

Performing Identity: Differences between Native and Nonnative Speakers of English in Gatekeeping Encounters

Hassan M. T. Qutub

University of Bristol, United Kingdom

Abstract

The current study investigates how native and nonnative speakers of English applying for teaching positions performed their identities in job interviews. The data included two teacher job interviews; one was with a native speaker of English, and the other was with a nonnative speaker. Both interviews were transcribed and analyzed in accordance with Pomerantz and Fehr's (1997) conversation analysis framework and Gee's (2000) identity framework. Results indicated that miscommunication, feelings of a lack of experience compared to westerners, and unsuccessful co-membership affected the identity performance of the nonnative speaking candidate. The identity performance of the native speaking candidate was characterized by the absence of miscommunication and successful co-membership. The paper recommends that nonnative speaking teachers of English be exposed to the pragmatics of interviews through direct instructions in teacher preparation and professional development programs. This will help in increasing their chances of successful identity performance in teacher job interviews and other forms of gatekeeping encounters.

Keywords: Gatekeeping encounters; Identity; Miscommunication.

Introduction

Social identity is shaped by the different contexts and the roles participants assign to themselves (Tajfel, 1982; Turner & Oakes, 1986; Zimmerman, 1998). In gatekeeping encounters, identities of participants are shaped by their institutional roles (i.e., as gatekeepers or gatekeepees); hence, producing unique institutional identities based on the roles participants assume in these encounters (Kerekes, 2006). Gatekeeping encounters can be defined as “asymmetric speech situations during which a person who represents a social institution seeks to gain information about the lives, beliefs, and practices of people outside of that institution in order to warrant the granting of an institutional privilege” (Schiffrin, 1994, 146). Several studies investigated gatekeeping encounters in various settings including professor student advising sessions (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1993), academic counseling (Erickson & Shultz, 1982), and job interviews (Gumperz, 1992; Kerekes, 2006, 2007). Most of the literature examining gatekeeping encounters investigated miscommunication, which has been viewed as the result of ethnic, cultural, and linguistic differences between interlocutors (Gumperz, 1982; Roberts, Davies, & Jupp, 1992). Gumperz’s pioneering research in interactional sociolinguistics indicated that miscommunication in gatekeeping encounters goes back to cultural and linguistic differences between interlocutors belonging to different ethnic and/or cultural groups (Gumperz, 1982, 1992). In other words, interlocutors belonging to the same first language (L1) background are viewed to be more congruent and hence have fewer chances of facing miscommunication compared to interlocutors with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. This miscommunication can affect the successfulness and the decisions made in gatekeeping encounters. Tannen (2005) further supported the above view by claiming that even though interviewers in job interviews believe that their judgments are only based on candidates’ qualifications, they are markedly influenced by the linguistic features used by candidates during interviews. However, these views were challenged for taking into account only situational factors that are merely based on contextualization cues in investigating miscommunication and ignoring the individual characteristics of interlocutors belonging to different cultural backgrounds (Sarangi, 1994; Shea, 1994). Kerekes (2007) referred to the importance of Hinnenkamp’s (1987) notion of pretext in understanding miscommunication within gatekeeping encounters. Pretext involves the concepts of power and prejudice and reflects the overall context influencing interaction, which includes the linguistic, cultural, and ethnic affiliations (Kerekes, 2007; Shea, 1994). Therefore, the pretext of a gatekeeping encounter reflects the different identities of interlocutors as affected by the broad context of the interaction. This brings us to the conclusion that the way interlocutors perform their identities has a major impact on the amount of miscommunication and hence the successfulness of gatekeeping encounters. Even though gatekeeping encounters were repeatedly investigated in talk-in-interaction studies (e.g., Kerekes, 2006, 2007; Gumperz, 1992), most of that research was directed towards fields other than education. However, most of the research on the interaction in educational settings was mainly directed towards the classroom, turning a blind eye to other important forms of interaction such as teacher job interviews as forms of gatekeeping encounters (Cohen, 2008). Despite its crucial importance, in fact, performing identity in teacher job interviews has not received enough attention from talk-in-interaction studies. Moreover, most talk-in-interaction studies were more concerned with the interaction between native speakers as a means of revealing a candidate’s identity, giving little or no attention to the crucial role non-native speakers’ interaction can play in gatekeeping encounters (Bowles, 2006; Schegloff, Koshik, Jacoby, and Olsher, 2002).

To this effect, the current study aims to investigate the differences between native and non-native speakers of English in performing identity during teacher job interviews (i.e., as forms of gatekeeping encounters) through a conversation analysis of two teacher job interviews with one native and one nonnative speaker of English paying particular attention to the way candidates performed their identities through talk-in-interaction. In order to achieve this goal, the following questions were addressed:

- 1- How is the identity of a non-native speaker of English performed through job interviews?
- 2- How is the identity of a native speaker of English performed through job interviews?
- 3- What are the differences in identity performance through job interviews between native and nonnative speakers of English?

Background

The term “social identity” was first formulated by Henri Tajfil and John Turner between the 1970s and 1980s (Turner & Reynolds, 2010). It can be defined as “that part of the individuals’ self-concept which derives from their knowledge of their membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance of that membership” (Tajfel, 1981, 255). The above definition related social identity to two key factors. while the first factor is personal (i.e., self-concept) and tries to answer the question on who we are, the second factor includes the social context in which “self-concept” is performed, and answers the broader question on who we are with respect to the world that surrounds us. This makes it clear that social identities vary from one context to another. Therefore, members in the context of an educational institution carry a distinctive identity through which they perform their self-concept with respect to the context of a particular educational institution. This type of identity is referred to as institutional identity; seems to be misleading because institutional identity is not shaped solely by the institutional context, but it is also formed by other personal and social factors (Gee, 2000).

In a similar vein, Cohen (2008) conducted a study using interviews to investigate the identity talk of three teachers and to understand how teachers used linguistic features to accomplish their institutional identities. The analysis focused on teachers’ use of different discourse strategies including reported speech, mimicked speech, pronoun shifts, oppositional portraits, and juxtaposition of explicit claims to perform their institutional identities. Results showed that teachers positioned themselves in relation to others within the educational institution, and they also viewed themselves as active knowledge producers rather than information deliverers. Gee (2000, 100) proposed a framework in which he described four ways to view identity. The first identity descriptor suggested in his framework was “nature identity”, which referred to the natural state that individuals find themselves in. For example, the state of being a male or a female and the state of being a native speaker or a non-native speaker of English are determined by the forces of nature and humans are not usually able to alter that state. The second descriptor was “institution identity” and it referred to the position granted to an individual in an institution (e.g., a teacher or a student). In contrast to the nature identity, institution identity can be changed and is not as permanent as nature identity. The third identity descriptor suggested by Gee (2000) was “discourse identity”, it referred to the distinguishing quality that is recognized by other individuals through interaction and was used to characterize a particular individual. In other words, through interaction, we sometimes categorize people according to certain traits (e.g., charismatic, serious, or funny) that characterize their personality and hence, become part of it. This descriptor reflects the judgments made by other interlocutors

in order to perceive the identity of an individual. Finally, the fourth descriptor was “Affinity identity” and it referred to the shared experiences and/or practices through which an individual affiliates himself/ herself to a given group. For example, going regularly to the same cafe with a group of individuals or even being a fan of the same football team reflects a shared affiliation to that practice with other individuals, and can result in feelings of solidarity among the members of that group which is reflected in their identities. Gee’s identity framework (2000) was used to analyze the performance of candidates’ identities during the two teacher job interviews investigated in the current study. Kerekes (2007) and Shea (1994) stressed the effect of the pretext which refers to the overall context of gatekeeping encounters including cultural, linguistic, and ethnic affiliations (Gumperz, 1992) as well as power relations and prejudice (Hinnenkamp, 1987). This broad context plays a key role in reflecting the identities of different interlocutors in gatekeeping encounters, and hence affects the degree of miscommunication and successfulness of these encounters. In a study investigating the different aspects affecting the successfulness of job interviews in gatekeeping encounters, Kerekes (2006) identified two main factors that foster the success of job interviews. The first one was co-membership and it referred to the shared features between two or more interlocutors (e.g., graduating from the same university, going to the same gym, knowing the same individual, etc.). This factor overlaps with the “affinity identity” from Gee’s (2000) framework of identity representation and indicates that co-membership and performing affinity identity can lead to successful job interviews. The second factor was trustworthiness. Kerekes (2006) listed five factors that can influence trustworthiness as identified by Weber and Carter (2003) including interlocutors’ inclinations (i.e., having a tendency towards trusting), their appearance, their personality (i.e., how friendly they are), their references, and their manners during the conversation. The third factor (i.e., personality) and the fifth factor (i.e., manners during the conversation) are related to Gee’s (2000) third identity descriptor (i.e., discourse identity), which refers to the listener’s impressions and judgments based on the ongoing interaction. Therefore, one can claim that trustworthiness and performing discourse identity can lead to successful job interviews. Overall, the two factors provided by Kerekes (2006) are very much related to Gee’s (2000) identity framework, and this proves that success in performing identity can lead to successful job interviews. Campbell and Roberts (2007) conducted a study comparing success in job interviews between British, British minority ethnic, and born abroad candidates. They found out that non-native speakers of English, even when having a university degree, were judged by recruiters “as inconsistent, untrustworthy, and non-belongers to the organization” (p. 243). The findings of Campbell and Roberts (2007) illustrated the notion of miscommunication and proved that it could be affected by linguistic, ethnic, and cultural differences (Gumperz, 1992) as well as power relations and prejudice (Hinnenkamp, 1987). Jensen (2005) also conducted a case study investigating intercultural communication in a job interview. The interview took place between a Danish interviewer and a Chinese candidate. Jensen concluded that miscommunication could occur in job interviews due to cultural and ethnic differences between interlocutors, which further supports the early views of Gumperz (1992) and Hinnenkamp (1987).

From the literature discussed above, it is evident that most scholars have focused on either success in job interviews or revealing teacher identities. Performing teachers’ identities in job interviews has not been directly investigated in the literature. Therefore, the current study will strive to examine and shed more light on teachers’ identity performance in job interviews.

Methodology

Participants

The current study took place at a major Saudi Arabian university located in an urban setting. The participants included two male candidates applying for the post of an English language instructor and three male interviewers. The first candidate was a 25 year-old non-native speaker of English holding an MA in English language from a Moroccan university, and he was from Morocco. At the time of the interview, he was working as an English language instructor at another university located in Saudi Arabia. The second candidate was a 32 year-old native speaker of English holding an MA in Classics from the UK where he originally came from. He was working as an English language instructor at a Saudi Arabian university at the time of the interview. The interview panel interviewing the first candidate (i.e., the non-native speaker) consisted of two interviewers. The first interviewer was a 62 year-old native speaker of English from the United Kingdom holding a BA in English language from the UK. The second interviewer was a 32 year-old non-native speaker of English from Syria, and he obtained an MA in applied linguistics from a British university. The interview panel for the second candidate (i.e., the native speaker) consisted of the same first interviewer who interviewed the first candidate and a 58 year-old native speaker of English from the United States of America holding a BA in English language and literature from a US university. The three interviewers taught English to foundation year students at a Saudi university and also participated in some administrative duties.

Procedures

Two job interviews were conducted through Skype (i.e., a software for making voice and video calls over the internet) with two candidates applying for the position of an English language instructor. The interviews were audio recorded with the interviewers' camera tuned off and the interviewee's camera turned on (i.e., interviewers could see the candidates, but candidates could not see the interviewers). The interviews were conducted in a quiet room located at a university building. The first interview lasted about 24 minutes and the second interview lasted about 15 minutes. The two job interviews were then transcribed in order to be ready for analysis (see Appendix A for transcription notations). Ethical measures were taken to protect the rights of the participants. The original names of the participants were changed, the university they were applying to, the universities where they worked previously and universities where they were working at the time of the interview were not mentioned. Also, informed consent was taken from all participants.

Data analysis

The current study used conversation analysis as an analytical tool to analyze job interviews. Lazaraton (2004) defined conversation analysis as "a rigorous empirical approach to the analysis of oral discourse, with its disciplinary roots in sociology, which employs inductive methods to search for recurring patterns across many cases without appeal to intuitive judgments of what speakers think or mean" (pp. 51-52). Over the last few decades, applied linguists became interested in using conversation analysis in analyzing talk-in-interaction especially in educational settings (Schegloff et al., 2002). Pomerantz and Fehr (1997, 71-74) provided a useful analytical framework that contained five analytical "tools" for conducting conversation analysis; these included:

- 1- Selecting a sequence.
- 2- Characterizing the actions in the sequence.

- 3- Considering how speakers' packaging of actions, including their selection of reference terms, provide for certain understandings of the actions performed and the matters talked about.
- 4- Considering how the timing and taking of turns provide for certain understandings of actions and the matters talked about.
- 5- Considering how the ways the actions were accomplished implicate certain identities, roles, and/or relationships for the inter-actants.

This analytical framework was used to conduct a conversation analysis of the two job interviews investigated in the current study.

In order to investigate both candidates' identities during job interviews, the current study used Gee's (2000) identity framework along with Pomerantz and Fehr's (1997) framework. Gee's identity framework (2000: 100) included four identity descriptors including "nature identity" (i.e., the natural state that individuals find themselves in), "institution identity" (i.e., the position granted to an individual in an institution), "discourse identity" (i.e., others' judgments based on interaction), and "affinity identity" (i.e., shared experiences or practices that result in belonging to a particular group). Gee's identity framework was explained in more detail in the background section above.

Results

The first question that the current study aimed to answer was: How did the identity of the non-native speaker of English perform through the job interview? This could be answered through an analysis of the job interview with the Moroccan candidate using Pomerantz and Fehr's (1997) framework for conversation analysis as well as Gee's (2000) identity framework. If we look at excerpt (1), it would be clear that it represented a sequence including a question in which interviewer (1) was requesting a piece of information from the candidate and the candidate tried to provide the required information before the interviewer moved to a different question.

Excerpt (1)

72 Int.1: when would you be able to: leave that job? because you must be on 73 contract.

74 Cand.: ↑ya no I don't want to leave it right now.

75 Int.1: [aha=

76 Cand.: =but I think its my right to look you know for a better kind of 77 chance and a better salary if I find because I have you know in 78 some other contract I mean contracts with other universities.

79 Int.1: uhm=

80 Cand.: =and of course I will just do a kind of comparison and I will 81 choose the best one.

82 Int.1: <ya but> when would you be- be available to join us there's a 83 spot on the form we have to write down when you'd be available.

84 Cand.: er of course for the next- for the next year.

85 Int.1: it will be the next academic year.

86 Cand.: [sure ya.

87 Int.1: so I'll put here September.

88 Cand.: September.

89 Int.1: [two thousand four- thirteen.

90 Cand.: uhm (3.5) because of course it is not 91 academic to leave without finishing the contract (.) I have 92 signed one year annual contract of course by

the year I consider 93 they will not er:: I will not for example I don't wish for example 94
to re- to renew the contract °you know°

95 Int.1: °okay° that is clear (.) AND at the university in er ((name of 96 city)) and at your
workplace in Morocco how would you describe 97 your teaching methodology ()?

The actions in excerpt (1) above can be characterized as follows:

Lines 72-73, question requesting information (Q1).

Line 74, (unexpected) incorrect answer to (Q1).

Line 75, continuer indicating incomplete information.

Lines 76-78, (unnecessary) supplementary information.

Line 79, continuer indicating incomplete information.

Lines 80-81, completing (unnecessary) supplementary information.

Lines 82-83, rephrasing (Q1).

Line 84, imprecise answer (A1).

Line 85, repetition confirming (A1).

Line 86, confirmation to (A1).

Line 87, suggesting a precise (A1).

Line 88, confirming precise (A1).

Line 89, completing precise answer.

Lines 90-94, unnecessary justification of (A1).

Lines 95-97, confirming (A1) and asking a new question (Q2) to start another sequence.

The packaging of actions in excerpt (1) shows that the sequence started with interviewer (1) asking a question (Q1) requesting a precise piece of information in lines (72-73) concerning the time (i.e., expected date) in which the candidate will be able to join the institution he is applying to. The wording of the question targeted the time when the candidate can leave his present job but the intended meaning was on the time in which the candidate will be available to join the institution he is applying to. As a result, in line (74), the candidate provided an unexpected and incorrect answer indicating that he could not leave the institution he was working for at the time of the interview. He clearly misinterpreted the interviewer's question as a request to leave his current job immediately. In line (75), the interviewer gave a continuation signal to the candidate waiting for the required piece of information to follow (i.e., expected date of joining the institution). However, the candidate also provided additional and unnecessary information in lines (76-81) in which he explained the reasons for which he could not leave his current job immediately. In lines (82-83), the interviewer rephrased the wording of (Q1) in order to clear the misunderstanding. In line (84), the candidate provided an imprecise answer (i.e., next year); and the interviewer therefore suggested a precise answer (i.e., September) to end the sequence and to move on to a new sequence in lines (87-97).

Timing and turn taking in the above sequence were largely affected by the nature of conversation in interviews. Interviews can be viewed as a unique form of conversation in which interaction is governed by the institutional roles of the participants as well as the predetermined interview agenda (Lazaraton, 1992). In lines (75) and (79), even though the candidate was providing unexpected incorrect responses to the interviewer's questions, the interviewer did not stop him and rather allowed him to complete the turn. After the candidate completely failed to answer the interviewer's questions, the interviewer rephrased the question providing the candidate with a further clarification.

The actions accomplished in excerpt (1) clearly reflected the institutional role of the participant and the performance of his identities. In performing his institutional identity, the

candidate expressed his right to shop for jobs and to select the best one for himself in line (76). The candidate also showed trustworthiness through his being loyal to the institution he worked for at the time of the interview in lines (90-91), where he said: “it is not academic to leave without finishing the contract” (i.e., I speculate that he meant “professional” by “academic”). Last but not least, the candidate misunderstood (Q1). This miscommunication can be explained by the fact that the candidate misinterpreted the wording of (Q1).

With respect to Gee’s identity framework (2000), the candidate’s nature identity was characterized by his being a male nonnative speaker of English from Morocco. His institutional identity was shaped by the fact that he is a teacher of English applying for an English teaching position in an Arab speaking country. These identity descriptors affected the candidate’s identity performance during the job interview. This became evident in excerpt (2) below:

Excerpt (2)

184 Int.1: um (1.5) how do you (.) see yourself in terms of future 185 professional development Ali.

186 Cand.: er: of course er concerning the future (.) er: (.) development (.) 187 er professional development of course I mean western experience 188 (.) okay so for example if I stay here er:: as long as I can for 189 example three years four years (.) maximum I will be obliged to go 190 to England or America or Australia (.) in the same area of 191 teaching.

192 Int.1: to live? or to study? or=

193 Cand.: =↑no to study.

194 Int.1: to study=

195 Cand.: =ya to study and then: I will choose it depends because its not 196 easy to get nationalities.

197 Int.1: ya=

198 Cand.: =ya.

In this excerpt, the interviewer asked the candidate about his plans for professional development. The candidate referred to the “western experience” as a source of professional development. This connection essentially came from his nature identity as a nonnative speaker of English. In lines (189-190), the candidate indicated that he was intending to “go to England, America, or Australia” without explaining the reason for that. In lines (192-193), the interviewer tried to enquire about the reason for which the candidate wanted to go to one of those countries and the participant indicated that he was planning to study there. Pursuing a graduate degree in an English speaking country was a reflection of the candidate’s institutional identity as an English language teacher and at the same time it reflected his nature identity as a nonnative speaker of English viewing westerners as experts. One can deduce, moreover, in line (196), the candidate unconsciously insinuated that he was not only intending to study in a western country, but that he was also intending to obtain a western nationality and live in a western country. This further supported his view of westerners as experts in line (187) and showed how his nature identity and institution identity affected his overall identity performance.

Based on the concept of interaction (Gee,2000), it is important to note that discourse identity is shaped by the judgment of others. Yet, and given the scope of the present study, no interviews were conducted with the interviewers to discover how discourse identity was performed.

Affinity identity refers to the shared experiences and/or practices that result in belonging to a particular group (e.g., acquaintance with an individual) (Gee, 2000). The interviewer tried to

show co-membership with the candidate by trying to confirm a shared acquaintance with an individual; however, the candidate was not familiar with that person as it appears in the excerpt below:

Excerpt (3)

513 Int.1: ((cough)) ya you did a CELTA I saw that which is very good at 514 certain certain (centers) of the British Council lately.

515 Cand.: yes British Council ().

516 Int.1: did you meet someone called Mark Brown there?

517 Cand.: sorry↑

518 Int.1: did you know a teacher there called Mark Brown?

519 Cand.: Mark no.

520 Int.1: okay

521 Cand.: uhm

522 Int.1: thank you you Ali (1:0) he's not in Morocco ↑I think he might be 523 in Casablanca though.

524 Cand.: because I'm not (there) °I've no idea doctor Ben.°

The identity descriptors identified by Gee (2000) do not have clear boundaries as they usually overlap with one another. Therefore, the affinity identity of the candidate was shaped by the fact that he shared a number of experiences and practices with the interviewers including being an English teacher, living in Saudi Arabia, and teaching the same level of students. Overall the identity performance of the first candidate was affected by miscommunication, unsuccessful co-membership, and feelings of a lack of experience compared to candidate from western communities.

The second question that the current study aimed to answer was: How did the identity of the native speaker of English perform through the job interview? This could be answered by analyzing the job interview with the British candidate using Pomerantz and Fehr's framework for conversation analysis (1997) as well as Gee's identity framework (2000). A close look at excerpt (4) below shows that the interview started with two questions from interviewer (1) requesting information. The candidate provided the required information and then the interviewer moved to the next question (i.e., sequence) in the interview.

Excerpt (4)

96 Int.1: ya erm ↑CAN I ask you (.) a question I usually ask all our 97 candidates David why are you applying to the ((name of 98 department)) in particular? (.) and what do you know about us?

99 Cand.: erm well I think that'll be ((name of city))I mean the initial 100 attraction is ((name of city)) in itself that (before coming) to 101 Saudi Arabia I have () some family in ((name of city)) so () 102 an attraction (.) the university erm and your department has a 103 good reputation (.) so I'd like to be apart of that.

104 Int.1: well thanks for your honesty about wanting to come to ((name of 105 city)) that's er (.) honest of you to say that.

106 Cand.: [(thank you)

107 Int.1: ↑have you looked at the website David?

108 Cand.: I have yes erm possibly a month or so ago.

109 Int.1: okay.

110 Cand.: It was very good it had lots of resources and lots of information 111 on it.

112 Int.1: so you found it helpful and useful and (.) beneficial.

113 Cand.: absolutely yes.

114 Int.1: o:kay.

115 Cand.: [() it was very useful.

116 Int.1: ↑when you

117 Cand.: [as opposed to many universities they don't have any ().

118 Int.1: no we we do we have put a lot of work in the last year or two in 119 developing the website its not by no means its perfect yet but we 120 are hoping (.) its gonna be at least presentable and () to 121 develop itself.

122 Cand.: [we are developing (ours) as we speak at the moment here for 123 this university and that's difficult to ().

124 Int.1: ↑in your two years at the university of ((name of university)) 125 when you're in the classroom with the students (.) how would you 126 describe your methodology David?

The actions in the above sequence can be characterized as follows:

Lines 96-98, two questions requesting information (Q1) and (Q2).

Lines 99-103, Answer (A1) to (Q1).

Lines 104-105, confirmation accepting (A1).

Line 106, accepting confirmation to (A1), thanking.

Line 107, question (Q3) requesting information related to (Q2).

Line 108, short answer (A3) to (Q3).

Line 109, confirmation accepting (A3).

Line 110-111, continuation (1) of (A3).

Line 112, confirming continuation (1) of (A3).

Line 113, accepting confirmation for continuation (1) of (A3).

Line 114, accepting confirmation for continuation (1) of (A3).

Line 115, continuation (2) to (A3).

Line 116, interrupted incomplete utterance.

Line 117, continuation (3) to (A3).

Lines 118-121, providing additional information supporting continuation (3) to (A3).

Lines 122-123, answering (Q3) about a different sitting.

Lines 124-126, asking a new question (Q4) to start another sequence.

The packaging of actions in excerpt (4) shows that the sequence started with interviewer (1) asking two questions in lines (96-98) about the reasons why the candidate applied to the institution and what he knew about it. The candidate answered (Q1) but neglected (Q2). The interviewer asked (Q3) which was related to (Q2) in line (107) asking about the website of the institution in order to elicit a response to (Q2). The candidate answered (Q3); however, this did not fully answer (Q2). In lines (110-121), the candidate extended his response to (Q3) with three continuations and the interviewer confirmed all of them. The candidate answered (Q3) again but this time about the institution that he worked for at the time of the interview in lines (122-123). Finally, the interviewer closed the sequence by asking a different question (Q4) to mark the beginning of a new sequence leaving (Q2) unanswered. I speculate that the candidate's avoidance to answer (Q2) can go back to his unfamiliarity with the answer. Therefore, he chose to avoid answering (Q2) and even though the interviewer made an effort towards eliciting an answer to (Q2), the candidate continued to avoid answering that question which made the interviewer ignore (Q2) and move on to a new sequence. Therefore, not answering (Q2) was the result of the candidate's avoidance technique and cannot be viewed as miscommunication.

Timing and turn taking in the previous sequence were simultaneous with several short turns between the lines (107) to (116). The candidate interrupted the interviewer twice once in line (117) and one in line (122). Overall, timing and turn taking was typical for a job interview.

The actions accomplished in excerpt (4) characterized participants' institutional roles. The interviewer asked all of the four questions above, and the candidate's role was to answer those questions. Each answer to a question by the candidate was followed by a confirmation from the interviewer, which is followed by another question.

With respect to Gee's identity framework (2000), the nature identity of the candidate showed that he was a male native speaker of English from the United Kingdom. His institution identity included that he was an English language teacher applying for the position of an English language instructor at a Saudi Arabian university. The candidate's identity performance during the job interview can be examined by looking at excerpt (5) below:

Excerpt (5)

- 26 Int.1: o:kay er you you studied in in I have a sort of slight personal 27 interest on this part of the interview you studies at the 28 university of Wales at Lampeter (.) I'm actually from the village 29 of ((name of village)) which is about eight miles from Lampeter
30 did you have a go there?
31 Cand.: sorry where where?
32 Int.1: ↑((name of village))
33 Cand.: I I played rugby there.
34 Int.1: oh okay o:kay
35 Cand.: [once () yes.
36 Int.1: [okay just on the outside of Tregaron there.
37 Cand.: yes.
38 Int.1: [I was there last week in the snow very lovely part of the world.
39 Cand.: ((laughs)) great.

The fact that the candidate was a male native speaker of English from the United Kingdom (i.e., nature identity) was shared by interviewer (1). In excerpt (5) above, the interviewer was sharing a personal interest with the candidate which was characterized by the acquaintance with the village where the interviewer originally came from. The candidate showed familiarity with that village which established a shared experience between them (i.e., affinity identity). The fact that the interviewer and the candidate belonged to approximately the same geographical origin and the fact that they were both working as English language teachers in Saudi Arabia represented a unique shared experience by which nature, institution, and affinity identities were shaped.

This brings us to the conclusion that the identity of the native speaker was characterized by the absence of miscommunication and the successful co-membership with interviewer (1).

The third question investigated in the current study was: What are the differences in identity performance through the job interview between native and the non-native speakers of English? From the above analysis of the first two research questions, it is evident that the native speaker of English showed more signs of successful identity performance in his job interview compared to the non-native speaking candidate. This was clear through his successful co-membership with interviewer (1) illustrated by acquaintance with his home village and sharing similar linguistic, cultural, and ethnic background. The native speaker also showed no signs of miscommunication during the job interview, which can be explained by his successful co-membership with the interviewer. In contrast, the nonnative speaking candidate showed a lack of

co-membership as he viewed the culture of his interviewer (i.e., the western culture) to be superior in knowledge and showed lack of experience compared to the members of that culture. The fact that the nonnative speaking candidate did not share the same linguistic, cultural, and ethnic background with interviewer (1) resulted not only in unsuccessful co-membership, but also caused miscommunication as illustrated in excerpt (1).

Discussion

The aim of the current study was to investigate how native and nonnative speakers of English performed their identities in teacher job interviews. The results indicated that performing the identity of the nonnative speaker of English was negatively affected by miscommunication, which led him to provide unexpected and undesirable responses (e.g., shopping for jobs) for the interviewer's questions. This finding is in agreement with Gumperz's (1992) principle, which stresses the effect of miscommunication on the success of job interviews. The non-native speaker's identity performance was also affected by the way he positioned himself with respect to western societies. He viewed westerners as experts and viewed himself as someone lacking experience and even wanting to identify himself as a member of a western society (i.e., obtaining a western nationality). In contrast, the native speaker's identity performance was not affected by miscommunication as it did not occur during the interview. The only instance that occurred was avoiding to answer one question asked by the interviewer which can be explained by the candidate's unfamiliarity with the answer to that question. His identity performance was positively affected by the different factors he shared with interviewer (1). This included the fact that both of them were male native speakers of English sharing the same geographical origin and working as English language teachers in Saudi Arabia. This co-membership positively affected the way in which the candidate performed his identity and hence increased his chances of successful identity performance during the job interview. This supports the claims of Kerekes (2006), which views co-membership as a major determiner of success in job interviews.

Based on the above findings, the researcher suggests to expose non-native speakers applying for teaching positions to the pragmatics of interviews through teacher preparation and teacher professional training programs. This, in my view, will equip non-native speakers of English with the basic skills to avoid miscommunication and to perform their identities in a desirable way and therefore, will increase their chances of successful identity performance in job interviews. As Li (2000), Louw, Derwing, and Abbot (2010) have maintained, direct instruction to the pragmatics of interviews increased nonnative speaker's chances of success in job interviews.

The limitations of the current study include that the findings are context-specific. Therefore, it would be unwise to generalize them to other situations. Also, the data investigated in the study was limited to two job interviews, which makes it difficult to generalize the results.

Thus, further research should be conducted to investigate identity performance in a wider set of teacher job interviews and other forms of gatekeeping encounters. This can provide valuable insights for teacher preparation and teacher professional development programs training nonnative speakers of English applying for English language teaching positions.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate identity performance by native and nonnative speakers of English in gatekeeping encounters, teacher job interviews in this case. Results indicated that miscommunication, exhibiting a lack of experience compared native

speakers, and unsuccessful co-membership were the major factors characterizing the nonnative speaker's identity performance. The absence of miscommunication and successful co-membership shaped the identity performance of the native speaker of English during the job interview. Direct exposure to the pragmatics of interviews was suggested for nonnative speakers of English applying for English language teaching positions. Further research was suggested to explore teachers' identity performance in a wider set of data.

About the Author:

Hassan Mohammad-Taher Qutub is a full-time graduate student at the doctor of Education program, (EdD) in TESOL/Applied Linguistics at the University of Bristol, UK. He holds an MA in TESL from Northern Arizona University, USA. He taught English in Saudi Arabia for 14 years, and then moved to work as a lecturer at King Abdulaziz University, Saudi Arabia.

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Appendix A

The transcription notation system employed for the data segments was adapted from Gail Jefferson's work (see Atkinson & Heritage (Eds.), 1984, pp.ix-xvi).

:	Colon (s): Extended or stretched sound, syllable, or word.
—	Underline: Emphasis point (s) by the speaker.
(.)	Micro-pause: Brie pause of less than (0.2).
(1.2)	Timed pause: intervals occurring within and /or between speakers' utterances.
(())	Double parentheses: Scenic details.
()	Single parentheses: Transcription doubt.
.	Period: Falling vocal pitch.
?	Question mark: Rising vocal pitch.
↑ ↓	Arrows: Mark rising and falling intonation.
° °	Degree signs: Indicates whisper, reduced volume, or quiet speech.
• •	High dots: Audible inhalation.
=	Equal signs: Latching, the break and subsequent continuation of a single utterance.
[]	Brackets: Speech overlap.
—	Hyphens: Abrupt cut of sound or word.
< >	Less than / Greater than signs: utterances delivered quicker or slower than surrounding speech.
AND	Caps: loudness compared to surrounding speech.