

# [Finding your Footing: stance and voice in student-teacher asynchronous interaction]

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**[Abstract]** *This paper attempts to contribute to the debate on the interpretation of meaning-making and identity construction as intertextual phenomena. Adopting the perspective of discourse analysis, relevant extracts from a questionnaire on attitudes to accents are examined by applying the theories of framing (Bateson, 1972; Goffman, 1974; Tannen and Wallat, 1987) and positioning (Davies and Harré, 1990), also exploring the concept of the stance triangle (Du Bois, 2007). The study argues that the dynamics of a hierarchical interaction are more reliably revealed when focusing on authentic discursive presentations of self rather than adhering to ritualised interactional patterns.*

**[Keywords]** *language attitudes; framing; positioning; stance; interactional patterns; asynchronous interaction*

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## [1] Introduction

As Czech university students partake in a distinctly hierarchical language culture (see also *standard language culture* in Milroy, 2007; or Labov, 1970), it is practically impossible to escape the language code of power asymmetry, as well as the dichotomy of face saving/threatening acts and their practical implications in the academic social space. To illustrate, the symbolic value of honorifics used in academia can easily transcend mere symbolism and become instrumental in power assertion. This paper aims to explore a limited sample of data drawn from an academic questionnaire in order to gain insights into the nature of the participation and power distribution that this specific genre invites. What is also scrutinised is the use of frames and footing (Goffman, 1987) that this discourse type induces. Finally, the status of mediated quasi-interaction (Thompson, 1995) is considered within the notion of participation frameworks.

To briefly introduce the data, a micro-corpus was extracted from the responses of our students, pre-service EFL teachers, to a questionnaire that was part of a project aiming at developing innovative approaches to teacher preparation. The main body of the questionnaire was divided into three sections and introduced to our students in an on-line format. There was space following each section in which the respondent could leave comments on the preceding questions or anything else they considered noteworthy.

The principal advantage that the less censored responses in the comments sections arguably represent is greater response authenticity in terms of authorship and autonomy. The potential contrast between the discourse of the questionnaire and the comments section lies, in my view, primarily in the degree of autonomy accorded to the respondent. As the amount of control the author of the questionnaire has over the answers is relatively high and some of the questions themselves are highly limiting due to their multiple-choice format, the respondents might be providing answers that are not fully or genuinely expressive of what their real thoughts and attitudes are.

Obviously, the perception of authority is a diachronic nexus of specific ideas and beliefs, and an oversimplification of this kind needs to be acknowledged as such. However, as a theoretical concept, *authority reverence*, or less ostentatious *social deference*, can serve as a constant to which the analysed interactional patterns can be related throughout this text.

It can only be hypothesised whether the obtained data would yield different results had they been amassed in a less hierarchical language culture. What can be stated with much greater certainty, however, is that the majority of the respondents displayed what could be called a polite emancipation (see Fairclough, 1989), respecting authority with confidence or revoking it.

## [2] Theoretical Framework

In relation to the interactional context mentioned above, my main research interest in this paper concerns the question of how the homonymy of behaviours (Tannen and Wallat, 1987) becomes manifest in the analysed discourse, the focus being conflicting frames.

These are linguistically marked by pertinent metamessages and register/frame shifting on the part of the respondents. Therefore, the studied micro-corpus comprises data that reflect the respondents' voluntary involvement in an unscripted interaction within the ritualised context of an academic questionnaire. Specifically, the respondents' retrospective glosses and metamessages following each of the three parts of the questionnaire are scrutinised. These comments often represent a certain balancing act in terms of revoking (in this context literally using voice to shift the interactional frame) the unfavourable hierarchy of the teacher-student interaction (see Fairclough, 1989) and asserting a more symmetrical type of communicative dynamics. Therefore, it should be emphasised that the data drawn from the questionnaire itself and from the comments sections are significantly different. This difference obtains between the relatively ritualised interaction taking place in the questionnaire and the authentic spontaneous discursive representation of the comments. Additionally, the intertextual dimension of my data is determined mainly by frames and positions that are principally different from the default setting of synchronous/non-anonymous teacher-student interaction that represents the habitual communicative context. Consequently, both textual and social conventions are negotiated and contested.

As to the research domains explored here, I mainly draw on methods of discourse analysis (Brown and Yule, 1983; Schiffrin, Tannen and Hamilton, 2003), and, specifically, of critical discourse analysis (CDA) (van Dijk, 1993; Fairclough and Wodak, 1997), while acknowledging the influence of Foucault's view on ideological discourses (Foucault, 1972/2010). Additionally, I make use of the concept of *positioning* (Davies and Harré, 1990) introduced within social psychology, also exploring the notion of *the stance triangle* (Du Bois, 2007). The stance triangle represents three different aspects of the stance act, which can be defined as a public act of an individual engaging in dialogic communication. The stance is achieved by means of "simultaneously evaluating objects, positioning subjects (self and others), and aligning with other subjects, with respect to any salient dimension of the sociocultural field" (Du Bois, 2007, p. 163). More peripherally, to anchor my theoretical point of departure in a broader socio-cultural context, I apply the theory of frames, particularly referring to social anthropology (Bateson, 1972) and sociology (Goffman, 1974). Spanning the approaches of anthropology, sociology, and social psychology, Tannen and Wallat (1987) propose an interactional model of shifting frames that significantly informs my own analytical view.

In his collection of essays *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*, as part of an essay entitled "*Theory of Play and Fantasy*", Bateson develops the concept of frames, saying that a psychological frame can be defined as a delimitation of a class or set of messages or meaningful actions (1972, p. 186). It follows that frames are involved in the evaluation of the messages they encapsulate, or they assist us in understanding these messages by reminding us that they are "mutually relevant and the messages outside the frame may be ignored" (Bateson, 1972, p. 188). Elsewhere, Bateson describes interactions of non-human mammals from the perspective of the evolution of play, giving this example: "The playful nip denotes the bite, but it does not denote what would be denoted by the bite." (1972, p. 180).

Goffman (1983) proposes a similar understanding of frames by focusing on schemata of interpretation and the moments in (verbal and non-verbal) interaction that bring different frames to the fore – which, in consequence, induces changes to the interpretative schema. As framing is inseparable from discourse roles and how they are linguistically indexed, for the sake of illustration it is useful to mention that the indexical choices made by a speaker categorise their audience. This categorisation is conducted by assigning roles or *positioning* (Davies and Harré, 1990) the other participants. In the same vein, “audiences construct speakers” (Johnstone, 2018, p. 153).

One potential perspective on how speakers orient to the roles of themselves and others is represented by *footing* (Goffman, 1983). Footing is “the alignment we take up to ourselves and the others present as expressed in the way we manage the production or reception of an utterance” (1983, p. 128). The most famous example of footing and its shift is provided by Goffman when describing the so-called Nixon sally. The situation included President Nixon and Helen Thomas in one of many press meetings in the Oval Office of the White House. Ms Thomas, a long-term White House correspondent, reportedly appeared wearing a pants outfit, to which Nixon reacted by asking how her husband liked that and requesting a pirouette so that everybody could have a better look. Goffman (1983) calls this abrupt change of interpretative schema (from a press conference to small talk) a change of footing. Here, Nixon clearly realigns his footing by choosing to align with the reporter’s gender rather than her profession. Linguistically, the Nixon change of footing is signalled by a certain level of code switching (Blom and Gumperz, 1972), which is also accompanied non-verbally by the President rising from his desk (Goffman, 1983).

Moreover, my main reason to employ the concept of positioning (Davies and Harré, 1990) stems from the problems inherent in the use of the concept of role in developing a psychology of selfhood. The concept of positioning helps focus attention on dynamic aspects of interactional encounters, in contrast to the way in which the traditional use of the concept of role serves to highlight static, formal, and ritualistic aspects. As both notions are expedient for my analysis, I employ them as two analytical perspectives on audience design (Bell, 1984).

In designing my current research, I continue a line of enquiry commenced by previous research conducted by my colleague Kristýna Červinková Poesová and myself on the role of accent in shaping pre-service teachers’ attitudes and identity. Our first paper (Lancová and Červinková Poesová, 2019) focuses on self-report perspectives on accentedness in Czech pre-service EFL teachers. Our second research topic (Červinková Poesová and Lancová, 2020) shifts its focus to the role that accents play in the process of forming non-native teacher identities in the same group of informants – specifically, what role pre-service teachers ascribe to accent in their perception of social authority, satisfaction, intelligibility, and teachers’ expertise.

As I expound below, the main research questions discussed below concern the following points:

- RQ1: How do the participants signal that they are (re)claiming their right to frame interaction, and does this yield potential changes in alignment with their interlocutor?
- RQ2: What are their response strategies and potential changes to the topic discussed?
- RQ3: Is there any occurrence of conflicting frames? If so, what is the purpose and nature of these changes of footing?

## **[3] Data and Method**

The original body of data was amassed via a questionnaire that was devised for the purposes of research forming part of a Charles University project aimed at developing innovative approaches to teacher preparation and training. A micro-corpus of data was extracted from the questionnaire responses, solely for the purposes of this study. There are both qualitative and quantitative differences between the main body of data and the derived micro-corpus, and these differences are described below.

### **[3.1] Data collection**

Broadly speaking, the original research explores the language attitudes of our students, pre-service teachers at the Faculty of Education, Charles University, and aims to search for ways of putting the newly gained knowledge to use in our teaching and curriculum improvement, particularly in enhancing interdisciplinary cooperation. The questionnaire consists of three parts: Introduction, Accent and me, and Accent and teachers. The 44 questions inquire firstly about personal background including age, gender, nationality, and a brief SLA (Second language acquisition) autobiography. Secondly, the respondents' attitudes to their own accents and accents in general are observed. Lastly, the role that accent(s) play in ELT is explored, including how pre-service teachers might approach the phenomenon of accent variation in their prospective careers.

After piloting, the final version was administered online from November to December 2018 in the form of a Google Form survey, which uses freeware from the Google company. The response rate was approximately 50%, reaching a total 256 participants.

As concerns the micro-corpus of data amassed for the purposes of this study, it consists of responses in three optional comments sections that appeared as a follow-up to each of the three main question sections. Unlike the comments, all the questions were obligatory in order for the respondent to complete the questionnaire. The sole instructions appearing at the top of the comments section were formulated as follows: "This is a space for any comments you wish to add to section 1(2,3) of the questionnaire."

Logically, the type of responses obtained from the comments sections differs to a certain extent from the main body of data; however, these differences will be dealt with specifically in the Results section below. Broadly speaking, the main difference in the status of the comments section is its being a framework within a framework, i.e. a distinctive

subsection of a questionnaire. Moreover, it clearly invites much less planned and scripted participant discourse.

Regarding the qualitative distinction from the full data set, one of the most illustrative examples of an unplanned speech event in this particular participant framework is offered by respondent no. 187 (henceforth Rxy), who reacts by writing the following: *I am not consciously aware of having a specific accent, although rationally I realise it must be so*. More importantly, however, a cinematic GIF image is attached depicting an African American female speaker in conversation, who claims that she does not have an accent while styling an overly confident comical facial expression. The unplanned character is clearly cued by the use of a second order pragmatic principle, i.e. the irony expressed by the GIF image.

Quantitatively, the parameters of the micro-corpus can be described with considerably more comparative ease. The comparison is presented in the following section.

### [3.2] Respondents

The total number of respondents was 256, while in the micro-corpus it was only 49; the latter group thus represents roughly 20% of the total. It can be expected that this group consists of students who wanted to contribute beyond the standard scope of the questionnaire. All respondents were attending one of the four study programmes offered by the Department of English Language and Literature at the time when the questionnaire was administered. The most numerous group (n=161, 63%) consisted of students of the three-year Bachelor's programme, out of which nearly half were first-year students, who constituted almost a third of the total number (27%). Interestingly, the involvement of first-year students drops considerably when the micro-corpus is concerned, to a mere 18%. Contrastively, as regards academic experience, 33% of the micro-corpus respondents are Master's programme participants, while in total this group constitutes only 16%. This tendency is not mirrored by a change in the average participant age, which is merely 6 months higher.

Concerning language proficiency (as defined by CEFR), the micro-corpus displays the greatest difference in the self-reported B2 level. While the majority of micro-corpus respondents still rate their English competency at level C1 or C2 (65%), the B2 level participation decreases to 14% from the original 33% in the main corpus of data, leaving space for a wider distribution of the self-reported levels at the margins of the scale, i.e. the ones below level B2 and of native/native-like status.

Quite predictably, the full research sample was dominated by females (77%); however, there is a certain downward shift in the ratio in favour of male participants in the micro-corpus to 69% of female participation.

### [3.3] Data description and method of analysis

In this paper, the focus is on the qualitative analysis of the comments occurring after each of the three main sections of a language attitudes questionnaire. The status of the

comments differs considerably from the rest of the questionnaire, as they are not obligatory, unlike all the questions. It should, however, be pointed out that the questionnaire format did not make it possible for respondents to revisit their posted answers or to choose the order of the questions, which might be a significant factor in the respondents' motivation to give additional comments.

Primarily, the obtained data capture potentially emotive responses to the communicative situation instigated by the invitation to give comments on the preceding questionnaire section. Secondly, they demonstrate a factual informative value, as they reflect individual needs to elaborate on information already provided or to express personal assessments of the questionnaire's quality.

Regarding the format of the comments, they generally do not exceed the length of a short paragraph, and they mostly occur in the form of complete sentences. However, as will be discussed below, most respondents employed graphic conventions that are not standard for written discourse in English, such as emoticons or subject deletion.

As to the method of analysis, firstly the data were categorised alongside the relevant three questionnaire sections, which represents not only a formal division but also a content-based classification. The main topical areas are roughly pre-determined by the focus of each section, namely SLA personal history in section 1, attitudes to personal accents in section 2 and attitudes to accents in ELT in section 3.

Secondly, all responses within these three categories were divided into two general types based on the overall nature of the information provided – specifically, personal and impersonal assertions. To illustrate, the personal type of assertion is expressed by R25 in their comment on section 2: “I work at the airport and I meet many people from various countries who speak English. I always recognize their nationality because of their accent.” In contrast, the impersonal type of assertion can be exemplified by R114 in their comment on section 3: “It is important to accept all accents around us, on the other hand, teacher should be good pattern of accent.” This data division enables the observation of a fundamental distributional pattern that delineates a certain structure of expectation concerning the occurring frames and their potential shifts, or changes of footing. Thus, thirdly, the types of frames occurring across the aforementioned categories were identified.

Logically, qualitative data of this type require a multi-level analysis, as the different frameworks that are involved overlap, yet their scope differs in breadth. In accordance with Johnstone (2018), I apply a macro- and microscopic view of discourse participants and their interactional behaviour. The macro scale encompasses the concepts of power, solidarity, and social and discursive roles, while the micro scale comprises the concepts of stance, style (Johnstone, 2018, p. 156), and voice (Johnstone, 2020).

Consequently, the macroscopic approach determined two main types of participant frameworks, namely consensual and conflicting. From the microscopic perspective, the consensual frames are categorised as evaluative and elaborating, the former providing assessment of the questionnaire and the latter adding specific information. Furthermore, the conflicting frames are classified into pragmatic and discoursal, the former concerning dialogic context and the latter concerning sequential context. The notion of conflict

is understood not as explicit discord, but as any shift in the ritualised student – teacher alignment, which involves the process of specific stance-taking (see Du Bois, 2007). This stance is represented primarily by re-positioning the student self and aligning with the teacher/expert role by means of critically evaluating the object of the questionnaire. Additionally, this perspective is supplemented by elements of topic and response analysis (Shuy, 2003, Chapter 22, p. 439).

## [4] Results

As mentioned above, the initial data categorisation divided the obtained responses by topic into three groups. The total number of micro-corpus respondents was 49, and they provided 68 comments. Except for four respondents (8% of the micro-corpus total) who reacted in all three comments sections, all the other respondents typically placed comments in only one section. This outcome might be understood as reflecting the fact that the involvement was perceived as purely voluntary, which was the primary intention behind devising this part of the questionnaire. Interestingly, the highest return rate occurred in section 3 (n=33, 49% of the total number of the micro-corpus responses), followed by section 2 (n=20, 29% of total). Predictably, section 1, inquiring mainly about personal data, did not elicit a particularly high rate of response (n=15, 22%). Nevertheless, as this division was imposed by the questionnaire format and does not display any discernible regularity of occurrence, the first outline of the results focuses on the distinction between personal and impersonal assertions.

Predictably, clearer distributional patterns occur when the respondents' free choice of linguistic devices is accounted for. In section 1, the ratio of personal assertions is the highest (n=9, 60% of all section 1 comments). Section 2 features a slightly lower number (n=11, 55%), and section 3 presents the lowest rate (n=17, 52%). Relating the last level of categorisation, i.e. types of frames, to the content and form of the assertions in the different sections, a moderate tendency can be observed for the personal assertions to represent predominantly consensual frames. Contrarily, the impersonal assertions, or a combination of both personal and impersonal assertions in one comment, display a greater tendency to represent conflicting frames. In section 1, there is no conflicting frame present within the personal assertions and the overall ratio of the occurring conflicting frames features in 20% of the comments only. Section 2 witnesses a rise in the ratio of conflicting frames (40%), while 27% of the personal assertions contain such frames. In section 3 the growth continues to rise to 52% of conflicting frame comments overall, with 35% of the personal assertions displaying conflicting frames.

Considering the most complex level of analysis, the consensual and conflicting frames occur in a relatively balanced distribution, with 53% of the comments containing consensual frames, 43% containing conflicting frames, and 4% of the comments displaying a combination of both. To illustrate, an example of a consensual frame can be represented by R187 in section 2: "My perception is that while I can try to imitate, I don't really succeed against any discerning listener so I am critical rather than optimistic." Contrari-



ly, the R253 commenting on section 3 expresses a conflicting frame in this clear criticism of the questionnaire: “Do not have possibility for NEUTRAL questions – this is the wrong evaluation method.” As to the last group of comments that combine both types of frames, I have selected R218 in section 2, who chooses to elaborate on two of their previous responses referring to them explicitly: “Q16 – A FREAKING GOOD IDEA!!! I HAVE TO TRY! Q28 – but I like accents of: Ewan McGregor, Alan Rickman, Donald Trump, and Benedict Cumberbatch a lot.” Quite symbolically, these three examples display a certain correlation between the type of frame and assertion: the consensual comment is personal, the conflicting comment is impersonal, while the combined type displays firstly an impersonal formulation followed by personal ones.

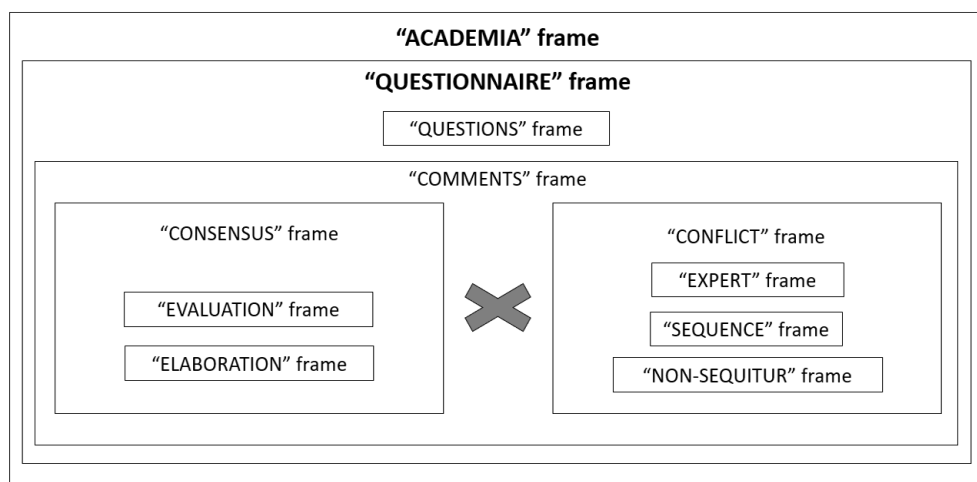
To shift focus to the qualitative aspects of the obtained data, a finer distinction should be drawn within the two major types of frames. It is useful to subcategorise the consensual framework into evaluative and elaborative frames. The evaluative frames are distinguished by what Du Bois (2007) describes as their evaluative target or object of stance. Generally speaking, evaluation can be seen as “the process whereby a stancetaker orients to an object of stance and characterises it as having some specific quality or value” (Du Bois, 2007, p. 143). In the given context, the evaluative target can be represented by the complete questionnaire, its sections or the individual questions. The second evaluative subcategory comprises elaboration, which takes the form of adding information on a specific topic or question in the preceding section of the questionnaire.

Furthermore, the conflicting framework can be divided into the pragmatic and discursal type of frames. The former concerns primarily the dialogic context obtaining between the teacher’s instructions and the student’s reaction. Here the interpretative focus is on the politeness strategies and face-threatening or face-saving acts, e.g. R167: “Unnecessary repeated questions, could be shorter, why do we have to write yes/no and then specify in another question?”. The latter considers primarily the interpretation in sequential context of what textually precedes the given comment, e.g. R7: “Do not agree with the new term ‘Englishes’ there’s just one model of English, always has been, BBC English, and this is just all nonsense to me”. Thus, the interaction unfolds between the instructions/the teacher and the response/the student, but also between a particular part of the questionnaire and the expressed attitude or emotion it instigates.

The schematisation of frames uncovered a need for a more specific labelling within the conflicting frames. This seems logical, as they offer the greatest interactional and linguistic variation in the context of the given data. Namely, the conflict at pragmatic level is best represented by the expert frame, while at discursal level the non-sequitur frame is added as a counterweight to the sequential one. What is understood by a non-sequitur frame is a type of response that has no clear relation to the questionnaire itself and is only very distantly topically related to the subject matter. To exemplify the added non-sequitur category, I have selected a comment on section 3 by R56: “In Czech Republic, lots of Eng. users use the so called ‘Manager English’, unluckily this ‘accent’ contains mistakes such as mispronunciation of the word occur and event and often pays no attention to word as well as sentence stress”.

In Figure 1 below, the structure of continuing (Academia and Questionnaire), embedded (Questions and Comments) and conflicting (Consensus and Conflict) frames is schematised for greater clarity. The Academia and Questionnaire frame are continuing, as the interaction analysed in this text is made possible only thanks to our (i.e. the teachers' and students') collective participation in university education and the questionnaire. Both the continuing frames determine the default footing of the participant framework, which is a priori hierarchical. Thus, the nature of the comments frames is judged as consensual or conflicting within this default setting. The individual entries in the Questions and Comments are logically embedded in the encompassing Questionnaire frame. Moreover, within the Comments frame, the Consensus and Conflict frames are marked as clashing by the highlighted x sign.

**Figure 1**  
Participant Framework Schematisation



## [5] Research Implications

In his discussion of response strategies in the legal context, Shuy (2003) mentions, *inter alia*, the strategy of keeping silent. From this perspective, my data occur on a notional scale which shows that 80% of respondents chose to stay silent altogether in the comments sections. The opposite end of the scale is represented by four respondents (2% of the questionnaire total) who reacted to all the communicative tasks, i.e. all the questions and all the comments sections. Within the last group of respondents, the answers can be graded from minimal single entries using merely the negative particle to full paragraphs. Obviously, these quantitative proportions reflect the fact that the micro-corpus respondents are a minority of all the responding students. The current qualitative results might have or might not have been replicated in the sample as a whole if all the respondents had opted to react in the comments section. However, the voluntary decision to stay silent

is a highly valuable and a relatively eloquent choice that might be interpreted as reflecting a neutral attitude to the communicative tasks posed by the questionnaire. It can also be understood as an imaginary vote for the status quo in the hypothetical hierarchical framework of academia.

Concerning the qualitative aspects of the data, the response and topic analysis (Shuy, 2003) has shown that the main purpose of responding was the desire to specify a concrete answer to a previous question, offer additional explanation, or, contrarily, claim the respondent's right to frame their own interactional contribution, most commonly asserting an opinion. Furthermore, the main response strategies are elaborating and specifying, qualifying agreement or justifying disagreement, and changing the subject.

Having outlined the interactional *why* and *how*, the *who* should also be specified. Statistically, the most significant group of respondents that can be seen as homogeneous based on the criterion of their academic experience are the first-year students, who constitute almost a third of the total number (27%) responding to our original research request. It is thus useful to observe any potential changes in their degree of involvement between the major questionnaire data and the micro-corpus. Interestingly, the involvement of freshman students drops considerably when the micro-corpus is concerned (from 27% to 18%). What is significant about this narrowed-down group of first-year respondents is a discernible tendency to use conflicting frames. The decrease in participation in this group might be caused by personal awareness of a relatively low level of academic experience, which might be inauspicious for the less controlled type of interactional involvement that the comments section provides. Contrarily, the impetus to participate might be informed by the need to express criticism or assert identity that counters the hierarchical expectations. This is also supported by response analysis, as is illustrated by R94, a first-year student, in reaction to section 1: "Is reading a book actually an exposure to English accent?". This comment pertains to question number 10 enquiring about the types of exposure to English accents in a multiple-choice format including the option books/magazines/online texts.

Additionally, concerning language proficiency (as defined in the CEFR), the micro-corpus displays a comparatively low B2 level participation with regard to the full data set. This is related to the overall lower number of first-year students that opted to voice their stance in the comments sections and the considerably higher participation of self-reported native or native-like speakers. This outcome could indicate positive correlation of the attained language competence and sufficient self-confidence and sense of entitlement in terms of voicing an opinion. In summary, those students who feel their knowledge of English is proficient seem to be more ready and motivated to offer a personal opinion.

As to the interactional *what*, the micro-corpus should not be judged solely within the normative framework of written language, as the comments are written in terms of the digital medium but are rather spoken in character. This claim is supported by the occurrence of specific linguistic cues (Milroy and Milroy, 2000, pp. 116-117) that signal the textually expressed stance-taking or the potential changes of footing. These clues

are categorised into consensual (e.g. active voice) and conflicting (e.g. subject deletion), and they are exemplified below. Furthermore, as most of the responses react to a preceding section of the questionnaire, there is a clear reliance on the “immediate context to express propositions”, which is typical of “relatively unplanned discourse” (Ochs, 1979, p. 62) as opposed to planned discourse. Equally, this predominant tendency of the data indicates its overall spoken nature.

From the perspective of relatively unplanned spoken discourse, the analysed responses can be classified as primarily *listener-oriented* as opposed to *message-oriented* (Brown, 1982), or *interactional* rather than *transactional* (Brown and Yule, 1983). Therefore, the linguistic cues differ mainly according to their occurrence in either consensual or conflicting participant frameworks. The consensual linguistic cues are predominantly personal structures, active voice, and endophoric (anaphoric) reference.

To exemplify, the following comments are categorised as consensual, with their linguistic cues marked in bold and the relevant questionnaire items preceding them in italics and square brackets. All the following extracts relate to section 2 of the questionnaire, where mostly open-ended (Q25) or yes/no (Q11) questions are used.

[Q25. *Out of the most common non-native accents (e.g. Spanish, French, German, Russian, Chinese), do you find any very difficult to understand? Please specify:*] Indian English does not sound **pleasant to me** (R224, section 2)

[Q11. *Do you have an accent when speaking English?*] **I think** that my accent is strong but not exactly Czech. It is more of a mix of all kinds of accents that I have been exposed to and tried to (**partly subconsciously**) imitate. (R48, section 2)

[Q25. *Out of the most common non-native accents (e.g. Spanish, French, German, Russian, Chinese), do you find any very difficult to understand? Please specify:/Q26. If so, which non-native accent(s) do you find more difficult to understand than others? Please specify:*] **Q25 and Q26** seem to have the same meaning **to me**. (R35, section 2)

In contrast, the conflicting cues are mostly represented by impersonal structures, subject deletion, exophoric reference and a specific contextual use of graphic conventions – such as inverted commas for distancing, non-standard use of punctuation, and non-capitalisation. Both types of framework make use of emoticons and parentheticals.

For illustration, the following are examples of the conflicting participant framework, with their linguistic cues marked in bold and the relevant questionnaire items preceding them in italics and square brackets. All the following extracts relate to section 3 of the questionnaire, where the answer format is a Likert scale ranging from ‘agree strongly’ to ‘disagree strongly’.

[Q39. *English teachers should expose students to a variety of non-native accents in lessons./Q43. I am acquainted with the term English as a Lingua Franca.*] **Do not agree** with the new term “**Englishes**” there’s just one model of English, **always has been**, BBC English, and this is just all nonsense to me. (R7, section 3)

[Q44. *If one’s speech is understandable, some mother tongue pronunciation features are acceptable.*] If one’s speech is understandable, some mother tongue pronunciation features

are acceptable: **yes, but not** in university lessons (R92, section 3) “**live and let live**” (R120, section 3)

While example R7 and R92 represent the pragmatic level of a conflicting frame of the ‘expert’ type, example R120 illustrates the non-sequitur type at the discoursal level (see Fig. 1 above). In the case of the latter, the relevant questionnaire item is missing, as it is not clear to which part of the questionnaire exactly (or if at all) the response is related.

Considering the research questions, the data seem to indicate that positively oriented or neutral messages within the consensual framework dominantly use personal structures, while negatively oriented messages within the conflicting framework are more commonly formulated using impersonal structures.

Example R94 above can be seen as representative of a typical strategy of distancing while expressing negative or conflicting content. This response pertaining to the conflicting framework (R94 in reaction to section 1: “Is reading a book actually an exposure to English accent?”) provides an illustrative answer to RQ1 on how participants signal that they are claiming their right to frame interaction and whether this act changes their alignment with the interlocutor. The question is clearly a criticism expressed in interrogative form, and after a closer analysis it is evident that its secondary discourse function, and its communicative purpose, is a negative assertion reprimanding the questionnaire’s authors for their inconsistency, i.e. reading a book is not an exposure to English accent. Thus, the hierarchical default roles and the typically attributed participant communicative strategies are reversed.

Specifically, regarding example RQ1, it should be mentioned that frame shifts and changes of alignment are performed either explicitly or implicitly. The former can be illustrated by R187: “My perception is that [...]”, while the latter can be exemplified by R92: “If one’s speech is understandable, some mother tongue pronunciation aspects are acceptable [...]”. Predictably, the degree of explicitness correlates with the above-mentioned employment of personal and impersonal structures. As can be observed in examples R187 and R92, explicit signalling tends to use personal structures and occurs in a consensual framework. Conversely, implicit signalling tends to be impersonal and expresses conflicting frames.

As to the nature of the changes of footing in conflicting frames, regarding RQ3, the observed comments tend to represent a positive face assertion (Brown and Levinson, 1987), particularly in the form of granting advice or expressing an expert opinion on the topic at hand. In the context of mutual face vulnerability which is established initially by a speech act that primarily threatens the addressee’s negative face (i.e. the teacher asks the student to fill in a questionnaire, which impacts the ensuing interaction by creating asymmetrical power distribution), such use of politeness strategies is indicative of the amount of the perceived threat to the hearer’s face. The more substantial the perceived threat, the more likely it is that the speaker will respond using negative rather than positive politeness strategies (Brown and Levinson, 1987). In the analysed data, the most common positive politeness strategies representing expert identity are the following

(emphasis mine): asserting knowledge (R87: “pron. mistakes can be occurring across the whole system”), giving reasons (R94: “hard to compare when there is no reference point”), or using in-group identity markers (R224: “I wish to equip my students”). In contrast, the most common negative politeness strategies are being direct/openly critical (R88: “the question [you are posing in the questionnaire] is unclear”), using questions (R94: “is reading [a book] an exposure to accent?”), and impersonalising/using passive structures (R114: “it is important to accept all accents”). The aforementioned examples document a tendency to employ terminology adequate to the formal academic register which thus bears witness to the respondent’s expertise.

Arguably, the purpose of these communicative strategies is to establish a certain balancing act in terms of revoking the unfavourable hierarchy of the teacher-student interaction and asserting a more symmetrical type of communicative dynamics. In other words, such a strategy could demonstrate that the footing of the interrogating teacher is shifted to a position on a par with the interrogated student. Therefore, it would be beneficial to analyse these communicative strategies in line with the theory of *politeness* and *face* (Goffman, 1967; Leech, 1983; Brown and Levinson, 1987). This particular analytical perspective, however, is beyond the scope of the current study. Moreover, the micro-corpus data presented above are of highly limited scope. Our primary intention in designing the original questionnaire was to map which accent-related discussion topics, personal concerns and language attitudes seem to display the highest degree of salience for our students and to elaborate on these in subsequent research. Thus, our focus will from now on turn to the attitudinal correlates of teacher and expert identity in the relevant sections of the data set in the form of in-depth interviews.

## [6] Conclusion

One of the most salient features the data discussed above bring to the fore are the emergent expert identities as observed in a group of pre-service EFL teachers. In his recent study on the shifting forms of expertise in TV documentaries, Chovanec (2016) introduces a descriptive scale that positions the TV presenter as a semi-expert between “the lay audience, the experts, and the omniscient voiceover that adds yet another level of expertise to the entire participation framework of the programme” (Chovanec, 2016, p. 18). It is conceivable to draw a parallel between the documentary framework and the questionnaire framework. If we suppose that the central role of interest is taken by the *semi-expert* represented by the respondent, a pre-service teacher, the *lay audience* can be their current or future students, the authors of the questionnaire (their university teachers) being positioned as the *experts*, and, at one remove, the formulations of the questionnaire can represent the *omniscient voiceover*. What makes this parallel particularly interesting is the fact that any potential criticism appearing in the respondents’ comments is aimed at the omniscient voiceover rather than the expert.

In relation to these identities, two closing remarks should be made: how this expert style engendered by mediated quasi-interaction differs from ‘normal’, face-to-face

interaction and how the respondents qualify their expertise. Regarding the first question, in face-to-face/synchronous interaction the respondents would have been likely to avoid expert stylisation altogether, as the shroud of anonymity would have been absent. The nature of quasi-interaction, i.e. the lack of confrontation and immediate feedback, is arguably inductive of potentially conflicting responses and framing without experiencing the impact of power distribution asymmetry or any kind of retribution from the figure of power. Regarding the second question, the respondents seem to qualify their expertise based on their membership of the academic community, particularly on the fact that they have successfully completed academic courses related to foreign language proficiency, EFL methodology and phonetics and phonology. This fact, however, puts them in a paradoxical situation in which what qualifies their expertise can equally contest it. Seen from the ritualised hierarchical standpoint, their academic community membership provides them with expert identity that is limited to the status of a student, which typically differs in quality and recognition from the status of a teacher. Thus, it is all the more notable and valuable that some respondents opted not to avoid assertiveness, which is rather typical of submissive interactional participation, and instead to employ conflicting frames voicing their expertise.

Returning to the research premise that the dynamics of a hierarchical interaction are more reliably revealed in authentic discursive presentations of self (here the comments section responses) rather than in adherence to ritualised interactional patterns (here the questionnaire responses), what are the outcomes of the intertextual identity negotiation I have been attempting to observe in the micro-corpus presented in this paper?

In the context of the analysed data, there are two mutually implied dichotomies: the student vs. teacher identity and the consensual vs. conflicting frames. The teacher identity and conflicting frames are analytically less predictable, and, therefore, interpretatively weightier. The consensual frames primarily reflect student identity and the acceptance of ritualised hierarchical interactions. The conflicting frames tend to reflect (pre-service) teacher identity and the defiance of the ritualised interactional patterns, bringing authenticity to the fore. From the CDA perspective, the employment of the consensual strategy can be attributed to the *enactment/legitimation of power relations*, while the use of the conflicting strategy can be attributed to their *denial/mitigation* (van Dijk, 1993, p. 205).

In my approach I have adopted Johnstone's view on the role of individual voice in stance-taking and linguistic variation. She claims that approaching variation "from the individual outward rather than from the social inward means thinking about how individuals create unique voices by selecting and combining the linguistic resources available to them" (2000, p. 417). On one hand, some of the resources may be "relatively codified, shared and consistent", while other resources might be "highly idiosyncratic, identified with particular situations or people" (Johnstone, 2000, p. 417). What Johnstone calls "paying attention to linguistic individuals" (2000, p. 416) has been the overarching intention behind the current research.

Furthermore, the *relationality principle* viewing the notion of speaker identity as relationally constructed through the process of *authorisation* and *illegitimation* (Bucholtz and

Hall, 2005) holds interpretative relevance for my study. Taking inspiration from the interactional principles of identity negotiation (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005), the dichotomy of the intersubjective relations that the authors call *authorisation* and *illegitimation* (p. 603) is particularly prominent with regard to my data. This dichotomy refers to the structural and institutional aspects of identity formation. Authorisation represents “affirmation or imposition of an identity through structures of institutionalized power and ideology”, whereas illegitimation relates to “the ways in which identities are dismissed, censored, or simply ignored by these same structures” (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005, p. 603). Thus, some of the observational outcomes of the full data set could be seen as examples of authorisation, while the outcomes of the micro-corpus could be seen as examples of autonomous illegitimation in the sense of dismissing the default student-teacher identities.

In line with these findings, I envision conducting follow-up research exploring to what extent the respondents’ perception of themselves as EFL students and EFL teachers is convergent or divergent. The current data suggest that among other highly relevant aspects, such as native-like second language acquisition, expert identity comes to the fore in the publicly relevant content of the face of a pre-service EFL teacher.

Based on the presented data, a certain shift from norm-dependence to norm-defiance can be observed. It is possible that when the confines of individual questionnaire items are disrupted and voluntary space in the form of a comments section is thus constituted, the frequency of norm-defiant reactions is increased. The respondents’ motivation to engage in divergence can be elucidated by the optimal distinctiveness theory (Brewer, 1991; Leonardelli, Pickett and Brewer, 2010). Brewer (1991) proposes the existence of two competing human needs, the simultaneous need for inclusion and differentiation. The fact that the respondents are presented with a change of footing from within the continuous frame of questionnaire participation and are invited to offer a personal opinion might be activating their need for different in-group inclusion. The default footing (see the Questionnaire frame, Fig. 1) frames the respondents as students, while the comments section (see the Comments frame, Fig. 1) frames them as potential teacher experts. Therefore, it is conceivable in some cases that the need for student in-group inclusion is saturated by participation in the questionnaire and the need for expert in-group inclusion is activated by the comments section. We witness a tendency for the *collective self* to be suppressed and the *individual self* to become motivationally primary (Leonardelli, Pickett and Brewer, 2010) in the dynamic process of negotiating nascent teacher expert identity.

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