

A 'small' story narrative analysis of a teacher's account of her desire for postgraduate education

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ABSTRACT

While research into language teacher identity has frequently drawn on narrative analysis as a research method, this research has often focussed heavily on content analysis of narratives, and has largely analysed narratives taken from interviews. The narrative analysis undertaken here instead focuses on an account by a language teacher taken from a performance review meeting at a university language centre in Australia. It uses positioning theory to examine how both the content of the account and its interactional accomplishment combine to form a contested identity of a language teacher as a professional, and in relation to a master narrative of ongoing education. The study has both theoretical implications for the positioning of teachers within institutional discourse, along with more practical implications for the management of teachers and their professional development in similar settings.

INTRODUCTION

Investigation of language teacher identity has been a part of TESOL research literature now for over 20 years, since the work of Norton Pierce (1995) made identity the focus of her work on language learners, and Duff and Uchida (1997) employed similar concepts to study language teachers. Much of this study of language teacher identity has been concerned with its relation to language teacher education, drawing on research for guidance on pedagogy (Martel & Wang, 2015).

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The study of language teacher identity does, however, have important sociocultural and sociopolitical implications as well (Varghese *et al.*, 2005). The study of identity is broadly concomitant with the 'social turn' in applied linguistics, problematising as it does previously taken-for-granted concepts such as that of 'teacher' (Ortega, 2012), and situating the production of such concepts in broader social contexts.

While other means such as surveys on beliefs and attitudes have been used to study language teacher identity, narrative analysis is a key means by which language teacher identity is studied, due largely to the role that narratives are seen to play in identity's constitution and maintenance (Bruner, 1987; Giddens, 1991). While views of identity within narrative analysis vary, particularly between more biographical approaches on the one hand and more interactionist approaches on the other, much narrative analysis agrees on a view of the self that is emergent, processual and articulated semiotically (De Fina, 2015). Frequently too, in studies oriented to narratives in interaction, identity is seen as relational, shifting and multiple (Somers, 1994; Wortham, 2001). Such a view of identity thus leads to the study of professional identity as a specific, contextualised identity which is amenable to study through narratives.

English language teacher professional identity has thus been analysed through the use of narratives in a number of different contexts. A growing level of interest in narrative analysis more generally in applied linguistics and TESOL research, and more specifically in research on language teacher identity, is reflected in the recent (Barkhuizen, 2011) special edition of *TESOL Quarterly* and the publication of *Narrative Inquiry in Language Teaching and Learning Research* (Barkhuizen, Benson, & Chik) in 2013. Narrative analysis into language teacher identity has, reflecting research into language teacher identity more generally, often concerned itself with language teacher education and pre-service teacher's developing professional identities (Park, 2012; Pavlenko, 2003). Other themes explored in the literature on narrative analysis of language teacher identity include non-native speaker language teacher identity (Canagarajah, 2012), gender and language teaching (Simon-Maeda, 2004) and accommodation of new methodologies and new workplaces by teachers (Liu & Xu, 2011; Tsui, 2007).

While narrative analysis has contributed much to an understanding

of language teacher identities in a variety of contexts, Vásquez (2011) identifies certain similar limitations in this literature in terms of scope. The first issue she identifies is a tendency to focus on 'big' stories - autobiographical stories often abstracted from their context, and analysed for content only - at the expense of 'small' stories, which often are heavily contextualised and fail to conform to more literary or formal notions of narrative, and are analysed as strips of interaction (Goffman, 1981) rather than just for content. In line with changes in narrative analysis more broadly, however, this focus on 'big' stories seems to be changing (see for example Barkhuizen, 2010; Baynham, 2011; Watson, 2007). Vásquez's second critique of narrative analysis of language teacher identity is the reliance on narratives drawn from interview data rather than from naturalistic sources (2011, p. 539). This is evidenced by the absence in Barkhuizen, Benson and Chik (2013) of any discussion of narratives taken from naturalistic data and a sole focus on elicited interview data, due perhaps to a lack of examples from the literature. While interview data can be analysed in a suitably reflexive manner (De Fina, 2009; Talmy, 2011), Vásquez (2011) points out that narratives elicited from interview data can often erase the social context within which the data was taken. Schegloff (1997) makes a similar point when he writes that elicited interview data lack the purpose of storytelling that motivates narratives in other contexts, and often overlook the co-construction and recipient design of narratives in interaction.

There have been a small number of narrative analyses of stories that emerge in naturalistic data for language teacher identity - Richards (2006), for example, studies staffroom discussions between teachers, while Rugen (2010) analyses conversations of pre-service Japanese English teachers. Despite this, further work is needed to see how language teacher identity is constructed and contested in interactions outside interview settings. This study seeks to remedy this lack of analysis of narratives in naturally occurring discourse by analysing a teacher's narrative taken from a performance management review meeting at a university language centre in Australia. It seeks to examine to what extent teachers are positioned by such a speech event or whether they agentively construct their own subject positions within the narrative. In doing so it is hoped that the findings are relevant to

teachers navigating mandated speech events such as performance management meetings, and to language centre management in planning for the performance and professional development of teachers.

NARRATIVE ANALYSIS AND THE DISCOURSE OF PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

The narrative analysed here is taken from an ongoing research project analysing the discourse of performance management. Performance management is here defined as the set of practices in an organisation used to measure or improve staff performance (DeNisi & Pritchard, 2006). Many theorists in the area of performance management see the process as primarily one of feedback and communicating performance back to the employee (Anseel, Lievens, & Schollaert, 2009; Bouskila-Yam & Kluger, 2011; DeNisi & Pritchard, 2006; Gruman & Saks, 2011), and usually focussed on meetings between manager and employee – in Australia such meetings account for 60% of performance management (De Cieri & Sheehan, 2008). Thus communication, language and discourse play a central role in the performance management system within organisations, and a discourse analysis of this set of practices would help to fill a relatively under-researched area. While a number of papers have examined areas such as facework in performance management meetings (Clifton, 2012), preference organisation in negative assessments in performance management meetings (Asmuß, 2008), leadership discourse in performance management meetings (Van De Mierop & Schnurr, 2014), and enactment of strategy in performance management discourse (Sorsa, Pälli, & Mikkola, 2014), few if any have undertaken an analysis of narratives within this context.

Research and reflection on performance management within TESOL contexts such as university language centres has been relatively scant. Richards (2008) locates performance management within a broader trend towards an increased influence from the corporate sector upon language teaching organisations, a move that has led to more successful language programs. Underhill (2004), too, sees performance management in TESOL organisations as largely beneficial, seeing it as a key part of his view of the 'learning school'. There are also dissenting views on performance management in TESOL. Vanci-Osam and Aksit (2000) found that while performance management

was seen as being of some merit to new teachers, older teachers and overseas native speaker teachers saw it as being of little value. More broadly within the teaching profession as a whole, there have been those such as Ball (2003) that see performance management as part of an increased emphasis on performativity brought about by moves within education towards new public management, leading to disillusionment and cynical compliance amongst teachers.

Performance management within the higher education system in Australia, wherein the language centre that serves as the site for this research is located, is certainly linked to broader currents of educational reform informed by new public management. It was first introduced during higher educational reforms in the late 1980s and 1990s to bring about increased quality assurance within the sector, and in 2000 federal funding was made contingent upon workplace reforms including effective performance management systems (Anderson, 2006). Currently, at a macro-organisational, university wide level, performance review of staff is a mandatory threshold standard in order to be recognised as a higher education provider by the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards), 2011, Chapter 1, s. 5.3). Performance management in Australian universities thus occupies the position of a mandated speech event which is performed to conform with government regulation of the higher education sector.

Performance management in the language centre

The data analysed here has taken this role of performance management as a mandated speech event in the language centre. Within the language centre, all full-time teachers must participate in the annual performance management system (referred to within the organisation as PM and D), as must any casual teachers who later wish to become a full-time employee at the centre. With only 24 full-time teachers in the organisation compared to between 80 and 100 casually employed teachers with no guaranteed work within the organisation, full-time positions are much sought amongst the casual teaching staff and thus many casual teachers along with full-time staff participate in the performance management system.

As with many organisations, performance management within

the university language centre is conducted over a 12-month cycle. The main document that accompanies the system is the PM and D document, which is issued by the university's central human resources (HR) department but is implemented with certain variations within the language centre. Each performance management year begins in August with the completion of the current year's PM and D document. There are two main parts of the language centre's PM and D document that need to be completed: Part B, which lists the goals on the teacher's last PM and D document and whether they were satisfactorily completed, and Part C, which lists the goals teachers would like to achieve in the future year. Goals typically pertain to education, further training, and new projects at work. Teachers then choose a reviewer (typically a lower level manager or a senior teacher) with whom to meet and discuss their PM and D document. Upon completion of the document (usually made by the teacher after the meeting based on changes made by the reviewer) the front page is then sent to the HR department, and the document is also stored at the language centre and referred to by managers when deciding on training needs and other queries about the language centre. In the year previous to the study an optional six-month meeting was added to the PM and D calendar to discuss completion of the teacher's goals, before the cycle was begun again in August.

The narrative studied here was taken from a recording of an end of performance year meeting, with the approval of a university ethics committee and consent granted by both participants. In listening to the meetings as a whole, it became clear that the main focus of these meetings was the successful completion of the PM and D document. Unlike other performance management meetings (Alexander, 2013), or business meetings as a whole (Bargiela-Chiappini & Harris, 1995, 1997; Handford, 2010), no clear staging or phasing of the meetings beyond a basic meeting structure could be discerned, which could perhaps be due to the small number of performance review meetings recorded and analysed at this site so far. In the meetings analysed there are clear Opening and Closing phases, while phasing in the main part of the meeting generally correspond to Part B or Part C of the documents, where the teacher must account for items in each part. This suggests the centrality of the completion of the PM and D document to the

purpose of the meeting. Despite variations between meetings within each phase focussing on either Part B or Part C of the document, the meeting is generally ordered by the teacher giving an account of each goal in the part of the PM and D document being examined, followed by the reviewer commenting on how appropriate the goal is and whether the goal could be better explained in the PM and D document.

Accounts and positioning theory

This purpose of the meeting - to account for items on the PM and D document - has an influence on the structure and the nature of the narratives that emerge in the meetings. The narratives usually take the form of 'storied explanations' (Antaki, 1994), often given in response to reviewer questions for them to explain or account for items in their PM and D documents, or in relation to other parts of the PM and D process. They often fail to conform to more formal definitions of narratives in the sense defined by Labov and Waletzky (1967/1997), or the 'Sydney school' of genre (Martin & Plum, 1997). In order to understand their generic structure, they may be considered accounts, according to De Fina (2009) - a form of narrative found in a variety of settings, told in response to evaluative 'how' or 'why' questions. While accounts as a genre can be found in a number of settings, both in interviews and in naturalistic data, and may take varying discursive forms, they are enacted in interaction with a similar purpose. Such a view of genre focuses not so much in formal or linguistic terms but how the texts connect with the context, the purpose of the text and the participants involved (see also Rampton, 2006).

This observation that narratives in interaction differ greatly from more literary and structural models is in keeping with broader trends in narrative analysis over the past 20 years. In general, narrative analysis has moved beyond the structural models first developed by Labov and Waletzky (1967); this move has been prompted largely by a focus on narratives as they emerge in interaction (see Bamberg, 2004; Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008; Georgakopoulou, 2006; Ochs & Capps, 2009). In line with this greater focus on interaction, and in order to analyse how identity is enacted in narratives in both content and interaction, a three levels model was created by Michael Bamberg (1997, 2004) drawing on the positioning theory of Davies and Harré

(1990), and combining narrative inquiry and narrative analysis. Davies and Harré originally developed positioning theory to break with more static sociological notions such as role to look at how the self is enacted in a localised, shifting and sometimes multiple fashion. However, their work often conceived of positions in as much of a Foucauldian sense (positioned by others) as in a performative (i.e. agentively free) sense, and also lacked applicability to real-world data (Deppermann, 2013). It was Bamberg who operationalised the theory for use in narrative analysis, with the three levels model that has been further elaborated in the work of Georgakopoulou (2006, 2013) and Deppermann (2013).

Level one

This level analyses the level of the story, traditionally the preserve of narrative inquiry. Much of the focus here is on the characters in the story, how they are positioned in relation to each other and as a form of design by the narrator (Deppermann, 2013). In addition to this, a level one analysis also examines at how characters are constituted spatially and temporally within the narrative (Bamberg, 2004, p. 336), along with the organisation of events and locations in the story. Approaches deriving from membership categorisation analysis, along with stylistics and poetics, are often applied here (Deppermann, 2013).

Level two

This level is an examination of the narrative at the level of interaction, of what the narrator is trying to accomplish with the story, and how the story is co-constructed with the recipient(s) (Bamberg, 2004). Analysis at level two often draws on conversation analytic techniques (Bamberg, 2004), but can also use notions such as Goffman's participation frameworks, meta-narrative comments, meta-pragmatics and argumentation (Deppermann, 2013).

Level three

This level brings together the analyses at levels one and two to discover how the narrator is trying to position themselves through telling the narrative (Bamberg, 2004). This positioning may be done in relation or opposition to master narratives and dominant discourses (Bamberg, 2004; Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008). De Fina (2015) sees level three positioning as occupying a middle ground between

fine-grained analyses of talk such as conversation analysis, and broader social notions of self and 'being positioned' such as in critical discourse analysis. Ethnographic data has also sometimes been used here to supplement the narrative analysis (Georgakopoulou, 2013).

This study employed Bamberg's three levels model to explore the construction of language teacher identity in a narrative taken from the performance review meetings recorded at the university language centre. Bamberg's model offers a clear and usable model for the analysis of identity in narrative, acknowledging that identity work takes place on several levels in narratives of interaction and without overly reifying narrative identity. This study, like many narrative analyses employing positioning theory, employs a single case approach and focuses on a single narrative. This case has been selected as a 'telling case' (Mitchell, 1984), displaying how issues of professional identity, casualisation and further education are negotiated in the account; the focus on a single account also affords a detailed examination of these issues as they emerge in interaction. Through the positioning analysis of the narrative here it can be seen how teachers position themselves and are positioned in accounts in performance management meetings.

'MASTER' ACCOUNT NARRATIVE ANALYSIS

This account is typical of those recorded in the performance review meetings thus far, where teachers are asked to account for items in Parts B and C of their PM and D documents. While the means by which teachers do so vary considerably, the 'Master' account analysed below will give some sense of how one teacher negotiates this and in doing so articulates a sense of professional identity. The two participants in this meeting are Ken, who is the reviewer, and Tina, who is being reviewed. Ken is a full-time teacher at the language centre and Tina is a casual teacher, so the level of asymmetry from an organisational perspective is quite low. However, as Ken orients to early in the interaction analysed below, this is Tina's first performance management meeting, so a form of epistemic asymmetry exists regarding completion of the performance management document, and the interactional knowledge required to fulfil the purposes of the meeting. Asymmetry also manifests itself in the allocation of speaking roles, with Ken setting the agenda and asking questions, and Tina giving accounts.

Level one

Tina's small story in some senses articulates Labov and Waletzky's (1967/1997) formal structure of a narrative, with an orientation on lines 17-19, a long complication appearing on lines 20-56, a resolution on lines 56-61 and a coda on lines 61-62 (see Appendix A; refer to Appendix B for transcription conventions). However, a purely formal analysis such as Labov and Waletzky's (1967/1997) would miss the particular contextual, situational and personal inflections through which Tina's professional identity is managed in this interaction. Labov and Waletzky themselves acknowledged variation in their narrative structure according to personal and situational imperatives (1967/1997, p. 27) where in one instance the absence of an orientation is attributed to a need to suppress information about people and places. In Tina's narrative, the relatively short orientation is due to the PM and D document already stating the main purpose of Tina's narrative - her desire for a master's degree. The long complication is an account of why she lacks a master's degree, as possessing a postgraduate degree within a university context is seen as important. This is a point to which Tina herself alludes in her resolution, clearly locating her renewed desire for a master's degree with her current job in a university language centre (lines 56-57, 60, 61-62: "but since I came here, well you know here, suddenly I started to think, 'Well, you know there is actually I can start to take this seriously', and now in a sense I'm starting to feel those wasted years", where "wasted years" refers to a period of not doing postgraduate study).

Rather than a formal analysis of the narrative structure, a level one positioning analysis typically involves an analysis of how characters and event sequences are agentively constructed at story level. The event sequence, while fitting Labov and Waletzky's formal structure, is primarily organised into the form it is in response to Ken's request to account for the first item on her PM and D document - to apply for a master's degree. In order to do so, Tina establishes herself as willing to do a postgraduate degree while also accounting for her current lack of one; thus she begins in the past before proceeding chronologically into the present. The location of the story in the past and chronological sequence of events is therefore attributable more to recipient design (Drew, 2013; Heritage, 2005) and in line with the overall purpose of

the meeting than to formal narrative structure. Also notable in the event sequence is how events are sometimes represented as nominal phrases - firstly life events that prevented her on lines 19-20 ("things have always been in my way") and then again on line 22 ("big change in the industry"). As such they remain relatively underreported, as Tina's use of nominal phrases to describe these events obscures the exact nature, causes and reasons for them (Fairclough, 1989).

Few characters or locations can be found in the story, and the main character is clearly the narrator, Tina. Much of her account serves to represent herself as a professional teacher but due to varying outside forces has been unable to attain a postgraduate degree. Her professionalism is asserted in the narrative in her response to the "big change" in the TESOL industry (line 22), and in opposition to another important group of characters in the story - the 50 or 75% of her colleagues who in response to the "big change" left the industry. A related dichotomy which also establishes Tina's professionalism is drawn on lines 41-45 where Tina positions herself as someone who has chosen to work in TESOL in opposition to those who worked as an English teacher "while they were waiting for something else" (lines 43-44). Thus Tina, through the dichotomies established between her and her colleagues, establishes two membership categorisation devices that position her as a professional (Sacks, 1992). These serve to counteract the doubts expressed about obtaining a master's degree on lines 50-54 and her lack of a master's degree as a whole. Story location also plays a key role in Tina's account, particularly in transitioning from complication to resolution on lines 56 and 57: "since I came here, well you know here, suddenly I started to think, 'Well, you know there is actually I can start to take this seriously'". It is assumed knowledge by Tina that "here", the university language centre at which Ken and Tina both work, is a place where postgraduate study is respected and encouraged.

Level two

In order to conduct a level two positioning analysis with naturalistic data such as these, rather than just examining Tina's account in isolation, locating Tina's account within the broader context of the interaction and its institutional setting is important. As a result, Ken's initial request for Tina's account has been included in the transcript and the analysis

here. As can perhaps be gleaned from Ken's opening statements from lines 1-8 ("So, I just want you to talk through the PM and D. This is your first one ... And it's Part C that we're looking at"), Tina's account takes place at the beginning of the PM and D meeting. It is also Tina's first PM and D meeting, a fact that Ken orients to on line 3 (see excerpt above). This is particularly relevant to the overall purpose of the meeting, as it is the first time Tina has completed the PM and D document Tina only needs to account for Part C - her plans for the future - rather than also Part B, her accomplishments in the past year. Ken orients to this fact on line 5, and then rephrases that on line 7 ("you know your plan for the future"), which is perhaps an example of recipient design, orienting to the fact that this is Tina's first PM and D meeting and she might be unaware of what terms like "Part C" entail. Ken then calls Tina to account the first objective on lines 7-8, an action which marks the interaction out as institutional talk. Explicitly calling Tina to account for the items on her PM and D meeting is a turn-taking system that is specific to the PM and D meetings analysed thus far (see Heritage & Clayman, 2010). Ken's orientation to institutional documents on line 5 ("and it's Part C we're looking so") is further evidence of this. Ken's ability in this strip of interaction to call Tina to account also indicates the asymmetry of their participation in the meeting. As the reviewer, Ken acts as chair of the meeting, setting the agenda in this Opening section of the meeting and calling Tina to account. While the level of asymmetry outside the PM and D meeting between Ken and Tina is relatively low, with Ken simply a more senior full-time teacher at the centre, in the PM and D meeting the role allocated to Ken allows him to direct the agenda at the Opening of the meeting and ask questions regarding Tina's PM and D document (see Angouri & Marra, 2011, for a further discussion of meetings as a genre and the role of chairing).

Early in Tina's account she gives a clear explanation for why this item - starting a master's degree - is on her PM and D document. Tina aborts a turn-constructive unit (TCU; Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1974; Schegloff, 2007) early in her account (lines 9-10: "I don't") in order to make clear that the objective to attain a master's degree is "straightforward" (line 9). There are two other places in the early part of Tina's account where she portrays the desire to get a postgraduate

degree: note her use of the word “actually” in “I don’t actually have a Masters” suggests having a master’s degree as somehow the normal state, along with her use of the word “clearly” on line 12. Tina also displays much meta-pragmatic concern both with authorship of the text and authorship of the narrative in lines 10-15, with statements regarding the validity of the objective (“I think it’s a pretty straightforward one”) but more importantly lines 14-15 where Tina explicitly reflects on her discourse role as one giving an account and saying how having the master’s degree was something that was “hanging over her head” was not the right phrase. This may be seen as a form of contestive humour (Holmes, 2000), while at the same time meta-pragmatically framed to avoid sanction. Ken’s response seems mixed: while he laughs quietly at first on line 16, the rising-falling-rising intonation contour of his response token indicates uncertainty (Halliday, 1967).

Tina, perhaps in response to Ken’s disapproving response token, then explains how much she has wanted to do a master’s degree course, and then refers to obstacles, firstly referring to things that have always been in her way. With Ken supplying a continuer on line 21 (“mm”), Tina goes on to discuss another issue preventing her from obtaining a master’s degree - the “big change” in the industry that resulted in great changes to conditions. Tina again shows a meta-pragmatic concern for the level of formality while simultaneously diverging from it on line 25 (“everything just went, well, can I say to hell”). She then on lines 26-27, in establishing the next part of her story, engages in an affiliative move in attributing to Ken a shared memory of the change in the industry (“I’ve forgotten what year that was but you remember the time” - see Goodwin, 1987, on forgetfulness as an interactional resource). She discusses the number of teachers that left the industry, then, in a humorous intensifier increases her estimate of the number (“I would say more than 50% of my colleagues left the industry very quickly. No, more like three-quarters ...” lines 30-31, 33). Ken indicates affiliation at this point in the story with response tokens on lines indicating his involvement and agreement (lines 36 and 38), along with his laughter at her humorous intensifier (Gardner, 2001).

Tina moves on to talk about her thoughts and feelings at this time, using a projecting clause and direct reported speech on lines 39 and 40

("I was just feeling put off, and like 'Man you can never be a professional teacher"). She begins and revises her TCU on lines 40-41 ("I'd chosen that job") to include information about how many teachers were doing the job while "They were waiting for something else" before returning to the fact that she had chosen to be a teacher and wanted to be a teacher. Evidence for the co-construction of the story is found then on line 47 when Ken interjects that it was "her profession", a theme which Tina repeats yet revises on line 48 with "my professional choice", still drawing out the distinction between her and her colleagues who were teaching while waiting for another job. Tina then returns to reporting her thoughts and feelings on why she did not want to undertake a master's degree on lines 48-54, again eliciting affiliative responses from Ken (laughter on line 51, the "m:m" possibly indicating involvement with the narrative on line 53, and agreement with "yeah" on line 55).

Tina moves to resolve the narrative on line 54 with "But then", indicating a contrast with her previous doubts with "but" and a move closer to the present in narrative time with "then", followed with a further time reference indicating a move toward the present in time with "since". Before doing so however, she shows that her doubts regarding postgraduate study continue to the present on lines 54 and 56 ("and I've continued to feel that way"). Her repeated use of "here" (lines 56 and 57) indicates joint membership of the university language centre, and her use of "you know" (lines 56 and 59) is perhaps used to invite the inferences involved in working at the language centre. In the context of the meeting and her account these inferences are probably that, unlike other workplaces, ongoing learning is respected at this language centre. This is supported by the following TCUs which again reflect Tina's thoughts and feelings - "suddenly I started to think, 'Well, you know there is actually I can start to take this seriously'" (lines 57, 59, 61), but show that she can take "this" (teaching English) seriously at the language centre, and that she is feeling the "wasted years" (line 62). Arriving as she has at the present marks the end of her narrative, but the end is again reinforced with the repetition and emphasis of her final turn - "You know, I am" (line 62). Ken then continues to call Tina to account with his next question.

Level three

Tina seeks to position herself as a professional throughout this account, but to do so is fraught with difficulty, as she needs to do so while at the same time accounting for her lack of a master's degree. This involves some complex positioning on her part. At the level of the account overall Tina's commitment to education displays a certain level of professionalism. In the level one analysis we see her defining herself as a professional in opposition to teachers who simply chose teaching as a temporary job while waiting for another. Tina establishes a position for herself as a teacher through choice, and a dedication to the profession through hard times. This is despite the precarity of her employment as a teacher, which caused her to at times question whether she could ever be a "professional" teacher. These concerns about the impact of precarious employment on her professional development are however framed as reported thoughts, to distance Tina the storyteller (with a commitment to further education) from Tina the character. In this example we also see the role reported thoughts play in Tina's account, suggesting alternative positions to the notion of the teacher as professional with a postgraduate qualification, while at the same time distancing herself from it. Tina also displays her professional status as a teacher at the level of interaction. Tina's references to the "industry" (lines 22 and 31) display a shared orientation to what this industry might be. Tina also establishes a position for herself as a teacher through affiliative moves with Ken, such as on lines 27-28 with a shared understanding of the time when conditions for teachers deteriorated.

There is also evidence that underlying Tina's account is a master narrative of the need for education. Tina orients to this master narrative early in her account; for instance, by referring to the desire to obtain a master's degree as "straightforward" (line 10), and as "clearly" (line 12) something she needs, suggests that she considers such a desire as normal. By saying that she "doesn't actually have" (line 12) a master's degree suggests this is the normal position. However, Tina expresses some ambivalence towards this master narrative. Her comment that the need for a master's degree was "hanging over my head" (line 14) suggests that rather than wishing to do a master's degree she in some sense felt compelled to do so, although after

Ken's uncertain response token at the end of line 16 she quickly asserts that she has wanted to do it several times (lines 17-19). She again raises concerns regarding the need for a master's degree on lines 50, 52 and 54 in regards to the money and time spent on it. While distancing herself from the statements again by framing her concerns as reported thoughts or feelings (line 49: "I sort of felt like"), at the same time she confesses that she still thinks this way (lines 54 and 56).

Overall it is difficult to discern a unitary subject position for Tina in this account in this particular strip of interaction. Her meta-pragmatic statements (lines 14-15, 25) suggest a disconnection between Tina and her account, so that while Tina's main discourse role is that of narrator, there is an occasional sense of distancing from her statements in the narrative. Similarly, in her positioning as someone who wants to do a master's degree, overall Tina voices a desire for further education, but through reported thoughts on the drawbacks of further education (lines 50 and 52) and again through meta-pragmatic distancing of her criticism of further education as "hanging over her head" (line 14), there is also a subtle critique of the need for a master's degree. In Tina's narrative there is also a sense of her identity not entirely being agentively performed, and that to some degree the subject positions she occupies are positioned by the context and its attendant discourses, here in particular a master narrative of further education. This is again evidenced by her meta-pragmatic concerns in her account, suggesting a degree of compulsion, and in her ambiguous relationship to the perceived need for postgraduate education. This sense of compulsion to do a master's degree, evident in the narrative, was reinforced in a post-meeting interview with Tina, in which she said why she included this item on her PM and D document was because it was expected of her to have a master's degree, and that it was a deficit of hers. Thus Tina orients to a compulsion to do further education while composing her PM and D document, and is then required to account for this item in the meeting and in doing so perform the identity position she first established in the document.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

One of the main theoretical implications of Tina's narrative is that it suggests that positioning is not entirely a process that is actively

produced by the narrator; rather, the narrator is in part positioned by the context of story, the purpose for which it is undertaken, the recipients of the story and by broader master narratives. This stands in contrast with some parts of the small story literature, particularly the work of Bamberg (2004), along with some work on identity in English language teaching contexts (for example, Barkhuizen, 2010). This oversight is perhaps an effect of their methods, relying as they do on narratives elicited in interviews rather than, as in this case, naturalistic data from institutional contexts. There is a sense here that the identity of Tina as a learner is in part one that is interpellated by the performance management system (Althusser, 1971/2008). There is, however, enough 'wobble room' (Erickson, 2001) for Tina to voice doubts about the master narrative of continuing education.

Aside from theoretical implications of this analysis of an account, there are also more pragmatic and practical implications for how teacher's identity and work are organised and acknowledged in university language centres. The master narrative of ongoing education that Tina orients to shares a certain affinity to what Scott Thornbury (2001) has termed the 'academic model' of teacher professionalism. Thornbury writes that in response to a lack of status for native speaker English teachers in Western contexts, an 'academic model' of teacher professionalism is one form of professionalism supported in parts of the TESOL industry. While low barriers to entry for teachers prevent the kind of professional closure that professions such as doctors and lawyers have achieved, professionalism within the 'academic model' is pursued through the creation of a professional body of knowledge within which teachers are trained and qualified. Thornbury critiques this model in part by suggesting that this perpetuates a dependency upon authority in teacher education. The 'academic model' and its valorisation of a body of knowledge is however central to notions of the university, and by extension the university language centre which is the institutional context of this account, resulting in Tina's view that a master's degree is expected of her.

Another important issue that Tina's narrative raises is employment conditions, and the effect this has on teacher's professional development. Tina talks of a great change in the industry after which

conditions went to “hell” (line 25), which led her to question whether it was possible to become a professional teacher. While issues with employment conditions such as casualisation of academic staff have been addressed in academic literature (for example, Courtois & O’Keefe, 2015; Ryan *et al.*, 2013), it remains relatively under-researched in TESOL (although see Stanley, 2016, for a broader account of the effects of casualisation on the career trajectories of Australian ELICOS teachers, and Sun, 2010, for survey data on this from the USA). Tina’s narrative makes a connection between employment conditions and professional development, a connection that is crucial if working within the ‘academic model’ of teacher professionalism, and one that is often overlooked. Bill Johnston (2003) writes “in order to place a proper value on professional development in ELT we must take into account the socio-political conditions under which teachers work” (p. 108). This is certainly the case with Tina, who in her narrative positions herself as someone whose educational development has been impacted by socio-political realities such as poor employment conditions.

There are of course clear limits to what can be extrapolated from a single narrative. There is also further work to be done in this context – more collection and comparison of narratives taken from both PM and D meetings and interviews, and triangulation of data in this site and possibly with other sites. Further collection of teacher narratives in naturalistic settings would also contribute to our understanding of how teachers position themselves or are positioned in discourse, and how identities emerge or are constructed in real world settings both inside and outside the classroom. It is hoped, however, that the present study makes some contribution towards research on language teacher identity, as well as suggesting further areas for study.

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APPENDIX A: 'MASTERS' SHORT STORY TRANSCRIPT

- 1 Ken: I just: want you to talk [through] uh >the PM and D=
2 Tin: [ok]
3 Ken: =this <is your first one>=
4 Tin: =YEAH (0.5) [yes
5 Ken: [and it's uh (.) Part C we're looking [so=
6 Tin: [yes]
7 Ken: =you know your plan for the future. Can you tell me
8 Ken: about your first (0.2) [objective the] (0.2) ma[sters]
9 Tin: [ok part-time] YES well [because]
10 Tin: I don't I think it's a pretty straightforward one just
11 Tin: because I don't actually have a Masters (1.0) eh:
12 Tin: [degree] (.) so that's always clearly the thing that's=
13 Ken: [mm]
14 Tin: =been >I was going to say< hanging over my head=
15 Tin: =[but perhaps] that's not the right £phrase HEH heh [heh]=
16 Ken: [[[chuckles]]] [n: o:k]
17 Tin: =and that I you know I mean I've wanted I've been
18 Tin: teaching English for a long time and I wanted to
19 Tin: eh I mean: I wanted to do a Masters degree but things
20 Tin: have always (.) been in my [way:]. And then (.) when=
21 Ken: [mm]
22 Tin: =(0.7) there was a big change in (0.5) [industry] >a few=
23 Ken: [mm]
24 Tin: =years ago oh you know <especially conditions, pay,
25 Tin: everything just went (1.0) well, can I say to hell.=

26 Ken: [HUH huh]

27 Tin: = [And:] um: (0.5) and at that time >l've forgotten what

28 Tin: year that was but [you] remember the time <but at that=

29 Ken: [yeah]

30 Tin: =time (0.7) eh: I: would say more than fifty percent

31 Tin: of my colleagues left the [industry very quickly .hhh=

32 Ken: [m:m]

33 Tin: =(.) no, more like three quarters by [th(h)e- >by the end=

34 Ken: [huh huh=

35 Tin: =of that year] three quarters of [them had left and the=

36 Ken: huh huh =yeah] [yeah:]

37 Tin: =others were talking about [leaving.< .hhhh And I was=

38 Ken: [yeah:]

39 Tin: =just feeling (.) put off and like man: you can never=

40 Tin: =be a professional teacher[:.] You know and I'd chosen=

41 Ken: [m:m]

42 Tin: =that job >like a lot of people chose< were doing the job=

43 Tin: =a-as a (.) something to do while they were waiting for=

44 Tin: =something [else: but for me at that time I'd actually=

45 Ken: [m:m]

46 Tin: =chosen [that. I wanted to do it. [it] was=

47 Ken: [so that was, like your, profession. Yeah]

48 Tin: =my professional choice and I did feel (0.5) hh kind=

49 Tin: =of unable to really at that point I sort of felt like=

50 Tin: =well what's the point of going through the [agony,=

- 51 Ken: [Heh heh]
- 52 Tin: =the work and (.) now,days the [money ah involved in a=
- 53 Ken: [m:m]
- 54 Tin: =master's [degree]. But then, since I, and I've continued=
- 55 Ken: [yeah:]
- 56 Tin: =to feel that way, but since I came here, well you know,=
- 57 Tin: =[here] suddenly we- I started to think, well: (.)=
- 58 Ken: [m:m]
- 59 Tin: =you know [there is act- I can] actually start to take=
- 60 Ken: [after all ha ha ha]
- 61 Tin: =this seriously, and now in a sense I'm feeling those=
- 62 Tin: =wasted years. You know, I [am::
- 63 Ken: [m:m. Do you wish you had=
- 64 Ken: =done it earlier?

APPENDIX B: TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTION

[yes	
[yes]	Overlapping talk by two speakers
=	Indicates there is no gap in the talk between lines
don't	Marked stress
m:m	Indicates an elongated sound, or rising/falling intonation
YEAH	Loud volume
(.)	Short untimed pause
(0.5)	Timed pause
<this is>	Slow delivery
>this is<	Fast delivery
((laughs))	Contextual information

