



TEACHER'S AND PUPIL'S IDENTITIES IN THE PROCESS OF WRITING

Nina D. Gerdzhikova

University of Plovdiv, College Smolyan, Plovdiv, Bulgaria

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0091-6687>



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Abstract

This paper explores the identity notion in the context of the teacher-pupil relationship and its impact on professional development. The study draws on international comparative research focusing on Bulgarian teachers and an example of one lesson in the mother tongue (Bulgarian language). The concept of professional identity is examined, encompassing various components such as the profession's philosophy, skills, attitude toward work, and interactions with colleagues. It is argued that professional identity is tied to social dedication and cultural values closely. The relationship between teachers and pupils involves coordination, cooperation, and co-construction which are essential for creating an orderly learning environment. The teacher's identity, social interactions, and significant memories influence the pupil's identity formation. The connection between the body and identity is also explored, highlighting the nature of subjectivity and its cultural influences. The research emphasizes the need for a qualitative approach to understand how the body shapes the identities of both teachers and pupils and how environmental factors contribute to this process. Overall, this study contributes to our understanding of the complex nature of professional identity in the teaching profession.

Keywords: teacher, pupil, identity, literature, mother tongue, teaching, education

1 INTRODUCTION

There are two subjects in the learning process – the teacher and the pupil. The interplay between them creates objective reality. Both sides are active to varying degrees. Their actions cover two directions of impact – from one to the other partner and, simultaneously, from outside to the inside of the person. Parallel existing realities influence the formation of identity. Concerning both, teacher and pupil, the course of the training depends

largely on the roles they perform. That is why it will be further related to the professional identity of both, teachers and pupils.

2 PRELIMINARY THEORETICAL REFLECTIONS

A publication, which is part of an international comparative study, provides data on the professional identity of teachers in Bulgaria. It states that it is "appearing in the professional space when one realizes him/herself as a professional" (Berberyana, Bogdanova, Silchenkova, Ermolaeva, & Vardanyan, 2019, p. 308). A broad understanding of the nature of

Address of the author:

Nina D. Gerdzhikova

gerdzhikovan@uni-plovdiv.bg



professional identity is perceived in the same publication. It includes the philosophy of the profession, professional knowledge, skills, professional attitude to work, interaction with colleagues, and conduct of professional representation. Based on these components, professional identity is associated with the social dedication of the teacher to the profession, which is a projection of the competencies, cultural and value orientations of the pupils (Berberyan, Bogdanova, Silchenkova, Ermolaeva, & Vardanyan, 2019, p. 313). The specified components describe the professional identity as a complex category.

This examines the relationship between pupils and teachers as "Prozessen der Koordination, Kooperation und Ko-Konstruktion" (Thies, 2014, p. 194), which is a prerequisite for creating the necessary order and regulating communication between them. In the course of this relationship, pupils not only assimilate knowledge of the subject but also curricular skills. The authors include the skills of communication, cooperation, discussions about subjects of key topics, a conflict resolution. In this context, the interaction between the teacher and the pupils is a set of social practices that have a broader anthropological meaning and encompass the person as a whole.

In a general theoretical plan, Eberstadt & Kuznetsov (2008, p. 18) examine the identity as being composed of two components: a subjective sphere of identity in which "I" comes to the fore. The second component is the empirical sphere. The action interacts with the surrounding environment and after that, the performance takes place through the internal processing of this interconnection in the form of recall and experience. In this, only those memories that are important are left in the mind of the individual. It is they who have the strongest influence on the formation of identity. In this sense, identity formation is closely linked to social interaction between the teacher and the pupils. Further, it is a set of social practices that have a broader anthropological meaning and encompass the person as a whole.

Another important aspect to clarify identity is its connection with the body. For the first time, this idea was seen by Erik Erickson in the late 60's. Adolescence is a particularly important period for

the formation of identity: "Erikson (1968) described identity development as the gradual integration of different self-images" (Kling, Waengqvist, & Frisen, 2018, p. 102). Moreover, Ericson emphasizes that this process takes place in the interaction with the social environment. For the description of this connection, Piran (2016, p. 44) uses the "embodiment" construct: "... embodiment denotes specific assumptions regarding body and mind, as well as body and culture ". He supports the idea of Merleau Ponty about the inability mind to be separated from the body. According to Ponty, the body participates in the exploration of the world and becomes a bearer of subjectivity. Thanks to this peculiarity the body "absorbs" various cultural practices and turns the external social experience into its internal possession. For Zirfas & Jörissen (Zirfas & Joerissen, 2007, p. 102) in everyday life, there is a specific "policy" for identifying the body. The most accessible example according to them is the perception of people as men and women. Sharing the views of M. Douglas they give special importance to the ideas about the body as something social and physical. At the same time, in our notions of differences in the body of a man and a woman, there is always something that prevails and is more related to the social which is to some extent imaginary, as Zirfas & Joerissen (2007) claim: "the individual physical body forms the symbolic place of the social".

The theoretical ideas presented so far about the nature of the relationship between teacher and pupil, as well as the importance of the relationship between body and identity, presuppose the implementation of this qualitative research. It is an attempt to describe in general two phenomena:

- how the body forms the identity of both the teacher and the pupil and
- how the material in the environment influences their identity.

Further, we will discuss some more concrete ideas about the professional identity of teachers and the identity of students.

3 THE PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY OF THE TEACHER

The professional identity of the teacher can be interpreted from a theoretical and methodological point of view (Rodrigues & Mogarro, 2019, p. 1).

In essence, the concept of identity serves as a framework to examine various aspects of a teacher's professional role, such as analyzing lesson planning, delivery, and assessment, as well as resolving conflicting perspectives when executing learning tasks. That enables teachers to develop a personal perception of themselves and gain insights into their professional realization. Concurrently, such information can be utilized methodologically to enhance teacher training programs. We discovered that there was often a tendency to avoid providing a precise definition for the 'professional identity,' with frequent reliance on quotations from other authors instead. To this end, key theoretical concepts such as reflection, self, emotions, initial teacher education, learning, professional knowledge, and perceptions of teaching are often used. Other authors prefer terms such as agency, collaboration, professional development, professional image, professionalization, and the relation between theory and practice (Rodrigues & Mogarro, 2019, p. 3). Due to the existing difficulties, it is necessary to choose an identity concept that is consistent with the purpose of this study. Such is the understanding of Fomunyan (2016, p. 187), who defines it as a fluid construct that is subject to continuous change. The factor influencing it is the curriculum used by the teacher at a specific time and place. According to Fomunyan, there are many different beliefs about the nature of identity. The first one examines the relationship between identity and the Self and the role of emotions and reflection. Also significant are the discourse of understanding about themselves and the actions that follow the reflection. Contextual factors have a considerable influence on the formation of identity. Other authors consider the professional identity as interpreting and reinterpreting the experience. That suggests that the process is continuous and lasts throughout life because the teacher monitors and realizes the professional development according to the results achieved in the training. It is possible to manifest different identities during the different stages of development that the teacher has to harmonize.

In essence, Fomunyan defines the teacher's professional identity as "central to a teacher's belief system that guides his or her actions and practices, inside and outside the school environment" (2016, p. 187). Because of its

social nature, identity changes according to time, place, circumstances, and space. Therefore, its formation is "open" and also depends to a large extent on the perceptions of pupils in the classroom learning process.

4 THE IDENTITY OF THE PUPIL

The pupil's identity is determined by its role in the learning process. How it perceives and evaluates the impact of the teacher affects the perspective on its characteristics as a learning subject. The pupils' judgments about themselves are also related to the classmates' opinions about their results in the learning process. Brown (2021) emphasizes the influence of emotions and motivation in shaping the perception of oneself as a pupil. So, they are influenced by the teacher's beliefs associated with the "perfect student." This notion was embedded in pedagogical research at the beginning of the 50s years of the XX. century as typical characteristics of pupils originating from the working class. Later, at the beginning of the 90s, Waterhouse pointed out that the teachers' perceptions were related to the pupil as a "norm" who captures all behavioral characteristics, which correspond to the "average" achievements in a particular class.

The research proves that, as a learning subject, pupils form their identities according to their level of achievement. High achievement leads to an overall positive assessment. Low achievement makes students think that they will never reach the 'average' for the class. The teaching style reflects in a complex way the student's identity. It can give rise to opposing experiences: confidence or anxiety. In any case, however, according to Brown (2021), the hierarchy of achievement affects the pupils' identity as a learner and has a stronger influence than the teaching style. In this sense, the individual-personal beliefs of the pupil about her/his positioning among the classmates and the teacher's ideas about her/him lead to the construction of the identity.

5 THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTIC OF WRITING

As a form of learning experience, writing is a specific form of activity. Thanks to it, the real objects in space are transformed into abstract signs that need decoding. This model of

"translation" from sign to meaning is called "WRITING" by Dell Hymns. Through this acronym, the author describes the essence of writing:

- W: Writers – Who are the writers? Do they have a specific status? Are writing skills subjected to institutionally recognized patterns?
- R: Readers – Who are the readers? Is the role of the reader independent of that of the writer? Are there different reading skills according to sociocultural or status levels?
- I: Instrumentalities – What kinds of instruments does a writer use to write the messages, and how are they related to the keys through which a reader, the events described, must - or should - interpret?
- T: Textualization – What rules govern the passage from cultural- and linguistic content in the written texts? Is there any distinctive pattern of "translation" between linguistic and scriptural domains?
- I: Interpretative context – What is the role played by the environmental context in which the written text is placed in interpreting that text?
- N: Norms – Are there graphic and social norms related to the writing and reading of different kinds of texts?
- G: Genres – Is there a "canon", either implicit or explicit, through which texts are classified and hence interpreted? (Perri, 1999, p. 276)

This detailed description of the writing offers a way to interpret the materials collected for the study. Writing is a complex activity through which pupils master their cultural and social norms of behavior and understanding of the surrounding world. Writing offers specific tools for mastering knowledge and expanding the content of everyday communication.

6 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Fomunyan cites the definition of Opie for the essence of the methodology. It essentially describes the methods or approaches by which the investigator's critical data (Fomunyan, 2016, p. 188) is reached. This study is a qualitative case study. It aims to describe the mechanisms of writing in class in literature and seeks an answer to the research question: *How does the teacher's professional identity influence the pupil's identity*

as a learner in the writing process? This question will help establish the specific forms of interaction between the teacher's and the pupil's identities. The participants in this study were one teacher and one class of pupils from the compulsory secondary school of education. The school is located in the central part of a medium-sized town in southern Bulgaria. A series of photographs we used to collect data on learning in one literature class. In addition, the subject of analysis will be the curriculum and the literature textbook.

7 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The object of the survey is one lesson in Bulgarian language in the 9th grade of secondary school (MNP, 1989). The lesson topic is writing an essay on a humanitarian issue in a literary text. The survey covered documents corresponding to the timing of the monitoring. The same topic was acquired one year earlier, in the 2019/20 school year.

Syllabus

Fomunyan uses the following syllabus definition: "A detailed outline of what students must learn in the course of studying a particular program or course" (Smith at. al. cited by Fomunyan, 2016, p. 189). The Bulgarian syllabus describes the following components: the leading type of learning activity, the standards it needs to meet, the topics to be studied, basic new concepts, types of learning assignments, and possible curricular links.

The standards for mastering the writing relate to:

- appropriate use of different language registers;
- peculiarities of different types of texts: media, scientific, civil, institutional, and literary.

The topics foreseen for mastering the writing are as follows:

- the text and the socio-cultural context: what defines the situation of communication; the functions of the text in communication;
- the text in public communication: features of public communication; spheres of public communication – media, scientific, civic, artistic, institutional.

The learning tasks are related to the creation of different texts depending on the purpose of the communicative act and the sphere of

communication. The content presented reveals the objectives and tasks of writing as a learning activity. It helps both, to absorb new knowledge and to rethink the already familiar. Functional knowledge forms the identity of the teacher and the pupil by stimulating cognitive and linguistic processes. Thanks to them, the subjects of teaching and learning can answer the question "Who am I?" in the course of learning communication. Information processing presupposes dynamics in communication and the perception of different perspectives, which positively influences the development of the individual.

Content

The educational content on the topic of writing an essay on a humanitarian issue in literary work is presented in the textbook according to two basic didactic perspectives: those of academic rationalism and the technological approach (Bowen, 1994, pp. 451-452). The content highlights basic scientific concepts such as analyzing the title, composition of the text, theme, and thesis of the essay, selection of arguments, language, and style. Linguistic competence is needed to understand the basic concepts. In the textbook, there is also an example of an essay that pupils should consider and use as a model for writing their essays. This component of the educational content is consistent with the technological approach, which focuses on the mastering of skills in the learning process. The essay pattern forms the student's idea of the final result he must reach. Imitation is the underlying mechanism embedded in this type of content. In this sense, it determines the physical and cognitive activity of the pupil.

Lesson's Analysis

The photographs attached to the text can trace the writing process in Bulgarian language lessons.

The first photograph presents the teacher as a "speaker" and the pupils listening and writing. In the second photograph, the teacher and students write simultaneously. In them, the performative character of the speaking and writing of the teacher in the class is manifested. The perception of these activities by the pupils causes the corresponding forms of movement in them. There is a "mimetic circulating" (Burghardt & Zirfas, 2019, p. 116) of behavior and processing of information. The communication messages sent by the teacher mirror the actions of the students. But the first photograph reflects anything more than just a simple reproduction of the "pattern" action. The teacher speaks and the students "expand" listening by writing. Thus the "added" meaning of the messages addressed to the pupils arises.



Photo 2



Photo 1



Photo 3

In the second photograph, the hand movements of the teacher and the pupils are synchronized.

When considering photography 3, we can see the educational character of the teacher's writing. Writing on the board sets only the general structure to which pupils add what the teacher speaks. The understanding of the course information proceeds and the fixation of the most important of it is achieved by pupils through writing.

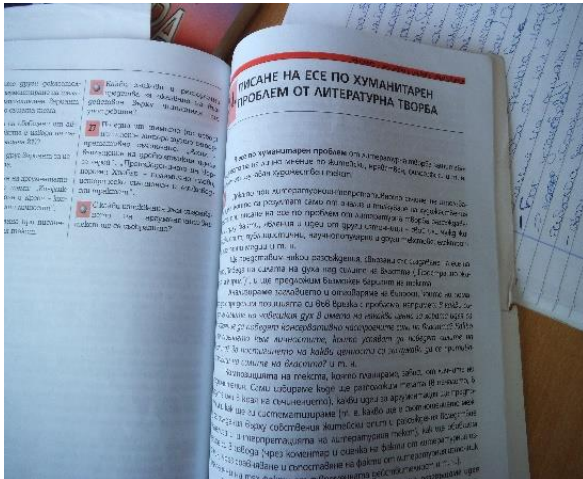


Photo 4

The fourth photograph reflects the similarities in organizing the written text in their class notebooks and the textbook. The text in the textbook and the notebook are a "block" of related information. The concepts are arranged one after another, accompanied by the necessary explanations. The presentation of the content in the textbook has a disciplined character and defines the strategy of writing. Thus, the text in the textbook controls indirectly the movements of the hand and the thought in the writing process.

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The analysis makes the logic of writing in class visible. As a practice, it has mimetic, discursive, and habitual components (Burghardt & Zifras, 2019, p. 118). The teacher shows what she/he is capable of by her/his biographical experience and level of awareness. Accordingly, the pupils imitate the teacher's actions again depending on their world. Differences in knowledge predetermine the discourse within which they interpret the perceived information. The behavior they demonstrate reveals the habit of looking at writing.

8 CONCLUSION

The analysis convinces us that the teacher's professional- and the pupil's identity in the "learning" role have a close relationship. The teacher affects not only thought processes but also the pupil's body. The planned learning content determines the type of activities of the pupils and teacher. The subject of the teaching consciously influences through the actions and provokes "mirror" reactions in the recipient. However, the pupils' reactions "extend" the impact of the messages sent to them. The perception of impact has a two-collar structure:

- At a basic level, the crucial components of the teacher's actions are reproduced.
- At the personal level, components that result from individual focus are added to the initial perceptions.

Thus an individual experience becomes "mobile", enriching and influencing the student's social development. Through this mechanism, the teacher's actions make sense, both for self-evaluation and for the realization of the socially significant function of motivating the development of pupils through the means of teaching.

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Note

The photographs are published with the consent of the teacher and the parents. (Author)

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