup and outgroup.

It can be concluded that the relationship between language and identity is intricate and reciprocal. First, there was some evidence of the fluidity of the person's language identity. The fixed, frozen and essentialist view of a language as a marker of national or ethnic identity was rejected by the person in Extracts 4 and 5. Instead, the person's language identity was a fabric interwoven with different threads, such as partial or full command the local and organisational language, experienced or assigned (in)complete fluency in one's 'native' or first language and strong or weak identification with other languages. Language identity emerged at different levels when individuals were constructing integration with or separation from others. On the other hand, language was a more implicit and ambiguous part of the identity discourse, when the individuals were positioning self and others in the social settings of the workplace. Linguistic resources, such as command of professional jargon or the ability to use multiple languages or switch between codes or speech genres, were essential when co-constructing and negotiating relational and group identities and positions.

Language and identity are also inseparable from the distribution of power, the construction of social order and language ideologies (e.g. Pavelenko & Blackledge, 2004, 1; Welch et al., 2005; Tange & Lauring, 2009). In the datasets, English as the medium of communication was always used between non-native speakers. In English as a Lingua Franca conversation between and among non-natives, the dominance is based on other factors than the ownership of the language – language proficiency being, however, one obvious factor.

Explicit verbal references to social positioning based on language were not observed in the Finnish-mediated workplace interactions. There could be many reasons for this. The presence of an outsider could have influenced the workplace interactions in, at least, two ways. The interlocutors could have paid more attention to how they interact with each other. On the other hand, the lack of such examples in the observational data could have been caused by the conscious withdrawal from or avoidance of the communicative encounters that were considered challenging. This was assumed to be at least somewhat true in one of the companies, where there was no interaction between the speakers of two different languages in the coffee room. However, it should be kept in mind that the observation periods were very short, and I had limited access to the communicative situations. Therefore, the reasons for such behaviours can only be speculated. To understand the complex relationships between language, identity, power and ideologies requires much more thorough, critical and focused analysis (e.g. Hava, 2018). It might still be possible to get only a partial picture of the dynamism and interplay between language and identity, especially when language use and identity construction are interpreted and situated in authentic business environments.

4.2.2 International Identities

International and multinational companies operate in between different geographical areas, cultures and languages. Their organisational cultures and practices are combinations or fusions of various influences. To be able to operate, there is however, a need for shared values, principles, goals, and methods, and for effective means of communication, "common language". This new hybrid set of values and practices can be called the third culture making everybody, not just expats, third-culture employees. Contrary to Moore and Barker's (2012) definition, in this study third-culture individuals are not only those who have lived outside their passport country during their developmental years, but also those who work in culturally diverse organisations. The third culture is seen as an ongoing process where members of a group construct meanings and establish common grounds through communication in intercultural relationships (Baxter, 1987; Bolten 1999; Casmir 1993 and 1999; Hopson et al., 2012). International business communities are also an interesting social site where different facets of identities are enacted, negotiated and positioned.

While some of the prototype identities were rejected and decomposed by the participants of this study, discourse also constructed a merged, international identity. The data included 20 quotations radiating the facets of "international" personal, relational, or collective identities. Some participants spoke about themselves or others in the workplace as "international", because they had lived in many countries or worked in different environments. In Extract 14, the interviewee wants to make a clear distinction between her physical appearance as a representative of certain race or ethnicity and her international mindset.

Extract 14:
"I never faced, only at school, some kind of bad naming
and this kind of jokes about my eyes or something like this,
but I didn't care,
because I was never thinking that I looked different.
Because my friends were (different ethnicity)
so I think I'm the same,
my eyes are blue ((raises her hands and smiles)) and my hair is white.
I never consider that.
And I'm mentally international person."(Diana, interview)

As Ting-Toomey (2005, 215 and 217) states, one's genetic features do not automatically guarantee ethnic ingroup membership, but identification is about a subjective sense of belonging, the content and salience of the person's ethnic identity. In the data, international identity was not described as given or innate, but a result of exposure to and contacts with otherness. For some, internationalisation had started already at home at the very early age. The same interviewee describes how her family had become international and more receptive towards others:

Extract 15:
"My grandmother wasn't accepted in many things because the nationality.
After wartime you can imagine to be a (certain nationality)
and there were a lot of *obstacles* (nonstandard word stress).
Also, his (grandfather's) family did not accept her until then, now,
she is not (the same ethnicity)
and then they got this international family
and they now have like many, many obstacles
like growing, like development of their family,

> and that's why for our family there were no any question of nationality,
> because our grandfather made accept." (Diana, interview)

In the extract, Diana explains what international means regarding family relations. Two people from different national backgrounds get married despite the disapproval of the larger family and grow their own international family unit to accept different national backgrounds. In Extract 15, Diana relates this open, international mindset to herself and later to her own international intimate and professional relationships. The impact of schooling and childhood experiences to the development of one's international identity is described by Due in the next extract.

> Extract 16:
> "Well, my high school was kind of international,
> to say that the methodologies of teaching are not the same
> as in traditional (national) way of teaching(s),
> but we didn't have any international students there.
> So, in a way, it is international, and in a way it's not international at all,
> the high school I took." (Due, interview)

> Extract 17:
> "My father had quite a lot of international friends
> and he invited them to come to the house quite frequently at that time,
> mostly for me to practice my English." (Due, interview)

In the above examples, the interviewee is trying to define what being international means to him and how it relates to interpersonal contacts and communication. In Extract 16, international organisational identity is defined through the methods that are non-traditional or unconventional in comparison with the other, national schools. The speaker is, however, not happy about his definition and implies that international should also include presence of people from other national backgrounds. It is worth pointing out that 'international' can only be defined in terms of 'national' and that discursively the international identity cannot exist without national identities (see also Coe & Neumann, 2011). However, Due seems somewhat vague and irresolute what is the relationship between these two.

In the participants' speech, the international identity was construed through a shared language, predominantly English. Because of its global use, English as a Lingua Franca has become so dynamic and multifaceted that in ELF researchers have started to use it in a plural form or refer to it as a hybrid communication code (Kankaanranta et al., 2015; Kankaanranta & Planken, 2010.). In the following extract international people are said to be those who communicate in English. At work, international organisational identity and culture were mostly associated with having English as a corporate language or employing staff with international, expatriate experiences.

Extract 18:
"(The company) is international company,
so the language, default language is actually English
and it's actually very helpful in communications." (Due, interview)

Extract 19:
"But, of course, we are an international company
and that is of course influencing in that.
People here who work here in (the country), have been abroad
and adapt maybe also how their work, take it here to (the country),
and so, I could say it's very relaxed and international, the atmosphere here."
(Vera, interview)

In both examples, the term international has a positive association with ease and comfort. The use of international lingua franca English as a world language may not only appear helpful in in-company communication but it can construct equality and communality in multilingual communities, especially if there is no question of language ownership. It has an enabling, maybe even empowering influence. At the individual level, the use of English may allow social mobility through membership in a more positively evaluated international group. For an individual, the international or expat identity was explained to be the outcome of having stayed, studied, or worked in different countries, which was also considered helpful in adaptation to new settings and in establishing and maintaining interpersonal relations at work:

Extract 20:
"I become an expatriate living abroad for a long time,
so, of course, I had experienced it when I was in (the country where I studied),
so it gives me a good understanding of my own psychology,
yeah, and also of my adapting cycle, so it's actually very helpful for me.
I know(s)* what I need to expect.
I know what I need to learn before going there,
and also it makes me, the most important thing is that I'm very open-minded, in a way,
and it helps me to *kind(s)* like easier tolerate for people.
If you define it as like non-usual behaviour in my own interpretation,
I'm still a little bit easier to tolerate with them." (Due, interview)

Having an international identity was not only helping the person to understand the self and one's personal experiences, but it also enabled teams and communities to build and maintain relationships through communication, as the example below illustrates.

Extract 21:
"Nää ihmiset pääsääntösesti on asuneet ulkomailla aika paljon,
niin siinä mielessä se ei hirveesti eronnu
niinkun (omanmaalai)stenkaan kanssa keskustelusta,
että kun ei voi sannoo, että olis ollu vaan esimerkiksi (paikall)isia
vaan hyvin niinkun kansainvälinen porukka siinä mielessä.
Niin se on muokkaantunu vähän niinkun universaalimmaksi

> se yhteydenpito ja keskustelu ja kaikki viestintä. (Maria, interview)
>
> [These people have mostly lived a lot abroad,
> so in this sense, it has not differed so much from
> the discussions with (people of my own nationality),
> because it cannot be said that there would have been only, for example (local people),
> but very much like international staff in a sense.
> So, the contacts, discussions and all communication have become more universal.]

International companies are complex networks and sites where identities are negotiated and discursively reconstructed at individual, interpersonal and collective levels. At all these levels, international identity in the data was associated with positive traits, such as openness, ease, agility, mobility, and tolerance. On the one hand, international identities are hybrid constructs allowing individual and social diversity. On the other hand, 'international' can be seen as amalgamation which fades out or does away with diversity and uniqueness (Fotovatian, 2012). By making everybody and everything look and sound similar, 'international' can also be a mask disguising prejudices, controversies or inequality.

4.3 Role-based Identities in Peer and Supervisor-Supervisee Relationships

This chapter discusses the construction of role-based, relational identities at work. It aims at presenting some of the answers to the second research question and especially how work identities are discursively positioned in verbal and nonverbal communication in different role relationships. According to Brewer and Gardner (1996) and Sluss and Ashforth (2007) relational identities are based on the institutional and occupational roles that are assigned in the organisation. Although based on assigned roles, relational identities are not determined by them. Although organisational roles are given and rather fixed, relational identities based on them are negotiated, confirmed or contested in interaction. I will first discuss how the assigned roles and job titles related to the participants' status and if education, gender, age or experience seemed to be interlaced with titles in work identity construction. Further, I will look at interaction in both asymmetric and symmetric workplace relationships. In most cases the asymmetric relationships with supervisors, managers, or owners were considered egalitarian rather than hierarchical. The organisational hierarchy and status differences were, however, acknowledged and approved. Although communication with supervisors was described as open, at the end of the day the boss was still "the boss". On the contrary, peer relationships were found to be more complex and necessitate more identity negotiation. I have named the three types of identity discourses as "the boss is the boss", "pretty assistants" and "male engineers". The results are mostly based on the participants' depictions on employee-supervisor roles and communication, because in most cases the supervisors were not present during the observation periods. Later, the chapter discusses identity positioning between and among organisational peers, where also some examples of interaction and co-construction will be presented.

The titles and job descriptions that the companies assign to employees are important for social positioning inside the organisation as well as for presenting individuals and the organisation to the outside. Titles often reflect the hierarchy and the different levels and ranks of the company. Job titles also relate to identity construction, because they function as visible "identity badges" (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999, 417). Before discussing the role-based identities, I first look at the roles that the companies had given to the participants of this research. The study shows that some of titles were not defining the tasks or responsibilities of the young professionals but seemed to index the employees' status and the importance of their work for the company. The titles of a "specialist" or "junior specialist" seemed to refer to competence that was somewhat rare and not easy to replace. However, such titles were rather vague in terms of job description. The title of the junior specialist was also quite unexpected because the company did not have senior specialists at the time of data gathering. When inquiring about their tasks, both the assistant and the specialist explained their duties to be responsible, and I considered their jobs to be different but equally demanding. Yet, the specialist title implied a higher position and more independent role than that of an assistant. Both women had some four years of work experience, but the companies differed in the size and composition of their staff as well as in their lines of industry, which is reflected in the types and hierarchy of job titles. Vera, the assistant, had also worked a much shorter time in the company than her coworkers, which could also explain her lower-ranking title and position as an assistant.

Extract 22:
INTERVIEWER: If you think of this work community here,
how would you define it? Is it more hierarchical?
VERA: No. No. No, I don't think so.
Of course, it depends on like the persons working here.
Like most of the people have been working here so long,
like I'm the one, only one who has been working here for four years;
the other ones over ten.
So, they know each other so good,
so the atmosphere here is very relaxed.
But, of course, we are an international company and
that is of course influencing in that. (Vera, interview)

The employee's educational level did not seem to influence the status or title in the private sector organisations in this study. The specialist, junior specialist and the assistant all had a graduate degree, unlike the two male BBA's who had managerial titles. Despite having the titles of managers, the male participants were not in charge of a sales team nor did they have any supervisory role. They were working quite independently, and they both had a supervisor to whom they reported. Maria had the job title of an agent. However, she was not self-employed, but worked as part of a multi-professional team. Her title did not specify her organisational role or her authority.

The employee-supervisor communication and relationship are an important arena for work identity construction. Unfortunately, it was not possible to observe all the participants interacting with their supervisors. However, the interviews with the employees showed that supervisors' role-based identities were supported, and there was no need to negotiate their position as 'the boss'. The superior-subordinate relationships are asymmetric and hierarchical, but each dyad in the data was unique, and the level of perceived power distance varied from case to case. Elisa, who was working in purchasing, shared an office with her supervisor. Both women had the same national and language background. During the day, they were frequently engaged in friendly conversations with each other asking for advice or giving each other help. Their office cubicles were almost identical, which was in alignment with the nonverbal and verbal behaviour which I observed, and which reflected their autonomous and egalitarian positions in both their collegial and supervisor-employee relationships. The rectangular office was divided into three parts by dividers. In between the private cubicles, there was a common area with some potted plants and a round table with chairs. Behind the divider, Elisa had had some personal items representing her motherhood and an adjustable table and some cupboards. During the day, Elisa mostly worked standing, and her supervisor was also at the same elevation, which allowed the two women to see and talk to each other over the office partitions.

When the supervisor wanted to talk with Elisa about a personal topic, she moved out from her own cubicle to the common area but did not enter Elisa's space. She talked to her casually over the office partition about the special order for *munkki ja sima* [doughnut and mead] for the upcoming Mayday. The supervisor posted the order form on the wall by the office door for Elisa to fill in. Later, when she spoke about job-related, departmental or corporate topics, such as quality audits, she did not leave her own cubicle, but just raised her voice after making sure that Elisa wanted to hear about the results. When they discussed work-related topics, there was a longer physical distance between the two women. In contrast, the discussions on nonwork or more interpersonal subjects brought the supervisor out of her cubicle, making the relationship of the two women closer and more equal. Proximity also allowed the women to use quieter voices when talking about more private or confidential topics, such as other people, their personal or relational matters, or topics outside work. The only aspect of their communication that was indicating their supervisor-subordinate roles was that Elisa's supervisor seemed to have access to more strategically important information, which she, however, shared with Elisa.

During the data gathering in spring 2016, Due moved to a new city where he and his supervisor had been sent to establish a new office. Due and his supervisor were both originally from Asia, but they came from different national and ethnic backgrounds. Additionally, there was a difference in age and experience. Like Elisa, Due was also sharing the office with his supervisor, but the relationship between the two men seemed more distant:

> Extract 23:
> ”Since I am in the office together with the boss,
> the communication is a bit less than previously,
> since it is not always I can chat casually with him
> in comparison with a normal colleague.” (Due, interview)

In the extract, Due is calling his supervisor a boss and distinguishing him from the ‘normal’ colleagues, who also sometimes use the office space. Because of their sales work, Due and the others were often away on business. Office space was, according to Due, very expensive in the big commercial hub where the company had its newly established branch office. Moreover, there was no need for more space since they seldom were there all at the same time. The office interior was very minimalistic, and there were no visible personal items. As I observed Due via web camera, I was not able to see the small pantry, but I was told that the office had one, although it was used very seldom, and even more rarely for social interaction. Due mentioned that they would go to a close-by restaurant for coffee or lunch and for discussions once or twice a week when he was in the city. During their time together, they talked mostly about business or had some “mild” jokes, where ‘mild’ probably referred to harmless humour that neither of them considered offensive. By dividing time between the relational work and his more independent professional tasks, Due was probably able to maintain his position based on his job title as Regional Manager, on the one hand, and the harmonious, but asymmetrical relationship with his supervisor, on the other. Limiting the time and the topics of conversations helped them to avoid threatening their role-based and interdependent identity positions as an employee and supervisor. Unfortunately, I was not able to observe their discussions during the lunch, which might have given a better opportunity to see how the positioning was done verbally and non-verbally in their interaction with each other.

Aleksis was also working in sales, but because some of his clients visited the company premises, he had a private office attached to the main entrance hall. The hall was a spacious showroom for different types of small accessories and spare parts. The personnel responsible for sales had their offices on the first floor, and the administrative staff on the second. Before Aleksis showed me around the premises, he gave a brief introduction to the company:

> Extract 24:
> ALEKSIS: We have here, there, just over there ((points to the corridor)),
> about five salespersons.
> Some of them have the shift work, as far as I understood,
> and one of those sellers is actually the boss.
> So he is also sitting here and selling,
> and he is also using sometimes, from time to time, a bicycle
> just to go to the other stock (warehouse) to see if they have a spare part or not.
> And there is another boss and they are just,

I don't feel any kind of – ((raises his hand to indicate higher status))
INTERVIEWER: hierarchy
ALEKSIS: Yes. Of course, you have to understand
that if there is like an important question,
of course, you turn to them and ask,
but it's not because of the hierarchy,
but because of the experience.
They have a long experience
and you ask for their point of view.
I think it's pretty comfortable here.
…Everyone knows who is the boss at the end of the day,
but we don't feel any pressure and
of course, it's a family business here.
Also the wives of the bosses are working."

In the above extract, Aleksis acknowledges that there are people above him in the organisational hierarchy, although he does not like to use this word. Like Due, he assigns these people a position of 'the boss', although, in fact, the company had recently become part of another larger corporation and the former owners had less decision-making power than before. However, they still had a supervisory role towards Aleksis. Aleksis accepts the status difference because of the experience of his supervisors. However, he claims that the status difference does not affect the atmosphere or make him uncomfortable. Aleksis points to two factors which indicate low power distance, but which apparently seem unusual to him. The first of them is that 'the boss' is working with the others and has his office on the same floor with other salespeople. The comment about the supervisor using a bicycle shows that Aleksis is not expecting such behaviour from a person with a higher organisational status, maybe because of his prior experience in businesses in his home country. One of the reasons for lower power distance is, according to Aleksis, that the company used to be a family-owned enterprise and employs the wives of the former owners.

Vera, who had worked in two countries, compares her prior and current workplaces and manager-employee relationships:

Extract 25:
VERA: Maybe, I don't know, how you say,
they are a little bit more relaxed
((gestures with her hands)) …
atmosphere in (home country)
and that maybe their *hie*, *hier* =
INTERVIEWER: = Hierarchy
VERA: Hierarchy is also a little bit more easier in (home country).
There the boss was one of the team.
Maybe here it is more like the boss is the boss. ((Speaks more silently.))
He makes the decisions and so - ((bites her lip)).

Vera's nonverbal communication, i.e. lower volume, biting her lip and not completing her sentence, could indicate that she does not want to openly criticise the current workplace or the management style, which differs from what she experienced in her home country. Maria in her interview, appreciated that the workplace she was leaving behind did not have micro-managers who would have set the pace for her work.

Extract 26:
"Työpäivä tuosta aamuyheksästä *viitteen* saakka
taitaa olla pikkasen pitemmät kuin (kotimaassa) yleensä,
mutta ihan semmosta,
että ei ollu micro-managing pomo siinä selän takana
vaan ihan sai ite tehä,
ite määritellä sen oman rytminsä." (Maria, interview)
[Workday from nine in the morning till five
might be a bit longer than usually in (home country),
but like that,
nothing like that there would have been a micro-manager behind your back,
but you could do yourself,
set your own rhythm yourself.]

What is noteworthy is that none of the participants openly contested the supervisor's position, managerial role, or their relational, role-based identities. Some levels of hierarchy were accepted as long as young professionals were given an employee position with some autonomy and freedom to make decisions regarding their work. At the interviews, some participants made comparisons between their former and current supervisors, but, in general, management and authority were considered important because of the structure and social order they provide, as the following comment implies.

Extract 27:
ALEKSIS: So there is a frame in which you have to operate and work
and it's good.
There is no,
how do you say in English?
there is no anarchy ((sneers))…
(changes the topic and talks about a meeting in his company)

Of course, there could have been reasons why the respondents did not want to criticize the management, for example a fear that negative comments could be detrimental to their own career, as Vera's example may suggest. However, all the participants accepted their subordinate position and the role identity of 'the boss'.

In contrast with the employee-supervisor identities, the work identities in peer relationships appeared more negotiable and situated. The age and experience were discovered to be closely interwoven with roles, positioning and relational identities. In the following extract, Elisa describes her relationships with two of her male colleagues, Esa and Sam. Esa was partially retired and he was not at work during the observation period. Sam was Elisa's other coworker, who had called Elisa earlier to ask for her advice.

Extract 28:
INTERVIEWER: Tuossa esiintyy useampaan kertaan tämönen nimi kuin Esa,
niin minkäläinen *sie* koet että sulla on työsuhde häneen?
Häntä on kaivattu tässä tämän päivän aikana useaan kertaan.
[The name Esa was mentioned several times earlier,
so how do you feel what kind of a work relationship do you have with him?
Many have been asking about him several times during the day.]
ELISA: Hän on rautanen ammattilainen.
On oman alan, tuntee hyvin ja tietää, mitä vain *kyssyy*.
[He is an adept professional (uses figurative speech, ‘rautainen’, adj., literally ‘cast-iron’ or iron-like’). (He) is in the same field (as I), knows () well and knows whatever (you) ask.]
INTERVIEWER: On(ko) pitkään ollu talossa? [Has he worked long here (in house)?]
ELISA: Joo. [Yeah.]
INTERVIEWER: Onko ollut talossa silloin kun sie oot tullu töihin?
[Has he been here when you came to work here?]
ELISA: Joo. [Yeah.]
INTERVIEWER: Onko ollu perehdyttämässä sinnuu millään tavalla?
[Did he acquaint you with the work in any way?]
ELISA: Hän on SAPin pääkäyttäjä. SAPiin liittyen on auttanu minnuu?
[He is the SAP Super User (admin). He has helped me with SAP.]
INTERVIEWER: Entä tää Sam, joka kysy sulta neuvoo?
Hän on varmaan nyt sitten nuorempi kollega, joka on tullut sitten –
[How about this Sam who asked your advice? He must be a younger collegue then, who has come –]
ELISA: No, Sam on tullu itseasiassa ollu tässä hommassa pitempään kun minä,
mutta SAPin kanssa hän on... SAP ei oo hänelle niin tuttu kuin mulle,
ja muutenkin kysyy aina neuvoo.
[Well, Sam has actually been doing this job longer than I,
but with SAP he is… He is not as familiar with SAP as I am,
and he always asks for advice anyway.

In the extract, Elisa is positioning her two male colleagues based on their knowledge of and experience in the SAP ERP system. Esa has a special, assigned organisational role as the system administrator, but probably his age and long work history in the company has also something to do with the position he has attained. Elisa has a more egalitarian relationship with Sam, yet her better knowledge of SAP allows her to place herself in a higher professional position. If looking into Elisa’s last phrase “he always asks for advice anyway” in the light of the positioning theory, Sam’s identity position towards Elisa both entitles him to ask for advice but may also delimit his agency to act independently. The comment implies that in this workplace relationship Elisa has gained an expert position and has an extra role as a mentor to Sam, especially when Esa in not available. By speaking about her coworkers and their professional skills, Elisa is constructing both her relational and professional identity. Elisa is fulfilling her obligations in these two role-relationships by asking and receiving help from Esa, but being asked by and helping Sam. She positions herself in between her two male colleagues using expertise in SAP as an argument for her social position.

Consequently, her organisational role and identity as a specialist becomes more fluent, as it depends on the others who she is relating to in the workplace.

Time and place are important resources for businesses and elements of organisational life creating contexts for workplace communication. On the other hand, they also communicate, convey and construct meanings of rights and obligations and different types of boundaries. In the data, identity discourses and positioning emerged especially when there were some changes in settings or transitions from one place or stage to another. Such transitions included, for example, breaks during the day, moves from one task to another, or the introductory or concluding stages of communicative situations. Moving from one location and physical space to another was also a shift which often necessitated social exchange or re-negotiations of participants' identity positions. There were physical markers for appropriate and inappropriate spatial and temporal behaviour, such as open or closed doors, high or low partitions, conference room scheduling displays or an agenda for a meeting on a big screen. The interactional exchange of greetings, small talk and nonverbal messages through proximity were some of the means to position self and others when employees were entering or leaving a coffee room, unexpectedly dropping by someone's private workspace or when new people arrived at a meeting, which they were either invited or not invited to attend.

Most of the identity negotiations and discursive positioning were observed during the breaks in the coffee rooms and in one case in a private kitchen. These shared spaces seemed to be the sites where the boundaries between work and private domains were set, spanned or blurred, and professional, group, relational, personal and other identities negotiated. Although such places could be called 'no-man's' territory, these neutral zones seemed to have unwritten pecking orders. Interpersonal dominance was apparent both verbally and non-verbally in the ways people entered or were welcomed to the shared and public areas.

Sometimes there was no verbal exchange and hardly any nonverbal signs when an employee entered the coffee room that was already occupied by others. After the company tour, we were sitting with Aleksis in one of the coffee rooms, when two of his female colleagues entered. They did not look at us, nod or greet us verbally. When they turned their backs to us, Aleksis whispered to me, "she is an accountant" pointing to the other woman. When the women had fixed themselves some coffee, they took their cups and left back to their offices without saying a word. Ignoring the presence of other people sends an ambiguous message and may have very different cultural and personal interpretations. It could be a sign of disrespect, exclusion or isolation, but possibly also a way to show respect to the other person by allowing him or her a moment of silence and privacy during the break (Covarrubias, 2015). The different interpretations of silence in interaction may include, for example, a 'perceived ambiguous or unpredictable relationship' (Basso, 1972), 'protection against outsiders' (Braithwaite, C., 1990) or 'discriminatory silence' (Covarrubias, 2008). In the given situation, the presence of the researcher could cause the first and second interpretation to be accurate. The third interpretation cannot be made just based on this one incident. However, Aleksis later returned to this coffee break when discussing the importance of communication at work. He laughed and gesticulated when he said: "I need to bring back that *tauko* [break]. I have some background.". Laughing about the incident suggests that Aleksis did not consider silence and non-communication in the coffee room as normal or ideal. It is not, however, possible to say, who he thinks should have initiated communication. Negretti and Garcia-Yeste (2015) present language as an explanation for the lack of social interaction in a multilingual workplace, yet it may seldom be the only reason. Aleksis does, however, consider his partial command of the local language to limit his possibility to fully integrate, as in "I still don't feel that I have 100% adapted because I don't speak the language". In the incident, Aleksis introduced the other woman to me by whispering her job title, but did not mention the names of any of his colleagues. The low volume of speech could imply the distance in their role-relationship, but it also establishes Aleksis' less powerful position and could indicate his lack of rights to initiate conversation and speak up.

In another company, the coffee room was filled with people sitting around the table and chatting with each other when Vera and I entered. The coffee room was actually an open rest area with easy access from all parts of the company. Vera, the young marketing assistant, was recognised by one of the male employees, who turned to her and said: "*Ollaan tässä ooteltu kahvinkeittäjää*." [We have been waiting here for someone to make some coffee.] Although trying to be humorous and probably even welcoming, the man still assigned Vera the position of a coffee-making secretary and made her a laughingstock in front of her colleagues and me, her former teacher. The coffee pot was empty, but all the people sitting around the table seemed to be sipping something from their mugs. The force of the speech act in this situation includes the position that a speaker has in this storyline. He is positioning himself as someone who can speak on behalf of the others and who can assign Vera duties she should perform. The response by Vera does not explicitly reinforce this performative action. She was not verbally opposing the speaker's position, neither was she openly rejecting the one offered for her. However, as a consequence, Vera did not join the others in the coffee room but quickly passed the table and the group sitting around it and continued her walk with me to the corridor. The nonverbal and verbal communication in the situation did not send Vera a welcoming or inclusive message, but rather seemed to restrict her access to the shared space and discourage her social integration.

The location of the employee's workspace in the company, as well as the manner in which his or her office or office cubicle was entered, manifested and construed the relationships, positions and power dynamics in the company. Vera's office was a transit hall. It could have been intended to be the hub, where the assistant would be in the centre of information, but instead, it was a place where she, as she commented, could not fully perform her responsibilities. Being at the centre of action can be associated with the most or least powerful positions in the social context (e.g. Burgoon and Dunbar 2006, 290-291). From the management perspective, Vera's central workspace might have been a practical solution to the lack of office space, or her availability for the others might have been thought to have a positive influence on the staff performance. However, what comes to Vera, centrality did not increase her productivity, but exposed her to constant interruptions when everyone could or had to by-pass her when entering or leaving their own office. The office arrangements construct the meaning of the value and importance of employees' tasks and position them in relation to each other. In this case, Vera's central workspace, together with her organisational role and job title as an assistant, was indexing her lower position. For the interview, as well as for her important business calls, Vera was using the office of her colleague, who was on a leave of absence. During the interview, a woman entered this borrowed office to bring in some mail. Although the door was closed, she did not knock, neither did she apologise or greet Vera or me verbally or nonverbally but just left the mail on the keyboard on the side desk and walked out closing the door behind her. Based on the observation, it seemed to me that Vera was walked over in several ways during the day. Either she was unable to set personal boundaries at work from her assigned position, or the others did not respect the boundaries she had tried to establish.

Inside the company premises, office doors, doorways and dividers did not only physically show the limits of the private and public working areas, but also served as frames for constructing identities. One such incident took place when a man from the same department with Elisa came to talk to her. He was not able to see me at first but when realising that there was a third person in the room, he then introduced himself to me as Elisa's colleague:

> Extract 29:
> VÄISKI: Ollaan samalla osastolla. Elisa on vaan meistä se kauniimpi.
> [(We) are in the same department. Yet, Elisa is the more beautiful one of us.]
> ((Elisa is smiling to herself but does not respond verbally and continues staring at her computer screen.))

As a speech act, Väiski's comment on Elisa looks like a compliment, yet appears somewhat ambiguous. It includes depreciating construct of self and subtle elements of other appreciation, but at the same time it conveys the sense of togetherness and collegiality. Although an impersonal expression '*ollaan*' is used without an inclusive Finnish pronoun '*me*' [we], the speaker refers to their relationship with '<u>*meistä*</u>' [of us] in the second sentence. Elisa is not denying what her colleague just said. She leaves herself out of the conversation at this point as if what is said is just between the researcher and Väiski, although she is being positioned in their collegial relationship for her former teacher. Väiski is also constructing his own position as a polite person having friendly relationships with his colleagues. However, he makes a distinction between Elisa and herself, which is based on their appearances, which could imply that there are different expectations for different genders at the workplace.

In addition to verbal communication, the above encounter included also observable nonverbal behaviour. When Väiski came to talk with Elisa, he did not come inside the office but stood at the doorway. Elisa and her supervisor had kept their office door open the whole day, as did most of the other people working along the same corridor. Moreover, when facing the door, there was a round table, some chairs and potted plants in between the two dividers, which created an inviting, shared space. Elisa's male coworker asked for permission to interrupt but still did not step inside. The verbal message positioned Elisa and the man as equals in terms of their tasks and organisational structure, but on the other hand positioned Elisa based on her physical attractiveness. His short introduction was a compliment, but the same speech act was also constructing a distinction between them. There were also two other women, Elisa's supervisor in her own cubicle and me sitting in the corner, which caused gender imbalance and probably made his position and rights more unequal in the situation. Keeping the distance and not crossing the threshold could construe dual meanings of unequal positions or respect for colleagues' personal and professional boundaries.

The companies also had places for collaborative work, such as meeting rooms, which also became locations of identity negotiations and positioning. During the project meeting, two men walked half-way into the meeting room and claimed it to be theirs. They interrupted the discussion and showed no apology for doing so.

Extract 30:
Two men walk into the meeting room, where the project team is having their weekly meeting.
ONE OF THE MEN ((raising his voice)): Mitä? Meillä on palaveri täällä. [What? We have a meeting here.]
CHAIRPERSON: Meillä on ainakin palaveri. [At least we have a meeting.]
THE MAN: Ei tuo taulu näytä. [It does not show on that board.]
CHAIRPERSON: *Mie* lupasin, että *myö käyvään noppeella*. Tää on *meijän* vakiopaikalla. [I promised that we run through this quickly. This is our regular timeslot.]
THE MAN: No mennään sitten, jos on teille *varraus*. [All right, let's go then if you have the reservation.]
CHAIRPERSON (sarcastically): Kiva kun kävit perällä kävelemässä. Nyt on hyvännäkösiä naamoja. Niin tuota – ((the door closes)) [Nice that you came to walk at the back (of the room). Good-looking faces we have now. Ermm, well –]

In and through interaction, the participants reveal and construe their interpersonal relationships and identity positions when they negotiate over their right to the shared workspace. The use of personal pronouns 'we vs. you (plural)' and 'I vs. you (singular)' indicates that the speakers are positioning each other and their teams and at the same time co-constructing both their relational and group identities. The nonverbal behaviour of the uninvited guest, interference, intrusive entrance, and loud voice created interactional dominance, which could have been a performance of the speaker's organisational, i.e. legitimate power. The chairperson's reply accentuated *meillä* [we] when he reclaimed their right as the majority group that already occupied the space. When they continued negotiating, both speakers began to use the regional, Eastern Finnish dialect or accent with lengthened consonants. The chairperson, who initiated the local way of speaking, also used the personal pronouns of *mie*, *myö* and *meijän* typical of the local speech, which could have been the means of increasing cohesion and gaining support within his own group or increasing the influential power of the group towards the uninvited outsiders entering the meeting. He identified himself as the one being responsible for the meeting and the efficient use of time. The use of sarcasm at the end of the episode could be interpreted as a sign of victory, winning the battle over the space. The final comment by the chairperson verbalised the nonverbal communication of the others in the meeting, i.e. the facial expressions of astonishment at or disapproval of the intruders' behaviour.

Meetings seemed to reposition the employees' work identities and cause temporary changes in their role-relationships. In the meetings that were included in the data, the chairperson was always one of the peers who did not have a supervisor or management role over the others. Aleksis explains the chairperson's equal position but his specific role as a topic initiator and timekeeper, as follows:

> Extract 31:
> ALEKSIS: The one, in sense of, like,
> he is not like a leader,
> not considered as a leader,
> but he is the one who is basically just leading the meeting…
> following the … schedule – =
> INTERVIEWER: = agenda =
> ALEKSIS: = Agenda, exactly.
> So basically, he brings the topic onto the table
> and then we discuss it.
> But you are open to bring up the topic, as well.

Regardless of the corporate status, chairpersons in general have the greatest influence on the meeting and have a more powerful position and more rights than the other participants (Holmes & Stubbe, 2003; Verschuren 1999). In the above extract, the assigned position of a chairperson, although it might be just temporary, is considered beneficial for the work community and it is not contested. The leader as a facilitator of the joint discussion is seen as the one who oversees the meeting procedures and protocols but is not controlling people, or their ideas and opinions.

In general, however, the participants contested the identity positions in symmetric roles and peer relationships more often than in the role-relationships that were based on the organisational hierarchy or assigned for practical reasons to ensure that work gets done. The critique was not directed to individual colleagues, but rather toward the professional or gender bias in the specific industry, or the experienced inequality sustained by the corporate management culture and organisational policies, as in the following two examples:

Extract 32:
"Näin kun kattoo meitä toimihenkilöitä
niin insinöörejä taitaa tässä olla suurin osa.
Sitten niinkun mulla,
että jos oot insinööri
niin sulla on kaikki ovet auki. (Elisa, interview)

[When looking at us office workers,
so the majority here seems to be engineers.
Then like for me,
if you are (were) an engineer,
you have all doors open.]"

Extract 33:
INTERVIEWER: So (you are) quite balanced gender-wise?
VERA: Yeah, yeah, but then the work tasks are, how to say,
women are the assistants and the men are,
how you say,
men are the leaders.
They have those kind of work tasks.
INTERVIEWER: Do you think that it is the strategy of the company?
VERA: Hmm, well, yeah,
and especially this field is rather,
much, males working in the field
and then when it's a local company
and we are hiring new people,
then it's so small and they know each other,
and usually, usually there are not many women working in higher positions.
They are doing the assistant work.

The experienced inequality, which was not based on the employee's competence or ability to carry out the role or tasks, but rather premised on educational background and/ or gender, seemed to challenge the female employees' work identities and cause tensions in their relationships with colleagues. When the women referred to gender bias, they used impersonal language. For example, Elisa is not saying 'if I were an engineer, which I'm not, I would have all doors open'. Instead, she uses the second person form *jos oot* [if (you) are] to replace the passive voice. In Finnish it is possible to omit the personal pronoun, because the verb form already indicates the subject. Vera uses the pronoun 'they' to refer collectively to the women who are working in the local companies in manufacturing industry.

Gender roles and gender identity in symmetric workplace relationships were also expressed by male employees. The example below is from the interview with Aleksis.

Extract 34:
"I think it's good to have women in, how to say,
working environment as your colleagues,
because they sometimes dare to say things nobody wants to talk about.
They normally dare to say things that mostly businesses fear ((sneers)),
because they have this, I don't know what kind of thing is that –…
sense of reality, or something like that
and it's good to have that
and they are also very proper
and it's very important when it comes to this customer service.
So, in this industry it's good to have a woman as a colleague,
as a work colleague.
So, and I know when there is this customer meetings,
when we have customer meetings, in the forest industry,
there are also girls who do advertising for the companies.
It's quite common here.
To the exhibitions you also bring girls
and they do advertising, as well."
(Aleksis, interview)

At first sight, the example represents female colleagues in a positive way highlighting the advantages that female colleagues bring to the company and industry at large. However, on the other hand, it seems to reinforce the socially constructed gender roles and work identities in which female employees are not only viewed as capable professionals, but also evaluated and positioned based on their gendered characteristics. What at first sight seems other appreciation, is actually negotiating or 'doing' gender (Kvande, 1999). It is a form of gender stereotyping or constructing gender segregation at work based on essentialist and taken-for-granted beliefs on male and female characteristics. In the previous extract the speaker is also using the word 'girls', which is often interpreted as a derogative expression, a verbal put-down. Also, female participants used the word 'boys' to refer collectively to their male colleagues. In the data, such name-calling never appeared in a singular form, neither was it directly used to address others if they were present in the same communicative situation. I named the two competing identity discourses in the data "pretty assistants" and "leading engineers" to illustrate that the contest did not take place in dyads but was more about collective identification and stereotyping.

Gender identities and professional identities are intertwined and relevant in the types of work where women are underrepresented (Reissner-Roubicek, 2012, 231). In Finland, there is gender imbalance in engineering fields and in the manufacturing industry, which are male dominated in terms of the number of employees and their occupational status (Statistics Finland, 2018). Similarly, imbalance and stereotypical occupational roles based on gender have also been discussed in other contexts (e.g. in the USA by Ridgeway, 2011). In the research data, the two female participants working in the manufacturing companies criticised the biases and inequality more openly than men. There could be, at least, two explanations to this. Firstly, the industries and companies where they work are in reality male dominated. Another explanation could be that the female participants affiliated themselves or wanted to ally with or please the female researcher working in business, rather than in technical education. When observing how these two women enacted their gender and professional identities, I was able to observe differences. Vera, in her assistant role, was disguising her resistance and used more implicit strategies, such as nail polish to irritate her male colleagues, or ignoring the comment where her professional position was lowered to that of a coffeemaker. Elisa, instead, was taking a more masculine role in the project meeting, in which she was took actively part in a banter and 'dirty' jokes. Worth (2016) reports on three strategies how millennial women in Canada managed their work identity in her study. First, young women accepted the status quo, ignored discrimination or chose not to challenge it to be likeable and protect themselves or their jobs. Worth interprets their behaviour by having limited agency to influence the structural power or having insecure jobs. Limited agency could well explain Vera's behaviour. The second strategy in Worth's (2016) study included negotiating inequality by adjusting to inequitable work cultures by changing their dress and behaviour to be considered competent. This strategy was not apparent in this study. The third strategy was used by privileged millennial women who had already social power and respect and were, therefore, able to challenge gender and age stereotyping. Apparently, Elisa was positioned highly and that enabled her to challenge some of the stereotyping based on gender or occupational biases.

Apart from proximity, some nonverbal symbols were also identified as means to construct role-based identities at work. Often, such symbols were construing convergence or divergence, or similarity with or difference from the others. People usually diverge their nonverbal behaviour when they want to distance themselves from a person or a group but converge or adapt when they want to integrate (Giles, 1973; Giles & Wadleight, 1999; Shepard et al., 2001). Nonverbal communication, such as clothing, adornment or office décor, were not only identity representations but they were also ways to negotiate the identity positions in the work community. It appeared that the persons who accepted their organisational role and social position in the workplace did not have a strong need to exhibit or emphasise who they were or wanted to be. The distinctive nonverbal behaviour and artefacts seemed to be a way to either resist the identity that the others were assigning to the individual or to perform one's individual uniqueness when there was pressure from others to conform to the group prototype.

The construction of work identity through similarity and difference often took place simultaneously on different levels. In his introduction, Elisa's male colleague was first referring to their interpersonal, coworker relationship as members of the same department but in the same sentence already contrasting them as individuals when referring to her 'more beautiful' appearance. The appearance of Elisa's male colleague looked distinctively different from the engineers I had met earlier in the project meeting, although none of the engineers had worn helmets, overalls or other types of special clothing outside the production facility. Elisa's departmental peer had several rings on his fingers, items that might have been banned for safety reasons for those in the manufacturing departments. The man's attire was smart casual, and the colours were brighter than those of the male engineers. The appearance and grooming set the man apart from the engineering staff and constructed his identity as a professional in sales and purchasing. The excessive personal adornments could also be interpreted as representations of his success and power and confer his identity and position in the social structures of the workplace. In comparison with Elisa and her supervisor, who also belonged to the same department, his accessories and cologne were, however, excessive. It could be assumed that he had a bigger need to differentiate himself from the other occupational groups in different departments than the women in the similar roles. In two of the manufacturing companies, the traditional gendered occupational roles seemed to prevail and, in this context, it is easy to understand the male employee's need to highlight difference from the 'normative' male engineer.

To summarise, the data suggests that the role-based work identities are negotiated or contested in peer relationships more often than in asymmetric relationships. In other words, role-based relational identities are less negotiable when the organisation is hierarchical, or the roles and duties of each employee are clearly defined and separate. In this study, the discourses of equality and inequality intertwined with those of professional stereotypes, educational background and gender. Positioning and negotiations of identities did not only take place verbally, but also proximity and, to certain extent, clothing and other material identity markers were important means of identity construction and positioning. People were negotiating and constructing their relational identities in how they used private and shared office spaces, how they located themselves, or how they entered or left different areas in the workplace. The identity construction in role-relationships often also included negotiations about rights, agency and power.

4.4 Managing Work and Nonwork Identities

This chapter focuses on the construction of identity when people are balancing between the work and nonwork identities and managing the boundaries between different domains of life. Boundaries are also closely connected to protecting versus sharing information, which needs to be considered when studying identities as discursive constructs. This chapter introduces two identity discourses, which are points on a continuum between integrated and segmented (or separate) domains and identities. I have named the first one as "a balancing juggler" identity, which exemplifies the integration or even a merger of work and nonwork roles, identities and domains. The second identity discourse is "an isolated employee", where the work identity is more task than interaction-oriented and when the work domain is more clearly separate from the private sphere. The latter identity type seems be integrated with organisational rather than with individual or relational identity.

Boundary management takes place in different types of relationships from dyads to organisations and even larger communities. Like identities, boundaries are socially constructed and coordinated and therefore fluid and prone to change. The studies on work-nonwork and privacy-disclosure often make a distinction between permeable or impermeable boundaries and segmented or integrated domains (Kreiner, 2006, 1319-1323; Petronio & Durham, 2008, 315-316).

The boundaries between work and nonwork can blur, for example, due to the many changes in organisations, workspaces, and information and communication technology (Ashforth et al., 2000; Duxbury et al., 2014; Kreiner et al., 2009). Kreiner et al. (2006) propose a boundary perspective to conceptualise and study the interfaces and dynamics between individual and organisational identities. It is an intriguing approach also for this research on identity, although, as they state, it is not fully compatible with the discourse analytic perspective (Kreiner, 2006, 1136-7). Organisational identification and the boundaries between organisational and personal domains have also been studied by Fieseler et al. (2015) and Ashforth et al. (2000), among others. It has been predicted that in the future organisations have less clearly predefined structures, which means also more contingent and alternative work arrangements for individuals. It would be important to study identification and identity construction in these less traditional contexts of work.

Sharing private information with others gives them access, rights and ownership to the information, when they all can jointly manage and coordinate the boundary around it (Petronio & Durham, 2008, 314-315). This perspective of boundary coordination is also interesting from the methodological perspective. When ethnographic methods are used in data collection, the researcher may have access to information that the research subjects accidentally disclose, although they are only one of the co-owners of that information. The researcher may be completely unaware of the layers and limits of privacy boundaries, which can result in turbulence (Petronio & Durham, 2008, 316). By observing dialectical tensions between public and private, privacy and disclosure and work and nonwork, I as a researcher can become more aware of the relational boundary dynamics at the interface of different levels and facets of identity.

The research data included one very interesting case for investigating discursive identity construction in blurred roles and negotiable work-life boundaries. It took place in a small family enterprise where two BBA's have a coworker-spouse relationship. Their role-relationship is, however, more complex than that of the academic couple in Prentice and Pollom's study (2009). During the site visit, Diana had a temporal, part-time job at her husband's family business. She would have been entitled to a parental leave, but she did not want "to have a gap in the CV". Working from home allowed her to arrange her time and duties so that she could also take care of their small child. She described her work not only as temporary but also project-based. Moreover, she had a side-job as a fitness instructor and worked as an intern to complete her third tertiary degree.

In a small, family enterprise, work and private domains overlap and intertwine. It is not surprising then that both the relational identity based on the work roles and the one grounded in the roles of a spouse or a parent emerged and intersected in the workplace discourse. Diana was very open and keen on telling about her work, but also about her background, the relationships with her friends, immediate and extended family and in-laws. She also mentioned several other people she had worked with or was interacting with on different projects. Her long narrative connected all these networks to each other and interweaved the different facets of her social identity. Although she was informed about the purpose of my visit, she seemed to consider it more like a social call and discussed both relevant and irrelevant topics elaborately. The boundaries between work and nonwork, private and public appeared very permeable and blurred.

Diana spoke English very fast and occasionally switched into Russian or Finnish, which she knew I was also able to understand. Her nonverbal communication was very vivid, and she could suddenly change the subject and spontaneously react to the stimuli in her environment. One example of her ability to switch from one mode to another was when the family dog tried to get into the kitchen where she worked. She stopped conversing with me, jumped up from her chair and with a loud voice addressed the dog in Russian, yet simultaneously explaining to me in English that the dog would have understood Spanish better.

Diana's workspace was the kitchen of their home, which made her continuously available as an employee, mother and wife. Her work and nonwork roles were manifested by two devices, her computer and a multicooker, which she introduced as her important "office" items. Her roles and tasks overlapped, and there were frequent and sudden changes during the day, either because of her own initiative or due to the interruptions caused by others in the family, including their small son or the dog. Although it was their mutual home, the husband asked Diana's permission to enter the kitchen. When in the same room, his nonverbal behaviour, such as volume of speech and gestures suggested that the kitchen was Diana's space, her dominion. The following episode took place in the kitchen where Diana was conducting her daily work. Her husband had come out of his office to make some coffee and Diana, her husband and I sat around the table and talked over a cup of coffee.

Extract 35:
DIANA: …and then basically he (the husband) is just giving me ready texts
and I'm doing them then. So, and also these social networks. Like.
Because he was also studied in the same programme, so he knows a lot.
HUSBAND ((laughs)): at least something
RESEARCHER: So who is the boss? Who is the boss?
HUSBAND: She is definitely the boss.
((Diana laughs and looks at her husband, who is pouring coffee))
DIANA: but for me no coffee, no
HUSBAND: Maybe a little? ((pointing to the cup))

DIANA: No. And basically, as I said, a lot helping that because he is more flexible, because if I say – ((Diana stops to ask the researcher about the cup of coffee where he already poured some milk.)) But we can put another, or you can take that –
RESEARCHER: I can have some milk.
DIANA: He is more flexible, and, in this way, we can solve easier things –
((Diana stands up and her voice is not as clear as earlier.))
because if I find some idea then I'm fighting to that
and then he is finally accepting and then I'm thinking that maybe he was right.
It's not that great. He was the … basically, more difficult.
((Husband is putting plates on the table and the voices cannot be heard very well.))
RESEARCHER: But it's great (that you are) admitting it afterwards that he was right.
((All three laugh.))
DIANA: Yes, I still think that the idea was great
but, at the same time, I know that when I have something in my mind I very long that
– Now this fight gives me –
(Diana does not continue her sentence. Instead the discussion returns back to coffee and snacks for a few minutes. The digression from the main topic is deleted from this extract.)

In the company, both the wife and the husband had their own tasks, which were based on their different expertise and skills. "He is giving me ready texts and I'm doing them then" refers to the division of tasks between the couple, where the husband usually developed the ideas and created the content, while she used her more advanced technical skills to design and publish the content in social media. Diana, however, tried to diminish this difference and complimented her spouse by referring to his knowledge and their similar education, to which he responded with laughter and a self-depreciating comment 'at least some'. As often in close relationships, the relationship and identities were negotiated through dialectic tensions and interplay between similarity and difference, and integration 'we' and separation 'I vs. he' (Baxter and Montgomery, 2008).

At the beginning of the episode, there was a researcher-initiated and playful discussion about Diana being the boss. Although she was not a business partner or owner of the family enterprise, there seemed to be some kind of an agreement between the couple that she is the boss. This positioning might apply to their relationship as a husband and wife, but when expressed in the same conversational context with work, it could have meant that she also had quite a powerful position in their business. At the beginning of the extract, the division of roles and their work process were described to be rather straightforward, but they are later contested or even 'fought' against by Diana, although she then admitted that the original idea of her husband had been good. The meaning of 'a boss' in this episode is, therefore, construed from Diana's personal characteristics (more determined than flexible) and her communication style (more aggressive-assertive than passive-accommodating).

Earlier that day, Diana had told me about her various projects and assignments that she had finished or was still working on. In the extract below, Diana describes how they work together with her husband. The couple often developed ideas and new projects together when they took long walks, which helped them to develop new ideas and be creative. However, it could also be assumed that by going away from home to a neutral and equal ground, to 'no-man's zone', they were able to get rid of their roles as a wife and a husband or their tasks and positions in the company. In the home environment, their roles in the family and the office intermingled, but outdoors they could be just like any two peers creating and developing ideas together. In a different, more neutral space, Diana and her husband might enact very different, situated facets of their identities than in their home as a workplace.

Extract 36:
DIANA: It's basically the best time to create ideas is to go outside.
Last year, for example, to walk outside.
We are walking to (another suburb)
and then we were creating all our great ideas at that time.
Because (the company name) is basically fun,
so it needs to be something fresh and like this kind of exciting,
so for example once we created this project and – Do you know that?
RESEARCHER: Yes, I've – =
HUSBAND: = And also this ( ) tour – =
((Diana speaks at the same time and it's impossible to hear what he says.))
DIANA: = And we were walking there in (another suburb) and I was pregnant,
and we were walking, wasn't it? …
((She addresses the question to the husband, but she answers herself)).
Yes, it was. And then we create this idea and basically also implemented it together.
Only there was one more person, who was working. So …
HUSBAND: Quite many projects we have done already together,
yeah, with my wife. =
DIANA: = Like this kirja [book] twice printed we did.
HUSBAND: and also she has given me so much support with my own, this music work.
RESEARCHER: Muusa [The muse], that's how they call it.
HUSBAND: Yeah, yeah. Now it's time to say some positive things about her, like like.
She is able to do quite many things
and that's why and she is like a totally, totally different person than me.
If I'm doing something, for example some IT work or something
and I don't know how to do that,
so I can do like two minutes and then my computer is like all.
I'm not able to continue to the end.
But then she is coming through calm and say, calm down, we will find solution here.
DIANA: Because his IT work is very easy tasks for me.
HUSBAND: But all in all, I'm more like artistic.
If something goes wrong like I have already the next idea to do.
DIANA: He's having good ideas and he is jumping very fast
and I'm more dedicated to the result.
A lot to get results from everything.
For example, when the pages were hacked now,
I have had so this personal hate to this hacker,
so only because of this hate I understood how to crash this, all his structures there
and then when I understood that maybe I'm not able to do it
because it was too hard, like complicated ((waving to the air with both hands)).
And all I tried to do, it didn't work, but then when I did it ((shows her fist)),
I would fight with this person and I would win.

And then, because I also hardly give up in many things.
HUSBAND: That's what I meant that = (gets interrupted by his wife)
DIANA: = But he, he likes to create ideas.
HUSBAND: But that's what I meant.
I tried to say that I have improved myself because of her,
that I have learned how to, like, concentrate more carefully.
DIANA: if it ( ) more ((laughing))
HUSBAND: But I have learned and that is a huge step.
((turns to the researcher)) But how are you by the way?
We have all the time talked about us ((laughs)).

At the beginning, the discussion was about their collaborative work relationship, the creativity they share and their business. The use of 'we' in the discourse was creating their identity as a couple. They communicated togetherness and mutual support. In this context, however, the husband's quite unexpected comment "Now it's time to say some positive things about her, like, like…" appeared quite surprising. He had not spoken negatively about his wife, if not considering his earlier comment about her being the boss as a form of negative labelling. Earlier Diana had told about her strong will and unyielding character as a communicator, and it could be that the husband felt that he needs to present and position her differently for me, either in my role as a former teacher or as a researcher. As the discussion continued, their dialogue again construed difference rather than similarity. They were no longer co-constructing their identity as a couple but rather constructing their own by contrasting it to the partner's identity. Their relational communication also included expressions where their separate identities complement each other. Again, at the end of the episode, some dialectical tension may be observed, although now it is not between similarity and difference (see Baxter & West, 2003). Diana laughed and tried to add something, but her husband changed the topic by bringing the researcher into the conversation. It seems, as if he was trying to avoid some topics which might have emerged if Diana continued. His earlier sudden intervention "Now it's time to say some positive things about her…" together with the later when he steered the conversation into a new direction seemed as if he was not satisfied with Diana's description but instead tried to create different identities for Diana and himself or a different relative identity for them as a couple. My interpretation of the situation at that time was that he was trying to conceal some of the dynamics of their relationship and, at the same time, creating a boundary between me and them as a couple. His communicative behaviour could then be interpreted to include elements of both privacy and boundary management.

In the episode above, both interlocutors were involved in co-constructing identities, but it is difficult to say when it was about their individual identity, work identity, relative role-identity as marital partners or coworkers, or their identity as a couple. All these different facets seemed to be woven together in one discussion. What becomes obvious, though, is that the couple was not just negotiating their identities between themselves, but also constructing them for me, their former teacher. If the conversation is viewed through a performative lens, this discursive identity construction becomes an act of self and other presentation and impression management.

Throughout the conversation, the husband used a softer and more submissive tone, while the wife expressed her emotions and opinions more loudly and directly. Diana spoke about the couple's mutual negotiations as a 'fight'. She also repeated the same figurative expression later when she told how she had solved the problems caused by a computer hacker. Moreover, she used other strong and emotive words, such as 'hate' and 'crash' and she was also more vivid in her gesturing and movements, for example, when she shook her fist. She often interrupted or overlapped her husband's speech and seemed to dominate the conversation. Diana's panache and dynamism were evidenced by her extended talk time and interruptions, which contributed to her conversational control and dominance. In close relationships, the association between interpersonal dominance and relational power is complex and nuanced, and relational power and dominant communicative behaviour do not always go hand in hand (Burgoon & Dunbar, 2000; Dunbar, 2004; Dunbar and Burgoon, 2005; Guerrero and Floyd, 2006, 140–142). Diana's husband was the owner, while she was working part time and temporarily. He had an office, while Diana used the kitchen as her workspace. In the company, the husband had more legitimate or structural power, yet Diana controlled and dominated their interaction and seemed to be a strong negotiator also when it came to decisions they have to make as a company.

The above, long episode was also constructing interpersonal dominance versus submission in a relationship that is simultaneously a family and workplace relationship. It could be argued that in this specific dyad, the persons were interdependent at many levels and the power dynamics were changing when the persons shifted from role to another and from one context to the next. Although Diana's communicative acts dominated most of the conversation, her husband was the one who most dramatically changed the direction of the discussion. Both interlocuters had to adjust their dominance-submission displays to the changes in the conversation or in the given situation. They needed to position and reposition their situated identities as the conversation continues. At the level of interpersonal communication, their power struggles could be seen as dialectical tensions between dominance and submission. It is through such contradictions and opposing discourses how meanings of identity and relationships are constituted. The meaning making is, however, more complex than just interplay of two incompatible elements and binary opposites (Baxter et al., 2014; Baxter & Scharp, 2015). This is especially true when it comes to identity construction.

Boundary management discourse and discourse on family roles and close relationships with significant others was also identified elsewhere in the observation and interview data, although they were not as manifest as in the case described above. All female participants discussed their work in connection with their out-of-office roles and relationships. Elisa mentioned that her work takes time away from her friends and has made her asocial. On the other hand, she was happy to be able to adjust her work schedules according to her personal needs and the needs of her family. As a sign of her motherhood and markers of other identity facets, Elisa had family photos on the windowsill and drawings and timetables of her two children posted on the dividing wall. Despite the various tasks and interruptions during the day, she seemed to be well-organised and focused on her tasks. She was able to find necessary documents in the folders on her shelves, and there were no excessive papers or clutter on the desk. Apart from a few artefacts and some occasional references to her nonwork tasks, Elisa performed her work identity throughout the day. The other women also mentioned their nonwork roles and disclosed some private information about their personal relationships. Vera mentioned her boyfriend and his friend working in the same company as important contacts that were the actual reason for her getting the workplace and staying in. In the interview, Maria depicted a story, where her big career change, moving to another country and break-up with her boyfriend were all separate transitional phases, yet interconnected and merged into one narrative. When analysing the nonverbal communication in the participants' LinkedIn profiles during the data gathering, I realised that Maria was the only person who did not look at the camera. It appeared as if her profile picture was not taken for this purpose but cropped from a photo that was not initially made for professional purposes. She had also a personal panoramic landscape photo as a background image differentiating her profile from the others who had not changed the default image. Although she had personalised her online profile, she was, as all other participants wearing office clothes with neutral colours creating a look and identity as a professional.

In the data, the two male participants seemed to control the boundaries between their private life and work domain most. Neither of the male participants initiated discussion on their social life or enact other than work-related roles at work. They both worked in rather sizeable manufacturing companies in the technology industry and were in charge of sales in their respective areas. Despite the team- or project-based structures in the companies, they seemed to work mostly by themselves and communicate most of the time with their clients. Their sales work included also online communication, travelling and visiting clients, which meant that they did not have face-to-face encounters with their colleagues or supervisors every day. Because the situations involving communication with the customers were out of the scope of this study, I was mostly able to observe these two participants when they were doing some paperwork in their offices. Moreover, there was very little social interaction between them and other employees during the observation period. I was able to observe some occasional hellos and nods, but there was no small talk or longer conversations between the members of the work community. Therefore, most of the inferences are based on the participants' own accounts of their social interaction at work.

I observed and interviewed Due using video conferencing. Due had a webcam, and during the interview and recorded observation he was sitting alone in front of the screen in a small office with class walls. There was a view to a larger room, which was empty during the video session. Due explained that he shared the office mostly with his supervisor when he was not on his business trips. The room was very plain, and Due mentioned that he had not brought any personal items to the office. The only 'extra' item in the office was said to be a stuffed animal with the company logo. I did not see this mascot during the video session, but it was partly visible in Due's profile picture in LinkedIn during the data gathering. The mascot represents the identity of this global corporation, but as part of Due's profile in professional social media, it also constructed his identification with the company. During the time I was observing and interviewing Due, he was wearing a light colour shirt with a dark suit without a tie. However, based on the photos that he shared with me a tie appeared as a must when he was representing the company outside his office.

Due, who during the data gathering was working in a global corporation, showed me some examples of their internal online communication. In the company, Yammer was a channel for information exchange, a storage for documents as well as a space for social interaction. There was, for example, a discussion chain where a new employee was welcomed by others to the geographically dispersed team. However, Due had not posted anything to this chain and commented that he used Yammer mostly to ask or retrieve information about product updates. His Yammer profile had only the initials of his name and a default picture (avatar), although many others had added a photo with their own face. Due's online work identity was in line with the identity that he constructed and performed offline. The unidentifiable avatar picture in the company social media was construing similar boundaries as, for example, his traditional business attire, a dark suit accompanied with a tie and a light-colour shirt. In his verbal account, he was also often using the company name or plural 'we' instead of 'I', accentuating his identification with the organisation rather than his individual identity.

Due's boundary management can also be observed in his reply to my question about his social interactions in and out of work. He reports to have separate time and place for socialising which takes place outside the office and during leisure.

> Extract 37:
> "Ah, well, it very depends, so, well my socialise now has two possibilities.
> There is (his country of origin),
> during my business trips,
> also during my two weeks of business trips,
> then the weekends I come back to (the home country)
> and I have my friends and my families over there.
> During the times when I'm in (my business location),
> then I go out with my friends.
> Those are actually, yeah, they are (local)
> and also some Westerners, some German." (Due, interview)

As a non-native English speaker, Due used some untypical language forms. For example, 'families' in the above extract is not plural, but he was pronouncing 'my family is' as 'my families'. Due did not specify if his friends in the country where he works were his colleagues or people from other spheres of life, but at least some of them belonged to the expat community of this Asian megacity. The collective categorizing of his friends to Westerners and German is interesting. Due had lived and studied in at least two European countries, which had probably influenced his perception on Europe not as a homogeneous continent but consisting of separate countries and several national and cultural groups. For him, the Westerners might represent an outgroup that he was not able or willing to specify. Implicitly he was still not including anybody with Asian or Eastern origin into this group.

During the data gathering Due and his supervisor were transferred from one country to another to establish a new office in a big commercial hub of South East Asia. Due had told earlier that although their team is bigger, there were only two persons working in the same office. He was in touch with the other teammates only when they had official team meetings, which mostly took place online. Due describes his interaction with his supervisor in the extract below:

> Extract 38:
> "The office itself has a small pantry but we rarely use it since it is quite small.
> Most of the time, we come to (the restaurant outside the premises) for lunch or coffee together
> with a frequency around once or twice per week…
> Most of the time it is about work.
> We discuss the deals that I have been working on, what are the status
> and do I need any help and support from higher management.
> We do have jokes and funny stories around the workplace.
> Usually quite soft and simple ones.
> I can't really remember a good joke, but it may be as simple as we discussed
> and made fun of some politics issue happened in X (country) or around Y (region)."
> (Due, interview)

Both Due and his supervisor were expats, i.e. not originally from the country they were transferred to. They both had Asian origin but did not share the same first language or educational or national backgrounds. Due is originally from a culture with high power distance similar to the country where he now works in, while his supervisor's national culture has a lower power distance index. Due seemed to be very sensitive of the status and position of his supervisor, but also that of mine, his former teacher, who was now observing and interviewing him. He answered politely to every question, smiled and maintained moderate eye-contact but did not initiate discussion on any topic. Mild jokes seemed acceptable in the employee-supervisor communication, but the private-public boundaries were not crossed, neither were the relational, i.e. role-based identities threatened. Joking about personal, national or ethnic issues of either interlocutor might have jeopardised the relationship but joking about the country that they were only connected through their work seemed appropriate. It also appeared safe and possible to joke about the politics of the region or continent they both had their roots in.

Aleksis' workplace had nicely furnished, well equipped, and recently renovated coffee rooms on both floors. The fridges had some food and snacks available for employees, as well as bottles of champagne for special occasions, such as closing of a good deal. However, there were no people sitting and chatting in the coffee rooms, but employees just got their cup of coffee and took it to their individual offices. Aleksis told that there were set coffee breaks, but he seldom observed them or joined the others for coffee. The biggest reason for not having much social interaction apart from friendly hellos was said to be that everyone had their own separate offices, as well as clearly specified tasks and rather hectic timetables. However, the company organised some events and social gatherings outside the office hours, when employees were able to relax and socialise with each other. For such purposes, the company even had a spacious sauna department in the premises. Unfortunately, no such event took place during the data gathering, when social interaction between the employees could have been observed. The company, which was formed through acquisitions some years ago, had several locations in Finland, and the majority of the staff and clients were Finnish. Aleksis was the only person in this specific location who was from a non-Finnish background and who was currently dealing with clients and partners abroad. Although Aleksis had lived in Finland since high school and spoke and understand some Finnish, language and cultural factors might also have contributed to the lack of social, non-job-related communication at his workplace.

Aleksis did not have any personal items in his office. Instead, he enacted his organisational identification by wearing a jacket with the company logo also outside the company premises while we were having lunch in a close-by cafeteria. I tried to ask Aleksis about his social relations outside work, but he returned the conversation back to his job and communication with his customers. Even when asked about the friends he had acquired through his work he prioritised the business rather than the socialising function:

Extract 39:
ALEKSIS: Nice friends, indeed, but no business at the end of the day.
I don't like that. I don't like that. I like to go straight to the point
and if they ask a straight question about the product that we have,
because I'm here for only because for that
and (reference to the nationality of the business owners) have this rational thinking
and I like that one plus one is two.
I like it in the work, you know, that they have this.
INTERVIEWER: Do you think people are sharing their private life?
ALEKSIS: No, no and I like that.
I mean, I like, I like that respect.
At least in my family, my father always says:
"What happens in the family, stays in the family"
and in (this country) it is the same.
I think in (here) they respect.
There is no secret, it's just, you know,
there has to be some kind of privacy.
Where else you can get it if not in the family? ...

So, I prefer the (local) culture in this sense.

Aleksis considered work and private life separate and the boundaries between them rather impermeable. It was interesting, though, that by mentioning his father and family he revealed something of his familial relationships but did not explicitly tell about his private matters. In some other episodes, he discussed some of his former fellow students whom he kept in touch with and whom I also knew. In the extract above, Aleksis associated the maintenance of strong work-nonwork boundaries with respect. As he explained, this preference for privacy came from his home upbringing and it also resembled the cultural values of the country of his current residence and work. The work identity that he created is separate from what he is or does in other spheres of life. The constructed work identity was based on the duties and tasks that he was assigned, "I'm here for only because for that". As an employee he needed and wanted to perform in a 'rational' and 'direct' way and ask and provide factual information.

The premises where Aleksis worked included a large meeting room, which was said to be in an active use. When asked if they had any online meetings with people working in other locations of the company, Aleksis answered "they do" indicating that he was not taking part in them. What comes to socialising during the coffee breaks, he also used 'I' versus 'they', separating himself from the others in the work community. He constructed himself a work identity of an independent salesman, who works for the company in his assigned role and communicates with the others when it is necessary for carrying out his tasks or solving problems. The work identity that Aleksis was construing in his talk was not only task-oriented, but also time-conscious, as the next short extract shows:

Extract 40:
ALEKSIS: and it's, like I said,
you kind of feel that you waste your colleagues' time with your questions
if you do it a lot.

Aleksis seemed to assume that colleagues should be given privacy to focus on their own tasks and not to be interrupted too often with questions. His relationships with colleagues seemed role- and task-based and he communicated with others only when there was a need to exchange job-related information (Kram & Isabella, 1985). Aleksis also kept apart from others and maintained distance during breaks. He was not taking part in socialising or phatic communication during the workday, which he explained by his health reasons, personal likes and dislikes, and his preference for direct, one-to-one communication.

Extract 41:
INTERVIEWER: Do you have a specific time when you have coffee together?
ALEKSIS: They do.
They even have a session when they play the card games.
I don't know what is the name of that game, but it's a simple game,
but they play it, usually at two o'clock.

INTERVIEWER: At two with coffee?
ALEKSIS: They have this afternoon coffee.
INTERVIEWER: You don’t drink coffee at all?
ALEKSIS: No, not anymore.
My body does not simple like it. I don’t feel good.
I used to drink when I was still in (my home country),
because I had to wake up at five o’clock
and I was home at nine o’clock in the evening
and then yes, but now I don’t. ((sipping water from a coffee cup))
INTERVIEWER: But do you take part in the card games?
ALEKSIS: No, not really.
If I want to, I could go, but I don’t feel that I wanted.
I don’t know, maybe it’s a good way to get present (the meaning is not very clear),
but I like just to go straight to someone I want to have a relationship
or if I do something wrong, I go straight to solve the (.) problem
or invite or say something.
I should ask you, you are a Finn, for advice how to improve the communication,
since you are the (Finn) – ((gazing at and smiling to the interviewer))
INTERVIEWER: With the colleagues or with your customers?
((A man passing by says ‘hello’ and Aleksis turns to him but does not reply verbally.))
ALEKSIS: I don’t know, with Finnish in Finland.

Lack of integration with the work community was apparent in Aleksis’ behaviour as well as in his talk. Based on the observational and interview data, Aleksis seemed to have even a more clearly specified role and tasks than the rest of his colleagues. His job description might have also limited his social interaction with the others as he mostly worked with customers or by himself. This might also explain why he was distancing himself from his colleagues and emphasizing his corporate or task-based identity more than the relational aspects of his work identity.

At the end of the episode, Aleksis asked for advice on how to improve his communication with the Finnish colleagues and clients. It could have implied that he considered social interaction to be important for work. However, he portrayed himself as a foreigner who does not know all the codes for social interaction in this context. When not aware of the discursive norms of the work community, he was not able to intertwine social and transactional talk, which would integrate the different facets of his work identity (Holmes & Riddiford; 2010; Marra, 2008; Roberts et al., 2008). Elsewhere in his interview, Aleksis told about his lack of language skills, which could also be one of the reasons impacting the social interaction at his workplace and his relational work identity. However, in the above episode, the problem was not linguistic but about his experienced incapability to adjust and attune himself to the local communicative style and culture. Whatever the reasons for limited social interaction at the workplace were, they must have had an impact on how Aleksis enacted his work identity.

Holmes and Marra (2004, 394) suggest that because relational work is off-record and invisible, it can be considered as unproductive downtime in contrast with ‘real’ work. However, even when relational work or relational practice is invisible or undervalued, workplace relationships are still being constructed and roles negotiated in interpersonal communication (Myers, 2010). Relational work and more permeable boundaries are traditionally considered more typical with female employees, as the above examples might also indicate. However, the changed gender roles and other factors than gender are also at play when constructing work identity and the boundaries between work and nonwork. The discourse that separates relational work and 'real' work and segments the work and nonwork identities can be associated with personal and relational factors, the tasks and job descriptions, as well as situational, contextual or cultural constraints that make workplace roles and identities incompatible with the roles and identities outside work. The organisational structures, size of the work community and power distance may also impact social interaction leading to different constructs and manifestations of work identity (Lauring & Klitmøller, 2015).

The data of this research suggests that boundary dynamics play an important part in constructing work identity and who we are to each other at work. Some of the young business professionals, especially one of the female participants, synergised their different relational identities rather than strictly compartmentalise their lives. However, the permeability of the boundaries between the work and nonwork domains differed because of very different contextual and situational factors. It is natural that a person having a dual role and working part-time in a family business has more blurred and permeable boundaries, while some others distance their private and work identities more. There could be many different reasons why some employees were not disclosing their private lives or enacting their nonwork identity facets at work. In this research, boundary management and coordination took place in various types of relationships, such as between the participant and the colleagues, the female or male participant and the female researcher, a former teacher and a student, the researcher and a married, co-working couple, an employee and his work community or between an employee and the company. The participants revealed or concealed their personal, family, work or organisational lives based on their considerations on themselves in these relationships in each of the communicative situations (Petronio, 2002; Simmons, 2017).

The two male participants in the current study seemed to protect their privacy in professional settings. They were not frequently engaged in humorous or emotive conversations and kept their private lives separate from their work. Sias and Cahill (1998), Morrison (1999), Morrison and Wright (2009) and Mao and Hsieh (2012) make a difference between instrumental ties and expressive ties at the workplace. The latter involve nonwork-related or person-related interactions including behaviours such as joking and self-disclosing personal information. The authors claim that people at higher organisational level are more sociable but maintain their workplace impersonality. In the current research neither of the male participants had a supervisor role or a high organisational status. In the workplace, the management of work and nonwork boundaries has been found to be closely connected with role-based identities but also with the strength of the situation, that is, how reinforced, institutionalised and taken-for-granted the boundaries are in each context (Ashforth et al. 2000). Fieseler et al. (2015, 166) also mention the effects of demographic factors on boundary and privacy management and conclude that there seems to be a tendency among women and young professionals to unify their individual and organisational identities and emphasize their belongingness to an organisation in order to increase their professional credibility, which could also apply to this research.

This chapter has discussed the boundaries between work and nonwork and to a certain extent also the dialectical tensions between the private and public. The boundaries are constructed in the discourse on the facets of work and nonwork identities. The work identities of BBA graduates in the data varied between 'a balancing juggler' and 'an isolated employee'. The juggler is enacting, negotiating, balancing and integrating different roles and identity facets without strong boundaries, while an isolated employee separates the different roles, relationships and identity facets, creating a more compartmentalised work identity. The idea of highlighting these two distinct types of work identities is not, by any means, to categorise the participants into two groups, but rather show the diversity that is possible when discursively constructing work identities at the interface of work and nonwork and privacy and disclosure.

4.5 Work-based Identity in Transition

This chapter presents the findings of a discursively constructed work identity that is in turbulence during life transitions. Change permeates every corner of our lives and society. From individual employees, teams and organisations continual change demands adjustments, adaptation and agility. The responses to change may vary from resistance to acceptance, from attempts to manage change to welcoming it as an engine of innovation and transformation. This chapter discusses how the discourse of change and transition intersected with the discourses of work-based identity. Discourse of change emerged in all datasets, but it was especially evident with three of the participants. Of these three, this subsection presents Maria, who was going through several transitions before, during and after the data gathering. I refer to this type of identity construct as a 'job-hopper'. I am aware that the term may carry some negative associations although it also emphasises the person's volition and free will to change jobs. In this chapter, Maria's agency is discussed against the identity positions that she is negotiating and co-constructing during her interview. Maria was quite elaborate in telling about the changes in the past that had led her to who she is at that moment and what she is to become. By integrating the current phases and transitions into her life narrative, Maria is constructing her career as part of her work identity and giving it sense and meaning.

Extract 42:
"...*mie ite* menin kesätöihin heti kun vaan
[...I myself went to a summer job as soon as]

16, …kun periaatteessa kun pääsin,
[16, …as I, in principle, was allowed to,]
mut suurin oli kyllä sit harjottelut koulun kautta.
[but the biggest were the internships through the school.]
Että nää kansainväliset harjottelut ne autto* ihan huimasti.
[That these international internships they helped hugely.]
Sitä kautta mie sitten löysin, pääsin (yritykselle X)
[That way I also found; I was allowed to (recruited by) (company x)]
siis töihin (ulkomaan) konttorille
[I mean, to work to the (foreign) office.]
ja sitten kun valmistuin, niin pääsin pääkonttorille myyntitöihin
[and then when I graduated, I was given a sales job at the headquarters.]
ja se oli siinä mielessä harjottelu oli kyllä ihan erinomaisen tärkee.
[and, in that sense, the internship was really important.]
Ilman sitä ei olis varmaan tullut edes haettuu,
[Without it I might not have even applied,]
tai en olis varmaan edes ymmärtänyt hakkee ees sinne.
[or I would not have understood to apply there].
Että siinä mielessä tuo sitten, nuo harjoittelut autto *löytämmään* töitä
[So, in that sense, those internships helped (me) to find jobs]
ja sitten ja sitä kautta on sitten aina löytynyt (töitä).
[and through it (I) have always found (work).]
Mulla on työpaikat vaihtunut *parriinkin* otteeseen,
[My jobs have changed a couple of times]
mutta *nykysseen* työhön sitten,
[but to this present job then,]
ihan vain tuttavan kautta kuulin,
[I just heard through an acquaintance]
että on paikka auki ja hain sitten suoraan yritykseen.
[that there is an opening and I then directly applied to the company.]
Että tää ei ollut missään julkisessa haussa tämä työpaikka,
[So, that this job was not publicly advertised as vacant,]
vaan kuulin tuttavan kautta,
[but I heard from an acquaintance,]
tai tutun tutun kautta,
[or through an acquaintance of an acquaintance]
että siellä olis nyt paikka auki.”
[that there is a vacancy.]
(Maria, interview)

At the time of the interview, Maria was leaving the job she is describing and which she had got with the help of her connections. She is telling about her feelings regarding this move.

Extract 43:
”Mulla on siis tässä viimeinen päivä tässä.
[So, I have here the last day here]
Tässä on tämmöset lähtötohinat.
[There is this kind of fuss of leaving here]
Eli juuri *vastaikkään* tuossa heräsin ja huomasin,
[So, just a while ago I woke up and realised]
että mulla on ihan tuhottoman paljon tehtävää,

[that I have overmuch work to do]
koska muutto tullee aina ihan puun *takkaa*.
[because the move always comes out of nowhere (literally: behind the tree)]
Vaikka ois miten pitkää tienny että sen muutto *tullee*,
[No matter how long (you've) known that the move comes]
niin sitten kun se muutto *tullee*,
[but when the move comes]
niin sitten tullee semmonen että juostaan *ympyrrää* ((sneers)) ja ihmetellään.
[so, then it's like that (you're) running circles ((sneers)) and wonder]
...
Nyt mie sitten muutan (erääseen maahan Aasiassa)
[So now I'm moving to (an Asian country)]
ihan monsuunikauden kynnyksellä
[right before (literally: at the doorstep of) a monsoon season]
sinne hyttysten syötäväks satteeseen *hikkoilemmaan*,
[there to be eaten by mosquitos in the rain, to sweat.]
mutt' sitä *pittää* aina vähän *kokkeilla*."
[but (you) always must experiment a little.] (Maria interview)

In the extracts above, Maria uses some dialectal features, such as double consonants in words where they are not used in the standard variant of Finnish. The pronoun *mie* [I] associates her with Eastern Finland. Although she has lived out of Finland for many years and the interview took place abroad, she wanted to conduct the interview in Finnish. The storyline also contains several figures of speech. Moreover, the rhetorical features of her speech include exaggeration and ironic humour. They could imply that she is hesitant how I, as her former teacher and interviewer, am going to react to her decision to move. Laughing at herself first reduces the risk of being negatively positioned by the other. The colloquial tone and occasional burst of laughter could also be signals to the interviewer how seriously or lightly her words should be taken. Thus, they play an important role in meaning making, i.e. how explicitly or implicitly the meanings are communicated.

Although not asked, Maria wanted to tell about the reasons to leave the job she liked and to move to a different country, even further away from her home, and to turn her hobby into a new career. As she explains, her present work had offered her many benefits, such as a great team to work with, the chance to travel and the possibility to make her own decisions. However, she is now looking for something else.

Extract 44:
"No se mulla on tarkoitus,
että mie halluisin vaihtaa ainakin muutamaks vuodeks vähän *urraa*,
että eihän sitä sitten *tiijä*
kun on varattomana rantapummina ollu muutaman vuotta,
että miltähän se sitten tuntuu. ((Laughs.))
Onhan se hassuu, että mulla on hyvä koulutus
ja sitten yllättäen pillit pussiin ja sitten ihan uuteen työhön,
mutta kyllä mie halluisin tehä jottain tuommosta liikuntaa ja ihmisten parissa.
Että nimenomaan ihmiset tullee jonnekin ja he saa uusia kokemuksia

ja tekevät jottain jännää mutta palkitsevaa
ja ovat sitten päivän lopussa ilosia siitä, että nyt on kokkeillu jotakin uutta.
Niin se on nimenommaan se motivaatio, mitä mie tuosta työstä etin.
Että antaa ihmisille uusia elämyksiä.” (Maria, interview)

[So my purpose is
that I want to change my career at least for a few years,
but (I) don’t know
after (I) have been a penniless beach bum for a couple of years
how it feels. ((Laughs))
It is funny that I have good education
and then, all of a sudden, quit and leave (literally: put whistles into a bag)
and then to a completely new job,
but I would like to do that kind of sport and among people.
So that people especially arrive somewhere, and they get new experiences
and do something exciting but rewarding
and are happy about it at the end of the day that they have tried something new.
So, it is especially that motivation that I seek in that job.
That (I) give new experiences to people.]

Maria’s narration is positioning her not only as a person who is about to change a job, but also as a career changer or a person who strays from a ‘normal’ career path (also LaPointe, 2010). The expression “a penniless beach bum” that Maria uses of her future destiny could suggest that Maria’s social status, self-concept and discursive position are all at stake at the same time. The laughing that follows marks the comment as a humorous, exaggerated statement. Again, Maria uses self-depreciating irony through which she positions herself much lower than could be expected. This act might, however, also turn against her if it is interpreted as a sign of low self-esteem. The interview becomes a site where by degrading herself the interviewee is trying to create her dignity while co-constructing her identity position together with the interviewer.

Maria continues her narrative of her rather sudden and unexpected decision to move using an idiomatic expression *yllättäen pillit pussiin* [literally: put whistles into a bag, i.e. quit and leave all of a sudden]. She almost apologises for not making use of her ‘good’ education when searching for excitement, new experiences and internal rewards. She probably mentions her education because of the former student-teacher relationship with the interviewer. It can be a way to renegotiate the relationship in this new situation and an attempt protect her own and her former teacher’s face. On the contrary, Elisa, who has a more stable situation at work as well as a higher degree, does not have similar face-concerns. Instead, Elisa expresses openly that none of the schools has prepared her for work, but it is work that educates the worker, *Työ tekijäänsä opettaa* (Finnish idiom). In the data, the educational and work identities were intertwined with personal and relational identities in very intricate ways. The positioning analysis was also able to show how situated the identities are in the communicative encounter and in the relationships of the interlocutors.

During the interview Maria tells about changes in her personal life and relationships. Because of her relocation, she was to leave her beloved pet with her ex-partner with whom she had broken up a few months earlier. At this turning point of her life, the theme of agency becomes more salient than the theme of communion, i.e. her desire to participate in human relationships or community (McAdams 1991, 1993 and 1996). At the interview, she expresses detachment and is not planning to stay in the new country or job for long, although moving to Mexico seems far-fetched to her.

Extract 45:
”En mie usko, että mie jään sinne pitkäks aikaa.
Mulla on tarkotus mennä sinne
ja nytten tuota hankkia nuo tarvittavat taidot
ja hankkii kokemusta
ja sitten ehkä muuttaa jonnekin viljelemään perunoita jonnekiin Meksikkoon
tai en tiijä.” (Maria, interview)

[I don’t believe that I will stay there for a long time.
My purpose is to go there and like acquire the necessary skills and get experience
and then maybe move to somewhere to grow potatoes, somewhere in Mexico
or I don’t know.] (Maria, interview)

When talking about the changes in her life, Maria is presenting several identity facets. When she speaks about her educational and professional identity and aspirations, it seems as if she is asking for social approval for her decisions to leave a stable, ‘normal’ job and launch an untypical career. Maria is a millennial who is not attached to or identifying herself with organisations but is ready to move on to set and achieve her personal goals in life even when it means a lower salary and a step-down. She does not speak about career advancement, but rather how she is searching for personal satisfaction and meaningfulness of life. Her move to Asia is not about escaping an undesirable work environment, but it does become a reason for her to change jobs later in her home country. In the extract below, Maria has already moved the second time, now from Asia to her home country.

Extract 46:
”Mie tulin töihin (kotimaahan),
mutta työnkuva ei ole vastannut luvattua,
ja muutan takaisin vähän etelämmäksi ensi kuussa.
(Ulkomaan kohde) oli loistava kokemus,
ja antoi hirvittävän paljon uusia elämyksiä.
Luonto- ja seikkailuopastus on mahtava työ,
ja toivon voivani jatkaa sitä vielä.
Saa nyt nähdä mihin tämä elämä vie.
Olisi kiinnostanut käydä töissä (kahdessa muussa maassa).
Ehtiihän sitä vielä!”
(Maria, interview)

[I came back to work (in the home country),
but the job description was not what they promised,
and I will move back to a bit further south next month.

(The foreign country) was a splendid adventure
and gave a huge number of new experiences.
Working as a nature and adventure guide was a great job,
and I hope I can still continue it.
It remains to be seen where this life is taking (me).
It would have been interesting to work in (two other countries).
There is still time!]

Maria's narrative creates connections between her past, present and future. When recounting her past experiences, plans and expectations, she refers to her freedom to make her own career choices, i.e. creates her agency as part of her work identity. On the other hand, in the above extract, she again seems unsure about her future and also recollects how some of her expectations have gone awry. Time to time Maria speaks directly and indirectly about money and finance, for example in terms of restricted unemployment benefits in one of the countries she has worked. Such factors might have been decisive at some points of her career. However, she is not blaming the circumstances but rather emphasises 'moving on' or 'moving back' as her coping strategies in challenging situations. Although she constructs her agency by reasoning her personal decisions regarding her jobs and career changes, she is somehow at the mercy of outside factors, *tämä elämä* [this life], as she expresses above.

What is interesting in this case is that Maria was asked similar questions as the other participants but produced a more comprehensive and consistent story of her career trajectory than any of the others, yet her career seemed the most fragmented. Creating a coherent career story may be especially important during transitions that threaten her work identity and social position. Although her capacity to create her own career might be restricted, she possesses so-called discursive agency, i.e. how she creates her career and work identity through rhetorical and citational practices (cf. linguistic agency by Butler, 1990 and 1997; Pizzorno et al., 2015). Her use of idioms and the self-positionings of 'a penniless beach bum' or the one growing potato can be citations to 'master narratives', social forces that influence her work identity, but which she is discursively fighting against.

4.6 Humour and Laughter in Identity Construction

In this research, humour was found to be one of the most powerful, yet subtle and implicit means to construct relational identities and identity positions in the workplace. The relationship between humour and identity was studied by observing how work identities were constructed in verbal practices containing elements of humour, what reactions and consequences different types of verbal humour generated and also how the identity discourse produced humorous 'joker' identities (Sinkeviciute, 2019). The results presented in this chapter are mostly based on the observational data gathered while the participants were interacting with their coworkers. My focus has been on humorous verbal communication, such as joking and self-irony, and on the nonverbal reactions it has induced, for example laughter. In my observer role, I was time to time involved in the actual negotiations of identity positions and face, and as an interviewer, I was even more obviously the other interlocutor against whom identities were presented and with whom they were negotiated, in this case, using humour. During the interviews, I was also trying to analyse if the participants accompanied their stories or replied to my questions with humorous comments, laughter or smile.

Humour, which consists of both nonverbal and verbal communication, is defined as "any communicative instance which is perceived as humorous" (Martineau, 1972) and which produces a "positive cognitive or affective response from listeners" (Crawford, 1994). Humour has also been defined as a communicative process starting with a humorous stimulus and ending with a response, such as laughter (Godkewitsch, 1976). Humour is one of the basic forms of human interaction appearing in different socio-cultural contexts. Because of its contextuality and situatedness, humour is often very ambiguous and difficult to interpret. Humour is also a challenging subject to research, because humour is socially constructed in interaction and at the same time humour constructs the social realities and relationships, i.e. the social context which needs to be taken into account in the analysis. The speaker's intention and listener's perception, interpretation and reaction are all at work. According to Cooper (2008), Holmes and Marra (2002a) and Priego-Valverde (2009), it is the audience that primarily determines if something is humorous; the joker's intention is secondary. In a multicultural environment, such as an international workplace, humour becomes even a more complex subject to study due to the various linguistic and communicative cultures and backgrounds that are intertwined in the social encounters. In this study, humorous utterances and sequences, so called "laughables", were identified in interaction on the basis of cues in the vocal and nonverbal behaviour of the participants (Holmes & Marra, 2002a; Tranekjær, 2017). These included, for example, different intensities of laughter and facial expressions that were associated with smiling.

Humour as a workplace phenomenon has been studied in various disciplines, including psychology, sociology, management studies, nursing sciences, pragmatics and sociolinguistics. Many earlier studies have highlighted the numerous benefits of humour in workplace communication. Humour has been associated with friendliness, solidarity and politeness (e.g. Brown & Levinson, 1987). Among other things, humour has been found to improve job satisfaction, reduce stress, increase creativity, and enhance collegiality and wellbeing at work (e.g. Günter et al., 2013, Plester, 2009b, Slåtten et al., 2011, Vesa, 2009). In managerial communication humour has been employed, for example, when there has been a need to lighten the atmosphere, relieve tension between people, soften the blow of criticism, or to overcome resistance (e.g. Smith and Khojasteh 2014; Yang et al. 2015). There are also several discursive studies on the relationships of humour and identity in inter- or cross-cultural settings, such as

Habib (2008). Moody (2014) has studied the co-construction of the 'gaijin' i.e. foreigner identity in English-mediated communication between an American intern and his Japanese coworkers. In Moody's study, humour was not only used to identify the intern as an outsider, but also to create solidarity among those who shared in the joke (Moody, 2014, 85). Moody (ibid.) concluded that highlighting the position of a foreigner in light-hearted, humorous interaction created a positive shared experience that helped to cross social and cultural differences.

Schnurr (2009, 1136) concludes that workplace humour and teasing can be very ambiguous, and therefore contextualisation is crucial in understanding and assessing the appropriateness and effect of such discursive practices. In her study, Schnurr identified three rather distinct discourses on the continuum of humour, which she had borrowed from Boxer and Cortés-Conde (1997). Teasing and humour in Schnurr's study ranged from contesting biting and nipping into supportive styles of bonding jokes. In the current study, humour was also found to work in several ways. It was used to assign and contest identity positions, maintain group identity and cohesion, as well as to create boundaries between groups. Several scholars have also pointed out how humour can divide people into subcultures and to personnel groups that are based on gender or power dynamics (Holmes, 2006b and 2006c; Putnam & Fairhurst, 2001). Mak (2014) concludes that humour and small-talk serve relational function and are connected to the construction of power and gender identities and stereotypes in online communication with colleagues. Mullany (2004) looks at humour from the perspective of communities of practice (CofP) and concludes that both female and male chairs use repressive humour as a discourse strategy to do power less explicitly in order to gain compliance in workplace business meetings. Humour has been found to be normative and oppressive when it targets the person's behaviour or identity and aims at creating embarrassment (Plester, 2015).

In my research, humorous discourse constructed and positioned identities at the interpersonal level, but the use of humour was also linked with individual and collective identities. For example, self-deprecating humour was communicating self-face concerns, protecting other-face and displaying conflict between the speaker and the normative gender role expectations. The research data also included different discourses of humour, ranging from inclusive humour and harmless puns, playful banter to self-irony, adult jokes and to insulting, belittling and sarcastic comments. The responses to different types of humour varied from ignorance to laughter, which also differed in intensity. When defining and interpreting the instances of humour, I did not rely only on the verbal interaction between the interlocutors, but also analysed the nonverbal and vocal communication and integrated the observational data with the interviews. There were differences in how much social interaction and humour I was able to observe during the site visits. The possible reasons for the absence or scarcity of humorous communication and incidents could be in the type of social relations at the workplace, but also in something else, such as persons' tasks and job descriptions, time pressure, physical environment or cultural and linguistic factors that did not enable such social interaction at the workplace.

Humour and different types of laughing occurred in communication in small groups and teams. A project meeting recorded in one of the workplaces included several jokes and humorous comments. The purpose of the weekly meeting was mostly to report progress and share updates. Although the official company language is English, the meeting was conducted in Finnish, because there were no non-Finnish speakers attending it. However, all meeting documentation was in English, and there were frequent occurrences of professional jargon that mainly derived from the English language. The use of jargon in the meeting contributed to the construction of professional and group identity. The meeting took place in two locations, and there were both face-to-face and online participants. There was a gender balance between male and female participants, although there were more men attending the meeting online. The majority of people had an engineering background.

The first humorous comment at the beginning of the meeting was about flatulence, which was not expressed explicitly at first; yet, everyone seemed to understand the indirect reference and many either sneered, chuckled or laughed openly immediately after. The meeting begins with a comment from the participant who seems anxious to get the meeting started.

Extract 47:
ELISA: Pitäskö aloittaa, että... [Should we start so that …]
CHAIR ((speaks silently something to the person on his left and then taking the attendance record)): Nonniin haloo, ketä tuli? [Ok, hallo, who came?]
MAN ONLINE: Ai keneltä tuli? [You mean, who passed?] (literally: From whom it came? meaning 'who passed gas'.)
((Many are laughing, giggling or sneering silently.))
CHAIR: Tais tulla molemmilta kun niin naurattaa... joo... =
[I guess both did pass since you laugh so much ... yes…]
MAN IN THE MEETING ROOM: = Pieru [Gas/ fart]
CHAIR: No Asko siellä ainakin hihittelee, kuka muu? Onko Miia?
[So, there is at least Asko (male) snickering, who else? Is it Miia (female)?
WOMAN ONLINE: No olen. [Yes, it's me.]

The chairperson and the other man taking part online are involved in a playful exchange; yet, they do not express the taboo word. However, one male participant says the word aloud, as if to make it sure that all attendees understand what they are speaking about. Interesting in this communicative instance is not only who jokes to whom about what and whom but how the communicative situation develops further.

Extract 48:
CHAIR (calling the names): Miia ja Jari? [Miia (female) and Jari (male)?]
MAN ONLINE: Ei, Jari ei ole paikalla, mutta J-P on kyllä tuossa,
laittaa yhteyksiä, jotta saadaan kuvaruutu näkymään.
[No, Jari is not present, but J-P (male) is here, though,
setting the connections so that we can see the screen.]
ELISA: Miia on siis hoidellu molemmat. [Miia has then taken care of both. ("Hoidella" can also refer to being involved in sexual intercourse.)]

CHAIR: Ja härskeistä puheista meillä vastaa Elisa
[And Elisa is responsible for our dirty comments/ jokes here.]
ELISA: Ite alottivat. ((Laughs.)) [They started themselves.]
CHAIR: Sitten meillä ois tämmönen vähän erikoinen juttu, niin,
täällä on paikalla Anne, Elisa ja Tuire
ja sitten Elisalla on erikoisesti paineita, kun sen vanha opettaja on tuolla taustalla.
[And then we have a somewhat unusual thing here, so,
we have here Anne, Elisa and Tuija (female)
and Elisa is especially stressed as her old teacher is there at the background.]
ELISA: Joo, siis miun entinen opettaja on täällä tarkkailemassa miun työpäivää.
[Yes, so my former teacher is here to observe my workday.]
MAN ONLINE: Terve. Ootko siellä vain tarkkailemassa vai onko joku muukin funktio?
[Hi there. Are you there just to observe or is there/ do you have some other function?]
RESEARCHER: Teen tutkimusta tradenomien työelämäosaamisesta ja heidän työtehtävistään. [I'm conducting research on BBAs' workplace skills and tasks.]
CHAIR: Joten et Jouni nyt sitten niitä perinteisiä pieru-huumorijuttuja siellä.
((Some people laugh.))
[So, Jouni (speaking to the man online) no more of those traditional fart humour jokes out there.]

Joking at the beginning of the meeting seems to function as an icebreaker setting the playful tone and relaxed atmosphere for the rest of the meeting. It offers some kind of relief to social unease in a situation when people cannot see or do not know everyone. Already at the introduction two people are performing and assigned 'joker' identities. The first joker is a man known for his 'fart humour' and the other is Elisa, the 'dirty joker'. The joking first takes place between the two men who are leading the discussion in their respective locations. Despite the rather masculine topic, the women in the face-to-face setting seem not to be annoyed or offended by it. On the contrary, they also sneer and seem to accept this kind of humour as part of the normal interaction in this social setting. Moreover, the female participant Elisa becomes part of this male exchange of humorous comments and banters back using adult humour.

Joking seems to help the participants to delineate boundaries of group memberships. On the one hand, jokes create communality between all participants, but on the other, the banter in the meeting establishes two competing jesters, Elisa and the man online, as well as two groups, "us here" and "you there". Wilczek-Watson (2015) uses the terms of jocular othering, self-othering or jocular abuse for the different types of humour that create difference and position the other person or group in interpersonal communication. Holmes et al. (2007, 446) make a distinction between conjoint humour and contestive humour in team meetings. In this example, both types of humour were used to create communality and belonging on the one hand and boundaries and competitive positions on the other. By making Elisa responsible for dirty jokes, the chairperson offers her a prominent position and introduces her to the online group as their 'centre forward', an offensive player. Elisa, however, does not accept this position but identifies herself as a defence player when she states that "they started it". Joking at the start of the meeting could also be partly about gender-positioning. The humorous exchange, especially between Elisa and the chairperson, clears space for women and gives them the right to take part and voice their ideas in traditionally more masculine contexts of project meetings of a manufacturing company. It has been suggested that in order to survive in the masculine culture the women may join in and perform masculinity through the facade of joking (Plester, 2015).

In these negotiations about identity positions, social order and rules for interaction, the chairperson's role is very important. He advises the online male participant not to tell the usual jokes about flatulence but does not sound very serious. On the contrary, the tone of his voice conveys the idea that such joking is socially acceptable in their usual meetings, but the online, male joker needs to be more considerate when there is a visitor present. In this example, the boundaries for humour are reconstructed by the chairperson for this unusual situation. (For more on boundaries of humour at work, see Paulsen, 2003; Plester, 2009a). It is also worth noticing that the chairperson does not forbid Elisa, the other joker, but almost encourages her, as in Extract 49 below, where the chairperson returns to the joking mode at the end of the meeting. The chairperson once more offers Elisa the identity of a "dirty joker":

Extract 49:
CHAIR: Jep. No missäs ne on ne kaikki härskit puhheet?
[Yep. Well, where are all the dirty jokes?]
((Elisa laughs.))
CHAIR: Elisa vähän yritti. Alotteli, mutta siirty sitten asialinjalle.
[Elisa tried a little. Started, but then returned to the factual/ serious mode]
ELISA: En mie alottanu. Kyllä joku muu alotti. [I didn't start. It was someone else.]
CHAIR: Asko alotti niillä ähinöillä. [It was Asko who started with the grunting]
((in a loud voice to everyone)) Ok, kiitti, moi! [Ok, thanks, bye!]

Humour in general tends to occur at the beginning and end of meetings and other communicative encounters, as well as in transitions from one episode to the other (see also Marra, 2003). Therefore, it is not surprising that at this point the chairperson refers to the jokes which were expressed at the start of the meeting. He does not recapitulate the main points of the meeting but instead concludes by contesting Elisa once more. Holmes (2006a, 110) claims that contested and competitive humour is considered more masculine in style. However, workplace humour is not only gendered, but the type and tone of humour depends also on other factors, such as relationships, personalities, group size, type of interaction, speech event, type and length of activity and the particular point in the interaction (Holmes 2006a, 108). It is also possible that in the above situation the chairperson portrays Elisa repeatedly as someone noted for risqué jokes because of the visiting researcher. By doing so, he could be addressing the visitor and putting the current status of the former teacher-student relationship to the test.

There is another episode in the same meeting where some humour takes place between two males: the chairperson and an online participant. This time humour can be categorised as situational.

Extract 50:
CHAIR: Tuota, painokoneasioista sen verran,
että nytten toi Topi on matkalla sinne Belgiaan
ja sit se mulle soitti matkan päältä,
ett ens viikolla onkin sitten näiden xx painokonneiden osalta lisä( ) (review)
ja sinne tarvittaan sitten lissää porukkaa mukkaan
ja siinä hetki sitten mietittiin, että ketä ne sitten on...
[So, about the press issues a little,
so Topi is now on his way to Belgium
and then he called me on his way
that next week there will be another (review) next week
and they will need more people to join
and then we thought a moment who they will be…]
((Some unclear voice through the line.))
CHAIR: Haloo? [Hallo?] ... ((no reply online))
Niin siinä sitten Topin kanssa mietittiin,
että ketä sinne lähtis lisä( ) niin sitten yks henkilö laadusta
ja sitten yks henkilö tuotannosta ja sitten T.
[So we were thinking with Topi
who could go to extra ( ), so one from quality,
one from production and then Topi.]
MAN ONLINE: Pätkii pahasti. ((laughing)) [Major interruptions.]
CHAIR: että Belgiaan ois sellanen kaljanjuontireissu tarjolla, jos kiinnostaa.
No ei vaineskaan.
Tää nyt tuli vähän viime tipassa tää tieto ite kullekkii,
että se on näin piakkoin, mutta tämmönen ois tarve sitten järjestää.
[so that there is kind of a beer drinking trip available to Belgium, if (you are) interested.
No not really.
It came at a quite short notice this information for everyone,
that it is so soon, but this is what needs to be arranged.]
MAN ONLINE: Lähtö ei oo mikkään ongelma mutta pitäs tietää, miten tullaan silloin takas. [Going is not a problem, but (I) need to know when, how we'll come back...]

Laughter after a comment on bad connection reveals that the person had actually heard what the chairperson said but does not want to hear that he might need to travel. The chairperson is not sure first if there is an actual connection problem, but after hearing the laughter, continues using a humorous tone, too. He refers to Belgian beer to persuade the man to go. In the episode, the online participant might use humour to buy some more time, to disguise his initial, negative reaction or to avoid expressing his response too directly. For both men, humour can be a means to save their own or another's face. By doing so they also reinforce their relationship and positions as colleagues and peers. The chairperson is just one of the project engineers, not a supervisor or a member of the management team, so he does not have the mandate to force anyone to go. When the supervisory authority based on organisational status cannot be directly applied, the participants must negotiate a situational leadership identity, which in this episode is done through face-saving humour. At the same time the relational identity of two coworkers is reconstructed. Humour and laughter seem useful for mitigation, persuasion, negotiations and influence in symmetric workplace relationships.

Humour at the workplace can both divide and unify, to draw boundaries and create inclusion simultaneously constructing identities (Moody, 2019). In the data, exclusion and othering through humour was apparent in the sequence that was already discussed earlier. In the workplace discourse, Vera and her male colleague constructed their individual and relational identities and positioned each other through contesting humour and ignorance. However, at the same time, the discourse creates and manifests collective identities and boundaries between different employee groups. The incident took place during a break when Vera and I at her heels stepped out of the office which Vera had borrowed from another colleague. When we approached the coffee room, I saw several people sitting at a long table. An older man turned around in his chair, raised his voice and said to Vera:

> Extract 51:
> MALE COLLEAGUE: Ollaan tässä ooteltu kahvinkeittäjää.
> Kait ne siellä sihteeriopistossa on opettaneet, miten kahvia keitetään?
> [We have been waiting here for someone to make some coffee.
> They have taught (you) in the secretarial college how to make coffee, haven't they?]

Using the third person plural "they", the person is distancing "us" from those from "the secretarial college" and positioning them as 'others'. Othering does not automatically imply a negative attitude towards another person or group, yet it can be important in the processes of discursive discrimination (Boréus, 2017, 31). Even though the speaker uses an impersonal language (in Finnish there is no 'you'), it is clear from the situational factors, body language and the tone of the speaker's voice, who the comment is about and for. He turns to Vera and speaks loudly over his shoulder. Furthermore, the context helps to understand that the comment is not only directed to the ears of the sales assistant, but also to everyone in the room including me, Vera's former teacher. There is some sneering around the table, and the comment was probably both intended and interpreted to be humorous. Its tone is sarcastic and it includes other-depreciation, if not an insult. Holmes and Marra (2002b, 1) state that this kind of "subversive humour tends to be conveyed through discourse strategies which create social distance and emphasize social boundaries between the speaker and the target of the humour". The man offers Vera an identity position of a 'coffee-maker' reinforcing her organisational role and title as an assistant. The offered identity contradicts the fact that Vera is the key person communicating in her native language with an important group of clients and responsible for a rather large market area of the company. The speaker is an older, slightly overweight male with technical background, while Vera is a young, blond, trilingual woman with a higher education degree in business. The sarcasm is also affirming the structural inequality between the salespersons with different educational backgrounds. Probably the positions based on age, experience and gender are also brought to the table.

The humour in the previous examples is different, but also the female reactions differ. While Elisa banters, laughs or smiles back. Vera, who has a similar educational background, but a different, lower organisational role and status, just ignores the sarcastic comment and walks away. Based on Vera's reaction, she did not consider the comment as humorous. She did not accept neither did she openly reject the position of a 'coffee-maker'. She ignored the speaker, did not greet the others or introduce anybody to me, but just lead me quickly through the coffee room to the corridor. Later Vera spoke about the incident and her relationship with the male colleague:

> Extract 52:
> "At the time, I think, I did not even react to that comment and
> that is probably for two reasons.
> First is that I know the person who said that comment
> and I take his comments with a pinch of salt.
> Second thing is that, I have a good self-awareness
> and I don´t take comments like that personally.
> It goes simply in one ear and right out the other."

Although both Vera and Elisa characterised themselves as strong and self-confident individuals, the construction of their workplace identities happened differently because of the different contextual factors, including the types of relationships and the power dynamics in their places of work. Vera did not directly oppose the offered identity position in the given situation. It seemed at first that she was complying and adapting to the situation. However, she did not accept the coffee-maker's identity, as can be seen in her third order, accountative positioning in the extract. Moreover, she used some indirect, nonverbal ways to resist the assistant positions that women had in the company and this line of industry (see Extract 33). For example, she used her nail polish to "irritate" her male colleagues but not in a rude, offensive way. Vera apparently did not have a position and right to openly resist the identity of a mere coffee-making assistant in the male-dominated environment of a manufacturing company. Elisa, however, was entitled to speak, realise her agency and be engaged in the humorous exchange, as well as resist the identity position of a joker offered by the chairperson.

The interviews also contained some laughing and humour. Such incidents included mostly self-depreciative or exaggerated comments about the speakers themselves. Maria's comment of becoming 'a penniless beach bum' was one of such expressions where the speaker was making fun of herself. Comments that included self-irony were constructing the interviewees' identities, but they often had also a relational function, where the speakers were presenting and positioning themselves to and for others. Self-depreciative humour has been found to be an effective means to show one's self-awareness and self-esteem, but also a powerful tool to construct one's social identity as a likeable and approachable person (Matwick & Matwick, 2017; van de Mieroop & Schnurr, 2018). The interview data also included some laughter following depreciative comments about others, for example, to disparage the members of another social group, such as "*Miesten kanssa on niin helppo tehdä töitä, että ei se siinä mielessä oo, mutta tietysti välillä ärsyttää se insinöörimäisyys ((nauraa))*." [It's easy to work with men, but of course the engineering qualities (reference to professional stereotype) irritates at times ((laughs))] Sometimes, the speakers were not saying anything that could have been considered funny or humorous. Instead, a soft, partly suppressed laughter was used to negotiate the meanings and relationships between the interviewer and the interviewee. Often laughter preceded or followed a witty remark, pun or question that could have been interpreted as inappropriate in the specific situation or relationship. In the following extract, Aleksis is trying to explain to me what he is currently working on.

Extract 53:
Aleksis is showing me one of the products on a computer screen.
ALEKSIS: Do you understand my English?
((turns to the interviewer and laughs)).
INTERVIEWER: I do - I do understand
((Both laugh))
and I partly understand what I see. ((laughs)).
ALEKSIS: It took time for me.
It looks simple, but it took time to find the way how to =
INTERVIEWER: = how to explain. …
If you think of your normal day, what do you do first when you come (to work)?
ALEKSIS: ((laughs)) Now you want to get into my head.
((points his head with the marker))
When I have my breakfast, I already know the transactions I need to carry out…

The laughter at the beginning of the extract has to do with our mutual face concerns and negotiations whether I can understand the technical language and content. Thus, Aleksis' question is not about the English skills at all. Aleksis uses the question and laughter to present himself as an incompetent speaker of English in order to protect my face and position as his former teacher. He also continues by belittling his own professional skills with "It took time for me…". On the other hand, the laughter before Aleksis' comment "Now you want to get into my head" is signalling that he is aware of my researcher identity and my motives to dig deeper than just to have a list of his daily chores. Laughter, however, makes this comment less abrupt and direct.

The results suggest that humour is a very context-sensitive and dynamic resource that can be used in identity construction at the group, interpersonal and individual levels. People do not resort to humour only when constructing their role-based relational identities or when positioning themselves and others at work, but also when the speech is more about the personal self-construct or the interface between the individual, relational and collective identity. The humorous discourses contain contradictions and can construe meanings of inclusion and exclusion, bonding and detachment or appreciation and depreciation of self and other. Table 8 summarises the relationship between humour and identity construction in this research.

TABLE 8 HUMOUR AS A MEANS OF IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION

type of humour observed	construed identity
face-saving humour: self-depreciating jokes, exaggeration or over- and understatements followed by laughter	individual identity (co-constructed in interaction with another)
humour used for positioning self and other in a dyadic relationship: other-appreciation or compliment and self-depreciation followed by friendly laugher or smiling, sarcastic humour and wit used for other-depreciation	relational identity and identity positions
situational, bonding and inclusive humour addressed to the team or ingroup to increase solidarity and group cohesion or exclusive humour addressed to the outgroup	group identity
jokes about the politics of a country that neither of the speakers have affiliation with; joking about the other gender or professional group in plural when no outgroup people are present	collective, impersonal, depersonalised identity

Humour and laughter seem to have several functions in discursive identity construction (see also Koester, 2010, 109). Humorous discourse relates work identity to facework and politeness. Humour can protect both self and other face and construct personal, enacted and relational identities. In addition to self-image and politeness, humour can also be used for positioning the self and others and for negotiating parity and power in workplace relationships. Jokes and bonding humour created group solidarity and identification, but, on the other hand, they can construct ingroup versus outgroup boundaries and exclusion. Jokes and humour reinforcing stereotypes or collective categorisation were also observed. Identity construction through humour was also identified at the level of communal or collective identity.

5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Identity at Work: Key Findings

An international workplace is one of the sites where multiple identities are discursively co- and re-constructed through communication. This research endeavour has attempted to understand some of the complex and dynamic processes of identity construction in the work domain through analysing a limited, yet rich qualitative data. This chapter summarises the key findings of the research by focusing on the meanings that were produced in intersecting and competing discourses on work identity. The results are also discussed against the framework of theories of communication and social identity. Moreover, there is an attempt to relate the findings of this research to the wider socio-cultural context.

The current study supports the view that the social identity is a complex discursive construct as well as a dynamic process of co-construction. In this respect, work identity is no different. The participants were presenting and enacting multiple identity facets in social situations and constructing multifaceted, multi-layered and sometimes rather ambiguous work identities. The analysis of identity construction in interpersonal communication also showed that personal and social identities are not separate but integrated and intertwined in intricate ways. As the Communication Theory of Identity (CTI) posits, communication integrates the subjective layers of identity with identities that are ascribed in social relations and the society (Hecht, 2015). As facets of their multi-layered work identity, participants were sometimes highlighting their personality traits or educational or national backgrounds, which made them different from or similar to the others at the workplace. In other contexts, the meanings of work identity were attached more strictly to tasks at work or to departmental and organisational identification. Work identity was also constructed in connection with work-nonwork boundaries which varied from flexible and permeable to rigid and impermeable. By combining the perspectives of Boundary Management (Nippert-Eng, 1996; Ashforth et al., 2000), Privacy

Management (Petronio, 2002; Petronio, 2019) and Positioning Theories (Davies and Harré, 1990), it was possible to see how entangled work identity was with work-nonwork relationships and role expectations on the one hand and the person's job description and organisational structures on the other. The meanings of work identity were multiple, fluid and situated as they were created, re-created, negotiated and changed in social interaction in different context. The fluidity and co-construction of work identity necessitated that work identity and its construction were studied and interpreted in the interpersonal contexts as well as in the specific socio-cultural and organisational settings.

In this study, identities were both produced and studied in communication, which may be one of the reasons why language became such a salient identity facet in this research. Another reason could be that multilingual competence is a professional requirement expected from the knowledge workers in international business. The connection between language identity should not, however, be considered only from the perspective of one's native language, languages required for performing one's duties at work or from the viewpoint of the official corporate language(s). These are important viewpoints, of course, but in the increasingly plural, superdiverse world, a wider perspective of language awareness is needed. Language, various levels of language competence and use, multilingualism, sociolects and the constitutive capacity of language to construct identities, relationships, organisations and societies should be considered at the interpersonal, institutional and societal levels. The awareness of the functions and sensitivity in the use of language in social interaction also encompasses multiple modes of communication (e.g. Iedema, 2007). This study showed that both verbal and nonverbal communication provide subtle means to negotiate relational identities and identity positions at work, which, in turn, constitute communities and organisations.

Although language, communication and agency are closely connected (e.g. Adhern, 2001; Harré, 1983), the speakers were not autonomous agents deciding on utterances and actions independently but engaged in co-actions and collaborative meaning making in a specific time and place (Linell 2016, 42). Consequently, also for this reason, work identities in diverse, international workplaces were not viewed solely from the perspective of an individual, for example that of an expat or immigrant worker, but in interpersonal relationships and relational communication. The discourse- and relationship-centred theories of interpersonal communication and discourse analysis provide an analytic and interpretive lens to study the social interdependencies of identities in the domain of work (Braithwaite and Baxter, 2008). While the perspective of discourse-centred theories allows to look into the identity enactment and meaning co-construction, the relationship-centred theories and Positioning Analysis applied in this research enabled to observe work identity construction as a dynamic process that has a relational function. In this research, the participants did not only co-construct their work identities together with others, but also construed and interpreted meanings in relation to the other(s). The others with whom identities were co-constructed and negotiated or for whom identities were enacted and performed included coworkers, but also me in my roles as an interviewer, observer or a former teacher. Sometimes discursive identity construction also involved people who were not physically present, such as former employers or colleagues whose words or actions the participants were recollecting in their accountative, i.e. third order positioning of self or others. The imagined others or imagined communities were also occasionally involved when identity discourses were producing 'international' identities.

The fluidity and dynamism of work identity became apparent also when identities and social categories were de- and recomposed in competing discourses. One example of such dynamism in this study related to the relationship between language and identity. Language was discovered to be an important facet and discursive construct of work identity on the one hand and a construction process on the other. An individual could first identify herself with a certain language community, even to the point that her ethnic and genetic features did not matter or were seen as identical with the other speakers of the same language. However, in another context the same person resisted the collective ethno-linguistic identity because of negative stereotyping, although enacting her language identity in public. As Social Identity Theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1986) posits, people seek to maintain positive distinctiveness. Similarly, Brewer's optimal distinctiveness model postulates that social cooperation and relationships have two opposing motives: the need for assimilation and inclusion and the need for differentiation and distinctiveness (Brewer, 1991). To achieve positive distinctiveness or sustain optimal distinctiveness, individuals need to be involved in ongoing identity negotiations and positioning with others. This seems to apply to both interpersonal and intergroup relations in workplace interaction but may also be connected to larger organisational and socio-cultural discourses.

In today's diverse world of work, many collective identity categories are no longer valid, yet they are still discursively sustained (Piller, 2011). When individuals or groups are viewed through only one 'cultural' lens or from the perspective of nations as 'imagined communities', it distorts how we see ourselves and others (Anderson, 1983). Language, for example, is equivocal and cannot be considered as a mere marker of identity. Language or linguistic identity entails more than the individual's native or first language or her identification with the speakers of a speech community. The research showed that the use of different registers, dialects, idioms, metaphors or a professional jargon were construing identifications, positionings and group memberships in various ways. Different levels of language and communicative competence, the individual's plurilingualism and the community's multilingualism all played a part in the discursive identity construction in the domain of work. In postmodern societies, language and languages are also sites where resistance, empowerment, solidarity, or discrimination are negotiated (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004, 4). In this study, languages were also intertwined with the employees' professional competence and had played a part, for example, in recruitment and in task allocation (see also, e.g. Roberts & Campbell, 2005). The multiple roles and functions of language and communicative ability in identity construction posed some methodological challenges for this research, which will be discussed in Chapter 5.4 in more detail.

Using English as a (Business) Lingua Franca (ELF) seemed to allow the individuals and communities not only a practical way to exchange information and negotiate meanings across linguistic boundaries, but also to assume a more positive international identity. Adopting an international identity and using ELF could enable social mobility and allow the employees to negotiate more egalitarian positions at the workplace (e.g. Erling at al., 2014; Jacob, 2018). At the interpersonal level, 'internationalisation' could help the diverse, yet interdependent individuals to create a third culture, accommodate their differences and co-construct relational identities (Imahori & Cupach, 2000; Kasmir, 1999). On the other hand, the 'internationalisation' discourse in this study may have disguised some of the contradictions or swept diversity under the rug of sameness. It has also been argued that the use of ELF can lead to thin communication, where organisational members communicate only to exchange work-related information but avoid social interaction that would be important for establishing and maintaining relationships and negotiating identity positions in a multilingual workplace (Tange & Lauring, 2009). However, also task-oriented and transactional talk has a relational function and is part of the identity work (Locher, 2008; Tracy & Naughton, 2000). Moreover, when constructing shared meanings in ELF, the common professional and corporate discourse systems can be more decisive than the different linguistic and national backgrounds (Scollon & Scollon, 2001). In this study, the lack of social interaction was observed in a few workplace contexts. However, it is not possible to say how much the use of ELF or the employee's competence in the local language or in the corporate discourse could be associated with socialising, in general, or discursive identity co-construction, in particular. The lingua franca perspective on interpersonal communication and identity construction deserves further empirical investigation from many research orientations.

Although the participants came from different ethnic backgrounds and worked in diverse communities, ethnic or racial disparity was invisible in the discursive processes of joint positioning. However, prejudices and discrimination were described in some of the interviews. The absence of racial or ethnic stereotyping or discrimination in the observation data contradicts some of the findings of other studies involving people of minorities. Yet, most of such studies in the domain of work have been based on either survey or interview data (e.g. Pitkänen, 2007; Van Laer & Janssens, 2011) or observations on employee-customer rather than coworker-coworker communication (e.g. Brewster, 2012; Brewster & Rusche, 2017). Van Laer and Janssens (2011) state that, in everyday interaction at the micro-level, ethnic discrimination manifests itself in subtle and ambiguous disempowerment embedded in wider organisational and societal structures. It has been argued that the implementation of equal opportunity policies in companies can turn the overt discrimination into covert discrimination (Lennartz et al., 2019). Racism and ethnic discrimination could also be considered morally more reprehensible than, for example, gender stereotyping or ageism. This could explain why the positioning of racial or ethnic identities was less overt than other facets of social identity. Siebers (2017) reports an ethnographic study where 66 ethnically diverse employees in the Dutch police forces were shadowed for several days as well as interviewed. The participants also kept personal diaries on their workplace encounters. Siebers concludes that the construction of ethnic boundaries and essentialist national identities can be explained by the ethnising discourse on migrants in the media and politics, which sustains homogenising the views of the ethnic others but also homogenises the reactions of ethnic minority employees (Siebers, 2017, 615–616). In my study the number of participants and the length of observation periods were much more limited. Moreover, the societal and workplace contexts were different. Racial and ethnic identities play an important, maybe even decisive role during recruitment (e.g. Campbell & Roberts, 2007), but it can also be assumed that their importance may diminish when the person has already been employed and her contribution to the organisational goals has been acknowledged. It is also possible that racial and ethnic stereotyping was more disguised or potential conflicting situations were avoided.

Apart from ethnicity, age and gender have been considered important for the construction of work identity and positions of power (van de Mieroop & Clifton, 2012; Mullany, 2010; Zimmerman, 1998). In the identity discourses of this research, the unequal distribution of power was more obvious between genders than between people of different age or ethnic groups. The participants of this research were all young professionals, yet, none of them was a complete novice, as they all had at least three to four years of work experience. Age as one of the many facets of work identity was discussed together with the time the participants had stayed in the same company or the length of their overall career and the span and scope of their professional experience work. Often age and experience were linked with special expertise, for example, how well the employee knew the enterprise software systems or if s/he had enough technical knowledge. The discourses on the importance of educational attainments to work identity were, however, contradictory.

This research applied Positioning Theory (Davies & Harré, 1990) and Positioning Analysis to study the discursive practices that construct identity positions and power in dyads, teams and between occupational groups in the workplace. In their nonverbal and verbal communication, participants positioned themselves, assigned positions to others and either resisted or accepted the identity positions offered by others. The identity positions were either in alignment with or opposition to the formal, legitimate power, the ascribed status or assigned role in the organisation or in the society at large. As described earlier, in egalitarian workplace relationships and communicative encounters, employees were entitled to speak, enact their identities and negotiate their rights and identity positions with others (Andreouli, 2010; Davies & Harré, 1990; Harré & Moghaddam, 2003b; Harré & van-Langenhove, 1999b). On the other hand, sometimes the employees were assigned positions that they were not able to negotiate or resist, nor were they always able to enact their identity from their assigned position. Both observation and interview data included performative, i.e. first and second order positioning between interactants. The third order positioning was accountative, where the respondents, during the interviews, commented on prior positioning. The narrative accounts sometimes connected the personal transition stories with master narratives of change and volatile work environments. In such cases, third order positionings included references to organisational or other big D discourses which jointly constituted discursive contexts for power dynamics (Bisel & Barge, 2011; Marshak & Grant, 2008). The three identity discourses that were identified in the context of medium-sized technology companies were called 'the boss is the boss', 'pretty assistants' and 'male engineers'. According to the results of this research, employees were more likely to challenge or resist the given identity positions in their communication with peers than in asymmetric relationships. In other words, role-based work identities required more negotiations when interactants had equal organisational status or when the structural, legitimate power relations were unclear.

The approach of this research has been more bottom-up than top-down. Therefore, the socio-cultural conditions for specific kinds of discourses have not been systematically scrutinised. However, the results seem to suggest that occupational role-stereotypes are still discursively sustained and have consequences to female BBAs' work identity in male-dominated industries. Many Finnish industries and educational fields are still quite gender biased despite the many efforts made and recommendations given by policy makers, research organisations and industry federations (Salo & Blåfield, 2007; Statistics Finland, 2018). It is the biggest professional and educational fields that are still either male or female dominated. In Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction 83% of all degrees are completed by male graduates, while in Health and Welfare the percentage of women is 87%. The gender imbalance in Business, Administration and Law is not as great; women achieve two-thirds of the degrees. (Ammattikorkeakoulutus, 2017.) Professional and gender imbalance continues to uphold gender stereotypes and gendered work-roles in workplaces and maintain the status quo between 'male engineers' and 'pretty assistants' in manufacturing companies. Graduates with a Finnish BBA degree can be employed in many sectors and industries, yet for the graduates from English-mediated business programmes technology companies in the export industry seem to offer most recruitment opportunities.

The rapid changes in the world economy, the new opportunities and the demands of globalisation and digitalisation, as well as the transitions in people's personal lives play a part in the construction of work identities (Valenduc et al., 2006). Two of the identity discourses, which were named the 'job-hopper' and the 'juggler', appeared as responses to the changes that were partly caused by the outside forces, 'life', and the decisions that an individual had made to manage and cope with change. On one hand, young professionals construed themselves flexible and adaptable identities, ready to grasp a work opportunity even if it meant a short-term contract and required adjustment and some personal sacrifices. The discourses constructed a person with a mindset of an independent freelancer or a sole trader, although they did not work as private entrepreneurs. They presented themselves from the empowered position as decisive and independent agents who were able to manoeuvre through the transition and change (Valenduc et al. 2006, 122-123). To maintain the consistency of work and professional identity, the career and job changes were weaved into a coherent story. Yet, with the use of self-irony, exaggeration or understatements, the 'job hopper' discourse suggested that millennial career switchers are aware of and concerned how they might be positioned and how atypical career choices and aspirations are viewed by others.

The other strategy used in work-related life transitions was to embrace a fluid identity capable of multitasking in various roles. When working from home and being employed in a family business, boundaries between work and nonwork became permeable when personal, relational, work-related and public information as well as roles, resources, and tasks were shared and negotiated in close relationships. Although various aspects of identity were presented and enacted, during the transitional phases the identity facets and different domains were integrated to the same narrative to maintain consistency across different identities in work and nonwork domains. In contrast to the 'juggler' discourse, 'an isolated employee' discourse was creating a more task-oriented work identity where the work and nonwork domain were kept apart and where one's occupational and organisational role was regarded more important than relationships or a congenial atmosphere at work.

Humour was one of the ways the interlocutors protected self- and other-face when negotiating their identities and positioning each other in their interpersonal relationship (Goffman, 1967; Ting-Toomey, 1988). According to Identity Management Theory (IMT) humour as one of the forms of facework helps interlocutors to negotiate mutually acceptable identities in interaction (Imahori & Cupach, 2005). In addition to identity construction in dyads, humour was also used when groups were creating team solidarity or ingroup-outgroup boundaries. Identity construction and facework through humorous discourse and laughter appeared in situations when communicators were negotiating and constructing their work identity and simultaneously trying to maintain harmony with their interlocutor or other members of the group. Schnurr and Chan (2011) relate this type of humour especially to dynamic co-construction and positioning of fluid identities when the interlocutors mitigate disagreements and negotiate different viewpoints (i.e. avoidance-based processes by Goffman, 1967, 15-18). Professional and gender stereotyping that was verbally quite explicit in the interview data was often disguised as humour in workplace interactions. This was, however, not always the case. Sometimes the other-depreciative and sarcastic humour was surprisingly direct and blatant, but there were also incidents where the stereotypical comment or essentialist categorisations masqueraded as a compliment or self-depreciation. Therefore, humour was not only employed to assign identities to others, but it was also a way to negotiate individual, relational and group identities, to position self and others or to respond to positioning. Playful banter and humorous teasing were used to oppose and resist the assigned identity. Such remedial responses provided a way to protect self and other-face and sustain relationships at work. The other-depreciative comments were responded to with silence and withdrawal from the communicative situation. Such acts could be interpreted as resistant acceptance of the position offered by the other(s) or not having the position or agency to oppose. In this study, open verbal resistance to positioning through other-deprecating humour was not observed. Instead, some adapting and attuning in verbal communication could be observed when 'dirty' jokes were used by both offline and online participants of a project meeting to converge with others.

Positioning did not only take place verbally, but also through nonverbal behaviour. In this study, proxemics, for example, how people entered and used shared and private space, was important when co-constructing relational identities and negotiating identity positions. In addition to visible boundaries and shared and private working areas, there were invisible social zones associated with very nuanced and complex behavioural rituals, rules and expectations. Violating such unwritten norms of nonverbal communication sometimes resulted in verbal confrontation and power struggle. Through proximity, people did not only negotiate the positions and power dynamics, but the discourse also construed meanings of privacy and respect and inclusion versus exclusion.

Another aspect of nonverbal communication associated with identity co-construction at individual, interpersonal or organisational levels included appearance and artefacts. Expressing one's identity in clothing and other visible symbols seems to align with the divergence vs. convergence dimensions of Communication Accommodation Theory (Gallois et al., 2005; Giles, 1973; Giles & Wadleigh, 1999; Palomares et al., 2016). On the other hand, clothing and adornment construed both obvious and very subtle and more equivocal meanings. The company logo on a jacket was a rather clear marker of organisational identity, but on the other hand a national flag painted on fingernails was construing several, more ambiguous meanings of identity.

The meanings of work identity in this study were often created in competing discourses, such as ethnic-national versus international, work versus nonwork, privacy versus sharing, male engineers versus female assistants, self-face versus other-face and similarity versus difference. The competing discourses can be described and explained through Relational Dialectics Theory (RDT). RDT calls these competing discourses discursive struggles or dialectical tensions in meaning making (Baxter, 2011; Baxter & Braithwaite, 2008; Baxter & Montgomery, 1996). RDT claims the competing and even contradicting identity discourses are inevitable and necessary when creating meanings (Baxter & Braithwaite, 2008, 349-350). The meanings of work identity necessitate the existence of the polar opposites that can be managed in interaction. The person who was maintaining his individuality and uniqueness through one aspect was also integrating and identifying with the group through another facet of his identity. The dialectical tensions create the elasticity and fluidity of work identities that are able to hold together when pulled apart and capable of adapting into different situations and contexts (Kreiner et al., 2015). Moreover, when the similarity-difference discourse intersected with some other discourses, for example, discourse on national versus international identity, it potentially construed other meanings, such as exclusion, marginalisation, diversity or hybridity (see also Woodward, 1997, 35).

The ability to discursively create flexible work identity in communication with others can help the individual to find her place at work and the best possible fit in relationships and in diverse social networks. To succeed at work, it is also important to understand that we all have multiple identities that we bring along to work. Work identity is not an overall that is put on in the morning and folded back to the locker at the end of the day. Neither is work identity a set of competences that are listed on a degree certificate or a CV. It is also more than a job title on a business card. A broader understanding of multiple and situated work identities and their construction is needed.

5.2 About the Quality of Qualitative Research

Quality and credibility, rather than validity and reliability, are central concepts in qualitative enquiry. However, there are no universal criteria for assessing quality and credibility, but different philosophical underpinnings, theoretical orientations and special purposes of qualitative research generate different criteria (Patton, 2015, 677). I will discuss the quality and credibility of this research mainly based on Tracy's conceptualisations (Tracy, S. J. 2010). However, I will also refer to some of the general scientific and social constructionist criteria, such as clarity of purpose, triangulation, reflexivity and intersubjectivity.

Tracy (2010) offers a set of eight quality criteria, which are (a) worthy topic, (b) rich rigor, (c) sincerity, (d) credibility, (e) resonance, (f) significant contribution, (g) ethics, and (h) meaningful coherence. Each of these broad criteria can be achieved through various practices, methods and skills. These broad criteria are useful when the study is not firmly grounded in one theoretical orientation or strictly aligned with one research paradigm (Tracy, S. J. 2010, 839), which is the case with this research.

The *topic* of the current research was derived from my personal practice as a faculty member in an International Business programme in a Finnish university of applied sciences. During the twenty years of my career, I have witnessed increasing diversity among BBA students and many changes in the domains of education and work. I found it both interesting and important to study how the young business professionals find themselves and their place in the world of work and how their work identity is constructed in social interaction. Although the data was collected from a limited number of participants in a few workplaces in specific moments of time, the objective has been to get a broader picture of work identity and its discursive construction in the international business environment through thorough analysis of rich qualitative data. The practical aim of the research has been to apply the research findings in curriculum development, although it is acknowledged that education based on empirical research can very seldom be proactive and fully cater to future needs. Yet, this research is one of the few attempts to investigate the construction of relational work identity at the interpersonal level, a perspective still not very widely studied (see e.g. Miscenko & Day, 2016).

Tracy (2010, 841) associates research *rigor* with "a rich complexity of abundance". Using different types of data, i.e. interview and observational data and field notes, as well as employing different methods of discourse studies allowed *triangulation* and multiple perspectives. This increased the *rigor and credibility* of this research project. The narratives produced by some interviewees provided an opportunity to look at how agency played a part in the way identity was constructed and how the interviewees deconstructed some of the social categories attached to them by others. In this study, interviews were seen as co-authored narratives (Mishler, 1986 in Georgakopoulou, 2006a and 2006b). This idea of co-drafting identities in talk-in-interaction during research interviews enriched the perspective on the construction of relational identities in interpersonal communication. The interview and resulting narrative data complemented the observational data where the participants co-constructed and negotiated their identity positions in workplace encounters. Moreover, conversational interviews were important for meaning making when there was very little or no interaction between the participants and their colleagues. On the other hand, the positioning analysis of observational data was able to unravel some of the more tacit and nuanced interactive processes and power dynamics in discursive identity construction.

The data of the current study was gathered from six informants, and the time spent at each of the workplaces lasted from half a day to one workday. The types and amount of data varied because of the differences in the companies and in the tasks the participants were engaged in during the time of site visits. Geographical distance did not allow me to visit two workplaces in person, but observation and interviewing took place through online video connection. Moreover, one of the companies restricted video recording in their premises. Although the amount of data was quite small, the integration and management of variable datasets appeared more difficult than anticipated. To improve *rigor*, special attention was placed on accurate, verbatim transcription and inductive, data-driven coding. The analysis was cyclical, and the raw data was revisited a few times during the process to check and verify the codes, preliminary findings and interpretations. To increase *credibility*, I have attempted to provide the reader with sufficiently detailed, 'thick' description and concrete examples that would be able to illustrate situated meanings (Tracy, S. J. 2010, 843).

In this research, I have also presented several alternative interpretations and even co-constructed and validated them with the participants during the conversational interviews and after the site visits using synthesized member-checking (Birt et al., 2016; Lindlof & Taylor, 2011). Tracy has also associated credibility with *multivocality and member reflections*, which enrich the data and enable deeper and richer analysis (Tracy, S. J. 2010, 844 referring to Bloor, 2001, 395). Moreover, *triangulation*, by using different methods of data collection, different datasets, different theoretical frameworks or methodology, or several researchers has been considered to improve the accuracy and increase the credibility of qualitative research (Denzin, 1978; Patton, 2015). Tracy (2010, 843 following Bloor, 2001), however, points out that triangulation does not always suit best to the studies in the interpretive or critical paradigms, which see reality as multiple and socially constructed. In this study, data and method triangulation have, however, enabled a richer and more comprehensive account and deeper understanding of the discursive construction of work identity. Work identity has also been conceptualised and interpreted from several theoretical perspectives.

For Tracy (2010), *sincerity* contains both transparency and self-reflexivity. In the current study, *transparency* was pursued by being open about the assumptions I had before and the choices I made during the process. I have also provided different potential interpretations to the studied phenomena and problematised the meaning construction (Ellingson, 2009, 4). In qualitative research, researcher bias cannot be overlooked, because the researcher has a dual role of being the instrument of data collection as well as the data analysist. I have tried to make my role as a researcher and former teacher as transparent as possible through reflexivity (Altheide & Johnsen, 1994). In addition to what Tracy (2010) calls *self-reflexivity*, I have pursued *discursive reflexivity* during the process. Discursive reflexivity, according to Carbaugh et al. (2011), is a metacommunicative ability to use discourse in theoretical, descriptive, interpretive, comparative and critical dimensions.

The concept of critical reflexivity includes also ethical considerations. I cannot ignore the influence of my own academic and professional background, experience, perspectives and values on my research endeavour. During the process, I have become more aware of the power imbalance and the vulnerability of my position as a discourse analyst where I can impose meanings on other people's speech and action (Cheek, 2008; Råheim et al., 2016). Tracy (2010) divides *ethics* into procedural, situational, relational and exiting ethics. By procedural ethics Tracy (2010) refers to such general ethical principles as causing no harm and avoiding fabrication. To ensure the participants' privacy and to observe research integrity, the ethical principles of the Finnish National Board of Research Integrity (TENK, 2012) were followed. The participation was based on informed consent obtained from the primary participants, as well as from the companies where they worked in. The challenges of research ethics and informed consent regarding fieldwork in organisational settings has been discussed, for example, by Plankey-Videla (2012). She is highlighting the complexities of power when the permission to conduct research among employees has been given by top management. Plankey-Videla (2012, 5) states that, if the permission is given only by the gatekeepers, the participation of the other members of the organisation is not based on their voluntary consent. Although in principle the ethical obligation was fulfilled, the voluntary participation of the secondary participants, that is other employees in this research can be questioned. When the EU General Data Protection Regulation became effective in summer 2016 (GDPR, EU 679/2016), a privacy notice was made. The participants were anonymised and other identification markers, such as exact place of origin or residence, nationality and company names, were deleted from or altered in the data extracts not to cause risks, damage or harm to the individuals or the organisations. Data generalisation was also important from another perspective. I considered it important that the participants were not considered as stereotypical representatives of their ethnicity or nationality, but rather viewed as individuals who construct their personal and social identities in their relationships with others. However, deleting or altering identifiers in the data has also its drawbacks, because it can make it difficult to evaluate the interpretations.

Identity is a sensitive topic and studying it in interpersonal communication makes it even more sensitive as it involves at least two people and their relationship. I have tried to observe *relational ethics* by cooperating and negotiating with the participants about when, where and how observations and interviews can be conducted. Knowing the participants beforehand was helpful. On the other hand, it was not problem free. From time to time, I had to ask how much my relationship with the participants affected the workplace discourses and the dialectics in other relationships. During the observation, I was directly included in the discussions, and it also became clear that my presence in the communicative situations affected the interpersonal dynamics and possibly created new tensions in relationships. I became a third wheel in dyadic relationships and one of the silent partners in some of the identity negotiations. It can also be argued that identities and relationships were performed to and for me. Moreover, as an interviewer, I was involved in the co-construction of the participants' narrative identities (Georgakopoulou, 2006a). This happened when the participant positioned himself as a foreigner and me as a native speaker of Finnish who could advise him how to communicate with Finns in Finland. During the interviews I also positioned myself differently, for example, when trying to establish trust by performing and speaking 'as a woman', 'as an objective researcher' or 'an older, more experienced person from the past'.

Considerations regarding *situational ethics* have also been important for this research when, for example, I have made decisions whether some information is worth collecting and if some parts of data should not be published. Moreover, *exiting ethics*, which relate to the publishing and dissemination of the research results, have been considered, although I cannot have complete control on how the reported findings will be read, understood or used. (For further information, see Tracy, S. J. 2010, 847.)

Tracy's (2010) *resonance* refers to the ability of research to impact the audience. It can be achieved through aesthetic merit or transferability. Regarding the aesthetic merit, I have tried to use language that would be comprehensible to both the academic audience and practitioners. When writing this report, I have also compared my own experiences as an expat and a representative of both minority and majority groups at diverse workplaces to consider if the findings of this research could be transferred to other contexts. The importance of language for work identity and positioning relates to my personal experiences as an expat worker with limited language competence. Additionally, some of the findings of this research, for example, on gender positioning and occupational stereotyping have been identified in other studies. In order to make the results of my study transferable to and applicable in other contexts, I have tried to provide a rich description of the situations and attempted to situate discourses first in their immediate context and only after that to interpret and further contextualise them. As often with qualitative research, resonance in this research does not mean that the results can be generalised across all cases but rather within them (Tracy, S. J. 2010, 845).

Meaningful coherence of research means that the study achieves its purpose by using methods that match with the theoretical and paradigmatic frame and that it makes connections between the relevant literature, research topic and the key concepts, methodology and results (Tracy, S. J. 2010, 848). The constructionist and discursive approach of this research supports the methodological choices of Cultural Discourse Analysis and Positioning Analysis. Yet, the two analysis methods also differ and provide alternative perspectives on how work identity is discursively constructed. Moreover, applying Positioning Analysis to both interactive and narrative data allowed combining both the personal, enacted and relational frame to the research (Hecht, 1993). Theoretically, I have, however borrowed from several disciplines and many conceptualisations on social identity to create something that would suit this research endeavour. At times, it was challenging to maintain the coherence due to the broad perspective and interdisciplinary approach to identity adopted in this research. After crystallising the purpose, task and questions of the research, it was possible to achieve the aims of the research, i.e. to describe and understand identity construction in workplaces characterised as international by their scope of action and diverse by the composition of their staff.

This qualitative research provides insights into the relational work identity and its discursive construction in interpersonal communication. It deepens the understanding of how discourses with small d construct multiple, fluid and situated identities in the domain of work. The use of several datasets and two discourse analytic methods has enabled to capture different dimensions and layers of discursive identity construction. The study *contributes* to the research on interpersonal communication and diversity management by providing a perspective on the discursive construction of work identities of young professionals in international business. Changes in the world of work impact both institutions and individuals and require flexibility. For employees it means flexible ways of working but also flexible work identity and the ability to negotiate their identities and place in different socio-cultural contexts. This accentuates the importance of communication skills. The transformation of work also necessitates curriculum development, and this timely study has practical implications for professional education, as described in Chapter 5.3.

5.3 Practical Implications

The current research stemmed from my personal interest and professional practice in intercultural and business communication studies. One of the personal aims has been to develop the contents and methods of communication studies in the BBA curricula by investigating how intercultural communication is enacted at the interpersonal level in the contexts of international companies. Over the years, the research focus of intercultural business communication has shifted from nations to companies and further to the identity and competences of individuals (Piller, 2009), yet the development of the contents and methods of intercultural business communication in BBA programmes lags behind. The positioning taking place between gendered occupational or professional groups at workplaces suggests that instead of just focusing on communication skills between different national, ethnic or linguistic groups, more emphasis should be placed on encouraging students to open communication between members of different occupational groups, which in many ways are still characterised by gender imbalance. This could take place already when the students are acquiring their university education by merging students from different disciplines and enabling them to observe discursive practices within and across different disciplines and in their inter-group communication. Inter-disciplinary teamwork could help to identify and cross some of the occupational boundaries, which inhibit communication and effective collaboration. As in Reynolds' (2007) study, interdisciplinary and inter-professional groups could be formed online, where data would be recorded and readily available for the analysis of membership categorisation and inter- and intra-group interaction. Moreover, as the present study has shown, nonverbal communication plays an important role in negotiating one's position in the workplace and power relations between different groups, roles and individuals. Therefore, communication studies should not only be offered as remote online courses but also include synchronic and face-to-face communication and practice.

As the communication studies cannot take a major share of the BBA curriculum, it is important to consider what kind of communication courses are offered and whether they should focus more on intercultural, organisational, group or interpersonal communication. Furthermore, it should be asked how academic versus business communication skills should be balanced and how communication and language studies could be better integrated. Because situated and negotiated meanings are co-constructed in social interaction, communication courses should probably focus more on listening, observing, interpreting and negotiating, not just on speaking, performing and presenting effectively. It would be important to see communication as constitutive of meanings, identity and reality, not only as transfer of information and messages or influencing decision-making. The perspective of language awareness and communication as formative of social life should also be adopted across the curriculum and in language policies within educational institutions.

The multiple roles and functions of language and language competence in workplace contexts would also need to be considered when developing BBA curricula. English, as the language of instruction and international business practice is essential to get the job done (Louhiala & Planken, 2010), yet it is rarely sufficient alone. The BBA's first language is often the key factor in recruitment. Unique language and cultural competence may positively differentiate the applicant from the other candidates. In internationally operating companies, the local or dominant language of the work community is often different from the strategically chosen corporate language. Inadequate communicative competence in the language commonly used for everyday interactions and social purposes in the workplace may have detrimental impacts on the individual and her work identity, but it also impacts the performance of teams, units and the company as a whole. In social contacts, partial language competence should not, however, be considered as a lack but as a resource in communication. This calls for more diversified and socially conscious language and communication instruction in universities of applied sciences where young people prepare for work. Languages should not only be viewed from the instrumental perspective, but as constitutive of social relations (e.g. Weninger & Kan, 2013).

Communication at work will not be possible without a shared language. English as a Lingua Franca has established its place as the common language in international business and in other spheres of professional life. Therefore, ELF and business contents must cannot be separated in the BBA curriculum. Based on their 2011 study, Louhiala-Salminen and Kankaanranta propose that global communicative competence in the business context compasses and integrates business know-how, the command of Business English as a Lingua Franca, BELF, and competence in national, corporate and/or professional cultures. It is important that the curriculum enables integration of these different layers of global communicative competence. Today, the communicative environment is even more diverse, fragmented, digitalised and networked. From this perspective, as well as from the perspective of work identity and its discursive construction, multimodal and multilingual communicative competence should also be emphasised in language and communication studies in BBA programmes (Bezerra, 2011, Heberle & Veloso, 2013; Kleifgen, 2013; Magnusson & Godhe, 2019).

Moreover, the communication studies in higher education should be able to combine theoretical and experiential learning. Although BBAs do not major in communication, they should learn to observe and analyse communicative behaviour in their professional practice. The communication courses could include small-scale experiments and 'research' projects that would help students to become more reflexive and analytical in order to continuously develop their own skills and the communicative practices in their work communities. At the level of higher education, there is a push for greater flexibility because it is uncertain what kind of combinations of skills and knowledge future work necessitates. What exactly the jobs of the future are is not even clear (FAME

Consortium, 2007). For this reason, the ability to learn and adapt to new situations and demands becomes even more important.

5.4 Limitations and Further Research

Like identity, a research project focusing on its discursive construction is never complete. There could always be new theoretical lenses, new levels of interpretation and new context for research. What comes to work identity, the contexts where it can and should be studied are becoming more and more diversified. Employees relocate, change jobs, have atypical contractual arrangements, or work in multiple, part-time jobs as freelancers or as entrepreneurs. In the gig economy, the traditional boundaries of organisations, jobs, other sources of income and hobbies blur, creating new environments and conditions for work-based identity construction. This study has been one attempt to describe and understand the work identities of young business professionals and their discursive construction through limited but rich qualitative data. However, more research is needed to increase our understanding of the dynamic identity construction in various social contacts in changing technological, economic, ideological, political and cultural contexts.

The research process has been long and challenging. It was clear from the beginning that my approach will be qualitative and interpretive and premised on social constructionism. However, the conceptualisation of my topic, work identity as a discursive construct, appeared more difficult than I assumed. Although many studies on identity in organisational and professional context build on Social Identity Theory, there were many departures from the same theoretical basis. The multitude of options was overwhelming, and I decided to embark on research without a written-on-stone definition for work identity. My aim was to collect ethnographic data, which could be approached inductively and used to further understand the meanings and dimensions of work identity.

The methodological choice of this research was to combine the micro-level analysis of interpersonal interactions with a meso-level analysis of the identity discourses in organisational contexts. To address identity construction at these two levels, I incorporated some of the analysis tools of Cultural Discourse Analysis (CuDA) and Positioning Analysis into the small "d" approach of Discourse Analysis. The study focused on verbal and nonverbal communication in the contexts of work and workplace relationships. Because the study was carried out in six different types of companies, it was not possible to systematically analyse the wider socio-cultural contexts of organisations, industry and international business. It would have been more feasible to investigate work identity construction at different levels of interaction if the study would have been conducted among the employees of one organisation. Then it could have been easier to manage the research project as a whole. However, if the aim of the research is to understand the multiplicity and diversity of individuals and contexts, as in this research, having a very narrow methodological focus may result in a skewed picture and biased interpretations of the studied phenomenon.

The data of this study included various types of data from different communicative situations, from video-recorded meetings to ethnographic interviews, and from researcher field notes to some screen shots. The different types of data enriched the study, but the datasets were also difficult to manage. Moreover, there arose several questions about the types of inferences that can be made. In one company I was able to collect video-recorded data of several interpersonal encounters, while there was another company where video-recording was not allowed, but the interpretations had to be made solely on the basis of audio recording and my field notes. Consequently, I could not observe non-verbal communication or make inferences in a similar way. The most problematic were probably the cases where there was very little social interaction between the participants and the other employees because of the type of work in which they were engaged. When collecting data in authentic workplace settings, there are many uncertainties that cannot be anticipated or controlled. Longer or repeated observation periods would have probably partially resolved this problem.

As an afterthought, it might have been better to use just one language for interviewing. While some participants were using their first language, Finnish, which is also my mother tongue, some others were conversing in their second or third language. Although English is the language they need for work, they might not have been able to express themselves as well in it as in their native tongue. Moreover, my linguistic, interactional and cultural competence influenced how I comprehended their interlanguage and (co)constructed and interpreted the meanings. Language and language proficiency are also important from the perspective of interpersonal dynamics and power balance and imbalance, which cannot be overlooked in discourse analytic research involving human subjects. The cultural sensitivity of the researcher plays also a decisive role when conducting discourse analysis in diverse communities of practice. For example, identity, privacy and space, three very important concepts for this research, can have different meanings for different people, when the meanings are co- and reconstructed in and for different socio-cultural settings. (For further discussion, see e.g. Fujii, 2005 and 2012; Saft, 2014.)

Although the data included, for example, some screenshots and videoconferencing, technology-mediated interaction was out of the scope of this research. In the future, identity construction and positioning could be studied in mediated, synchronic and asynchronous communication. Such settings would give researchers a way to stay more anonymous and invisible, which might result in different identity discourses. It would be interesting to compare if identities would be constructed differently in different channels and if the participants would perform similar identity facets in mediated as in face-to-face interaction. Because remote work is also often carried out in distributed teams, there would be a need to study how relational, role-based identity is constructed in interpersonal communication in globally operating, diverse teams. Taking into account how Covid-19 has boosted and reshaped remote work, this perspective on work identity construction is even more actual than ever.

In this study humour and laughter were found to be important in negotiating relational identity and identity positions. Further research on the role of emotions in identity construction could be conducted by focusing on the hub of 'feeling' of CuDA. Such research could compare, for example, how emotions are performed in face-to-face and technology-mediated communication and how they are involved in the construction of relational identity at work. It would be interesting to study if the concept of face actually relates to seeing the communicative partner and how it is performed when communicating online using videotelephony and videoconferencing applications. Enterprise social networks (ESM) and video conferencing solutions would provide contexts where both verbal and nonverbal means of identity construction could be studied and compared.

Another very interesting topic for identity research would be the relationship of identity construction and mobile technology. Mobile devices allow for the redistribution of time and space in social interactions (Geser, 2004). Various applications make it easy to interact in different role-relationships and for different private and work-related purposes using just one device. Mobile devices have been suggested to make the boundaries between work and nonwork more permeable, yet people are different in how they manage these boundaries (e.g. Duxbury et al., 2014). Consequently, people may also develop different strategies to manage the different facets of their individual and social identities in mobile communication (Farnham & Churchill, 2011).

In this study, the negotiating and positioning of identities often took place in shared spaces, such as corridors or in coffee and meeting rooms. There has been a lot of discussion and research on open offices and other solutions of shared workspace and their impact on productivity, creativity and atmosphere at work. It would be fascinating to conduct a comparative study on how different types of office environments affect interaction at work and the discursive construction of identity.

Four out of the six participants of this research are no longer working in the same companies as in the spring of 2016, when the data was collected. It shows that change is and will be a rather permanent state in BBAs' careers. This makes it even more essential to investigate how work identities are negotiated in the diverse and continuously changing communities of practice and what it means for communication studies in BBA education. Apparently, in the future, more and more BBA graduates need to change jobs, work in several short-term projects, or be involved in sharing, gig and other types of platform-based business. According to many national and international studies, expert statements and government reports, the new employment landscape requires versatile skills of social interaction and continual learning (see e.g. Alasoini & Houni, 2019; World Economic Forum, 2016; McGrath, 2016).

It seems that the millennials participating in this study have understood the importance of personal and professional development, as one of them posted the following quote on her social media wall: “We should embrace change as it brings along great opportunities to learn and to grow.” The changing contexts of work will directly and indirectly affect their individual and occupational and professional identities and require more constant negotiations of their relational identities in and outside work. Consequently, the current research could be complemented by a longitudinal or narrative study on the construction of work and career identity. One of the limitations of the current study is that the length of each role-based relationship was not available. As discursive identities are co-constructed and negotiated in communication, the length of relationship is an important contextual factor that should be considered in interpretation. A longitudinal investigation of specific role-relationships would yield more understanding on how identities are co-constructed at different stages of a work relationship or an individual’s career, for example when the organisational roles change because of promotion at work or when there is corporate restructuring. There is a lack of studies on how multi-layered work identity develops over time (Miscenko & Day, 2016).

One of the aspects that could also be studied more thoroughly is the privacy management and self-disclosure and how they relate to identity construction in workplace communication. Further study could focus on the dialectical tensions between privacy and disclosure in identity positioning. Moreover, the construction of work and nonwork identities and boundaries could be studied further. It would be extremely fascinating to focus on the meanings and interpretations of communication avoidance, non-communication and silence in multicultural and multilingual companies. This would be possible, for example, by recording social interaction during breaks and then conducting recall interviews with the participants. Integrating the use of mobile devices and face-to-face interactions could show how relational identities are constructed in the workplace in the era characterised by connectivity on the one hand but loneliness and isolation on the other.

Bucholtz and Hall (2005, 607) state, “identity in all its complexity can never be contained within a single analysis.” Even if focusing on one aspect or facet of social identity, is not possible to provide a full account of it. However, even one partial account can be valuable and enrich our understanding of who we are in relation to others and help us to repeatedly find our place in social realities.

YHTEENVETO

Tutkimuksen tausta ja tavoite

Kiinnostus työidentiteetin tutkimukseen on lähtöisin omassa opetustyössä kohtaamistani tarpeista uudistaa viestinnän koulutusta ja entistä monimuotoisemman opiskelijajoukon ohjausta International Business -koulutusohjelmassa. Tarve uudistukselle on ollut jo pitkään ilmeinen koulutuksessa, työelämässä ja yhteiskunnassa tapahtuneiden rajujen muutosten takia. Viestintä kytkeytyy olennaisesti kaikkeen ihmisenä olemiseen ja toimimiseen ja voidaankin väittää, ettei ihmistä ole ilman viestintää, eikä ihmissuhteita tai yhteisöjä synny ilman ihmisten välistä vuorovaikutusta. Viestintä on keskeistä myös työidentiteetin ja työn tekemisen näkökulmista. Tämän väitöstutkimuksen tarkoituksena on ollut kuvata ja ymmärtää kansainväliseen kauppaan erikoistuneiden tradenomien työidentiteetin diskursiivista rakentumista interpersonaalisessa viestinnässä ja viestintäsuhteissa.

Tutkimus pohjautuu heikkoon sosiaaliseen konstruktionismiin, diskurssitutkimuksen menetelmävalintoihin ja sosiaalisen identiteetin teorioihin, joiden mukaan identiteetit tuotetaan, niistä neuvotellaan ja niitä positioidaan sosiaalisessa vuorovaikutuksessa. Vaikka tutkimus ei ole puhtaasti naturalistinen tai etnografinen Lincoln ja Guban (1985) tai Pattonin (2002 ja 2015) määritelmien mukaan, siinä on kuitenkin piirteitä etnografisesta otteesta, mm. harkintaan perustuva otanta ja aineistonkeruumenetelminä käytetyt paikan päällä tapahtuva, *in-situ* havainnointi ja haastattelut. Tieto, jota tutkimuksella tavoitellaan, on laadullista, kontekstuaalista ja subjektiivista. Tutkimuksessa pyritään tulkitsemaan merkityksiä luomalla tiivis kuvaus tilanteisista, moninaisista identiteeteistä, joita rakennetaan ja positioidaan diskursiivisesti sosiaalisessa vuorovaikutuksessa työn kontekstissa. Tutkimus lähestyy identiteetin diskursiivista rakentumista induktiivisesti ja pyrkii vastaamaan seuraaviin kysymyksiin:

1. Mitä nuorten business-ammattilaisten identiteettejä (engl. *identity facets*) ja identiteetin merkityksiä tuotetaan ja nostetaan keskeiseksi diskursseissa työn kontekstissa?
2. Miten moninaisia ja relationaalisia työidentiteettejä rakennetaan (yhdessä toisten kanssa) ja miten identiteettejä positioidaan diskursiivisesti vuorovaikutuksessa?

Työidentiteetti ja sen diskursiivinen rakentuminen

Tämä tutkimus perustuu teorioihin sosiaalisesta identiteetistä, joissa identiteetit nähdään moninaisina, kerroksisina, tilanteisina ja kompleksisina konstrukteina joita luodaan, joista neuvotellaan ja joita positioidaan sosiaalisessa vuorovaikutuksessa. Identiteetti ei siis tässä tutkimuksessa ole kognitiivinen minäkuva tai ihmisen käsitys itsestään, muttei toisaalta myöskään jotain, joka määrittyisi pelkästään valtadiskursseissa yhteiskunnan makrotasolla. Työidentiteetti on yksi sosiaalisen identiteetin monista ulottuvuuksista ja sitä voidaan pitää mm. koulutuksellisen, ammatillisen ja uraidentiteetin, sekä osaamisen, organisatoristen roolien ja työpaikan henkilösuhteiden kautta rakentuvana kokonaisuutena. Kun ihmiset ovat vuorovaikutuksessa toistensa kanssa työpaikoilla, he eivät ainoastaan suorita työtehtäviään, vaan rakentavat interpersonaalisen ja ryhmäidentiteetin erilaisia ulottuvuuksia, ja ammatillisen statuksen, työntekijöiden ja tiimien välisen solidaarisuuden, auktoriteettien, velvollisuuksien, sukupuolikategorioiden, ryhmään kuulumiseen ja työpaikkakulttuurin merkityksiä. (Holmes 2006c, 167 and 186.)

Diskurssianalyysi on kokoelma erilaisia metodologisia lähestymistapoja, joilla voidaan analysoida tekstuaalista tai muuta symbolista aineistoa kontekstilähtöisesti ja sosiokulttuuriset käytänteet huomioiden (esim. Johnstone, 2017; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002; Phillips & Hardy, 2002). Yksi tapa tutkia identiteetin diskursiivista rakentumista on tarkastella sitä, miten identiteettejä ja sosiaalisia kategorioita tuotetaan ja esitetään interpersonaalisessa vuorovaikutuksessa mikrotasolla. Toisaalta identiteettejä tuotetaan myös rinnakkaisissa ja risteävissä diskursseissa makrotasolla. Tässä tutkimuksessa tarkastellaan sitä, miten yksilöt identifioivat itseään ja toisia sosiaalisen vuorovaikutuksen mikrotasolla. Toisaalta tutkimus kohdistuu myös siihen, miten työidentiteettejä diskursiivisesti rakennetaan, miten niistä neuvotellaan tai niitä positioidaan mesotason sosiaalisissa konteksteissa kansainvälisessä työyhteisössä organisaatioiden sisällä.

Osallistujat

Tutkimukseen osallistui kuusi nuorta ammattilaista, kaksi miestä ja neljä naista. Osallistujat tulevat erilaisista kansallisista, kielellisistä ja koulutuksellisista taustoista, mutta yhteistä heille kaikille on Suomessa hankittu BBA-tradenomitutkinto. Keväällä 2016 neljä osallistujista toimi myynnin ja markkinoinnin tehtävissä ja yksi harjoitti ostotoimintaa. Yhden henkilön työtehtävien kirjo oli laaja ja piti sisällään mm. verkkoviestintää, projektinhallintaa, lanseerausmarkkinointia ja tietojärjestelmien ylläpitoa. Osallistujien työnantajayritykset vaihtelivat mikroyrityksistä monikansallisiin konserneihin. Suurin osa yrityksistä toimi globaalisti tuotanto- tai teknologiateollisuudessa. Aineiston keruun aikana neljä osallistujista työskenteli pääsääntöisesti Suomesta käsin, yksi asui muualla Euroopassa ja yksi Aasiassa. Kuitenkin kaikki myyntityötä tekevät matkustivat työssään paljon.

Tutkimusaineistot

Kuutta tutkimukseen osallistujaa havainnoitiin ja haastateltiin heidän tavanomaisen toimistotyöpäivänsä aikana. Yrityssalaisuuksien takia ja muista käytännön järjestelyhaasteista johtuen asiakasviestintä ja -kohtaamiset jätettiin tutkimuksen ulkopuolelle. Tutkimusaineisto koostuu video- ja audiotallennetuista työpaikan viestintätilanteista ja tutkijan kenttämuistiinpanoista. Kahdessa tapauksessa observointia ja haastattelua ei voitu toteuttaa paikan päällä ja niissä aineisto kerättiin videoyhteyden avulla. Havainnointiaineiston lisäksi aineistoa kerättiin haastattelemalla osallistujia havainnoinnin yhteydessä ja sen jälkeen. Haastattelut olivat luonteeltaan vapaamuotoisia. Aineistoa täydennettiin myös joillakin sähköpostiviesteillä ja kuvakaappauksilla, muun muassa LinkedIn- ja Yammer-yhteisöpalvelusivustoilta.

Menetelmävalinnat

Tässä diskurssitutkimuksessa käytetään eklektistä lähestymistapaa ja siinä yhdistyvät kulttuurisen diskurssianalayysin, CuDA, deskriptiivinen ja tulkinnallinen ote (Carbaugh & Boromisza-Habashi, 2015) ja positiointiteoriaan pohjautuva positiointianalyysi (Harré & van Langenhove 1991; van Langenhove & Harré 1999). Kulttuurisen diskurssianalyysin soveltuvuutta tähän tutkimukseen puoltaa CuDA-metodologian kaksi näkökulmaa, joita ovat sanojen, niiden välisten suhteiden ja ilmaisujen järjestyneisyys ja se, miten sanallinen ja sanaton viestintä luovat identiteetin ja suhteiden sosiaalista koodistoa. Merkitysten tulkinnassa CuDA käyttää viittä analyysityökalua tai ns. merkitysten keskittymää (engl. *hubs* tai *radiants*), joita ovat 1) ihmisenä oleminen, esimerkiksi identiteettiin, persoonaan ja kasvoihin liittyvät ilmaisut ja kielimuodot, 2) suhteissa toimiminen, johon sisältyvät niin suhteet toisiin ihmisiin kuin instituutioihin, 3) tunteminen ja emootioiden ilmaisu, 4) toimiminen ja tekojen, ml. puhe- ja vuorovaikutustekojen, järjestyneisyys ja 5) oleminen paikassa ja ympäristöissä (Carbaugh & van Over, 2013, 144; Scollo & Milburn, 2018, xxxiii). Tämän tutkimuksen analyysityökaluiksi valikoituivat erityisesti ensimmäinen, toinen ja neljäs, joiden avulla on pyritty paikantamaan diskursseja, joissa identiteettejä rakennetaan järjestäytyneessä interpersonaalisessa viestinnässä ja työhön liittyvissä viestintäsuhteissa. Diskurssikeskittymät tulevat esiin eksplisiittisesti sanallisessa ja sanattomassa viestinnässä, mutta CuDA pyrkii myös tulkitsemaan ja ymmärtämään laajemmissa diskurssiverkostoissa syntyviä implisiittisiä merkityksiä (Carbaugh, 2007b; Carbaugh & Cerulli, 2013). Tässä tutkimuksessa tarkastellaan identiteetin merkityksiä, joita luodaan ja esitetään sosiaalisessa vuorovaikutuksessa tietyssä kontekstissa tiettynä aikana, mutta myös merkityksiä, joita osallistujat tuottavat kuvatessaan ja raportoidessaan näitä vuorovaikutustilanteita. Myös jälkimmäisissä on kyse identiteetin merkitysten tuottamisesta sosiaalisessa vuorovaikutuksessa, ns. co-construction, jossa haastattelija osallistuu merkitysten tuottamiseen haastateltavan kanssa.

Toinen tutkimuksessa käytetty analyysimenetelmä on positiointianalyysi. Andreoulin mukaan, positiointi voi auttaa ymmärtämään identiteetin relationaalista ja dynaamista luonnetta kun identiteettien rakentumista tutkitaan nyt ja tässä (Andreouli 2010, 14.1.-14.4). Positiointiteorian mukaisesti identiteettejä tuotetaan aina yhteisesti diskursseissa (Davies & Harré, 1990; Davies & Harré, 1999; Harré & Moghaddam, 2003a ja 2003b; Harré & van Langenhove, 1991, 1999a and van Langenhove & Harré, 1999). Toisin sanoen positiointianalyysissa ei olla kiinnostuneita ainoastaan selvittämään sitä, miten puhujat positioivat itseään esimerkiksi refleksiivisesti narratiiveissa, vaan myös miten toiset positioivat heitä vuorovaikutuksessa (vrt. De Fina & Georgakopoulou 2012; Jones 2013). Lisäksi positiointianalyysin on sanottu yhdistävän ja sovittavan yhteen jännitteitä mikro- ja makrotason tutkimuksen välillä ja mahdollistavan identiteetin tutkimuksen organisaatioympäristöissä (Zelle, 2009).

Keskeiset tulokset

Ensimmäisessä tutkimuskysymyksessä kysyin, millaisia identiteettejä tai identiteetin ulottuvuuksia ja merkityksiä kansainvälisen työn kontekstissa rakennetaan tai korostetaan (make salient) diskursiivisesti. Ensiksikin voidaan todeta, että aineistossa identiteetit rakentuivat hyvin moninaisiksi, monikerroksisiksi ja joustaviksi. Työn kontekstissa ei nostettu esiin ainoastaan ammatillisen identiteetin eri puolia, vaan niissä rakennettiin kuvaa identiteetin ja elämän kokonaisuudesta, jossa on monia ulottuvuuksia ja jossa elämän eri osa-alueet nivoutuvat yhteen. Itseen kohdistuvia stereotyyppisiä identiteettikategorioita, kuten kansallisuus tai sukupuoli, pyrittiin vastustamaan tai purkamaan erityisesti silloin, kun niihin koettiin liittyvän negatiivisia assosiaatioita. Toisaalta itseä esitettiin ja tuotettiin osana sosiaalista ryhmää ja homogeenistäkin kategoriaa silloin kun siihen voitiin yhdistää positiivisia ominaisuuksia. Toisiin kohdistettiin kuitenkin suorasti tai epäsuorasti stereotyyppistä identiteettipositiointia. Erityisen kiinnostavaksi tutkimuksessa nousi ns. kansainvälinen identiteetti, joka miellettiin niin yksilön, ryhmän kuin organisaationkin ominaisuudeksi. Tähän identiteettiin liitettiin vahvasti avoimuus, kommunikaation ja yhteistyön helppous ja kyky käyttää englantia viestinnässä. Kielellinen identiteetti nousi tutkimuksessa myös vahvasti esille, mikä voi selittyä mm. sillä, että kansainväliset työtehtävät edellyttävät usein monipuolista kielitaitoa ja kielestä tulee näin tärkeä osa työn tekemistä ja työidentiteettiä. Useissa haastatteluissa kävi ilmi, että kielitaito oli ollut ratkaiseva tekijä rekrytoinnissa ja määritti pitkälti sitä, millaisiin työtehtäviin BBA-tradenomin katsottiin työpaikalla kykenevän. Kieli-identiteetti nousi keskusteluun myös silloin, kun puhuttiin työpaikan sosiaalisista suhteista ja vuorovaikutuksesta erityisesti ryhmäviestinnän tasolla.

Kun identiteettidiskursseja tarkasteltiin positiointianalyysin avulla, voitiin aineistosta konstruoida viisi työidentiteettidiskurssia, jotka nimesin seuraavasti: “the boss is the boss”, “pretty assistants”, “male engineers”, “a job hopper” ja “a balancing juggler” sekä ”an isolated employee”. Kolmessa ensimmäisessä on kyse positioinnista työpaikan vertais- ja esimies-alaissuhteissa. Suhdetta esimieheen kuvattiin usein tasavertaiseksi ja vuorovaikutus esimiehen ja työntekijän välillä myös näyttäytyi useissa tapauksissa välittömänä ja toimivana. Esimiehen organisatorista roolia tai asemaa ei aineistossa haastettu, eikä hänen toimintaansa kohtaan esitetty kritiikkiä. Päinvastoin, esimiehen osaamista kunnioitettiin myös silloin, kun esimies kysyi työntekijältä neuvoa tai hänen toimintaansa pidettiin epätavallisena kyseissä asemassa olevalle henkilölle. Sen sijaan vertaissuhteissa esiintyi huomattavasti enemmän diskursiivista positiointia ja identiteettineuvottelua erityisesti silloin kun organisatoriset roolit tai työtehtävät eivät olleet selvärajaisia. Teollisuusyrityksissä identiteettidiskursseissa vahvistettiin perinteisiä sukupuolikategorioita ja koulutukseen perustuvia ammatillisia eroja. Kaksi jälkimmäistä identiteettidiskurssia, ”a job hopper” ja ”a balancing juggler” liittyvät muutoksiin ja rajanvetoihin (engl. *boundary management*) työn ja muun elämän ja yksityisyyden ja julkisuuden välillä. Toisiinsa limittyvissä työ- ja siviilielämän muutostilanteissa kaksi tutkimukseen osallistujaa tuotti kerronnallista aineistoa, johon sovelsin narratiivista positiointianalyysiä. Ensimmäinen haastateltavista positioi itseään toisaalta oma-aloitteiseksi ja rohkeaksi muuttajaksi ja työpaikan vaihtajaksi, jonka on kuitenkin alistuttava siihen 'mihin ...elämä vie'. Toisen muutostarinan keskiöön nousi työn, perheen ja harrastusten yhteensovittaminen. Myös tässä tarinassa korostuu henkilön oma toimijuus siinä, miten hän yhdistää eri osa-alueita, tehtäviä ja rooleja elämänsä kokonaisuudeksi. Jälkimmäinen tarina sijoittuu keittiöön, joka on myös kyseisen henkilö työtila ja kerrontaan nivoutuvat niin kertojan mies, perheyrityksen yksi omistajista, kuin perheen ulkomailta hankittu koira ja monitoimikeitin, jonka tulkittiin symboloivan kykyä hallita henkilön monimuotoista arkea. Vastavoimana "juggler" identiteettidiskurssille, aineistosta löytyi myös "an isolated employee" diskurssi, jossa työidentiteetin ja muiden elämän osa-alueiden välillä konstruoitiin selkeä raja ja jossa työpaikka määrittyi pitkälti pelkästään työtehtävien, eikä sosiaalisten vuorovaikutussuhteiden kautta.

Toisessa tutkimuskysymyksessäni kysyin sitä, millä tavoin työidentiteettejä rakennetaan diskursiivisesti. Risteävissä diskursseissa syntyneiden merkityskeskittymien ja aineistokatkelmien eli episodien tarkempi analyysi osoitti, että työpaikkahuumorilla on keskeinen rooli identiteettineuvotteluissa ja positioinnissa. Huumorilla suojataan omia ja toisen kasvoja, luodaan yhteenkuuluvuuden tunnetta tai korostetaan erilaisuutta ja toiseutta ('*othering*'). Toinen keskeinen positioinnissa esiinnoussut viestintäkeino liittyy tilankäyttöön ja proksemiikkaan. Erityisen kiinnostavaksi aineistossa nousivat tilanteet, joissa viestintä tapahtui ns. jaetuissa, yhteisissä tiloissa, kuten kahvihuoneet, käytävät tai kokoustilat. Näissä esiintyi runsaasti positiointia ja itsen ja toisen määrittelyä. Myös työtilojen jakaminen ja toisen työtilaan tuleminen tuottivat positiointia. Osana nonverbaalista viestintää tarkasteltiin myös esineistöä ja pukeutumista, joilla henkilöt myös rakensivat identiteettiensä erilaisia merkityksiä ja ulottuvuuksia.

Tulosten tarkastelu ja hyödynnettävyys

Aineistossa työidentiteetti rakentuu monimuotoisena ja dynaamisena. Se ei siis ole selvärajainen koulutuksen tai työkokemuksen tuottama ammatti-identiteetti vaan siinä yhdistyvät erilaiset identiteetin tasot ja ulottuvuudet, joita tuotetaan tilanteisesti sosiaalisessa kanssakäymisessä työpaikan sisäisissä, mutta myös muissa, työn ulkopuolisissa vuorovaikutussuhteissa. Tämän tutkimuksen yksi keskeisimmistä kysymyksistä ja tuloksista liittyy identiteettipositioihin eli siihen, miten henkilöt itse asemoivat itsensä suhteessa toisiin tai millaista positiota heille vuorovaikutuksessa tarjotaan. Vuorovaikutuksessa tapahtuva diskursiivinen positiointi tekee työidentiteetistä relationaalista eli suhteissa ilmenevää ja rakentuvaa. Toisaalta positioinnin kautta rakennetaan sosiaalista järjestystä ja jaetaan valtaa ja neuvotellaan valtasuhteista työyhteisö sisällä.

Positiointiteoriaa mukaillen tuloksia voidaan tulkita myös siitä näkökulmasta, miten haastateltavan oma toimijuusposition yhdistyy tai eroaa toisten kanssa yhdessä tuotetuista diskursseista. Toisaalta yksin tai toisten kanssa tuotettuja tarinoita voidaan tarkastella suhteessa ns. suuriin tai vallitseviin kertomuksiin (*master narratives*) ja laajempiin yhteiskunnallisiin diskursseihin, jotka liittyvät työelämän muutokseen tai milleniaaleihin työelämässä. Positiointiteoria voi auttaa ymmärtämään identiteetin rakentumista myös esimerkiksi samanlaisuuden ja erilaisuuden positioiden avulla. Myös monet viestinnän teoriat tarjoavat selityksiä tämän tutkimuksen tuloksille. Ryhmä- ja työyhteisöidentiteetin rakentumista esimerkiksi pukeutumisen tai ammattislangin keinoin voidaan teoreettisesti selittää mm. viestinnän mukauttamisen teorian avulla (Communication Accommodation Theory, esim. Gallois ym. 2005; Giles, 1973; Giles & Wadleight 1999; Shepard ym. 2001). Petronion yksityisyyden hallinnan teoria (Communication Privacy Management Theory, Petronio 2002) voi selittää sitä, miksi osa tutkimukseen osallistujista ei pidä sosiaalista kanssakäymistä työpaikalla tärkeänä ja miksi osassa työpaikoista keskitytään vakavaan työntekoon, eikä huumorille ja muulle sosiaaliselle työn ulkopuoliselle vuorovaikutukselle anneta tilaa tai aikaa, vaikka siihen olisi luotu erinomaiset ulkoiset puitteet. Mielestäni positiointiteoria yhdessä relationaalisen dialektiikan eli vuorovaikutussuhteen jännitteiden teorian kanssa (Relational Dialectics Theory, RDT, Baxter, 2011; Baxter & Braithwaite, 2008; Baxter & Montgomery, 1996) tarjoavat uskottavimman selityksen sille, miten työidentiteettejä ja identiteettien merkityksiä tuotetaan ja niistä neuvotellaan erilaisista positioista käsin diskursiivisten jännitteiden kautta. Näitä kilpailevia diskursseja tai diskursiivisia jännitteitä tässä tutkimuksessa ovat mm. samankaltaisuus – erilaisuus ja läheisyys – etäisyys. Fyysinen etäisyys voi monimerkityksellisyydessään olla keino hallita yksityisyyttä, antaa tilaa tai eristää. Identiteetin joustavuutta kuvaa se, että vaikka siihen kohdistuu vastakkaisia voimia, se pystyy mukautumaan erilaisiin tilanteisiin ja tarvittaessa myös vastustamaan tarjottuja positioita. Tämä tulee ilmi tuloksissa mm. siinä, että puhuja voi kieltäytyä hänelle tarjotusta identiteettikategoriasta ja konstruoida identiteetin itselle merkityksellisistä tai muiden hyvinä pitämistä ominaisuuksista. Positiointi ja diskursiiviset jännitteet nostivat esille myös vuorovaikutuksessa ilmeneviä oikeutuksia ja velvollisuuksia, valtasuhteiden dynamiikkaa ja vallankäyttöä työpaikoilla.

Tutkimuksen tuloksia tullaan hyödyntämään mm. ammattikorkeakoulun viestinnän opintojen ja uraohjauksen kehittämisessä International Business -koulutuksen opetussuunnitelmien uudistamisen yhteydessä. Tuloksia voidaan mahdollisesti myös soveltaa työyhteisö- ja vuorovaikutustaitojen kehittämiseen laajemmin myös muissa koulutuksissa, työnohjauksessa ja työyhteisöjen kehittämistehtävissä.

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APPENDIX. TRANSCRIPTION SYMBOLS

The data transcription has mostly followed conventional English orthography. Additionally, some special symbols and 'eye-dialect' have been used in transcription and especially in this report when quoting the transcribed data.

( ) (word) (country of origin)	Doubt about the actual words is put in single parenthesis. When the words are unclear, the parentheses are left empty. If the words are unclear but partly intelligible or can be guessed from the context, the words are enclosed in parenthesis. Sometimes parentheses are also used when, for example, proper nouns are replaced by general nouns or some other identifiers have been deleted or altered in data quotations to ensure confidentiality and privacy. Parentheses are also used when relevant information necessary for understanding the quotation has been added from the other parts of the data, e.g. from field notes.
(( ))	Double parentheses are used to add information on nonverbal and paraverbal (vocal) communicative behaviour, such as laughter, facial expressions or interruptions, such as background noise.
…	Three dots are used to indicate a longer pause within an utterance. The pause length is not timed but based on the perception of what is the interlocutors' 'normal' rate of speech. Three dots at the beginning or end of a quotation indicate that the quotation is part of a longer turn.
–	A dash is used to indicate that a speaker breaks off, e.g. to paraphrase, or a speaker breaks off as a second speaker breaks in, reacts or overlaps.
=	The equal sign indicates overlap or two speakers speaking simultaneously.
*	An asterisk is used for distinctive pronunciation.
<u>very</u>	Words or syllables with special emphasis are underlined. The accentuation can be based on volume or stress.