Chapter 1
Identity in the Linguistic Interaction within the Use of the English Language in Social Networks: Theoretical and Methodological Approach

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Abstract

This chapter presents a theoretical and methodological approach for the exploration of linguistic interaction practices with the use of English (L2) through social networks by young adult Mexican university students in the analysis of their identity. A theoretical approach from a sociocultural perspective is proposed to analyze the interaction (Engeström,1996, 2001) and identity construction (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, 2008, 2010). Additionally, a methodological approach is suggested, which is constituted from a qualitative view with a descriptive and an in-depth phases' study.

Keywords: *identity, interaction, English as a Foreign Language (EFL), social networks.*

Resumen

El presente capítulo presenta una aproximación teórica y metodológica hacia la exploración de prácticas de interacción lingüística con el idioma

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inglés (L2) a través de redes sociales por jóvenes estudiantes universitarios mexicanos en el análisis de su identidad. Se propone un enfoque teórico desde una perspectiva sociocultural para analizar la interacción (Engeström, 1996, 2001) y la construcción de la identidad (Bucholtz &Hall, 2005, 2008, 2010). Adicionalmente, se sugiere un enfoque metodológico, el cual se constituye desde una mirada cualitativa con un estudio en fases, una descriptiva y una de profundidad.

Palabras clave: *identidad, interacción, Inglés como Lengua Extranjera (ILE), redes sociales.*

Introduction

The social media hosted on the Internet currently provides spaces for the development of users and learners of a second language identities in any context. The significance of this phenomenon, known worldwide, lies in the possibilities for the development of individuals' literacy and awareness of data that serve for the updating and innovation in understanding second language acquisition processes (Reinhardt, 2019).

This chapter shows the theoretical and methodological approach used in a research study conducted in a specific context, in northern Mexico, where different phenomena related to learning or using a foreign language (L2) and using social networks are being developed. In this study the English language is referred as L2; although it was learnt in a context of foreign language, it has been used in a broader context through social networks, the limits are blurred.

Particularly, young university students with a full schooling trajectory in the Mexican Education System have been exposed to educational strategies such as an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning program, in a context where Spanish (L1) is the official language, and an Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) learning program in all levels of study since almost three decades ago. Though, it is known that technologies have been diversified and evolved to an endless of electronic and digital resources in the past years, it is reported here that some identities ap-

peared in relation to their learning process but also identity construction in the social network community.

Therefore, these youths hold digital culture practices and interact everyday through social media using the English language or expressions to communicate with others. In this respect, it is intended to shed some light on the identity in the interaction with the use of English through social networks within this background of that previous exposure to the language and technologies.

It should be noted that this matter has been little explored in Mexico, although it is an incipient topic in research. Based on generalized data, it is possible to say that the Mexican population has poor knowledge of English, perhaps due to the heterogeneity of the population and the diversified implementation of strategies by educational agencies in each locality. However, it is claimed that the reality in the north of the country might be different due to the proximity to an English-speaking country or to the effect of the above-mentioned educational strategies have somehow had on the identity of these young people. The knowledge of these processes is considered relevant to the field of second language acquisition (SLA) as well as in the exploration of realities or new realities, which leads to benefits in pedagogical issues, curriculum design, traditional, hybrid, virtual or online instructional modalities.

The primary objective of this study is to propose a method for identifying practices that reveal the identity of young learners and users of the English language. This is achieved through their linguistic interactions on social media platforms, which are situated within a global context. This context is characterized by the evolving complexity of Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) activities, which are particularly favored by today's youth (Reinhardt, 2019; Thorne, 2003).

Theoretical Approach

There have been notable elements of literature review in relation to the exploration of identity (Guitart, Nadal, & Vila, 2007; Zhao, Grasmuck, & Martin, 2008) it can be observed that the socio-cultural perspective has

been widely applied with some emphasis on actions with language (Chen, 2013; Depew, 2011; Fong, Lin, & Engle, 2016; Klimanova & Dembovskaya, 2013; Pasfield-Neofitou, 2011; Schreiber, 2015).

Additionally, identity has been explored through the activity and interaction in linguistic and communicative practices (Bagarukayo, Ssentamu, Mayisela, & Brown, 2016; Crovi, 2016; Kitade, 2014; Kulavuz-Onal & Vasquez, 2018; Lam, 2004; Satar & Akcan, 2018; Warner & Chen, 2017).

From these investigations, it was also identified that data used to describe activity in interactions have been actions in social networks (interactional data). Mainly, posts that mark preferences through communicative exchanges, patterns of code selection and social themes related to identity construction can be noticed. The most explored digital environments had been the social networks, Facebook the most frequent and some didactic platforms. Although, it is known that there are other platforms that have developed the culture such as TikTok nowadays.

In addition, in some studies about identity, the use of theoretical and methodological approaches, such as language ecology, have been found (Kramsch & Steffensen, 2008; Thorne, 2004). Also, the interactional sociolinguistic approach, and the activity theory in multilingual contexts have been considered in identity studies (Bagarukayo, Ssentamu, Mayisela, & Brown, 2016; Kitade, 2014; Lam, 2004). Additionally, content analysis, critical discourse of linguistic practices (interactions, rhetoric, as well as computer-mediated discourse or web content analysis), and the framework of identity analysis through interaction (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005) were implemented in Klimanova and Dembovskaya (2013). The latter is of a special interest because it was the basis in the present study due to the flexibility of concepts that have been observable and applicable in the study of language interaction practices, giving the visibility of social network users' identity.

Identity

Thus, from the approach to identity in the field of second language acquisition, in which it is considered fluid and constructed in social and linguistic interaction, it is assumed that identity (social or linguistic) practices

and resources are mutually composed (Block, 2003, 2007; Crovi, 2016; Norton, 2000, 2013; Norton & McKinney, 2011; Norton & Toohey, 2011).

The framework for analyzing identity as produced in linguistic interaction developed by Bucholtz and Hall (2005, 2008, 2010) provides five principles that can be observed in social interaction with the language. The *emergence* principle refers to identity as the view and representation of a subject's internal state of mind through their speech; it also relates to the macro side of identity in social categories such as gender, age, race, and social status. The *positionality* principle refers to how identity encompasses positions or roles from the macro categories mentioned in the previous principle to more local and cultural positions, as well as temporally and interactively marked positions. The *indexicality* principle can be observed as the 'mechanism' to place identity through the linguistic forms that are chosen to articulate ideas and that somehow 'indicate' something particular about the individual's identity. The *relationality* principle, 'relational phenomenon,' refers to the fact that identities are not always autonomous and independent, but intersubjectively constructed presenting several overlapping and complementary relations such as similarity/difference, genuineness/artifice and authority/delegitimacy. The *partialness* principle refers to the fact that identity also entails agency and partiality in meaning and contextually situated linguistic practices between the subject and others. These five principles are not independent of each other, but interrelated, so it is not possible to say that they appear separately in interactions or expressions but rather superimposed and interrelated, a complex characteristic of identity. Therefore, identity is a 'discursive construct' (Bucholtz & Hall; 2005, p. 587), which emerges in interaction, and which occurs in certain contexts; moreover, identity is the product and not the source of linguistic and semiotic practices.

Interaction

To delve into the generation of interaction through actions, their meanings, and their interrelation with contextual elements, Engeström's activity theory (1996, 2001) provides a robust foundational framework. This theo-

ry elucidates the complexity of interactions within communicative processes by considering various factors such as tools, subjects, explicit or implicit contextual rules, community dynamics, division of labor, roles of communicators, and objectives. These elements collectively contribute to the production of actions or behaviors.

Mediation is observed as a natural link between action and context, in which tensions and dynamics are involved by everyone in certain situations, generating the relationship between the individual and their inherent agency in a sociocultural environment (Thorne, 2015; Wertsch, in Kalaja, *et al.,* 2016). This is a dynamic system where context and individuals are considered integral parts, and in a state of change and transformation. Likewise, individuals perform actions that have meaning and sense as active agents in the construction of their world including their learning, and it is not possible to understand their activity without access to the motive or intention to perform it. Thus, while language is possibly the most powerful and persuasive cultural artifact, human mental activity is also mediated by other artifacts with characteristics not necessarily linguistic but social or cultural (Kalaja, *et al.,* 2016; Lantolf, 2000; Lantolf, Thorne, & Poehner, 2015).

In this vein, the peculiar communication with the use of language and/or languages in the use of social networks to interact, communicate and express themselves is observed as examples of such social and cultural artifacts in the context of the study and then serve to analyze identity. Engeström's model of activity theory (1996) in studying human behavior has been used to interpret and understand different processes such as the acquisition of certain skills originally in the work field. This model has incorporated additional elements to Vygotsky's original triad (tools, subject, object), and it is possible to identify additional elements such as *rules*, referring to the set of conditions that determine how and why individuals act and being in turn the result of social conditioning; also, the *division of labor* that provides a distribution of actions and operations in a *community*. These elements in turn, influence a new plane of reality known as *community* in which individuals coexist and interrelate with the rest of the elements resulting in the visibility and understanding of behaviors, processes or tasks. Such a model has been used to explore activity in learning pro-

cesses and also to explore these processes in social networks (Bagarukayo, Ssentamu, Mayisela, & Brown, 2016; Thorne, 2004).

The construction of identity in L2 learners or users, as observed in their interactions within digital environments, can be recognized through their discursive practices. These include their selection of linguistic codes and the use of hybrid textual practices, often incorporating elements such as images, photographs, memes, likes, videos, and interactive features. In such practices, identities associated with both the L1 and L2 are often combined (Chen, 2013).

Social networks, considered cultural tools, offer various possibilities for interaction, particularly on popular platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Features such as profile customization, status updates, sharing links and photos, as well as the use of synchronous chats and asynchronous messaging, enable users to maintain both online and offline connections. These functions are utilized to explore interaction through participatory actions (Knobel & Lankshear, 2008).

Crystal (2004) pointed out that the study of linguistic practices to identify a linguistic variety account for the specificities of language in digital Internet environments, such as graphical, lexical, syntactic and discourse elements. Graphic representations consist of abbreviated forms of English words such as 'u' to represent the word 'you', and in virtual worlds participants commonly use lexical forms (specific vocabulary) in addition to these expressions. Therefore, participation through social networks is where users' communication and expression practices materialize, in addition to other factors that condition the use of these environments.

Thus, identity traits in digital environments can be identified through users' affiliations with certain activities and their choices regarding language use, registers, and digital tools, which are reflected in their linguistic and textual practices (Depew & Miller-Cochran, 2010; Fong, Lin, & Engle, 2016; Lam, 2004; Pasfield-Neofitou, 2011; Zhao, Grasmuck, & Martin, 2008). The aim of this section is to provide a lens for analyzing identity in linguistic interaction, while also recognizing the complexity of language use and its social and cultural meanings within environments like social networks.

Methodological Approach and Results

The presented methodology was designed and planned regarding the general objective of the study: to analyze the identity of young university students through the interaction with the use of the English language in social networks. It was developed with a qualitative perspective since the studied phenomenon has human behavioral traits. Also, data was analyzed involving an interpretation of patterns in themes through the voices of the participants (Colás, 1998; Creswell & Poth, 2016; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; McMillan & Schumacher, 2011).

Therefore, it was proposed to set three analytical components to conduct this case study with an analysis in depth about the participants' identity produced in linguistic interaction 1) social networks' identity 2) linguistic interaction in social networks and 3) identity produced in linguistic interaction through social networks.

In light of the above, the study was structured in two phases. *The first phase*, a descriptive phase, aimed to analyze the identity of social networks (component 1) and linguistic interactions within these networks (component 2) using Engeström's model (1996, 2000). This phase focused on the first two analytical components to examine the collected data. *The second phase*, an in-depth analysis, involved re-examining the initial data to describe the participants' identity within the analytical framework of Bucholtz and Hall (2005), focusing on identity produced in linguistic interaction through social networks (the third analytical component). Consequently, an 'emergent design' was developed, incorporating iterative phases and stages of data collection to refine and finalize the process until the necessary data for analysis were obtained.

The Descriptive Phase

This phase consisted of several methods to collect and analyze data. First, the application of a survey to recruit potential participants and an initial interview to select and check participant's data, then an online observation

with the study participants was held. The survey was widespread among young students of the English Courses of intermediate-advanced levels at a higher education institution. Thereupon, the results were collected and analyzed, young students from different undergraduate and engineering programs with high indicators of interaction with the use of the English language in networks were identified and called for a very brief follow up initial interview with the purpose of expanding information based on their answers.

For that matter, young university participants were recruited, the requirements to select participants were that these youth were schooled within the Mexican Educational System and attended public institutions, had an advanced level of the English language, and were frequent users of the language in social networks, they deployed actions several times a day in their personal social networks.

From the surveyed students, data was analyzed and according to the requirements a smaller group of students were selected and briefly interviewed. Because of the precise requirements and willingness to participate, two students were selected, Ana and Aldo (pseudonyms to protect their privacy). They authorized an online observation of their personal social networks to study their interactions in depth.

The online observation was conducted for a period of 3 months in which the activity of each participant was registered, data was collected through a checklist scheme, and it was used for their activity on *Twitter, Facebook,* and *Instagram*. The checklist included specific items: type of publication (post or share/forward), type of content (own text, share only text, multimedia), code selection (Spanish, English, codeswitching, alternating language with emojis, or another language), and number and type of reactions (likes, comments, share/forwards).

The observation outcomes indicated that both Ana and Aldo interact highly frequently through their social networks in a diversified manner in different ways depending on the platform and other elements. In Ana's register, 545 publications were registered on Twitter, 67 on Facebook, and 3 on Instagram. Twitter was the social network with the highest number of publications. It was observed that the *type of content* of her posts was mainly with text, that is, generating content for her contacts, and the *type*

of publications with the highest percentage corresponds to retweets (i.e., actions in which content is copied, forwarded, or shared). In relation to *code selection*, she used English and Spanish with equal frequency, and to a lesser extent the alternation of these codes (codeswitching). Another element that was considered part of the interaction with the contacts were the *reactions*, in her case, it was observed that in the network that had more publications, a smaller number of reactions were registered. For example, Twitter had the most public and the lowest percentage of reactions; on the other hand, on Instagram, she published 3 posts, but obtained approximately 100 reactions, *likes*, on each post. Here some examples of posts with *own text* or *tweets* with the highest number of reactions (N = 15), one in Spanish that says '*disculpe profe no hice la tarea…*' and the other in English '*i'm so ready for tomorrow*". The meaning of these Ana's posts was addressed in the final interview.

In the case of Aldo, the other participant of the study, it was observed that Twitter was the social network where he published the most posts (N = 259), followed by Facebook with 75 posts, and Instagram with 12. The *type of content* in his publications was mainly with *text*, as opposed to publications with some multimedia content. The most frequent *type of publications* were retweets, in this case Aldo was not quite involved in content generation. Aldo's *code selection* was mainly focused on the use of English and, to a lesser extent, Spanish; publications with codeswitching were very rare. In relation to the received *reactions* on his publications, the higher the number of publications, the lower number of reactions. A Tweet with the highest number of reactions (N = 7) was '*Ma'am this is a Walmart, we don't do scientific research here*'.

After data were collected and analyzed it can be concluded that Ana and Aldo express themselves through their social networks. They interact in different ways using the tools that each platform provides, depending on the context and the content. However, it was important to know and understand their intentions and their mindset to express using the English language.

The In-Depth Phase

It consisted of a thematic analysis and a final semi-structured interview. The thematic analysis was carried out based on the results of the interactions of the online observation, this analysis was performed only with data from one social network, Twitter, due to the significant number of publications that were registered. The analysis was carried out for identifying emerging themes in which intentions and motivations could be addressed from their posts and, thus, a coding of different topics such as humor, interpersonal relationships, emotions and mood, reflections, entertainment, among others, were carried out. Ana's posts generally dealt with interpersonal relationships, emotions and mood, and reflections on life. Regarding the used language, it is possible to highlight that the main themes in posts in Spanish were emotions, relationships, and life; in English were movies and television, humor, and relationships; and with codeswitching were emotions, school, and relationships.

In Aldo's case, there was a recurrence of publications about music and humor. Likewise, on publications in Spanish, humor and relationships were found, while on posts in English, music and humor appeared almost exclusively. On posts with code alternation (using emojis) or codeswitching (language alternation), humor and reflection on life were mainly found.

Lastly, the final interview addressed the meaning of the different actions and posts patterns that highlighted the interaction of these young people. It is possible to say that Ana used English to nuance emotions, that is, to de-intensify emotions; she gives global importance to language, and the use of alternation between Spanish and English gives her a bilingual identity because it shows two parts of her world, at least, of her world's point of view. For her, each platform has a particular meaning and influences how she interacts through the messages she transmits, she uses expressions about movies and TV and school to express herself in English, but also to reduce importance on messages and not to make them as emotional or direct as if she did it in Spanish.

On the other hand, Aldo identified with the music, he feels that by the lyrics of the songs he can express what he thinks about some social strug-

gles that represent either the lyrics of the songs or their exponents, such as stereotypes discrimination and depression. Aldo uses English language more to interact with humor, which modulates the seriousness of the content he posts; he discretely shows his sympathy with the community of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and genderqueer (LGBTQ) people, and he does it by humor and music. For him, English represents a way to relate to people outside his offline circle and allows him to understand different contents as well; he also believes that the meaning of his posts takes on a different social meaning from one language to another.

Discussion

The interaction practices were observed considering that the elements that are interrelated in the activity of the networks are those produced to make the construction of identity observable.
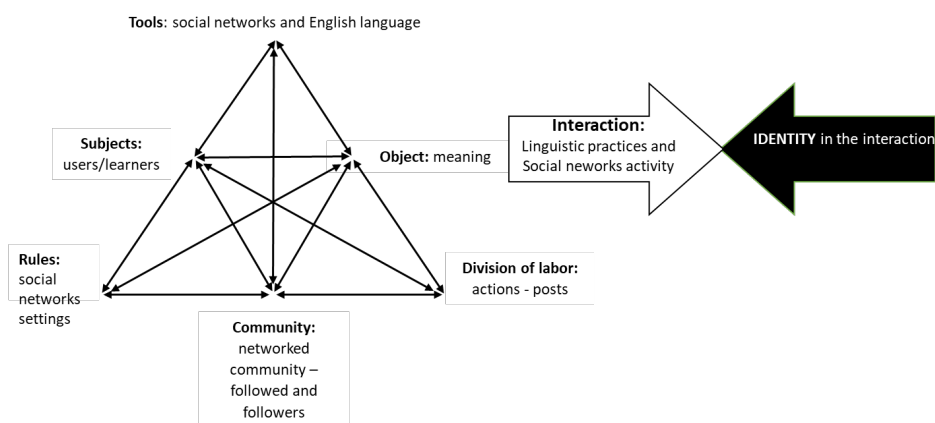
Interaction

The description of interaction in this study was inspired by Engeström's model (1996, 2001), in such a way that interaction is apparent as a set of elements that are constituted with features of the context, so in this environment the original elements of the model are transferred to the specific situation of the study. Therefore, *tools* in the model are, in this context, social networks and the English language. The *subjects* are the users. The *rules* are the settings of the social networks and the social 'norms' of the youth generation. The *community* is the network of contacts and followers with whom they interact on each platform. The *division of labor* consists of the actions and publications shared and forwarded, with or without modification, that generate trends in topics. Finally, the *object* is the meaning obtained by the intentions and motivations of the participants in their interactions.

It is necessary to observe that interaction is neither unidirectional nor totally unconscious but is subject to interrelated with and dependent on

the other elements. Once all the interrelationships have been visualized the result is the representation of the interaction, making it possible to propose a model that will later serve as the basis for the analysis of identity, under the framework of language identity as produced in linguistic interaction (see figure 1).

Figure 1. *Model of the interaction with the English language through social networks*

Note. Interaction can be seen through linguistic practices as multidirectional and interrelated to show identity. Adapted from Engeström, 1996, 2001).

Identity

The analysis of identity as produced in interaction with language can be carried out to describe the particular use that individuals develop with language. Thus, once the interaction with language in the context of social networks and its interrelations with other elements has been visualized, it is considered relevant and practical to describe the construction of linguistic identity of these young people on their posts and practices in social networks, which are an extension of their being and presentation to their audience. This was based on the framework of analysis developed by Bucholtz and Hall (2005) in which five principles of interaction present in the construction of identity (emergence, positionality, indexicality, relationality and partialness) are posed to understand and somehow describe the fluid and unstable yet interrelated dynamics.

In relation to the principle of *emergence*, this is a macro attribute in which the category of age, race and/or socioeconomic status is located. It is presented with special characteristics that "display" the participants as part of a generation of young people. In Ana's interactions, it was observed that her posts frequently referenced her state of mind and situations related to school, reflecting her role as a student. From this principle, it can be assumed a connection to socioeconomic status by her "bilingual" interactions with which she identifies herself by using code switching, reflecting a upper – middle or high educational level and socioeconomic context due to the access to tools such as technology and other languages (also in Kormos & Kiddle, 2013), although it was not directly nor in depth analyzed. It can be observed that in most of Aldo's interactions, the expression of humor in relation to his feelings and moods is shown. Likewise, as explained in Bucholtz and Hall (2005), the gender category can be observed in his posts with sympathy to the LGBT community, because of his interest in social issues such as discrimination by stereotypes.

The principle of *positionality* (micro features in relation to local and temporal aspects such as being a member of an institution, and roles of the participant in society). In Ana's construction of identity, it was identifiable in the interactions in which she established her role as a student and as a young person at the same time. Thus, by her posts about entertainment and the recurrent communications about the 'Avengers' films, their characters, and actors, it is possible to observe the interrelation of two principles: positionality and emergence. Likewise, Ana posed herself as a user of a second language, i.e., as bilingual and a member of a community of students who are trained to be English teachers (this as a local attribute). For Aldo, this principle of identity was observed in his posts and interactions in his role as a student (this being a local attribute) and as a user of a second language by representing his ideas preferably in the English language.

The principle of *indexicality* is noticed by labels about themselves and others, as well as implications and inferences about perceptions. On Ana's interactions, it was possible to distinguish this feature both in the linguistic forms chosen to present herself through social networks, as well as when she presents herself as a university student, bilingual, and as a young person in publications such as *'I like to party…', 'i'm a sudent of the* BA *in*

English teaching…', 'I know English…', or 'I like to be bilingual…' The linguistic forms are also observed in the use of the lower case for the personal pronoun of the first person singular in English (i), a usual idiom that implies the diversity of language use in an informal way. In the other side, for Aldo, he uses certain forms and vocabulary to refer to gender diversity, his bilingual identity, and even his musical preferences with the lines in his posts (*'i'm gay…', 'I know English…', 'I use English…', or 'I like this kind of music'*); thus, the type of music of *Lady Gaga, Madonna, Kim Petras, Billie Eilish* and *Bebe Rexha* is a popular genre in the community that represents a sense of generational struggle (this being a feature by inference).

The principle of *relationality* is an attribute of identity in relation to oneself and others by complementary relationships such as similarity and difference and other. In Ana's posts, a similarity with others was noted through her interactions with the popular *Avengers* films from the *Marvel* universe. However, a difference was also observed: she is more interested in a secondary character, '*Bucky*', rather than the main characters. In the other hand, on Aldo's interactions, the similarity with others is observed through his posts about popular exponents of a musical genre, however, the relationship of difference is presented in that the motivation to interact with them or publish about them has a meaning of difference by being represented on the lyrics and focusing on the social problems they present and what they fight for.

The principle of *partialness* is an observable attribute in interactions that, although it does not lie only in the individual, it emerges by intersubjective relations. That is, it refers to the fact that identity entails a partiality in the meaning and contextually situated linguistic practices between the same subject and others. This principle was observed in Ana's posts when constructing her bilingual identity openly, without concerns about the "correct" use of the language (L1 or L2). These practices are part of her own speech, but also when feeling comfortable with her audience or community of contacts and followers with whom she identifies with and who may understand what she wants to convey in her messages. In Aldo's posts, this principle was observed by his preferences in relation to musical content with a sense of struggle for stereotypes, that is, partly for himself and his personal struggle, partly for his community. It possibly to observe the

representation of empowerment, in both cases, for different reasons; in Ana for being able to show her bilingualism in lines such as '*I know English…*', or in Aldo for advocating on social causes such as against gender stereotypes, See table 1.

Table 1. *Identity as produced in linguistic interaction through social networks*

Emergence: macro attributes- gender, age, race and/or socioeconomic status.	Positionality: micro attributes- local and temporal aspects.	Indexicality: labels about themselves and others, implications, or inferences.	Relationality: representation of identity in relation to self and other (complementary relationships).	Partialness: attribute that does not reside only in the individual but emerges in intersubjective relationships.
ANA: –age and socioeconomic status. –student role –Bilingual status by constantly using code switching.	ANA: –student role. –role as a young person –'*Avengers*', -English language user. –member of the community of learners for English teachers.	ANA: –University student –Bilingual –youth –the use of lowercase for the pronoun 'I'.	ANA: –*Avengers* films *(similarity)* –not the interest in the main characters but in a particular 'secondary' character (difference).	ANA: –Empowerment: openly bilingual.
ALDO: –Age and race. –Humor relation to his feelings and moods. –Gender, sympathy with the LGBT community and interest in social issues (discrimination due to stereotypes and depression).	ALDO: –role as a student, –user of a second language by representing his or her ideas with content preferably in English.	ALDO: –gender diversity –bilingual identity –type/content of music.	ALDO: –popularity musical exponents (similarity) –focus on the lyrics and message on social issues they represent (difference).	ALDO: –Empowerment: stereotypical struggle advocate.

Note. This table shows Ana and Aldo's identities according to the interaction principles according to Bucholtz and Hall (2005) framework.

Conclusions

It was observed, in this study, that social networks are not only a space for socialization and entertainment, but also serve as a cultural space with linguistic-type meanings and demands through which identity construction unfolds. In addition, social networks provide a space for developing com-

munities of practice. However, questions remain about their application in the teaching-learning process (Gee, 2018), and there is no consensus on how this can be practically achieved or utilized. It is essential to consider various contextual factors, as well as the advantages and disadvantages of each situation. The findings in this study could pedagogically serve to locate communicative strategies and levels of meaning in language teaching using language interaction and socialization.

It was possible to notice how Ana and Aldo assign a special meaning to the language and use it to add meaning to their expressions. It was remarkable how they used Spanish, English and codes alternations in specific situations where they found the need to add specific denotations. It permeates their identity in the ways of expression they choose to communicate themselves.

Young Mexican university students are located in a multidimensional context, by being immersed in a digital culture, which in part has been strengthened by the educational policy of the Mexican Education System, and by its effects in relation to language and the use of digital tools with a communicative approach and human development (referred to as digital literacy). It is assumed these tools are subject to the communicative features that are developed in computer-mediated communication.

The theoretical significance of this research lies on its context and in the methodology used to approach a complex and subjective phenomenon, linguistic identity and interaction. Likewise, the diversity of existing studies also denoted a variety of theoretical and methodological components, which made the design of the present work more complex, however, a solid and underpinned design was achieved according to the specific situation of the participants.

It is necessary to approach the emergent characteristics of new generations which modify their forms of interaction as they change, as well as to incorporate them in their ways of learning since they also intervene in the ownership that students may have of the language, a direct relationship with learning in a foreign language context. Furthermore, Ana and Aldo reflected on their interactions as bilingual users and are aware of the advantages and disadvantages this entails for their audiences, as well as the identity they project in their own spaces.

The content they generate shows a bilingual culture contextualized in the geographical space of the study (living in a border state with the United States), as well as in the digital space that delineates their communities, showing how they own language and build an identity in their personal digital and social spaces, by generating their own linguistic uses of English, Spanish, or code alternation when interacting with their interlocutors. Just as these young university students, who attended school in a Mexican public education system and with no additional English instruction, identified and owned the language and skills for the use of technology, there are other youths. It could be considered as a significant effect of the implemented educational policy and which would be worth thinking about, studying, and exploring on a larger scale. Above all, to think practically about the foundations for curricular change that would be necessary to meet the needs of the new generations and in support of their personal and professional competencies.

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