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## **Dynamic formation of speech style and identity**

**Keywords:** personal speech style, identity, personal and social identity, ego-identity, inter- and intrapsychological processes, communication, interiorisation and exteriorization, psycholinguistics, didactics (teacher's speech style), empirical study

Within the framework of cultural-historical psycholinguistics, our interest in speaking humans focuses on the interaction between intrapsychological (internalized) and interpsychological (external) processes of speech. It is assumed that there is neither an isolated inside nor an isolated outside, but a dynamic intra- and interpsychological system that is subject to a constant constructive process that leads to identity. In this sense, identity is a dynamic interactionist process between interpsychological (social identity) and intrapsychological performances (personal identity). This echoes the model of the formation of ego-identity as dynamic process between personal and social identity (Erikson 1959, Goffman 1968). This constructive moment implies for us that – depending on situation and addressee - any communicative situation is a unique speech act that shows different personal speech styles and ego-identities (Krappmann 1993, Miosga 2006). Speech style is constructed depending on habitus and specific role in the communication process. We postulate that personal speech style is an expression of ego-identity and therefore interwoven with it.

Focussing the dynamic of internal and external processes the questions arise, firstly, how outer realities were interiorised and how they construct personal speech style and personal identity, secondly, how the balance between personal and social identity is maintained and ego-identity is constructed. We assume that within the dynamic interaction a core crystallizes, which affects both the personal speech style as well as the ego-identity. This core persists in different situations and is held responsible for the perception to be a coherent individual.

Using an example of a speaker teaching in two different contexts, the construction of ego-identity in relation to personal speech style is illustrated and analysed. Firstly, the speaker teaches a German lesson; secondly, the speaker gives a short paper for fellow students. Working with a structured observation form, the personal speech style is described in both situations by evaluating verbal, non-verbal and para-verbal parameters. Furthermore, the speaker gives a self-assessment of her speech performance. Then, the personality is assessed using the “big five”, this assessment is associated with the characteristics of the personal speech style. Although the first impression was completely different, the results of the assessment show agreement. In both cases the personal traits (derived using linguistic features) overlap. This investigation suggests that there is a coherent core over different communicative situations that concerns personal speech style and identity.



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