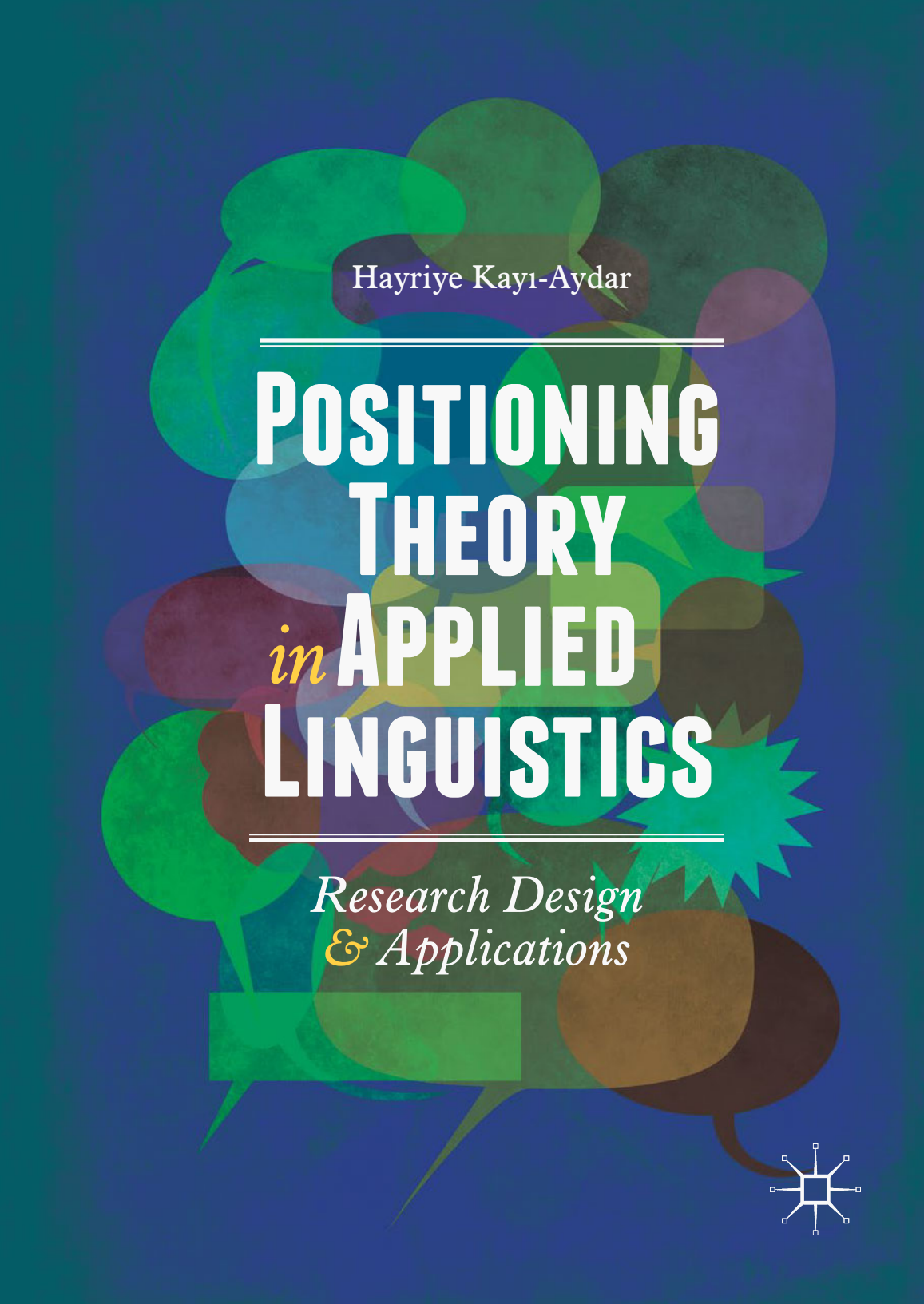
Hayriye Kayı-Aydar
Positioning Theory in Applied Linguistics
Research Design & Applications

Positioning Theory in Applied Linguistics

"This book is one of the first to focus upon how to link Positioning Theory to empirical research. As such, it is very much welcomed source-book to the growing community of scholars and practitioners that aim to use Positioning Theory as a theoretical framework for the analysis of different professional practices and societal problems. At the same time Kayı-Aydar's book also contributes to the refinement of the discursive basis of Positioning Theory."

—Luk Van Langenhove, *Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium*

"This book offers a coherent, informative account of positioning theory and its applications in applied linguistics. It brings together for the first time multiple disciplinary strands in a way that makes positioning theory evidently relevant and important for applied linguistics research. The book is very well-written, well-constructed, and immensely readable."

—Gary Barkhuizen, *University of Auckland, New Zealand*

"This is the first book to offer a comprehensive discussion of the theoretical and analytical relevance of positioning theory for applied linguistic scholarship. Kayı-Aydar has produced an accessible overview of the key components of the theory and offers practical guidance for applying it to one's research with language learners and teachers. As such, it will be a highly sought after text by both new and seasoned scholars in our field."

—Elizabeth R. Miller, *University of North Carolina at Charlotte, USA, and author of* The Language of Adult Immigrants: Agency in the Making *(2014)*

"This innovative, clear, very well organized book demonstrates the applied power of positioning theory in the educational setting. Hayriye Kayı-Aydar has added in exciting ways to the fast-expanding literature on positioning theory by demonstrating how positioning processes underlie changes in identity as second-language teaching and learning takes place. I strongly recommend this book to both teachers and students interested in second language learning, as well as positioning and identity."

—Fathali M. Moghaddam, *Georgetown University, USA, and author of* Mutual Radicalization: How Groups and Nations Drive Each Other to Extremes *(2018)*

"Kayı-Aydar's conceptualization and application of positioning as both theory and method provides useful insights into investigating classroom discourse and narrative texts. This book is an excellent resource for applied linguists and teacher educators who are committed to understanding how power dynamics play out in second/foreign language learning and teaching."

—Peter De Costa, *Michigan State University, USA*

Hayriye Kayı-Aydar

Positioning Theory in Applied Linguistics

Research Design and Applications

palgrave
macmillan

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ISBN 978-3-319-97336-4 ISBN 978-3-319-97337-1 (eBook)
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-97337-1

Library of Congress Control Number: 2018950054

Cover image: © Fanatic Studio/Alamy Stock Photo
Cover design: AKIHIRO NAKAYAMA

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by the registered company
Springer Nature Switzerland AG
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

Preface

This book is about positioning theory (Davies & Harré, 1990) and its application to applied linguistics and second/foreign language teacher education research. I became interested in positioning theory when I was a doctoral student at the University of Texas (UT) at Austin. As a graduate student, I had a strong interest in the topic of identity. This interest began and grew after I read Bonny Norton's book, *Identity and Language Learning: Gender, Ethnicity and Educational Change*, which is about five immigrant women's experience in English language learning and use in diverse social contexts. As an immigrant in the United States and a non-native speaker of English myself, some of the anecdotes in Norton's book strongly resonated with me. Her work helped me realize that learning a second language was beyond learning its grammar, vocabulary, or pronunciation. Learning a second or foreign language not only reflects who we are, but also shapes us.

I was heavily under the influence of Norton's work when I started thinking about what my dissertation topic would be. I wanted to study "identity," but I was not sure how to approach it differently. In a sociolinguistics class I took with Dr. Beth Maloch, I was introduced to positioning theory. I fell in love with it. I was fascinated by the complexity

and richness of the theory. To my surprise, I found that there were only a few applied linguists who had used positioning theory. I read with strong admiration the classroom-based studies by Patricia (Patsy) Duff, Julia Menard-Warwick, and Jennifer Miller that used positioning theory. Menard-Warwick's work guided me extensively at that time as I drafted a plan for my dissertation research. I observed an academic, college English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom for over an academic semester and analyzed positioning in classroom discourse. I published the findings of my dissertation research in various journals, such as *TESOL Quarterly*, *Classroom Discourse*, and the *ELT Journal*. I have used positioning theory in a variety of studies since then—this book is the culmination of the work I have been doing over the years.

My goal in this book is to provide a critical overview of positioning theory and illustrate how one can use it both as a theoretical framework and as a methodological tool in investigating various concepts in applied linguistics and L2 (second language) teacher education. The rich analyses, examples, and tips provided throughout the book offer an in-depth exploration of the possibilities of positioning theory in applied linguistics research. Through positioning analyses of different types of narrative and discourse data, I aim to show how such topics as second language learner identity, teacher agency, or classroom participation can be better understood. The work I present in this book will hopefully contribute to the theoretical area in applied linguistics. The implications I offer are meant to contribute to the growing body of multidisciplinary work in the areas of L2 teacher education and classroom learning. Despite the strong attention the theory is currently receiving in academic literature in applied linguistics, there is no book or edited volume on positioning theory that is specifically written for applied linguists. Hence, this book is the first to provide an in-depth exploration of how positioning theory works in applied linguistics and L2 teacher education research.

Positioning theory studies conversations and narratives in order to understand *self*, by making a contribution to the cognitive psychology of social action (Harré Moghaddam, Cairnie, Rothbart, & Sabat, 2009). The theory is based on the principle that "not everyone involved in a social episode has equal access to rights and duties to perform

particular kinds of meaningful actions at that moment and with those people" (Harré, 2012, p. 4). An essential aim of the theory is to "highlight practices that inhibit certain groups of people from performing certain sorts of acts" (Harré, 2012, p. 5). In other words, "positioning theory looks at what a person may do and may not do" (Harré et al., 2009, p. 9) in a particular context or situation. Given the crucial role of social interaction for second/foreign language learning and use, it is important to understand how power, rights, duties, and obligations are distributed in moment-to-moment interactions in the language classroom. Understanding how students and teachers position themselves and each other also enables us to see what kinds of identities students and teachers construct, and how those identities and power relations allow them to use language, exercise agency, and accomplish things in certain ways. Positioning, therefore, has important consequences for second language socialization, pedagogical choices, interactional organization of classroom talk, enactment of self-systems, and thereby second/foreign language learning and teaching.

Tucson, USA Hayriye Kayı-Aydar

Acknowledgements

There are numerous individuals without whom this book would not have been possible. I am deeply indebted to the learners and teachers who participated in various research projects that I have carried out over the years. Those projects, along with my interactions with those teachers and students, have not only contributed to my own professional growth, but also increased my interest in positioning theory and the related literature. Without the participation, contributions, and enthusiasm of those teachers and students, I could not have written this book. I do hope that this work gives them the voice they desire to have in their language learning/teaching contexts and diverse communities.

So many scholars, in my field of applied linguistics and other areas of education, have contributed in so many unique ways to my knowledge, curiosity, and strong interest in identity work. Their brilliant and fascinating work has inspired my own scholarship on positioning, identity, and agency. This, in turn, helped me think in different and critical ways and shaped my professional identity. In particular, I am grateful to Aneta Pavlenko, Anna De Fina, Betsy Rymes, Bonny Norton, Brian Morgan, Catherine Riessman, Courtney Cazden, Deborah Tannen, Elizabeth R. Miller, David Block, Frederick Erickson, Gary Barkhuizen,

Gergana Vitanova, Gloria Park, Kate Anderson, Jean Clandinin, Jenelle Reeves, Jochen Kleres, John Trent, Julia Menard-Warwick, Karen Johnson, Manka Varghese, Nihat Polat, Peter De Costa, Jean Clandinin, Jennifer Miller, Laura Schiller, Lesley Rex, Patricia (Patsy) Duff, Richard Young, Stephanie Vandrick, Suhanthie Motha, Teun A. van Dijk, Yasko Kanno, and Xuesong (Andy) Gao.

I am forever grateful to Beth Maloch, who introduced me to positioning theory in graduate school at the University of Texas at Austin. A number of scholars have written extensively on positioning theory; their influential work is the inspiration and source for this book. Among them, I am most indebted to Rom Harré, who initially developed positioning theory. Other amazing scholars whose work has strongly shaped this book are Arnulf Deppermann, Bronwyn Davies, David Wagner, Fathali Moghaddam, Luk Van Langenhove, Michael Bamberg, and Neill Korobov. Their work has contributed to the growth and development of positioning theory and helped me and others better understand interactions within and outside of the classroom.

My colleagues at the University of Arizona—have contributed to my work in various ways, for which I extend my warmest appreciation. The conversations I have had with my graduate students in the English Applied Linguistics and Second Language Acquisition and Teaching programs have allowed me to think about the topics and issues relevant to positioning and identity from different angles. I would like to thank my graduate research assistant, Curtis Green-Eneix, who did a diligent job as he identified areas that needed additional work and carefully copy-edited this book.

The Palgrave Macmillan team has helped me pull it all together. In particular, I would like to thank Cathy Scott and Beth Farrow for believing in this project and communicating with me throughout the process. The comments and constructive feedback from anonymous reviewers have certainly helped improve the content of the book.

Finally, I am most grateful to my husband Gökhan Aydar, who supported me in countless ways as I completed this extensive project, and Hakan Aydar, my almost-4-year-old son, who has been my source of energy and motivation throughout the project. My parents and brother have immensely supported me with their love and prayers from thousands of miles away, for which I am forever grateful.

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Overview of the Chapters

Chapter 1 introduces positioning theory along with its key concepts and ideas, providing an overview of the development of the theory as well as its recent advances. The chapter explains how rights, duties, and obligations are distributed in momentary interactions and how such distributions interact with positioning. Different modes of positioning are then explained and followed up with examples. Since every social interaction involves power, the connection of power to positioning is critically examined.

Chapter 2 begins with a definition of discourse, which I use frequently throughout the book. The chapter mainly discusses how positioning theory differs from or is similar to other discourse analytic approaches. In particular, it demonstrates how the theory is built on speech act theory, uses conversation analysis as a tool, and draws from the principles of interactional sociolinguistics, ethnography of communication, and critical discourse analysis.

Chapter 3 locates positioning theory in applied linguistics, explaining why the theory is relevant to applied linguistics research. The chapter examines how positioning has been addressed in applied linguistics academic literature, in particular in studies on language classroom contexts

and teacher education. The theoretical links among learner/teacher identities, agency, classroom participation, L2 socialization, culture, and positioning are the primary focus of this chapter.

Chapter 4 discusses the application of positioning theory in language teacher education research and practice. It demonstrates how positioning occurs in teacher talk and how understanding positioning can make a difference in teachers' own performance, professional development, and development of identities. The chapter places a particular emphasis on the complex links between professional identities of language teachers and positioning. It also describes the tight relationship between teacher agency and positioning. It concludes with the importance of positioning for language teacher development and professional growth.

Chapters 5 and 6 focus on a deeper application of key aspects of the theory, such as the positioning triangle, by using two different types of data: classroom discourse and narrative texts. Chapter 5, more specifically, provides readers with a tool to analyze the organizational structure of classroom discourse, showing how rights, duties, and obligations are distributed as the classroom teacher and students assign positions to themselves and others in moment-to-moment interactions. A segment of classroom discourse of an ESL oral skills classroom is provided to illustrate how positioning analysis is conducted. The example also elucidates the consequences of positioning for second language communication and learning. Chapter 6 describes the place of positioning theory in narrative inquiry. The focus is on the links among narrative, positioning, and teacher identities. Positioning analysis is conducted in the narratives of language teachers by drawing from the work by Bamberg and Søreide.

Lastly, Chapter 7 discusses the issues of trustworthiness and soundness of data in positioning studies. It also evaluates the current debates about positioning theory. Based on the previous chapters, the implications for classroom practice and language teacher education are discussed. After a final summary of where things stand for positioning theory in applied linguistics, the chapter draws together conclusions.

1

Positioning Theory

Positioning theory (e.g., Davies & Harré, 1990, 1999) studies the rights, duties, and obligations distributed among interlocutors or characters in and through conversations or narratives. The aim is to understand how those rights, duties, and obligations shape social structures while being shaped by them. The focus is on the social action, resisting the idea that "social behavior is a response to a social stimulus" (Harré, Moghaddam, Cairnie, Rothbart, & Sabat, 2009, p. 5). Rather than causation or hypotheses to interpret the meanings associated with social action, the theory capitalizes on what people are doing and saying in momentary conversational exchanges. As the theory focuses on the *moment* to explain the actions in a moral landscape, it takes in beliefs and practices as well as historical and social dimensions. This, according to Harré et al. (2009), is an important contribution of the theory to the cognitive psychology that neglected an important "dimension to the processes of cognition – namely concepts and principles from the local moral domain" (p. 6). Therefore, positioning theory is an effective tool to understand the complex interaction between psychological processes and social encounters within a moral landscape (Harré et al., 2009).

H. Kayı-Aydar, *Positioning Theory in Applied Linguistics*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-97337-1_1

The theory is multidisciplinary, as it draws from cultural/discursive psychology,[1] feminism, and poststructuralism,[2] aiming to understand how individuals gain or negotiate access to rights and duties to perform particular kinds of meaningful actions in a social episode, which can be a conversation or social gathering (Harré, 2012). Harré and Slocum (2003) argue that there are three categories of actions: "Those one has done, is doing, or will do; those which one is permitted, allowed or encouraged to do; and those which one is physically and temperamentally capable of doing" (p. 125). They further state that "positioning theory is concerned with the relations between these three domains. The focus, however, is on the relation between what one has or believes one has or lacks a right to perform and what one does, in the light of that belief" (p. 125). Harré (2012) argues that, in many cases, "the rights and duties determine who can use a certain discourse mode – for example, issuing orders, giving grades, remembering a past event" (p. 4). An essential goal of the theory is, therefore, to highlight practices that inhibit certain groups of individuals from saying certain things or performing certain sorts of acts or actions in discursive practices (Harré, 2012). The theory aims to accomplish this goal through a study of positions created in story lines as well as the social force of what is being said and done.

Positioning theory was developed in the 1990s by Rom Harré. Harré and his colleagues (e.g., Davies & Harré, 1990, 1999; Harré, 2012; Harré et al., 2009; Harré & Van Langenhove, 1991; Harré & Van Langenhove, 1999a; Moghaddam, Harré, & Lee, 2007) advanced the

[1]Rooted in a variety of theoretical and philosophical traditions, discursive psychology (see Edwards & Potter, 1992) is an alternative to mainstream psychology. Perhaps the main argument in discursive psychology is that psychological phenomena are played out in the talk and texts that constitute social life. Discursive psychology treats language not as an "externalization of underlying thoughts, motivations, memories or attitudes, but as *performative* of them" (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006, p. 40).

[2]In poststructuralism "meanings of self and others are reproduced within discourses – systems of power/knowledge" (Morgan, 2007, p. 1036). Poststructuralism, in applied linguistics, is "understood broadly as an attempt to investigate and to theorise the role of language in construction and reproduction of social relations, and the role of social dynamics in the process of additional language learning and use" (Pavlenko, 2002, p. 282). For a more thorough definition and explanation of poststructuralism and feminism, see Davies, B., & Gannon, S. (2005). 'Feminist/Poststructuralism'. In C. Lewin & B. Somekh (Eds.), *Research methods in the social sciences* (pp. 318–325).

theory since then. Other influential scholars, including Bamberg (1997), Deppermann (2015), Holland, Skinner, Lachicotte, and Cain (1998), and Wortham (2000), have also written extensively on the concept of positioning and/or positioning theory, critiquing, expanding, and deepening our understanding of the theory or certain elements of it. I present the current debates about the theory in great detail in Chapter 7.

Positioning theory has received considerable attention in a wide variety of disciplines. The application of the theory to various types of studies has resulted in new conceptualizations and understandings about some of its concepts. In the rest of this chapter, I first provide a short overview of the historical development of the theory. I then elaborate on the complex nature of the interaction among positioning, story lines, and rights and duties. I also would like to note that, throughout this book, I primarily review and rely on the principles of positioning theory promoted by Rom Harré and his colleagues for two main reasons. First, as I have stated, Harré and his colleagues are widely regarded as the primary scholars advancing the theory. Second, in the fields of applied linguistics and education, nearly all of the positioning studies I have read have been built or focused on the work by Harré and his colleagues (see Kayi-Aydar & Miller, 2018 for an extensive review). Given the strong influence of the work by Harré and his colleagues, I reference their work often throughout the book.

Positioning Triangle

Positioning theory offers a triangle, which consists of positions, story lines, and act interpretations, as an analytic framework. Those three mutually determine, influence, and shape one another in the unfolding social episodes (Harré, 2012). Harré further explains that "if any one changes – for example, by a successful challenge to the distribution of rights and duties, then all three change" (p. 6). Since positioning theory is partly built on John Langshaw ("J. L.") Austin's speech act theory (1962), speech acts and actions are considered to be an important component of the positioning triangle. Harré (2012) defines an action as "a meaningful, intended performance (speech or gesture)" and an act as "the social

meaning of an action" (Harré, 2012, p. 8).[3] In an effort to advance positioning theory, Herbel-Eisenmann, Wagner, Johnson, Suh, and Figueras (2015) propose replacing "speech acts" with "communication acts":

> Later work suggested that paralinguistic aspects of contributions like gestures (Harré, 2012) and physical positions and stances (Moghaddam, Harré, & Lee, 2008) also contribute to the interpretations of the speech action. Thus, we have begun to refer to these as *communication acts* to recognize that social force can be determined by more than just speech. (p. 187)

This is a meaningful suggestion that I support given the increasing number of studies that use paralinguistic elements along with physical positions in explaining positioning in story lines. Pinnow and Chval (2015) state that multimodal analysis, which "incorporates discourse and conversation analysis in order to examine linguistic utterances and draws upon research in multimodal communication" (Pinnow & Chval, 2015, p. 5), provides important insights into how semiotic resources are employed by individuals as they engage in positioning acts. In the next section, I explain the notions of positions, positioning, and story lines.

Positions and Positioning

Davies and Harré (1999) drew on Hollway (as quoted in Davies & Harré, 1999), who used the term *position* in his work on gender, to refer to presentations of self in communicative events. Davies and Harré (1999) define a *position* as

> a complex cluster of generic personal attributes, structured in various ways, which impinges on the possibilities of interpersonal, intergroup, and even intrapersonal action through some assignment of such rights, duties and obligations to an individual as are sustained by the cluster. (p. 1)

[3]For a more detailed explanation of acts and actions, refer to the speech act theory of Austin (1962).

According to Harré et al. (2009), "position s are features of the local moral landscape," which "consists of practices" (p. 9). These practices, "habitual ways of speaking and interacting" (Deppermann, 2015, p. 370), vary widely; examples might include criticizing someone, assigning someone a task, giving a grade, and so on. Harré et al. (2009) suggest that "we, as analysts, extract from these practices something we call a 'position' which someone seems to 'occupy'" (p. 9). A position may reflect social status, moral or personal attributes, characteristics or abilities, and biological aspects (Harré et al., 2009). Deppermann (2015) describes positions as semiotically structured ascriptions tied to social actions and accomplished by social practice; they are locally occasioned and designed situated achievements that represent multiple identities.

Being assigned positions by others or assigning positions to them is called *positioning*, "a discursive process whereby people are located in conversations as observably and subjectively coherent participants in jointly produced story lines" (Davies & Harré, 1999, p. 37). Positioning relates to situating oneself or others with particular rights and obligations through conversation (Rex & Schiller, 2009). Deppermann (2015) defines positioning as "the basic mechanism by which a self and identities are acquired in social interaction in terms of practical, emotional, and epistemic commitment to identity-categories and associated discursive practices" (p. 372). By engaging in positioning moves, people are able to claim, deny, and give rights as well as demand or accept certain duties. For example, speakers can position themselves as competent or incompetent, powerful or powerless, anxious or unconcerned, and so on. Van Langenhove and Harré (1999) suggest that individuals, through the use of positions, may limit or allow certain social actions, such as giving an opportunity to a person to speak in a particular context and at a certain time.

Positioning may not always be at the individual level. In other words, there is also an ongoing construction of "selves" as members of certain groups. Interpersonal positioning occurs when an individual positions her/himself as part of a team, group, or community (e.g., positioning oneself as the leader of a student organization). Individuals engage in intergroup positioning when they position their team, group, or community in relation to others (e.g., positioning one's student organization

as being better than other student organizations on campus). As can be seen, individuals may engage in positioning acts at different levels. Those positioning acts or moves can be ceremonial (e.g., giving a speech at a graduation ceremony), characterological (e.g., assigning roles or tasks to students in group work), or biographical (e.g., giving tenure to a faculty member by reference to research, service, and teaching record; Harré et al., 2009). According to Wilkinson and Kitzinger (2003), "positioning is not simply the result of internal or cultural causes, with speakers as automata, either cultural dopes or unwitting victims of their cognitive failings" (p. 158). On the contrary, they have the right to choose their own utterances, through which they actively construct the world.

Individuals sometimes deliberately position themselves and others. Intentional positioning is accomplished in various ways, such as using descriptive language to describe one's actions and points of view, or referring to autobiographical events. Individuals engage in intentional positioning moves to exercise agency so that they can accomplish specific goals. Intentional or deliberate positioning is, therefore, also strategic (Van Langenhove & Harré, 1999). In Table 1.1, I include definitions of *position* and *positioning* as they were offered in three major publications by Rom Harré and his colleagues over the years.

Story Lines

Positions emerge naturally out of social contexts and conversations. However, "neither story lines nor positions are freely constructed" (Van Langenhove & Harré, 1999, p. 19). It is the members of a conversation who "jointly construct a sequence of position/act-action/story line triads" (Van Langenhove & Harré, 1999, p. 19). While social episodes develop, this development does not occur in a haphazard way. Each social episode follows "already established patterns of development," which Harré and Moghaddam (2003) call story lines. Slocum and Van Langenhove (2003) define story lines as "the contexts of acts and positions" (p. 225). Story lines exist prior to and are also created in conversations that "implicitly or explicitly link the past with the present

Table 1.1 Definitions of *position* and *positioning*

Definitions of "position"	Definitions of "positioning"	Reference
A complex cluster of generic personal attributes, structured in various ways, which impinges on the possibilities of interpersonal, intergroup, and even intrapersonal action through some assignment of such rights, duties and obligations to an individual as are sustained by the cluster. (p. 1)	A discursive process whereby people are located in conversations as observably and subjectively coherent participants in jointly produced story lines. (p. 37)	Davies and Harré (1999)
Cluster of beliefs about how rights and duties are distributed in the course of an episode of personal interaction and the taken-for-granted practices in which most of these beliefs are concretely realized. (p. 9)	A discursive process through which rights and duties are distributed	Harré et al. (2009)
A generic concept covering assignments of rights and duties to act and to know or believe at the core of social psychological explanations. (p. 3)	Processes by which rights and duties are assigned, ascribed, or appropriated and resisted, rejected, or repudiated. (p. 6)	Harré (2012)

and future" (Slocum & Van Langenhove, 2003, p. 225). They are "the ongoing repertoires that are already shared culturally or they can be invented as participants interact" (Herbel-Eisenmann et al., 2015, p. 188). In each social episode, there can be one or more story lines.

In a more recent publication, Harré suggests that storylines might be used to (a) "describe the unfolding of the structure of an episode in terms of a familiar story" and (b) "refer to stories told by social actors, perhaps as accounting moves to make a lived storyline intelligible and warrantable" (Harré, 2012, p. 9). Although Davies and Harré (1990) emphasize that the story line is an important component of positioning theory, I find their description of the concept somewhat vague, a shortcoming noted by a number of other scholars (e.g., Herbel-Eisanmann et al., 2015; see Chapter 7 for further discussion). In my understanding, the topic of a conversation is not a story line, but rather a story

line is developed around a certain topic or various topics. The following example from Van Langenhove and Harré (1999) can be useful to understand the concept better.

1) Deborah: Yeah?
2) Peter: Before that… I read the French Lieutenant's Woman?
3) Have you [read that?
4) Deborah: [Oh yeah. No. who wrote that?
5) Peter: John Fowles.
6) Deborah: Yeah, I've heard that he's good.
7) Peter: He's a great writer. I think he's one of the best [writers
8) Deborah: [hm
9) Deborah: ?
10) Peter: He's really good.
11) Deborah: ?
12) Peter: But I get very busy… [Y'know?
13) Deborah: [Yeah, I … hardly ever read.
14) Peter: what I've been doing is cutting down on my sleep.
15) Deborah: Oy! (Sighs)
16) Peter: And I've been (Steve laughs)… and I [s
17) Deborah: [I do that, too, but it's painful

As Van Langenhove and Harré (1999) demonstrate, there is a story line from lines 1 to 8, while another story line begins at line 12 and continues to the end. Van Langenhove and Harré claim that the first episode positions Peter and Deborah as teacher and learner, which situates the story line as instruction. They argue that "a new story line unfolds in which Peter tells a strip of his life with the narrative conventions of 'hard times'" (p. 18). Their example and analysis seem to suggest that a story line is a chunk of conversation that develops around a certain topic among participants. Wagner and Herbel-Eisenmann (2009) state that "story lines are contestable and contingent in the enactment of any particular conversation" (p. 4). They explain the contingent nature of the story lines by saying "whenever one person enacts a certain story line the others in the interaction may choose to be complicit with that story line and the way they are positioned in it or they

may resist and enact a competing story line" (ibid.). Regarding the contingent nature of the story lines, Wagner and Herbel-Eisenmann further explain that "different people may see different story lines being enacted in any given situation" (ibid.).

The story lines, positions, and acts/actions closely influence each other. The positions people assign to themselves and others are impacted by a previous story line(s) or the story line developing in the conversation. When people take up new positions, certain acts and actions will emerge, and a new story line will develop. The sequence of statements and displays of personhood will create a new story line(s).

An important concept in Goffman's work, *frame*, looks similar to the concept of the story line in positioning theory. Although the two concepts are related, they do not have the same meaning. Harré et al. (2009) address the distinction and relationship between a *frame* and *position*:

> Frame is used to refer to story line genera – for example, the medical frame, which can be realized in a wide variety of specific story lines. Frame is important because it allows one to consider the coherence and incoherence of a contemporaneous story line and the kind of challenges that can emerge. For example, one might challenge a story line in the medical frame by shifting to a legal frame, that is breaking frame; or one may shift from one medical story line to another, without breaking frame. (p. 12)

Rights and Duties

When we look at the definitions of positions and positioning I provided in Table 1.1, we see that *rights and duties* seem to be the exclusive focus in the descriptions regarding the concepts of position and positioning. One of the main psychological claims of positioning theory as social psychology (Harré et al., 2009) is that "rights and duties are distributed among people in changing patterns as they engage in performing particular kinds of action" (Harré et al., 2009, p. 7). A position, as previously defined, is a cluster or group of rights and duties. It is through positioning that those rights, duties, and obligations are distributed in conversations.

Therefore, understanding the role of rights and duties in positioning theory is important. What exactly does *rights and duties* mean? Who determines them? How are they distributed in talk?

According to Harré and Slocum (2003), "rights are expressed as anticipatory or retrospective justifications for the propriety of demands or requests for action by someone else. Duties are expressed as anticipatory or retrospective expressions of demands for action by oneself" (p. 125). They further acknowledge that "claims to have certain rights and the acceptance or undertaking of certain duties are basic active self-positioning moves" (ibid.). In a more recent publication, Harré describes rights and duties in the following reciprocal way:

> *Rights*: My rights are what you (or they) must do for me
> *Duties*: My duties are what I must do for you (or them). (Harré, 2012, p. 7)

In a teacher and student story line, for example, it is the student's "right to be taught" and the teacher's "duty to teach," both of which can be challenged at any time depending on the situation. Although rights and duties might look simple, Harré points out that they depend on "other features of a concrete situation such as the risks to the actors, the conscientiousness of the powerful, and the skill of the recipients in presenting their needs and so on" (p. 7). In other words, "imbalance between the powers of some people and vulnerabilities of others" (Harré, 2012, p. 7) affects their rights and duties. In this sense, duties and rights are dynamic and context dependent. Harré et al. (2009) further contend that "we do not mean duties and rights as declared in laws and constitutions. These are excluded from the domain of positioning theory since they are set up by decree and are intended to last" (p. 11). Harré et al. (2009) also distinguish between duties and supererogatory duties as well as rights and supererogatory rights:

> Supererogatory duties, duties that individuals and groups are not obligated to carry out but get credit for when they do perform them. For example, Joe sees a woman fall into a fast-flowing river, but is not obligated by law to dive into the river to try to save the drowning woman. However, he is given a medal for bravery when he dives in and saves her.

> The second is supererogatory rights, rights that a person or group is agreed to have but will be rewarded for not exercising. For example, a newspaper editor has the right to publish a scoop about the mistresses and illegitimate children of a dying politician, but decides to forgo that right because it would cause pain to the politician's family. (p. 28)

Modes of Positioning

In their description of positioning theory, Van Langenhove and Harré (1999) define and describe two different modes of positioning: *interactive* and *reflexive*. *Interactive positioning* refers to assigning positions to others. What one says positions other(s). *Reflexive positioning* is about assigning positions to oneself. What one says positions oneself. Moghaddam (1999) claims that since people's life stories are not fixed but dynamic as people gain new experiences, reflexive positions are never static. Rather, they are changing, shifting, and emerging.

Positioning is relational: "positions are relative to one another" (Harré & Slocum, 2003, p. 128). In other words, people act, speak, and perceive themselves almost always in relation to others (Hazari, Cass, & Beattie, 2015). There is also a first-, second-, and third-order positioning. Most first-order positioning, the initial positioning in any conversation, is tacit; people do not always position themselves or others in intentional ways. When the first-order positioning results in an action, it becomes performative positioning. For example, when a language teacher tells her student "this intermediate-level book is too difficult for you to understand," the teacher positions the student in a certain way: someone who lacks the necessary language proficiency to comprehend the text, or someone who is not at the intermediate language proficiency. If the student accepts the position assigned to him by the teacher and does not read the book or decides to read another book at a lower level, the implicit first-order positioning results in performative positioning. The act (what is being said) leads to an action (what is being done or accomplished).

An internal conflict in a first-order positioning may lead to second-order positioning (Harré et al., 2009). As acknowledged by

Harré and Moghaddam (2003), positioning theory recognizes that people are constantly changing as their circumstances and contexts change. The change does not always happen smoothly, and it is open to dispute. People do not necessarily accept their assigned positions or others' interpretations, but may attempt to refuse them or impose their own: "Sometimes an initial seizure of the dominant role in a conversation will force the other speakers into speaking positions they would not have occupied voluntarily, so to say" (Van Langenhove & Harré, 1999, p. 18). By engaging in repositioning, people claim a right or a duty to challenge the initial or first-order positioning, or they can deny someone a right or refuse a duty or challenge the right of someone to assign positions. This is called repositioning or second-order positioning, and it occurs when there is a need to question or negotiate first-order positioning. In this case, "initial positionings can be challenged and the speakers sometimes thereby repositioned" (Van Langenhove & Harré, 1999, p. 18).

Rex and Schiller (2009) describe how all this may look like in the classroom context. The way the classroom teacher chooses to respond to a student may result in the student's accepting or resisting the teacher's choice. If the position assigned to the student during a moment-to-moment interaction matches her sense of self during that particular moment, it is likely that the student will accept the position. However, if there is a mismatch between the position and the student's sense of self, then resistance will possibly happen. Let us think about the example I have given earlier in a slightly different way. If the student responds to the teacher's utterance "this intermediate-level book is too difficult for you to understand" by saying something like "I just finished reading another book at the intermediate level," the student challenges the position assigned to him by the teacher. By challenging the first-order positioning, the student engages in second-order positioning by repositioning himself as someone whose linguistic proficiency is at the intermediate level or someone who can comprehend an intermediate-level text without difficulty.

Third-order positioning takes place in "retrospective discussion of previous acts of positioning" (Deppermann, 2015, p. 373). Herbel-Eisenmann et al. (2015) state:

> Third order positioning occurs outside of the original interaction. It can (but does not have to) involve participants other than the ones involved in the original discussion. When we talk about other interactions, we position the participants through our retelling. (p. 189)

Schieble, Vetter, and Meacham (2015) state that third-order positioning is usually "descriptive as they take place within talk or written discussion about past interactions" (p. 248). In educational research, they contend that third-order positionings are evident in the data that involve teachers' analysis of transcribed interactions and interviews about them. Let us continue with the same example as above to further illustrate third-order positioning: After the teacher and student have had the conversation about which book the student should read, the student narrates this event to one of his friends, saying something like: "The teacher thought I would not be able to read an intermediate-level book, but I made it clear to her that I could read it as I had read an intermediate-level book before." In this retelling or the new story line, the student refers to a previous story line to position himself and the teacher in a certain way. The student thus engages in third-order positioning. I summarize these modes of positioning and offer further examples in Table 1.2.

Harré and Van Langenhove (1991) also differentiate between moral and personal positioning. As mentioned earlier, positioning is almost always moral and personal. In other words, understanding the positions people take involves an analysis or understanding of the moral order or the "certain institutional aspects of social life"

Table 1.2 Modes of positioning

Mode of positioning	Description	Example
First-order positioning	Initial, mostly tacit positioning	You're late. The class started ten minutes ago
Second-order positioning	Resisting or rejecting the first-order positioning through repositioning the self	(In response to the first-order positioning above) You started earlier than the actual class time
Third-order positioning	Referring to positions constructed in previous story lines	Last week, you told me I was late even though it was certainly not the case

(Harré & Van Langenhove, 1991). Let me explain this with an example. From my role as a professor, imagine I say, "I asked my grandmother to transcribe a recorded interview for my research project." We do not have a "moral order" to draw from to understand this story line or the position I ascribe to my grandmother. Now imagine I say, "I asked my research assistant to transcribe a recorded interview for my research project." Both the story line and the first-order positioning (my research assistant as someone who is expected to transcribe something for my research project) make much more sense given the moral order—I have the moral right to ask my graduate assistant to transcribe an interview. Let me further the example to indicate how moral positioning may become personal positioning. Now let us think of a second-order positioning in which I ask my graduate assistant why he has not transcribed the recording of the interview yet. The response by the graduate assistant, whatever it may be, would no longer be in reference to his role—"I have not transcribed it because I am your research assistant" would make no sense. His response to the deviance from what was expected from him as a graduate assistant will most likely include "references to individual particularities" (ibid., p. 397). He might respond by saying, "You forgot to give me the transcription kit" or "I did not know what transcription conventions to use, so I could not transcribe." His response(s) would then shift moral positioning to personal positioning.

Prepositioning

In positioning theory, there appears to be a link between positions and roles. In other words, it is claimed that a position might be in reference to someone's roles, personal characteristics, or other relevant evidence. This seems to be in conflict with an important claim of positioning theory that "the content of positions is local and may even be momentary and ephemeral" (Harré et al., 2009, p. 10). Prepositioning has been offered in the later writings of Harré and his colleagues to clarify that ambiguity. Harré et al. (2009, p. 10) define "prepositioning" as "listing and sometimes justifying attributions of skills, character traits, biographical facts, deemed relevant to whatever positioning is going forward" and further

claim that "prepositioning might be positive or negative." Harré (2012) acknowledges that a distinction between positioning and prepositining was needed "to keep the difference between the discursive processes by which rights and duties are assigned or resisted and the grounds that are available to justify these assignments or resistances should they be challenged" (p. 5). According to Harré et al. (2009), "the act of positioning is a two-phase procedure" (p. 16). They further explain:

> In the first phase the character and/or competence of the one who is being positioned or is positioning him- or herself is established. This can conveniently be distinguished as an act of prepositioning. On this basis, rights and duties are assigned, deleted or withdrawn, taken up, and so on. (pp. 16–17)

Prepositioning acts can be constructed as much to "delete someone's rights and duties as to assign them" or vice versa (Harré et al., 2009, p. 10). For example, prepositioning herself as an autonomous teacher, a teacher may claim the right to teach in the ways she likes. This preposition (autonomous teacher) does not become static in discourse, though. It can be challenged, take different forms, and may lead to the construction of various other positions in ongoing conversations.

Positions and Roles

In interactional sociolinguistics, Goffman's work (1959) is seen to be one of the essential pieces that has contributed to our understanding of social episodes and interactions. Goffman aims to understand conversations from the roles people occupy. It is therefore possible, according to him, to understand any particular conversation in terms of someone taking on a certain role. Focusing on the dynamic nature of social episodes, Harré and Van Langenhove (1999a) have criticized Goffman, saying that it is not always feasible to understand an interaction only in terms of the roles the conversants occupy. This argument is exemplified in a study I conducted in a language classroom (see Kayi-Aydar, 2014). In the study, I found that one male student dominated classroom talk, frequently interrupted his teacher during her lecture, and challenged

the teacher by questioning her authority and knowledge. In light of role theory, it is difficult or even impossible to understand or explain the actions of this student. If the roles of a student in a classroom would include asking questions when appropriate, collaborating with peers when asked, and participating in class discussions when invited, how can one explain why this student did not fulfill any of those roles but instead chose to challenge his teacher and dominate classroom talk? His positioning of himself and others could not be explained through the *roles* that are typically expected of or attributed to students in a traditional classroom. His actions and participation could be understood only though a more fluid concept that would capture and help us analyze the "unexpected" shifts or even transformations in his role as a student in a given conversation. That fluid concept would be positioning.

Positioning is, therefore, necessary in order to understand much of what is going on and "how social and psychic phenomena are 'constructed'" (Harré & Van Langenhove, 1999b, p. 6). Harré and Van Langenhove (1999b) use the term "position" to "help focus attention on dynamic aspects of encounters in contrast to the way in which the use of 'role' serves to highlight static, formal, and ritualistic aspects" (p. 32). Roles are about sociocultural expectations of individuals and, therefore, represent "a set of constraints and requirements" (Harré & Slocum, 2003), whereas positions are situation specific, disputed, challenged, changing, and shifting (Harré & Slocum, 2003; Van Langenhove & Harré, 1999). According to Van Langenhove and Harré (1999), "fluid positionings, not fixed roles, are used by people to cope with situations they usually find themselves in" (p. 17). Roles dominate individuals, involve prescribed behaviors, and decontextualize situations individuals are in (Gillespie & Martin, 2014). Explaining the complexities of social action and talk is not always feasible from a role theory perspective.

Even though positions are different than roles, a position can be specified by reference to a person's role (Van Langenhove & Harré, 1999). The roles individuals have may affect the ways they position themselves and others—that is, the teacher's role compared to the student's. Harré et al. (2009) suggest that "what you are is partly constituted by what roles you have – in conversations, both personal (ruminating) and social. And that depends in part on how one is positioned – that is what rights and duties you are effectively able to exploit, and so on" (p. 12).

Despite their criticism of "roles" in Goffman's work, Davies and Harré (1999) suggest that the term "footing" that Goffman uses (1981) is almost identical to the concept of "positioning." Footing, in very simple turns, refers to changes or turns in a conversation. According to Goffman:

> A change of footing implies a change in the alignment we take up to ourselves and to the others present as expressed in the way we manage the production or reception of an utterance. A change in our footing is another way of talking about a change in our frame for events. […] participants over the course of their speaking constantly change their footing, these changes being a persistent feature of natural talk. (p. 128)

Although their description includes the fluid nature of conversations as well as natural changes, as Davies and Harré (1999) suggest, Goffman is still influenced by his earlier work that aims to explain any conversation with predeterminate roles of speakers. *Alignments* and *frames* in Goffman's work also exist prior to actual conversations, in contrast to the conception of positioning, which sees alignments as "actual relations jointly produced in the very act of conversing" (Davies & Harré, 1999, p. 45).

Positions and Identities

In positioning theory, the term *position* is used to capture the dynamic aspects of selfhood. Unlike the humanist subject, poststructural selfhood

> is constantly in process; it only exists as process; it is revised and (re) presented through images, metaphors, story lines, and other features of language, such as pronoun grammar; it is spoken and re-spoken, each speaking existing in a palimpsest with the others. (Davies, 2000, p. 137)

As speakers actively and agentively position themselves in talk (Korobov & Bamberg, 2004), they (co)construct and (re)shape their identities. Other scholars have used various similar concepts to capture the fluid aspects of one's self in relation to others. For example, Benwell and Stokoe (2006) used *conversational identities* to stress how identities are "performed, constructed, enacted or produced, moment-to-moment,

in everyday conversations" (p. 49). Similarly, Holland et al. (1998) used the concept of *positional identities* to describe the daily, real-world dynamic "relations of power, deference and entitlement, social affiliation and distance – with the social-interactional, social-relational structures of the lived world" (p. 127). Both definitions stress that identities are constructed in everyday discourse.

Although the term *position* seems to be used interchangeably with *conversational* or *positional identities*, there is still some nuance. In my understanding, *positional* or *conversational identities* are constructed and reconstructed through each position that emerges over social interaction. The same individual can manifest any of his/her identities or be assigned new identities in the form of positions in different social contexts. Taken over a period of time, some particular positions become more dominant in one's mode of self-presentation in particular contexts. For example, being a silent student is a positional identity and one of the multiple identities one has. What makes a student silent is the positions that the student takes up along with the behaviors he or she displays in relation to other people over a certain period of time in a particular social context. Indeed, the silent student identity is not constructed based on the student's interaction style or degree of participation in just one lesson or day. This identity position is constructed by others who repeatedly see this student not actively and sufficiently participating in classroom communicative events. It is through the accumulations of positions that *positional* or *conversational* identities are formed and shaped. The person becomes, in a sense, a compound noun (e.g., silent student) or a label (e.g., troublemaker) that s/he may internalize to act or not to act on in the future. For example, when a student frequently makes jokes in class, it is possible that she will be recognized as the class clown by members of the classroom (Rex & Schiller, 2009).

My interpretation of the connection between identities and positions seems to be consistent with the following argument by Davies and Harré (1990):

> A subject position incorporates both a conceptual repertoire and a location for persons within the structure of rights and duties for those who use that repertoire. Once having taken up a particular position as one's

> own, a person inevitably sees the world from the vantage point of that position and in terms of the particular images, metaphors, story lines and concepts which are made relevant within the particular discursive practice in which they are positioned. (p. 46)

In a way, the positions people take up form who they are. Therefore, as Davies and Harré (1999) claim:

> an individual emerges through the processes of social interaction, not as a relatively fixed end product but as one who is constituted and reconstituted through the various discursive practices in which they participate. It is one and the same person who is variously positioned in a conversation. Yet as variously positioned we may want to say that that very same person experiences and displays aspects of self that are involved in the continuity of a multiplicity of selves. (p. 35)

The mutual relationship between identities, positional identities, and positions can be visually presented as in Fig. 1.1. As seen from the figure, there is a constant, harmonious interaction among positions, positional identities, and identities. For example, if a teacher is positioned as

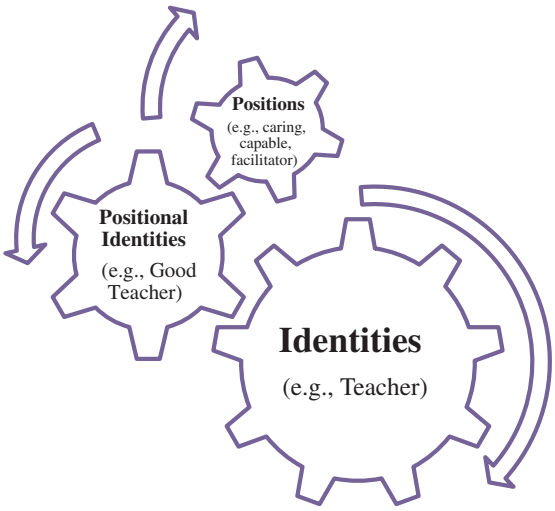

Fig. 1.1 Relationships among identities, positional identities, and positions

incompetent in her subject area, it would probably result in an identity conflict or some sort of tension. A position of incompetence would negatively affect a teacher's professional identity.

Power and Positioning

Since positioning theory focuses on discourse to understand social actions, it is impossible not to mention the concept of power, given that power is manifested in interaction (van Dijk, 2008) and "discourse is the site of power struggles" (Fairclough, 2001, p. 61). The notion of power has multiple meanings: it can be understood as control—control of one individual over another or others, or control of one group over another or others (van Dijk, 2008). This kind of power would enable some individuals or groups not only to be able to access goods and resources, but also to constrain the contribution of less powerful or non-powerful individuals' or groups' access to the same goods and resources (Fairclough, 2001; Rex & Schiller, 2009). Foucault (1980) challenges this understanding of power, arguing that power is not in one individual's or group's possession, but always circulates among people in social contexts:

> Power is not to be taken to be a phenomenon of one individual's consolidated and homogenous domination over others, or that of one group or class over others. What, by contrast, should always be kept in mind is that power, if we do not take too distant a view of it, is not that which makes the difference between those who exclusively possess and retain it, and those who do not have it and submit to it. Power must be analysed as something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain. It's never localized here or there, never in anybody's hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth. Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organization. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and excercising this power. They are not only its inert or consenting target; they are always also the elements of its articulation. In other words, individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application. (p. 98)

Following Foucault, McNamara (2012) states that power is not something that "is readable from the structural categories of sociology – class, ethnicity, gender, and so on" (p. 478). He rather argues that

> power lies in recognition; we all, as subjects of discourse, maintain a surveillance of one another in the terms discourses offer, so that they are internalized, and the power of discourse is therefore devolved and omnipresent, maintained by its subjects. The de-centering and diffusion of power as discourse makes power all the stronger, and harder to identify and oppose. (ibid.)

Individuals, through discourse, create and circulate power, which results in domination or differential access—if any—to discourse itself, rights, or duties. I use the word "domination" to refer to "inequities, injustice, and inequality, that is, all forms of illegitimate actions and situations" (van Dijk, 2008, p. 18). Individuals respond to dominance or resistance by trying to expand their capital (Kumaravadivelu, 1999). Capital, in French theorist Bourdieu's terms, can be economic, social, or cultural, and therefore is a form of power. Van Dijk argues that the knowledge resources, such as "economic capital" or "cultural capital" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 243), one might have result in symbolic power and therefore preferential access to or control over others or vice versa.

Power is not inherently bad or problematic (Buzzelli & Johnston, 2002; Rex & Schiller, 2009; van Dijk, 2008). As van Dijk suggests, "power obviously and trivially can be used for many neutral or positive ends." Indeed, in a classroom setting, a learner can have power "when she or he demonstrates independence, ownership, or self efficacy" (Rex & Schiller, 2009, p. 35). Fairclough (2001) and van Dijk (2008) also differentiate between two different aspects of power. Van Dijk states that a number of discourse analysts are interested in macro structures of societal power; other analysts, mostly sociolinguists, are interested in the micro level and micro-analysis of power, individual agency in particular. Fairclough calls the former *power behind discourse*, while the latter is *power in discourse*. The unpredictable and inherently complex nature of power affects the ways in which positions are constructed and negotiated as individuals engage socially across these micro and macro levels.

Summary

Positioning theory was first introduced by Bronwyn Davies and Rom Harré in 1990. The theory has since then been developed by numerous scholars, but most prominently by Rom Harré and Van Langenhove. This chapter has offered an overview of positioning theory along with explanations of its significant components, which I use often in the rest of this book. Positioning theory, primarily situated within a social constructionist perspective, explains details of social interaction with a focus on the individuals or characters in story lines, their presumed rights, duties, and obligations, as well as the meanings or consequences of their actions (Whitsed & Volet, 2013). The theory accomplishes this goal through the concept of positioning, which comprises positions and story lines. These positions and story lines together limit or lead to possible actions and meanings as well as rights, duties, and responsibilities relative to shared cultural repertoires, which in turn shape who we are. In other words, we have choices of what to say, where, and when (Rex & Schiller, 2009); however, we are not always completely free to make these choices. What we choose to do or say depends on who we are and with whom we interact. Our rights and duties are distributed interactively. How this occurs is explained through the notion of positioning in positioning theory. Positioning is accomplished in and though discourse, verbal or non-verbal, and is evident at discursive practices at different levels, such as local or societal (Glazier, 2009). An assemblage of acts of "reciprocal" interactions, positioning has symbiotic relationships (it affects and is affected by at the same time) with all environmental affordances.

Positioning, shaped by power and many other social factors, is the dynamic construction of personal identities and an essential feature of social interaction. Therefore, analyzing positioning in written and oral discourse is a way of uncovering participants' identities. In this sense, positioning theory can be a powerful tool in understanding identities and social acts in discursive practices. Positions, dynamic clusters of rights and duties, are different than roles that are always static. In other words, "roles cannot explain behavior that is deviant from expectations and

norms the way a position or relationship can" (Warren & Moghaddam, 2018, p. 7).

In this chapter, I have also explained the differences among first-, second-, and third-order positionings. The initial positioning move in which individuals are engaged is usually referred to as first-order positioning. When people are assigned a position through first-order positioning, they may have options: they may accept the position, challenge or question it, or refuse it altogether. Choosing any of these options will result in second-order positioning. Finally, individuals may engage in third-order positioning when they refer to previously constructed positions in a new narrative or conversation.

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2

Positioning Theory and Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis is a subarea in linguistics that aims to understand what *language in use* looks like along with how *language in use* and *context* affect each other (Rymes, 2016).

Numerous scholars and researchers across different disciplines have offered multiple definitions for this concept of "discourse," resulting in different approaches and methods for the analysis of discourse. Among those approaches are speech act theory, interactional sociolinguistics, ethnography of communication, pragmatics, conversation analysis, and variation analysis (Schiffrin, 1994).

Is positioning analysis discourse analysis? How is positioning analysis different from conversation analysis? Are positioning and footing the same? These are some of the typical, legitimate questions I hear from my applied linguistics students when I introduce positioning theory as an analytic method. I also regularly review journal manuscripts that are submitted for publication to numerous scholarly journals and utilize positioning theory or analysis. As a reviewer, I wonder sometimes why the author chose positioning analysis over other discourse approaches, some of which—in some cases—could indeed have been a better fit. In any empirical paper, a researcher should be able to explain why the

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https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-97337-1_2

analytic approach and theoretical framework used in the paper were chosen. Such a rationale for methodological choices is important and necessary for the soundness and trustworthiness of the study—these two issues are discussed in detail in the final chapter.

My teaching and review experience has indicated to me that it is necessary to "position" positioning analysis within other discourse analytic approaches.[1] Positioning theory can be used as a theoretical framework or an analytic method. Given its strong analytic focus on story lines, narratives, and discourses, positioning theory can be considered as an approach to discourse analysis. When used as an analytic method, positioning theory also overlaps with several discourse analytic approaches. Even though positioning analysis uses various techniques from those other approaches to discourse analysis, there are certain differences among them. The broad question that I attempt to address in this chapter is: "As an analytic method or approach, how does positioning analysis differ to other approaches to discourse analysis?" Instead of comparing positioning analysis to each of the discourse analytic approaches I have mentioned in these initial paragraphs, I only focus on conversation analysis, ethnography of communication, and critical discourse analysis (CDA), as they are—in my opinion—the most closely linked to positioning analysis.

Positioning and Discourse

The concept of discourse has generated discussions about what it means, how it is used, and how it should be studied (Cameron, 2001). Numerous definitions of *discourse* have been offered across disciplines. Yet, the most common definition that can be found is "language in use." Multiple scholars (e.g., Fairclough, 2001; Gee, 2008) suggest that it is insufficient to look only at language itself, but "language use

[1]Whenever I refer to positioning theory as a theoretical framework in this book, I use "positioning theory." When I talk about its use as an analytic tool or method, I use "positioning analysis." Since my focus in this chapter is the analytic aspect of positioning theory, I will use "positioning analysis" more often than "positioning theory," as the former better reflects the analytic aspect.

conceived of as socially determined" (Fairclough, 2001, p. 18). Gee addresses this distinction by two concepts: discourse and Discourses—with the latter referring not just to the language or the content of what people say, but who says it, how it is said, and what happens after it is said. The saying–doing combination is, therefore, important. As discourses operate in relation to other discourses instead of standing alone, they intersect, overlap, and intertwine in complex ways, which is called interdiscursivity (Rex & Schiller, 2009). Interdiscursivity highlights the multiple worlds and discourses of which we are part, their interrelated nature, and their availability to individuals in any interaction. Discursive psychology, in which positioning theory is rooted, argues that discourse is both constructed and constructive. In other words, "people talk by deploying the resources (words, categories, common-sense ideas) available to them" and they "build social worlds through descriptions and accounts thereof" (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006, p. 40).

Positioning and discourse are tightly connected, especially given that a major part of positioning acts are accomplished by linguistic action (Deppermann, 2015). Deppermann (2015) notes, however:

> linguistic forms do not code positions directly. Rather, they are used to cue relevant features of context indexically – that is they are associated with certain social groups, ways of speaking, moral, evaluative, and epistemic instances, and interpretative repertories and are used to construct locally relevant positions. (p. 377)

In positioning theory, the meanings, norms, and behaviors that guide one's thoughts and actions are constructed through discourses (Slocum-Bradley, 2009). Being part of multiple discourses, individuals recognize themselves and others as certain types or kinds of people (Rex & Schiller, 2009). Discourse in positioning theory is understood as ways of being in the world. Individuals use the language to act, behave, and speak as a way to take on positions others will recognize (ibid.). The focus is not only on the language itself, but "language used to do something and mean something, language produced and interpreted in a real-world context" (Cameron, 2001, p. 13). The focus is on the social practice,

on the phenomena constructed and shaped in the discourse, and on the actions being accomplished (Wood & Kroger, 2000). Therefore, positioning theory pays particular attention not only to the linguistic features in discourse, but also to their social functions (Wood & Kroger, 2000).

Earlier in this chapter, I mentioned that discourse analysis is a broad area and it is, therefore, not surprising that the approaches to the analysis of discourse are varied. While I "position" positioning analysis apart from other discourse analytic approaches, I describe its similarities to various research discourse analytic approaches that share certain features with positioning analysis. I now turn my attention to three major discourse analytic approaches in relation to positioning analysis.

Positioning and Conversation Analysis

Positioning analysis can heavily involve principles or techniques of conversation analysis (CA; see Seedhouse, 2004), which is known to be the most micro-analytic variety of discourse analysis (Wood & Kroger, 2000). Deppermann (2013) acknowledges that positioning analysis has increasingly included tenets of CA, especially in understanding and analyzing identities in conversational storytelling. CA, based on the analysis of live or ongoing interactions, aims to understand the momentary construction of reality the participants create (Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 2003). According to Wilkinson and Kitzinger (2003), CA is also similar to speech act theory, as they both perceive talk as a form of action, sharing the common understanding that "utterances *do* things rather than *state* things" (p. 159). This micro-level approach to discourse analysis emphasizes "face-to-face interactions, the immediate situation, and local events" (Wood & Kroger, 2000, p. 20), which are also the highlights in positioning analysis. Seedhouse (2004) suggests two principal aims for CA:

> One principal aim of CA is to characterize the organization of the interaction by abstracting from exemplars of specimens of interaction and to uncover the emic logic underlying the organization. […]

> Another principal aim of CA is to trace the development of intersubjectivity in an action sequence. This does *not* mean that CA provides access to participants' cognitive or psychological states. Rather, it means that analysts trace how participants analyze and interpret each other's actions and develop a shared understanding of the progress of the interaction. (p. 13)

CA analysis, therefore, focuses on linguistic resources in understanding how local events unfold and how local knowledge is produced. The interaction is considered as something "improvised by social actors who attend closely to what one another are doing and have just done in immediately present and past moments during the ongoing course of interaction" (Erickson, 1992, p. 203). Although CA analysts do not deny the role of social categories, such as gender or social class, they demand that the analysis rather show how these categories are evident and consequential in the discourse (Korobov, 2001). Rather than interpreting the data through assumptions or pre-established categories, the analysis itself should speak to it. For example, instead of assuming "A said B" in this conversation because of her gender, one should point out the linguistic resources that clearly indicate how gender is actually being performed or played out in the conversation.

The use of CA in applied linguistics research is widespread.[2] In applied linguistics, CA has been widely used to analyze the interactional organization of language classroom discourse, including but not limited to the structure and forms of acceptances or refusals, recasts, conversational repair, alignment, turn-taking, and so on. Using CA, one can also investigate how positioning is achieved locally in conversations. More specifically, by using CA as a technique, one can examine the interactional organization (e.g., turn-taking, repair, adjacency pairs) of classroom discourse, which helps to understand who positions who and in what ways within "naturally occurring data" (Seedhouse, 2004, p. 15). Looking at turn-taking alone can tell a lot about positioning. Analyzing how turns are distributed or shared, one can see who dominates the

[2]For an extensive overview of CA studies in applied linguistics research, see Kasper and Wagner (2014).

talk in the classroom, who gets positioned as a facilitator, who remains silent, and so on. Positioning analysis can, therefore, use various techniques of CA, from turn-taking to feedback-giving, to identifying positions assigned to students and the classroom teacher. According to Deppermann (2013), positioning analysis offers CA "a more comprehensive perspective to identities in interaction by attending to moral and epistemic positioning in terms of agency and evaluation and by the refined analysis of various orders of the constitution of the self in interaction with respect to biographical time" (p. 68).

Positioning and Critical Discourse Analysis

Foucauldian-inspired CDA is an interdisciplinary methodological approach that perceives discourse as a social practice and "refers to a set of discourse-analytic perspectives that, overall, are of the most macroanalytical sort" (Wood & Kroger, 2000, p. 21). Benwell and Stokoe (2006) describe two key assumptions of CDA:

> The first is that analysis should be based on a close engagement with the language of texts. The second is that language is a context-bound and social phenomenon and can be properly understood only by paying due attention to the social and cultural contexts in which it occurs. (p. 44)

Focusing on the "ideological workings of language in representing the world" (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006, p. 44), CDA argues that language used in any discourse is shaped and influenced by social norms. It is concerned with how agency, power, and control influence social relationships and discursive practices. It also aims to uncover such practices and processes, which would then result in social change within the society. CDA may involve the micro-level use of patterned linguistic features and interdiscursivity to understand how power, hegemony, privilege, status, and gender would be at work, marginalizing certain groups or individuals. In other words, it places great emphasis on multiple discourses associated with different institutions or practices and how those discourses operate together, or interdiscursively, across time and diverse contexts (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006). A common CDA

approach is the discourse-historical approach, which combines historical background information and prior related discourses to the current discourses.

According to Korobov (2001), positioning analysis is somewhere between CA and CDA, dissolving some of the tensions between both. Earlier I stated that positioning analysis can use CA to understand the interactional structure of the classroom and how that structure can position the classroom members. This can be done by focusing on various aspects of CA, such as turn-taking, confirmation checks, reformulations, and so on. However, such analysis is sometimes insufficient for positioning analysis, which is also concerned with "why." Why are certain individuals positioned in certain ways in the classroom? CA, with its strong focus on the "conversational details of talk-in-sequence," may fail in providing an answer to the "why" questions. Drawing from Wetherell's work (1998), Korobov (2001) states that "an adequate analysis must not only look at the conversational details of talk-in-sequence, but must also trace these detailed linguistic formations through the larger argumentative threads that are displaced in the participants' orientations" (p. 3). This would mean bringing the larger socio-political discourses to the analysis, and this is when a positioning analysis may draw from the principles of CDA.

As I highlight the differences between CA and CDA while also situating positioning analysis between them, I want to emphasize that CA does not completely reject the macro-level discourses in the analysis. Discussing the differences between CA and CDA, Korobov states that CA is almost never "interpretation-free, getting-at-the-real-thing form of analysis" (p. 3). Drawing from the work of Schegloff (1997, 1999), Korobov stresses that "all interpretations must be grounded FIRST in the actual talk and practices of the participants" (p. 3). Although positioning analysis somewhat emphasizes an immanentist view and therefore shares many commonalities with CA, it also highlights the role of macro-level discourses more than CA does. This is where positioning analysis is inclined more toward CDA. Furthermore, both CDA and positioning analysis are strongly interested in "inequality." As mentioned in Chapter 1, positioning theory aims to understand why certain individuals are denied certain rights in a particular story line. To

understand social inequalities, the theory places a strong emphasis on power. The common interest in power and inequality is what intersects positioning theory and CDA. Positioning theory and CDA also share a common understanding of the concept of identity. Benwell and Stokoe (2006) state:

> Like practitioners of critical discourse analysis, positioning theorists argue against a wholly agentless sense of master discourses in which identity construction is constrained by a restrictive set of subject positions available. Instead they claim that people may resist, negotiate, modify or refuse positions, thus preserving individual agency in identity construction. (p. 43)

A number of studies in applied linguistics have combined positioning analysis with CDA. For example, Trent (2012) combined CDA with positioning analysis to understand how linguistic practices in Hong Kong schools positioned teachers in particular ways. It is also common to see the use of CA and CDA simultaneously in applied linguistics research that uses positioning theory. For example, Menard-Warwick (2008) combines micro-analysis of classroom interaction discourse with CDA to investigate gender positioning in an ESL classroom. She focuses on linguistic and interactional structures, such as speech acts, corrective feedback, turn-taking and interruptions, codeswitching, stress and intonation, and paraverbals relevant to social positioning in CDA.

Positioning and Ethnography of Communication

Dell Hymes is known to be one of the linguistic anthropologists who developed the ethnography of communication approach in the 1960s and 1970s, in response to what he identified as a gap in the field of anthropology, arguing that anthropologists often ignored language as cultural behavior and neglected the vital role language played in a culture (see Gumperz & Hymes, 1964; Hymes, 1972, 1974). Interested in the moment-by-moment organization of interactions, Gumperz (1982) and Goffman (1959, 1961, 1981) also contributed to the approach.

Suggesting that the "way we communicate with each other is constrained by culture but it also reveals and sustains culture" (Hymes, 1972, p. 139), Hymes stressed that the communicative competence of the members of a cultural community differs depending on how those members draw on communicative cultural resources in everyday life. The focus in ethnography of communication is therefore on "the social meaning of stylistic variation in communication within and across bounded cultural groups that were considered speech communities" (Erickson, 1992, p. 203).

Ethnographers use traditional ethnographic research methods to analyze communicative patterns. The main goal is to ethnographically examine the communicative events and patterns relevant to a particular culture. The units of analysis typically involves (communicative) speech situations, events, and acts. With its focus on speech events and acts, ethnography of communication usually integrates principles of speech act theory with interactional approaches within a larger framework of inquiry. Erickson (1992) differentiates between ethnography of communication and ethnographic micro-analysis of interaction by arguing that ethnographic micro-analysis of interaction actually derives from five approaches, while ethnography of communication is from one. He considers ethnographic micro-analysis of interaction not as an alternative to ethnography of communication but as a complement to it. According to him, there are two crucial issues for ethnographic micro-analysis:

> 1) identifying the full range of variation in the organization of interaction in whatever setting, network, or community one is studying and 2) establishing the typicality and atypicality (relative frequency of occurrence) of various event types and modes of interactional organization (and of particular instances of these) across the full range of diversity in social relations to be found in the setting, network, or community. (Erickson 1992, p. 206)

In her study on language socialization, Duff offers a brief discussion of various approaches to classroom ethnography, which include ethnography of communication, micro-ethnography, discourse analysis, and critical ethnography. Duff warns researchers about the potential problems

such categories might create by acknowledging that "most ethnographic classroom research involves a combination of ethnographic description, micro-analysis of events, and discourse analysis, and researchers themselves seldom characterize their studies as just one or another type" (p. 292), which is indeed the case in applied linguistics research. Duff further argues that there are some other related or even overlapping concepts, such as constitutive ethnography, interactional ethnography, or sociolinguistic ethnography, a fact which only seems to complicate the problem of labels in ethnography of communication.

Putting these categories aside, I support the argument that Deppermann (2013) offers regarding the relationship of positioning analysis and ethnography of communication. His argument is that an analysis of identities in interaction within a CA approach should include positioning analysis and be enlarged by ethnographic considerations. He stresses that an analyst should

> resort to a wider notion of "display" than is usual in CA: s/he needs to turn to and incorporate the ethnographic knowledge the participants themselves dispose of into the analysis in order to grasp indexical socio-stylistic functions attributed to ways of speaking (in terms of vocal performance, lexical choice, and discourse strategies). (Deppermann, 2013, p. 78)

Especially in understanding identity work, Deppermann further acknowledges that

> ethnographic knowledge is necessary in order to grasp participants' full evaluative, stylistic, socio-cultural meaning of the identity-categories they invoke. This should not be taken as a call for resorting to cultural discourses "known" to be relevant by the researcher. Rather, we have to have ethnographic evidence that and how these discourses matter for the participants. Of course, the best ethnographic evidence will be the one which is documented by recordings of recurrent practices of the participants themselves. (p. 84)

A large majority of the studies in the field of applied linguistics that used positioning theory have also used ethnography of communication. A good example that uses positioning theory as a lens with ethnography

of communication as an analytic approach is Martin-Beltran's study (2010) on the social construction of proficiency. In analyzing acts of positioning in different contexts within a school, Martin-Beltran incorporates principles of "ethnography of communication, interactional ethnography, and critical conversation analysis" (p. 263). Given the emphasis ethnography of communication places on contexts within which utterances occur, Martin-Beltran begins her analysis of larger patterns across the school day and year and continues with a more detailed, moment-to-moment interaction analysis. In another study, De Costa (2011) takes a micro-ethnographic analytic approach in using the constructs of language ideology and positioning to examine immigrant learners' beliefs about English in a Singapore school. He claims that positioning and language ideology are inextricably linked and subject positions are based on ideologies. In his paper, De Costa explains why he chose a micro-ethnographic analytic approach instead of CDA by arguing that "such a distinction is superfluous in light of Gee's (2004) observation that all discourse analysis must be critical discourse analysis because all language in interaction is inherently political" (p. 351). De Costa's critical stance regarding the distinction between CDA and micro-ethnographic analysis points out, I believe, the complexities associated with "discourses" and blurry boundaries of discourse analytic approaches.

Summary

Positioning theory is multidisciplinary, since it draws from various "social theories and methods characterized by an interest in the study of face-to-face interaction, conversation scripts, situated definitions of 'I,' and situated discourse as component parts for the construction of social order" (Warren & Moghaddam, 2018, p. 4). Placing emphasis on the role of discourse in understanding positions and social structures, positioning theory shares similarities with conversation analysis, narrative inquiry, ethnomethodology, discourse analysis, and various other methodologies. According to Warren and Moghaddam, "the unique contribution of positioning theory is that it highlights the interpretation of rights and duties as primary explanatory variables for social interaction" (p. 4).

Discourse, or *language-in-use*, is understood differently across academic disciplines with numerous theoretical roots and, therefore, can be investigated in many different ways. In this chapter, I have introduced positioning analysis as an analytic approach to discourse analysis. It is important and necessary to elucidate how positioning analysis, as an analytic approach to discourse, overlaps with or is different from other discourse analytic approaches. I have attempted to detail this in the chapter by providing a brief overview of conversation analysis, CDA, and ethnography of communication. I have chosen these three approaches among others mainly because positioning analysis seems to draw heavily from the principles and features of those three approaches. Through an overview of each of the three approaches in relation to positioning analysis, my goal was to highlight the differences and similarities between positioning theory and those three discourse analytic approaches.

By paying particular attention to turn allocation and turn-taking to understand how individuals engage in certain discourse moves, positioning theory uses conversation analysis as a technique. To understand the role of power, a central concept in positioning theory, as well as other macro-level discourses in the construction of micro-level positions in discourse, positioning analysts draw from the principles of CDA. Ethnography of communication, with its wide range of varieties, helps scholars understand positions in their culturally embedded, social contexts. By combining certain aspects of numerous approaches to discourse analysis, positioning theory becomes a strong theoretical lens and discourse analytic approach.

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3

Positioning Theory in Applied Linguistics

Soon after positioning theory was introduced, Bronwyn Davies (2000) used it as a theoretical framework in her research on classroom interactions. Since then, the theory has been used in a wide array of classroom-based studies. Numerous studies in content-area classrooms have explored positioning within the context of literacy education (e.g., Bomer & Laman, 2004; Cremin & Baker, 2010; Davies & Hunt, 1994; Evans, 1996; Hall, Johnson, Juzwik, Wortham, & Mosley, 2010; Lewis, 1997; Maloch, 2005; McVee, Brock, & Glazier, 2011; Rainville & Jones, 2008), science learning and discussions (e.g., Ritchie, 2002), and mathematical thinking, learning, or development (e.g., Esmonde, 2009; Evans, Morgan, & Tsatsaroni, 2006; Ma & Singer-Gabella, 2011; Mosvold & Bjuland, 2016; Tait-McCutcheon & Loveridge, 2016; Wagner & Herbel-Eisenmann, 2008, 2009; Wood, 2013). The use of positioning theory in applied linguistics research, however, is quite recent and still limited.

The fields of second language acquisition (SLA) and applied linguistics have experienced a social turn (Block, 2003) that began in the late 1990s with increasing attention to socially oriented traditions, such as sociocultural theory (e.g., Lantolf & Pavlenko, 1995), critical sociolinguistics

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https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-97337-1_3

(e.g., Firth & Wagner, 1997; Kumaravadivelu, 1999), and feminist post-structuralism and pedagogy (e.g., Norton, 2000; Vandrick, 1994). These approaches have challenged the traditional and longstanding views of SLA. The social turn has allowed SLA researchers and applied linguists to focus on notions such as self, discourse, and identity in relation to developing and achieving acquisition of a second or additional language (Mantero, 2007). The alternative approaches to SLA (see Atkinson, 2011) have focused on the differences of social contexts, membership, and identities of the learners or users of the second or additional languages in order to understand how those social categories and issues affect and determine "*what* is learned, *how* it is acquired, and *why* some learners are more successful than others" (Saville-Troike, 2006, p. 99). Within this strand of research, Bonny Norton Peirce's (now Bonny Norton) foundational work on identity and investment (e.g., Norton Peirce, 1995; Norton, 2000), theorizing the relationship between the language learner and the social world, has been highly influential.

In a recent publication that introduces a transdisciplinary framework for SLA, the Douglas Fir Group (2016) further examines what it means to learn a new language. They highlight the increasing impact of globalization, technologization, and mobility on language learning and teaching in a multilingual world. New mobile technologies, they claim, shape the ways language learners need and want to use language to exchange and interpret information, and author knowledge. Such new technologies and global movement not only create linguistic communities that are extraordinarily diverse, but also reproduce inequalities (e.g., social, economic, cultural, etc.). Linguistic diversity in most schools around the world is no longer solely based on geographical differences among classroom learners, but on "contemporary mobility and Internet-circulated forms of social media" (Rymes, 2016, p. 23). With all these constant shifts and changes in the world, language learning and teaching processes are becoming even more complex than before. I see a strong potential in positioning theory to understand this complexity and advance knowledge in the areas of learning and teaching additional languages.

Positioning theory, as a "trans-disciplinary conceptual and analytical framework" (Slocum-Bradley, 2009, p. 79), allows applied linguists "to

adequately understand and address social issues, which are not bound by disciplinary divisions" (ibid.). Given its strong focus on social context, identities, and social interaction, positioning theory has much to offer in understanding the nature of interactions and participation in bi/multilingual contexts. Furthermore, positioning theory pushes us to rethink "taken-for-granted" story lines in the context of second/foreign language teaching and learning, cultural stereotypes (see Van Langenhove & Harré, 1994), as well as dichotomized constructs that describe learners or speakers of additional languages, characterizing SLA (see Canagarajah, 2007). Whitsed and Volet (2013) acknowledge, for example, that in the context of the internationalization of language education, "taken-for-granted story lines abound, for example, 'the academically challenged and problematic international student' vs. 'the less challenging domestic student' story line" (p. 722). Positioning theory enables us to expose and challenge such story lines and assumptions. In the next section, I elaborate on the link between positioning theory and applied linguistics research, and further explain why positioning theory is relevant to applied linguistics. I then continue with a discussion about the relationship of positioning to a number of important applied linguistics concepts, such as culture, language socialization, and identities.

Why Is Positioning Theory Relevant to Applied Linguistics?

As I have previously stated, positioning theory has been applied to research in numerous disciplines. In applied linguistics, the use of positioning theory is relatively new and limited to identity work. Many applied linguists I have taught or met perceive positioning theory as an identity theory. Even though the theory focuses on the *self*, perceiving it solely as an identity theory would be a mistake, however. When we look at the characteristics of the theory and its application to research in other fields or disciplines, we see that it has been used to investigate a diverse range of topics, such as conflict and alliances, internal personal relations and crises, or national and cultural tension and agreements (Harré Moghaddam, Cairnie, Rothbart, & Sabat, 2009). This is

not surprising given the strong focus the theory places on meanings and social action. Positioning theory can also be used to investigate various applied linguistic topics besides that of identities. Perhaps most importantly, the theory can be used to understand the second/foreign language learning and teaching processes.

Before explaining the link between positioning theory and the second/foreign language learning and teaching processes, I will first explain what I mean by "learning a second language." Walsh (2011) discusses two views. He states that several people regard learning a language as "acquiring ever-expanding repertoires of new skills and knowledge" (p. 49). This kind of learning, Walsh suggests, sees learning as "having." An alternative view, he suggests, considers language learning as "doing":

> Learning is regarded as a process, an activity, something we take part in, [and] perform. Learning is regarded as a dynamic, constantly shifting process in which participants collectively construct meanings. Learning is not something we have or own, it is something that we participate in – it entails encounters with others. Learning is regarded much more as a social rather than a cognitive process. Our actions, activities and interactions with others all work together to determine what it is that we learn. Learning entails completing a task, taking part in an activity, talking, discussing, debating and arguing with others. (p. 49)

It is this view of language learning that I adopt throughout this book, for two main reasons. First, there is enough empirical evidence in the fields of SLA and applied linguistics indicating that SLA does not simply happen in the mind or brain of the learner, nor can language learning be merely a function of the input to which the learner is exposed. Second language learning goes beyond acquiring the grammar rules, lexicon, and phonology of the target language. It is a social phenomenon embedded in the social context and cultural knowledge required for appropriate language use (Norton, 2000; Pavlenko, 2002; Saville-Troike, 2006; Wenger, 1998). Second, focusing on the "doing" dimension, as Walsh (2011) suggests, is "something we can study, analyse, and evaluate" (p. 49). As Walsh further argues, it is not possible to know what is happening in our students' brains or what they are learning.

It is possible, however, to look at what they communicate or say in the new or additional language; "this is where we can really begin to uncover some of the finer nuances of learning as a process. Under this view of learning, studying interaction, quite simply, is the same thing as studying learning" (p. 50).

Similarly, Pavlenko and Norton (2007) claim that learning is a "situated process of participation in particular communities of practice, which may entail the negotiation of ways of being a person in that context" (p. 669). Norton (2000, 2003) argues that inequitable power relationships in local contexts, rather than factors such as strong identification with the L1 (first language) group, low motivation, or personality traits (e.g., extroverted vs. introverted), may limit opportunities for learners to interact with L2 speakers. She capitalizes on the social and power relations in social interactions. Pennycook (1990) also argues that SLA should be evaluated in "its social, cultural, [and] political contexts, taking into account gender, race, and other relations of power as well as the notion of the subject as multiple and formed within different discourses" (p. 26). Indeed, multiple studies have indicated that language learners bring into the classroom various, sometimes conflicting, discourses, and that they position themselves in story lines that involve race, class, and gender (e.g., Abdi, 2011; McKay & Wong, 1996; Ritchie, 2002; Vetter, 2010). Similarly, a classroom teacher's race, gender, and ethnicity, among other social factors, shape classroom interactions and the ways s/he interacts with his/her students (Kayi-Aydar, 2015; Reeves, 2009).

These poststructural understandings of second language learning and acquisition are consistent with the principles of the positioning theory that I summarized in Chapter 1. Broadly speaking, positioning theory, with its particular focus on participation, discourse, and identities, can help applied linguists and language teachers better understand how second language learning and teaching happen in diverse social contexts. By saying this, I do not claim a correlation or causation between positioning and language learning. Rather, positioning theory can illuminate important elements that are crucial for second language learning or teaching, such as one's access to speaker rights in the language classroom

or other multilingual contexts, as well as identities, language socialization, ideologies, culture, moral dimensions, proficiency, interactional competence, intercultural communication, and social justice, among others.

Positioning Theory to Understand One's Language Proficiency in Bi/Multilingual Contexts

Positioning theory offers a new, different perspective for the definition and assessment of "language proficiency" and "interactional competence," both of which have an important role in the context of second/foreign language learning and teaching. In the field of SLA, language proficiency has been mostly described and determined from a cognitive perspective; in other areas, scholars (e.g., Cummins, 2016) have aimed to determine one's language proficiency based on factors such as age, cross-lingual dimensions, individual differences, and so on. The notion of interactional competence was offered as an alternative to proficiency, highlighting the attention to communication skills necessary for communicating with native speakers of the target language (see Hall, 2018). The most recent research has further placed emphasis on social factors, redefining the understandings of proficiency and interactional competence. Hall (2018), for example, has recently suggested the concept of "interactional repertories," arguing that this concept is more useful than the notion of interactional competence because "it more aptly captures the variable nature of the multilingual, multimodal resources that learners draw on and develop in their diverse contexts of use" and "it suggests a more empirically valid understanding of learning, not as a linear, single, one-path-fits-all process, but rather as multidimensional trajectories occurring over L2 learners' lifespans" (p. 25). Regardless of the concept that is preferred among SLA scholars, positioning theory offers an opportunity to expand understandings of proficiency, interactional competence, and interactional repertories.

Pinnow and Chval (2015) argue that "the development of IC [interactional competence] is inextricably intertwined with the positioning practices of the classroom interactional architecture" (p. 10).

They further explain the link between positioning and interactional competence:

> In examining the role of positioning in the development of IC, it is important to iterate that L2 learners do not gain IC as individual skills in singular isolated instances that are then applied in mechanistic fashion to future events. Rather, IC is a toolkit developed through dynamic interactions that provide knowledge and experience that can be drawn upon in an astute fashion when facing new encounters. (p. 10)

Similarly, Martin-Beltran argues that what determines a learner's linguistic proficiency is to a large extent the positions assigned to the student. For example, in her study conducted in a dual-immersion school where students interacted in two languages, Martin-Beltran (2010) analyzed the link between linguistic proficiency and positioning by focusing on the acts of positioning at three levels: personal (self), interpersonal (others), and institutional (school). At the personal (self) level, for instance, she analyzed positioning in learners' participation in discourse communities and activities. Martin-Beltran shows how one's proficiency is contingent on how one is positioned in one's particular context, arguing that no student would be considered a proficient speaker on his/her own; rather, linguistic proficiency is "enacted, ascribed, and discussed in the company of others" (p. 272). This would mean that the perceptions of proficiency change as one's interactive and reflexive positionings change. Martin-Beltran further states that certain local social practices within schools position language learners as members or non-members of certain discourse communities, which affect learning and teaching practices. She found, for example, that the students who were most likely to gain access to the classroom discussions were the ones who were already positioned as proficient speakers by the teachers. Such publicly declared and authorized positions offered continued opportunities for some students to participate in language more than others. Martin-Beltran concludes that through discursive practices and acts of positioning, learners co-construct perceptions of proficiencies and consequent language learning affordances and constraints.

Positioning Theory to Understand Speaker Rights in Bi/Multilingual Contexts

In the past decade, there has been increasing attention on mainstream classrooms, where researchers have aimed to understand how English language learners (ELLs) situate themselves and (re)construct identities. A common theme in these studies is that ELLs are usually marginalized by their native English-speaking peers, who seem to deny them opportunities to become members of the classroom community and participate in classroom practices (e.g., Ajayi, 2006; Miller, 2000). Ellis (2008) claims that:

> learners do not usually participate in communicative events as equals – at least when their interlocutors are native speakers. One reason for the lack of equality may be the learner's overall social status in the native-speaker community. For example, adult learners in conversations with native speakers are likely to have few opportunities to nominate topics and tend not to compete for turns. This restricts the range of speech acts they will need to perform. It is not yet clear what the repercussions of this are for the acquisition of both linguistic and pragmatic competence, but there is sufficient evidence to suggest that learners may benefit from opportunities for a more equal discourse role, such as occurs in communication with other learners. (p. 197)

Although L2 learners may not participate equally when they are with native speakers, Ellis's claim regarding learner–learner communication and equal discourse roles is questionable. Given the fact that there are differences among L2 learners in terms of age, gender, race, ethnicity, status, culture, and L2 competence, it would be problematic to assume that language learners would have "equal discourse roles" in a classroom environment. In an ESL classroom, for example, does each learner have the same access to use the language that all are learning? Does each ESL student equally benefit from learning opportunities? It seems that the "sufficient evidence" to which Ellis refers has neglected the power issues in classrooms; and "classrooms, after all, are also sites of struggle, struggles that are about existence and power" (Davies, 2000, p. 144).

An example of power issues affecting ESL learning and classroom participation is evident in a study I conducted in a college ESL

classroom (Kayi-Aydar, 2013). I found that some students perceived the classroom environment as a place for competition rather than collaboration, which resulted in unequal participation among students. A number of students dominated classroom conversations during student-centered activities, as they perceived group work like a competition. Negotiating content or linguistic knowledge in order to contribute to the conversations was difficult for some students in the same classroom. Furthermore, several students did not understand their classmates because of their strong foreign accent and they therefore avoided interacting with them. Reluctance to interact affected both positioning and participation. As can be seen, even though those ESL students were placed in the same classroom because of their same or similar language proficiency levels, a myriad of factors affected speaker roles, positions, and classroom participation.

Talk and participation are complicated in any second/foreign language classroom where sociocultural issues are intertwined in complex ways. Classroom members constantly negotiate rights to gain access to learning opportunities and participation. Positioning theory can be used as a theoretical framework, lens, or methodological tool to analyze classroom discourse in explaining the relations among power, competence, and positional identities as well as the second language learning experiences of language learners. Positioning theory emphasizes that meaningful communication is only possible when people not only possess the skills necessary to say things, but also are involved in the distribution of rights, duties, and obligations. For the language classroom, this means that language skills and competences are not sufficient for learners to participate actively. Rather, it is important who distributes the rights, whose duty it is to teach and learn, and how they are all negotiated.

Positioning Theory to Understand Access to Learning Opportunities in Bi/Multilingual Contexts

The term "learning opportunity" has been frequently used in the educational literature and is increasingly being used in discussions of TESOL (teaching English to speakers of other languages) classroom practices. In his opportunity framework, Crabbe (2003) discusses the relations

between opportunities, curriculum, and quality, and considers a curriculum "an organization of learning opportunities, or means, for achieving certain outcomes, or ends" (p. 10). According to Crabbe, learning opportunities refer to any cognitive or metacognitive activity that is likely to lead to an increase in knowledge or skill (Crabbe, 2003, 2007). Thus, negotiating meaning in a discussion is a learning opportunity, as is processing comprehensible input or getting direct feedback on one's own use of language (Crabbe, 2003, 2007). In his opportunity framework, Crabbe (2003) lists several opportunity categories, which may include but are not limited to receiving input, producing output, getting feedback, and "having access to knowledge about language and about language learning" (p. 19).

Crabbe warns readers that the list is not definitive and further recognizes and emphasizes individual differences, affect, style, and prior experience of learning, and motive in particular, in the take-up of the opportunities available.

Xie (2011) argues that the creation and use of learning opportunities are especially important in ESL classrooms because it is through such opportunities that students use the target language, which is essential and necessary for their language development. Crabbe (2003) further suggests that focusing on opportunities gives the teacher more flexibility and a chance to think about "what opportunities or interaction opportunities learners are likely to need and how feedback opportunities will be built in" (p. 22), instead of "task" or "group work" or "activities that work best," which might hinder adaptability or creativity. Furthermore, according to Crabbe (2003),

> learning opportunity is a term that is neutral as to who seeks or provides the opportunities, unlike terms such as instruction or delivery, and as to where those opportunities might be available. This aspect of the concept allows a teacher to consider the learner's role in seeking opportunities and the teacher's role in encouraging that opportunity seeking. In short, the notion of opportunity is compatible with the goal of supporting and fostering learner autonomy within instructional curricula. (p. 22)

In Crabbe's opportunity framework (2003, 2007), it seems that it is the learner who is responsible for getting access to the learning opportunities. However, as I have stated earlier, participation is not that simple.

Gaining access to learning opportunities in a social setting is not limited to individual characteristics such as being shy, motivated, or self-confident. Social and power relations with others also play an important role and have an impact on opportunities and access. Norton's work (2000) on five immigrant women's language learning experiences found that although the immigrant women were highly motivated and worked in an environment where opportunities to speak English with native speakers were available, their access to these opportunities was often denied. This is because the native speakers with whom they were in contact were not welcoming and avoided interacting with them. In an ESL classroom setting, I argue that it is reflexive and interactive positioning acts that affect learners' access to learning opportunities and participation. In a classroom setting, this might mean how and why certain students gain control over the actions of others, or gain access to learning opportunities while others cannot. Pinnow and Chval (2015) acknowledge, for example, that "a teacher's tacit positioning of L2 learners can dramatically affect learner access to interactional opportunities" (p. 3), which are important not only for L2 acquisition but also "membership in the local moral order" (ibid.). Positioning theory draws attention to the consequences of positioning for learners' access to opportunities and right to speak in the classroom environment.

Positioning Theory to Understand Identity Work in Bi/Multilingual Contexts

It is widely accepted in the field of SLA that second language learning cannot be explained only via the input that students are exposed to or the output that they produce (e.g., Douglas Fir Group, 2016; Firth & Wagner, 1997; Norton, 2000). Scholars adopting a social and poststructural approach to language learning have emphasized the importance of social, cultural, and political contexts in understanding additional language learning and use (e.g., Darvin & Norton, 2015; Norton, 2000; Pavlenko & Norton, 2007). The identities of language learners, in particular, have become an important area of investigation. But why are

identities important, or why do they matter? Current research shows that there is a link between learners' identities and their second/foreign language or classroom learning (e.g., De Costa, 2011; Duff, 2002; Kayi-Aydar, 2014; Menard-Warwick, 2008). Nguyen and Yang (2015) argue that "learners' participation, non-participation or resistance in classroom discourse depends on who they want to be and become" (p. 223). They further (2015) claim that when learners are not able to construct the identities that they want or when the learning environment does not support their identity development, they may stop participating in classroom practices. Bomer and Laman (2004) stress the importance of identities for academic achievement, suggesting that in order to understand and create real growth, one should examine not only the skills but also the identities learners develop; "the moral, relational, and emotional dimensions cannot be extricated from academic achievement" (p. 423).

Studies on identity have mostly focused on language and socialization processes (e.g., Cervatiuc, 2009; Day, 2002; Duff, 2002; Duff, Wong, & Early, 2002; Fernsten, 2008; Gordon, 2004; Menard-Warwick, 2004; Miller, 2000; Norton, 2000; Talmy, 2008) and provided insights into how L2 learners function in a new culture and language. Perhaps the most influential study was that of Norton (2000) already mentioned, which explored how five immigrant women negotiated identities, power, and access to English in classroom and work settings in Canada. Norton argued that "the learning of a second language is not simply a skill that is acquired with hard work and dedication, but a complex social practice that engages the identities of language learners" (p. 132). In the majority of the subsequent studies conducted in various different contexts, identity has been viewed as multiple, dynamic, and shifting. Researchers have highlighted that identities are (re)constructed in and through social interaction across social contexts and presented through actions and emotions (Gee, 2008; De Costa & Norton, 2017). One's identities are "micro-genetically performed and consolidated" and, therefore, they can be "micro-analytically accessed" (Korobov & Bamberg, 2004, p. 476). Positioning theory is a powerful tool for understanding the nature of this "complex social practice" in bilingual or multilingual contexts. De Fina, Schiffrin, and Bamberg (2006) state:

> Investigating levels of identity construction as a process of positioning, and discovering the means adopted to enact various positions, leads to reflecting on the many ways of doing identity, ranging from the proclamation and open assignment of membership into social categories to the enactment of different kinds of selves, to indirect conveying of alignments and disalignments, to the implicit placement of social agents into preassigned roles. (p. 8)

As De Fina, Schiffrin, and Bamberg suggest, positioning has consequences for identity work as well as classroom learning and teaching.

Positioning theory can be adopted not only to examine learner identities in the classroom environment, but also to investigate the intersectionality of one's multiple identities. As bi/multilingual individuals engage in positioning moves, their linguistic identities may intersect with their gendered, racial, ethnic, or other identities. Rex and Schiller (2009) contend that "our different identities, positioned in different worlds, influence what we may or may not say, as well as what we choose to say" (p. 26). In their study, for example, Nguyen and Yang (2015) indicate how a Korean student's identity as a queer individual interacted with her ESL learner identity in the classroom environment. More specifically, this student tried to learn and develop a linguistic repertoire so that she could become a member of English-speaking queer communities. Through learning queer concepts and relevant lexical items in English, she was able to develop sophisticated lexical knowledge and perform a queer identity in discourse. This student actively employed affordances offered by classroom practices and activities to share personal experiences and enact her queer identity, which was constructed dynamically in social interaction through various forms of positioning. As seen in this and other similar studies (e.g., McKay & Wong, 1996), positioning analysis of the intersectionality of multiple identities in classroom discourse can help classroom teachers get to know their students better and develop appreciation of diversity and differences due to age, gender, sexual orientation, or immigration status in bi/multilingual classrooms or contexts.

Positioning Theory to Understand Language Socialization in Bi/Multilingual Contexts

Another concept in applied linguistics that can be investigated in light of positioning theory is language socialization, which first appeared in writings about first language acquisition (e.g., Ochs & Schieffelin, 1984, 1995; Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986). In the first language acquisition context, language socialization is understood as a child's acquisition of social competence to "recognize/interpret what social event is taking place and to speak and act in ways that are sensitive to the context" (Ochs, 1986, p. 3), a process that involves both socialization *through* language and socialization *into* language (Ochs & Schieffelin, 2017).

In the context of SLA, Duff (2007) defines language socialization as "the process by which novices or newcomers in a community or culture gain communicative competence, membership, and legitimacy in the group" (p. 310). Duff argues that the language socialization process involves the mastery of linguistic, interactional conventions, and pragmatics as newcomers adopt identities and ideologies appropriate for or associated with the target culture. She further adds that second language socialization differs from first language socialization because adults who learn a second or foreign language already have some established repertoire of linguistic and cultural traditions while getting exposed to and acquiring new ones. In the school environment, newly arrived immigrant or refugee students may go through the process of language socialization first through observation, and then more active participation in class activities (Duff, 2002). Their participation in class discussions is instrumental in their becoming fully proficient members of the classroom or school speech community (ibid.). Duff (2002) states that their participation plays an important role in their linguistic and content-area knowledge, and allows those students to develop and project aspects of their multiple identities.

It is important to note that language socialization is not an individual act. For language socialization to occur, it is necessary that there is sufficient access, acceptance, or accommodation by the new discourse

community (Duff, 2007). Language socialization may fail if there is "resistance or opposition from those expected to nurture" second/foreign language learners (Duff, 2007, p. 310). In the school environment, Duff acknowledges that "knowledge and participation in educational activities are co-constructed and are crucially linked with issues of *identity*, *agency*, and *difference*" (p. 291). It is therefore important to understand how newcomers or language learners are positioned by others as they gain social, linguistic, and cultural knowledge. Positioning theory can also be helpful in understanding how language learners draw from or negotiate different sets of linguistic, cultural, and discursive traditions or community affiliations as they (re)construct identities in the new culture and language.

Duff (2002) examined language use and socialization in an ethnically mixed and linguistically diverse Canadian social studies course. More specifically, she analyzed how classroom participation was organized and what linguistic resources and behaviors positioned the members of the class in ways that emphasized the differences and connections among them. The data she presents in the paper focus on the moments of interaction in which the classroom teacher attempted to make connections with the non-local students, responses by the students to the teacher's interactional moves, and the possible consequences of such interactions. Duff's analysis shows that the content of the teacher's and students' utterances contributed to their reflexive and interactive positioning (e.g., as insiders or outsiders) and also affected the sequencing, allocation, and distribution of turns in the discussions. Even though the teacher made intentional attempts to involve non-local students in class discussions that were relevant to their own backgrounds, cultures, and experience, the students did not take up the identity positions ascribed by the teacher and they participated minimally. Duff acknowledges:

> The participation patterns of non-local students had many contributing factors, most of which were mentioned by them in interviews, and not just linguistic ones related to proficiency: their previous educational socialization and cultural orientation toward in-class speech, psychological fears of criticism or of being singled out, content-related issues, such as a lack of familiarity with aboriginal issues, perhaps ambivalence

> about discussing their own names or joking about them, social status, as perceived ingroup vs. outgroup members, and interactional factors connected to other students' turn taking behaviors and responses to their utterances. (p. 306)

Duff shows that this myriad of factors positioned non-local students as "interactionally slow, silent, unknowable, and thus 'other'" (ibid.).

Menard-Warwick (2008) also successfully shows the link between positioning, gender and social positioning in particular, and language socialization in a study that she conducted in an adult ESL program in California. The positioning acts she critically analyzes occurred during a unit on employment. The classroom teacher assumed that her female immigrant students were home-makers. The worksheet she gave to her students asked them to choose the skills they had. The worksheet included skills such as "clean house," "cook," or "cut hair." One of those female students, who was a former businesswoman in accounting, added "buy/sell chemical products" to the worksheet. This skill claimed by the student had not been discussed in class, but was crucial to the student's pre-immigration businesswoman identity. This reflexive positioning was in conflict with the teacher's prepositioning of her students as home-makers. The student, due to her limited English, was unable to fully explain her previous occupation or resist the position of a home-maker assigned to her by the teacher in the conversation. The interaction between the student and the teacher represented a missed opportunity for the teacher to rethink her assumptions or reconsider her employment curriculum to give space for students' reflexive positionings. Furthermore, in that particular interaction, the student was interactively positioned in a way to socialize her into the teacher's and society's "notions of realistic career goals for Latina immigrants in the current sociopolitical climate" (p. 285). As shown by Menard-Warwick (2008), her "L2 development was necessarily tied to that socialization" (p. 285). Menard-Warwick concludes that

> if successful L2 socialization (Watson-Gegeo, 2004) necessarily involves taking on new identities (Norton, 2000), then understanding such events

> of positioning in language-learning contexts is key to making sense of the 'voices constructed by learners in a target language' (Ehrlich, 1997, p. 440; cf. Vitanova, 2005). (p. 268)

She further argues that reflexive positioning acts accepted by classroom teachers or other interlocutors may "foster expanded dialogue and more opportunities for creative language use than does interactive positioning in which identities are assigned by interlocutors" (p. 271). This study also shows the importance of critically evaluating ESL curricula and activities that tend to position adult immigrants as individuals who hold low-skilled employment. This process of positioning can be highly gendered, which plays a significant role in their language socialization. In brief, analyzing reflexive and interactive positionings in language classrooms or bi/multilingual contexts can illuminate the complexity of second language socialization process.

Positioning Theory to Understand Culture and Moral Values in Bi/Multilingual Contexts

Social structures contextualize what people say or do in a framework of normative judgments and determine the rules for appropriate behavior (Van Langenhove, 2017). All social structures are thus moral orders, which can be legal, institutional, conversational, and personal.[1] Harré (2012) links positioning theory to cultural psychology by emphasizing that local meanings and local moral orders of rights and duties are all cultural. He states, "indeed, it would be appropriate to see it [positioning theory] as a part of the program of the study of psychology as a cultural phenomenon" (Harré, 2012, p. 2). Similarly, in his discussion of positioning, Moghaddam (1999) claims that positioning on any level requires an analysis of cultural considerations because cultural differences may influence positioning practices. According to him, positioning practices vary with:

[1]For an extensive discussion of the varieties of moral orders, see Van Langenhove, L. (2017). Varieties of Moral orders and the dual structure of society: A perspective from positioning theory. *Frontiers in Sociology*, *2*, 9.

- the particular cultural ideals persons desire to move toward through positioning;
- the particular dimensions which persons find relevant in positioning themselves and others in discourse;
- the preferred forms of autobiographic telling, which may influence the types of stories people tell themselves about themselves in the process of positioning. (p. 80)

Warren and Moghaddam (2018) discuss how culture determines what story lines are acceptable or unacceptable and that "positioning theory helps explain how an act that is 'rational' according to one cultural framework can be 'irrational' from another" (p. 17). Taylor, Bougie, and Caouette (2003) offer a good example detailing the link between culture and positioning. Their example involves a young woman who moves from Southeast Asia to North America. This young woman engages in an "if-then" dialogue when trying to figure out responses to multiple questions in the new cultural setting, such as "What happens if I marry someone who is not from my culture?" The alternative responses will possibly vary with respect to each cultural template. In the face of competing cultural demands, this young woman's positions, the potential consequences of those positions, and her own emotions about those consequences will probably differ. Taylor et al. conclude that engaging in an inner dialogue over time in which this young woman constantly positions herself and others within moral and cultural templates will result in some positions becoming more dominant than others. Internalizing those more dominant positions will eventually assign a clearly defined identity position for this young woman.

In applied linguistics research, attending to culture and social context is not new. Many scholars have written about the role of culture in learning and teaching a second/foreign language (e.g., Atkinson, 1999; Hinkel, 1999; Kramsch, 1993). Furthermore, the link between the culture and identities of language learners has been documented by numerous scholars. For example, in two social studies classes in Canada, Duff (2002) observed ELLs and found that the teaching practices that included pop culture and other textual and media references united and engaged local students, gave them opportunities to display

and co-construct their identities, and allowed them to share their experiences and interests. On the other hand, the same practices excluded most of the ESL students from the local English speaking discourse community and positioned them as outsiders or outcasts. In a similar study, Hunter (1997) described the multiple and conflicting identities of a Portuguese student who was positioned as an outsider by his classmates in a 4th grade regular classroom, as the content of his writing did not match the interests of the other boys' stories. More specifically, this student was interested in family-centered topics whereas the other boys were more into media-based fantasy adventures. However, he was positioned as an accepted member of his gender group in the 5th grade by the help of new students who attended the class and collaborated with him on popular culture–based writings. Hunter concludes that while dominant formal institutions such as school and family shape one's identity construction, the social forces of everyday life, popular culture, and media forms also influence the ways language learners position themselves and others.

In the language classroom, language, power, and culture are intertwined in complex ways, shaping the identities of classroom members and the positions they construct. According to Buzzelli and Johnston (2002):

> Language is used to negotiate or maintain power and is a primary vehicle for cultural productions; power is negotiated to a significant extent through language and in culturally conventionalized ways; culture is expressed largely through language; and hegemonies of culture are maintained by power. (p. 16)

In the classroom environment, moral orders, culture, and positioning are intertwined.

Teaching demands an awareness of positioning acts and negotiations of them in the moral and cultural domains. In an ESL classroom, it is possible that learners, coming from different cultural backgrounds, bring into this new social setting various cultural and moral orders that might be in conflict with each other or may not be valued in the target setting. Therefore, the actions and interactions of learners may lead to

misunderstandings between individuals and/or the group that will then place or define them in ways not originally intended. In this regard, positioning theory is a useful lens that can help elucidate how communication in language classrooms is constructed culturally and what rights, duties, and obligations are available for second language learners to negotiate identities, conflicts, and tensions. Positioning theory is therefore eye-opening in that it helps classroom teachers realize such differences, making the invisible visible in the learning process.

As language learners co-construct or negotiate new discourses in the classroom, they bring their cultural backgrounds and histories with them. It does not mean that individuals coming from certain cultural backgrounds would position themselves or be positioned by others in certain ways because of their cultures, although they may be. As Gillespie and Martin (2014) argue, "while it is recognized that any culture has relatively established subject positions, the focus is on the ongoing creation and negotiation of positions" (p. 73) in conversations. Furthermore, given that a culture includes complex and most often contradictory cultural practices and values, it would be quite problematic to explain positioning acts based solely on one's culture or cultural background. Atkinson (1999) similarly argues that individuals live in multiple social worlds with multiple social roles and allegiances that constantly change, so human beings should not be defined as members of a single cultural/social group. Positioning acts therefore should not be interpreted based solely on one's membership in a single cultural or social group, even though positioning almost always occurs within a moral and cultural frame.

Glazier (2009) used positioning theory to understand the complexity of teacher learning about culture. Her data come from a yearlong professional development exercise in which five English teachers from the same diverse high school in the United States participated in order to discuss and learn about the use of multicultural literature so that they could better support the learning of all students. Glazier focuses on how the participants positioned themselves with regard to text and one another during those discussions. Her findings indicate that one of the two African American teachers positioned himself and was initially positioned by the other teacher-participants as the authority regarding minority-related issues. Glazier argues that this moral or role-based

position as authority and expert, which was further strengthened by the teacher's deliberate self-positioning in his interactions with the other teachers in the group, was also imposed on him by the wider society. His moral position seemed to position other teachers as learners rather than participants, which resulted in one of the teachers dropping out. Glazier highlights that both the African American teacher, assuming his moral order positioning confirmed by the group and imposed by the wider society, and other teachers engaged in story lines that did not allow them to reposition themselves. Glazier comments that "what results is a stifling of learning" in that particular professional development context: While the African American teacher could not become a "learner" because of his culturally imposed moral position, his colleagues could only learn what he provided in his story lines. Glazier concludes that positions exist in "sociocultural contexts and relational matrices" (p. 833) and teacher educators should encourage counter-narratives that would allow each teacher to reposition him/herself as they learn about diversity.

In conclusion, positioning theory suggests that one's moral and personal attributes, through which people locate themselves and others in discursive practices, are culturally embedded and vary widely with cultural background and ideals (Tan & Moghaddam, 1995). Given that positioning practices are culturally shaped, positioning theory pays particular attention to moral order and culture in examining and interpreting positions constructed in discursive practices in diverse bi/multilingual contexts. It has the potential to further our understanding of the link between culture and language learning with its close attention to identity work in *sociocultural* contexts.

Summary

Cognitive-oriented, traditional SLA scholarship has heavily focused on experimental studies to understand the SLA process, which has narrowed definitions of what it means to learn a second/foreign language, how one becomes a second/foreign language user, and how one is taught a second/foreign language (McVee et al., 2011). This scholarship has not been able to fully explain the complexity of socially and

culturally situated second/foreign language learning and teaching. Positioning theory offers an opportunity to investigate the complexities associated with learning and teaching additional languages. In this chapter, I have explained how positioning theory can be used to investigate various applied linguistics concepts. For example, I have described how individuals construct multiple identities through positioning by naming, implying, or referencing certain categories or personal attributes, and participating actively in social episodes or discursive practices to distribute or take up various rights and duties.

Describing learning as a discursive and social practice, I emphasize that positioning theory can be used to analyze classroom discourse not only to explain identity work, but also various other concepts, such as power, competence, culture, and language socialization, which all play a crucial role in second/foreign language teaching and learning. It is not sufficient for learners to possess some necessary language skills (e.g., grammatical, phonological, etc.) to participate in classroom activities or learn a second/foreign language successfully. It is necessary to take into consideration the distribution of rights and duties in constantly changing bi/multilingual classrooms and contexts. To understand second/foreign language learning in the classroom environment, one must ask questions such as: How is power distributed? Who is given the right to speak? Who has the duty to …? Who gets access to learning opportunities? A positioning analysis of learner–learner and learner–teacher interactions in the language classroom would yield answers to these and other similar questions. Understanding the nature of interactions in diverse language learning environments can help improve the nature of second/foreign language learning and teaching.

In conclusion, positioning theory contributes to and shapes the lens through which SLA scholarship investigates the role of social context, culture, intersectionality of multiple identities, and power in learning and teaching additional languages. It provides an opportunity to understand complexity in the culturally situated discursive practices that are important for SLA.

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4

Positioning Theory in Language Teacher Education

Johnson (2016) claims that there are three central questions that constitute the core of language teacher education (LTE): "What is it that language teachers need to know? What is it that language teachers need to be able to do? And how are these best learned?" (p. 121). There has been a strong emphasis on and interest in the knowledge (e.g., linguistic, pedagogical, etc.) that language teachers possess for an extended period of time in the field of LTE. This interest and emphasis have resulted in a strong body of research on language teacher cognition and learning (see Borg, 2003).

However, the increasing emphasis on and strong discussions around the role of social context as well as the sociocultural and sociopolitical factors in explaining second language learning have also recently affected scholarship on LTE. The shift from cognitive to social approaches in the fields of SLA and applied linguistics has redefined language teacher knowledge, education, and development. Particular attention has been recently given to the social, political, gendered, economic, ethnic, racial, and cultural histories and discourses embedded in the contexts where teacher learning and development occur (e.g., Motha, 2006), as researchers aim to understand who language teachers are and how they teach (Johnson, 2016). Johnson (2016) acknowledges that how to teach

H. Kayı-Aydar, *Positioning Theory in Applied Linguistics*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-97337-1_4

a second/foreign language is not a matter of showing teachers how to transfer SLA theories into classroom practices; rather, the learning of L2 teaching is "a dialogic process of co-constructing knowledge that is situated in and emerges out of participation in particular socio-cultural practices and contexts" (p. 122). Johnson further argues:

> Instead the typical ways of acting and interacting, and the values, assumptions and attitudes that are embedded in the classrooms where teachers were once students, in the teacher education programmes where they receive their professional credentialing and in the schools where they work, shape the complex ways in which they come to think about themselves, their students, the activities of L2 teaching and the processes of L2 teaching-learning. (p. 122)

The increasing focus on "social context" has also resulted in a shift from product-oriented to process-oriented approach in language teaching (Crandall, 2000). In other words, the main goal has been shifted from equipping language teachers with the best practices and expecting them to be transmitters of knowledge to preparing and understanding language teachers in their social contexts and histories. These recent understandings about language teaching and teachers have led to three major areas of research: (a) learning to teach, (b) the identities and agency of language teachers, and (c) the sociocultural nature of language teaching practices. In the rest of this chapter, I explain how positioning theory can be utilized in some of these areas.

Applying Positioning Theory to Language Teacher Education Research and Practice

I see three major research areas within LTE where positioning theory can be used. The use of positioning theory is of course not limited to these areas, as many other concepts and issues in LTE can be investigated through positioning analysis. However, I view these areas as perhaps the most crucial for LTE. In the following sections I revisit each of these areas, explaining its link to positioning.

Learning to Teach

As novice teachers begin to teach, they engage in a process in which they learn how to become a teacher. General teacher education literature has an expansive depth of research concerning the nature of this process spanning over fifty years. In a seminal review of 93 studies on learning to teach, Wideen, Mayer-Smith, and Moon (1998) group the studies under three paradigms: traditional (positivist), progressive, and social critique. They state that, in the *traditional paradigm*, learning to teach was viewed simply as a process of acquiring knowledge about teaching. This more specifically would mean "the university provides the theory, skills, and knowledge; the school provides the field setting where such knowledge is applied and practiced; and the beginning teacher provides the individual effort that integrates it all" (p. 160). The main argument in the second tradition, which Wideen, Mayer-Smith, and Moon call the *progressive tradition*, is that student teachers would change their knowledge in a teacher education program, through innovative practice and effort, as they attempt to understand what they actually do know and how that knowledge is acquired. What characterize a third tradition, known as the *social critique*, are the "concerns about broader issues in teacher education, such as multiculturalism, gender, and systemic reform" (p. 133).

When we look at the LTE literature, similar trends or traditions appear. Although the traditional (positivist) view of learning to teach (Wideen et al., 1998) has been the most widely accepted view in LTE programs until recently, the field now seems to adopt a more social model. Learning to teach is being seen as a "long-term, complex, developmental process that operates through participation in the social practices and contexts associated with learning and teaching" (Freeman & Johnson, 1998, p. 402). Freeman and Johnson (1998) acknowledge:

> We now recognize that learning to teach is affected by the sum of a person's experiences, some figuring more prominently than others, and that it requires the acquisition and interaction of knowledge and beliefs about oneself as a teacher, of the content to be taught, of one's students, and of classroom life. We therefore have to acknowledge that the process is

> a socially negotiated one, because teachers' knowledge of teaching is constructed through experiences in and with students, parents, and administrators as well as other members of the teaching profession. We recognize this learning process as normative and lifelong; it is built out of and through experiences in social contexts, as learners in classrooms and schools, and later as participants in professional programs. (p. 401)

Freeman and Johnson emphasize that more work needs to be done to document and understand teacher learning, which is essential for teacher education programs. They argue that the choices and decisions teacher educators make about the content and pedagogies in teacher education reflect their conceptions of how student teachers learn to teach. It is the teacher educators who largely determine what student teachers, who seek to become part of the profession, must know and how they must learn it. I argue that an analysis of how teacher educators make choices and decisions that affect what and how student teachers learn should involve a positioning analysis. Lee and Schallert (2016) assert:

> For preservice teachers, learning what teaching is and how to teach requires them to go beyond simply following personal tendencies and beliefs; rather, it inevitably involves a process of understanding contextual dynamics, negotiating multiple positions, and designing a relationship between teaching and learning. […] Teacher preparation needs to be approached from an integrative and situative view of teaching and learning if deeper insights into the teacher development process are sought.

In agreement with Lee and Schallert, I believe that learning to teach not only involves knowledge acquisition, but also contextual factors, positioning, and identity work. To understand the processes of learning to teach and teaching, it is important to ask: How do teacher educators position student teachers? What rights do they see themselves in choosing or determining what student teachers need to learn and know? What do they see as the duties of the student teachers in the process and how do they assign them? Positioning analysis guided by those questions would give us an important yet partial image of the process of learning to teach. I say "partial," as the process continues for teachers

after they leave teacher education programs. For a fuller understanding of the learning-to-teach process, we should look at two other important elements of it, which are language teacher cognition and self-reflection, across different contexts including but not limited to teacher education programs, language classrooms, or professional development seminars or workshops. As I have mentioned before, learning to teach or becoming a teacher is a complex social process. Although this process involves many factors or elements, in the rest of this chapter I would like to focus on those two core elements of the "learning-to-teach" process, as they are, I believe, closely linked with positioning.

Language Teacher Cognition

Language teacher cognition, which Borg (2003) defines as "the unobservable cognitive dimension of teaching – what teachers know, believe, and think" (p. 81), is a crucial component of the learning-to-teach process. Both teacher cognition and beliefs have been investigated extensively in the LTE literature. Borg (2003) summarizes four major findings in his comprehensive literature review:

- Teacher education programs affect teacher cognition in different and unique ways.
- Behavioral change, as a result of teacher education, may not always result in cognitive change; nor does the cognitive change guarantee any changes in behavior.
- Significant changes in teachers' beliefs do take place during teacher education.
- Studies vary in what is considered to be evidence of cognition and cognitive change.

How different forms of data can capture the content, structure, and change process of teacher cognition remains a methodological challenge.

Based on these findings, two important questions can be asked: "What do we do with this information?" and "Why do teacher cognition and beliefs matter?" First, teacher cognition and beliefs are highly

important in teaching and learning processes. Teachers' beliefs play a significant role as teachers learn new content in teacher education programs, interpret what they learn, and implement that knowledge in their daily teaching practices in the classroom environment. In other words, teacher cognition serves as a filter when teachers make decisions and choices in their learning and teaching. Second, research shows that there is a mutual relationship between teacher identities and beliefs. For example, in a study conducted on student-teachers enrolled in an undergraduate language teaching program in Brazil, Barcelos (2016) found that professional identities are embedded in teachers' experiences and beliefs. The beliefs about language and teaching, including motivation to teach English, appeared to play a key role in the formation of the professional identities of Brazilian student teachers. Lee and Schallert (2016) acknowledge that teacher identity development is an ongoing process of changing beliefs and understandings about teaching. It is important to understand how teachers draw on their values and beliefs as they position themselves and their students in the classroom environment. Just as beliefs influence the professional identities of language teachers, those identities also affect teachers' beliefs about language and teaching along with their classroom practices. Through an analysis of positions, which involve one's beliefs, rights, and duties, positioning theory can be helpful in understanding the complex and changing nature of language teacher cognition, which is an important element of the learning-to-teach process.

Self-Reflection

Another crucial element of the learning-to-teach process is self-reflection, a topic that seems to be gaining attention quickly in the LTE literature. Self-reflection is systematic and critical self-inquiry into one's teaching practice, "a rigorous and sometimes painstaking" process (Lazaraton & Ishihara, 2005, p. 530). From a pedagogical standpoint, in order for their professional growth to flourish, it is critical for language teachers or teacher candidates to reflect on their learning, classroom practices, classroom talk, and instructional decisions or

choices. As teachers reflect on past experience, they can identify areas that need further development and subsequently improve their teaching. Lazaraton and Ishihara (2005) claim that a systematic and extensive action researcher who incorporates self-reflection "promotes the construction of teachers' knowledge of their own practice, including experiential knowledge, disciplinary knowledge, and sociocultural knowledge of the teaching context" (p. 530).

Self-reflection can be done in various ways. Language teachers can keep journals in teacher education programs to reflect on their learning and any relevant teaching practices in which they are engaged. In-service teachers can video-record their teaching and reflect on the process. Language teachers can also engage in self-reflection with other teachers through participating in various professional development activities. Regardless of the methods of self-reflection, teachers position themselves and their students as they reflect on their language use, experience, and knowledge. Therefore, positioning theory can be used as a professional development tool in any professional activity that includes self-reflection.

A study by Schieble, Vetter, and Meacham (2015) provides insights into how a teacher can engage in positioning analysis. Schieble et al. observed a student teacher enrolled in a master's-level English education program. This teacher recorded her interactions with her students and analyzed them with the aid of positioning theory. She realized how she projected her desired identities during her instruction as a student teacher. Her critical analysis of her own teaching and interactions with the students helped her not only understand her own identity development, but also choose certain identities to maintain over time. This student teacher came to see how all of the positioning acts she engaged in affected who she was becoming as a teacher. While positioning theory can be illuminating for a language teacher's professional growth, any use of it in a research project that is on reflective practice or self-inquiry would help enable "teacher-generated knowledge, thus empowering teachers as the creators and not just the holders of such knowledge" (Lazaraton & Ishihara, 2005, p. 530).

Positioning and Language Teacher Identities

Another potential area within LTE where positioning theory can be illuminating concerns the professional identities of language teachers. Language teacher identities (LTIs) is a topic that has received strong attention in the field of LTE. The *Modern Language Journal* (2017) and *TESOL Quarterly* (2016) have recently devoted special issues to LTIs, and the number of edited books or monographs on the topic has proliferated within the last few years (see, for example, Barkhuizen, 2017; Cheung, Said, & Park, 2015; Gray & Morton, 2018; Yazan & Rudolph, 2018). Barkhuizen (2017) has provided perhaps the most comprehensive definition of LTIs.

LTIs are cognitive, social, emotions, ideological, and historical—they are both inside the teacher and outside in the social, material and technological world. LTIs are being and doing, feeling and imagining, and storying. They are struggle and harmony: they are contested and resisted, by self and others, and they are also accepted, acknowledged and valued, by self and others. They are core and

> peripheral, personal and professional, they are dynamic, multiple, and hybrid, and they are foregrounded and backgrounded. And LTIs change, short-term and over time—discursively in social interaction with teacher educators, learners, teachers, administrators, and the wider community, and in material interaction with spaces, places and objects in classrooms, institutions, and online. (p. 4)

As can be seen, the definition captures the intricate and multifaceted nature of LTIs that are influenced by the relationships teachers have with their students and others in different contexts (Rex & Schiller, 2009). In other words, what self a teacher "chooses to display and how others will recognize his identity will largely depend on his relationships with the hearers and where he is" (ibid., p. 20).

Various researchers have examined the complex and multifaceted nature of LTIs through adopting different theoretical frameworks. For example, focusing on Wenger's Communities of Practice framework, Tsui (2007) described the processes that were involved as a Chinese EFL teacher

struggled with multiple identities, negotiation of the meanings of EFL learning, and the institutional construction and his personal reconstruction of identities. Drawing from the Bakhtinian framework, Menard-Warwick (2011) explored how 18 Chilean EFL teachers' cultural identities affected their approaches to teaching, while Johnston (1997) examined the working lives of EFL teachers in Poland through life history interviews, which reflected dynamic and non-unitary identities that interacted discursively in complex ways with various social, economic, and political discourses. Sociocultural theory informed Vélez-Rendón's study (2010) that investigated how biographical factors interplayed with contextual factors to shape the professional identity of a Spanish language teacher candidate.

A large majority of studies on LTIs have focused on the hegemonic relations between non-native speaker and native speaker teachers (Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, & Johnson, 2005), highlighting and detailing various forms of discrimination and marginalization (e.g., professional, linguistic, ethnic, etc.) that non-native speaker teachers experience in diverse contexts (e.g., Mora, Trejo, & Roux, 2016; Motha, 2006; Park, 2015, 2017; Rudolph, 2013; Simon-Maeda, 2004). Positioning theory, with its strong focus on social justice and inequality, is one of the most useful theoretical frameworks in examining and understanding the inequalities that exist among language teachers.

I have used positioning theory to understand the professional identity construction of language teachers in two different studies. In one of these (see Kayi-Aydar, 2015b), I documented how a bilingual teacher candidate created racial categories and distanced herself from the non-white category. At the same time, her peers in the teacher education program also positioned her recursively as white across different contexts. Her racial positioning, evidenced in numerous anecdotes that this teacher candidate narrated, played a significant role in her identity development as a language teacher by "othering" her. In the other study (see Kayi-Aydar, 2018), I used Bamberg's three levels of positioning analysis, which I explain in great detail in Chapter 6, in order to examine the intersectionality of multiple identities in the narratives of three Latina language teacher candidates.

Other studies that have used positioning theory in teaching contexts involving language learners are included in Table 4.1, indicating

Table 4.1 Studies that used positioning theory to investigate language teacher identities in bi/multilingual contexts

Source	Focus/purpose	Context	Research methods
Arkoudis, S. (2006). Negotiating the rough ground between ESL and mainstream teachers. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, 9*(4), 415–433	Explores the purposeful action of an ESL and a science teacher as they plan the curriculum for a Year 10 Science class in Victoria, Australia Offers a small example of teacher interaction to illustrate how positioning theory can illuminate the dynamics at play within the professional relationship	Highly experienced, one ESL teacher and one science teacher, working together at the same secondary school for many years	The two teachers' planning conversations over one year, interviews with the teachers before and after their planning meetings, and detailed classroom observation of the science class
Barkhuizen, G. (2009). An extended positioning analysis of a pre-service teacher's better life small story. *Applied Linguistics, 31*(2), 282–300	Reports on a positioning analysis of a small story about the imagined "better life" of a migrant, preservice teacher	A migrant, preservice language teacher in New Zealand	A series of three narrative interviews, four written narratives, informal meetings
Faez, F. (2012). Linguistic identities and experiences of generation 1.5 teacher candidates: Race matters. *TESL Canada Journal, 29*, 124	Focuses on the experiences of six Generation 1.5 teacher candidates to elucidate how native English speaking status is linked with levels of language proficiency and country of birth as well as to individuals' race	Four Generation 1.5 teacher candidates of color and two white participants. Participants were members of a cohort in a BEd program with emphasis on teaching in multilingual and multicultural classrooms	Interviews with Generation 1.5 teacher candidates

(continued)

Table 4.1 (continued)

Source	Focus/purpose	Context	Research methods
Reeves, J. (2009). Teacher investment in learner identity. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 25*(1), 34–41	Focuses on the process by which one K-12 teacher negotiated his identity through his assignment of identity positions to ELLs	One K-12 teacher in his mid-20s at a high school in the United States	A series of interviews with the participant teacher, writing notes from informal conversations, observations of 90-minute lessons on a weekly or biweekly basis, and course documents
Tran, L. T., & Nguyen, N. T. (2015). Re-imagining teachers' identity and professionalism under the condition of international education. *Teachers and Teaching, 21*(8), 958–973	Investigates how teachers adapt their teaching and construct their professional identity under the circumstance of internationalization in the context of vocational education	38 teachers from both public and private vocational education institutes in three states of Australia: New South Wales (NSW), Queensland and Victoria (VIC)	Semi-structured interviews, email and telephone dialogues with teachers and students, and notes on observations and reflections
Trent, J. (2012). The discursive positioning of teachers: Native speaking English teachers and educational discourse in Hong Kong. *TESOL Quarterly, 46*(1), 104–126	Examines native-speaking English teachers' self-positioning and their positioning by other stakeholders as part of a dynamic process of identity formation in schools in Hong Kong	Eight English language teachers in primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong	Semi-structured interviews
Whitsed, C., & Volet, S. (2013). Positioning foreign English language teachers in the Japanese university context. *Teachers and Teaching, 19*(6), 717–735	Explores how adjunct foreign English language teachers were positioned, tacitly or explicitly, in the context of internationalization in the Japanese university sector	43 teachers employed across 66, predominantly middle- and low-status universities, and several elite national and private universities throughout Kansai	Focus groups and one-to-one, semi-structured, open-ended, in-depth interviews

the focus, context, and research methods used. These and studies in the general teacher education literature have indicated how positioning theory can be useful in understanding the complexities associated with LTIs. Overall, they have highlighted the following key points:

1. *Teacher positioning is relational. In other words, teachers typically position themselves in relation to their students (e.g., Sosa & Gomez, 2012), co-workers or peers (e.g., Glazier, 2009), mentor teachers (e.g., Søreide, 2006), and work communities and institutions (e.g., Arvaja, 2016).*

In a study I conducted (Kayi-Aydar, 2015a), three preservice teachers positioned their mentor teachers in certain ways, which seemed to contribute significantly to their own identity (re)formation as teachers of ELLs and their teaching philosophy. By distancing themselves from their mentor teachers in certain ways and engaging in oppositional positioning, these preservice teachers assigned more powerful positions to themselves, which helped them form an effective teacher identity.

2. *Positioning shapes the agency (e.g., Turner, 2017) and professional identities of teachers (e.g., Arvaja, 2015; Hall, Johnson, Juzwik, Wortham, & Mosley, 2010) and informs teaching and evaluation practices (Reeves, 2009; Turner, 2017; Vetter, 2010 , Yoon, 2008).*

Turner (2017) examined teacher positioning in two different secondary schools in Australia. In one school with a high population of Chinese heritage students, a dually qualified Japanese and history teacher collaborated with a monolingual (in English) history teacher. Both teachers positioned some students as *knowers* of Japanese. In the other school where the majority of students had no Asian heritage, one monolingual teacher positioned her students as *weaker* and *accelerated*. These different kinds of positioning and students' subsequent classroom engagement in the two schools affected the teaching practices. The positioning of *knower*, for example, led to the teachers' decision to differentiate between students in order to draw on the advanced students' knowledge as a resource in the history classroom. The teacher who positioned her

students as either *weaker* and *accelerated* was not found to differentiate between these two groups in her instruction. Rather, she presented to the group as a whole. Students were not observed being called on to demonstrate knowledge that had not been immediately learned, so the accelerated group was not positioned as knowers of a relatively larger range of the Japanese language. Turner's study illustrated clearly the impact of teacher positioning on teachers' translanguaging pedagogy practices.

3. *Teachers implicitly or explicitly position their students during classroom interactions. The way teachers position their students may result in certain identities for students and affect student agency (e.g., Hall et al., 2010; Vetter, 2010).*

In a study by Yoon, teacher positioning in regular classrooms that involved ELLs affected three teachers' pedagogical approaches and their interactions with ELLs. The teachers positioned themselves as teachers for all students, as teachers for regular education students, or as teachers for a single subject. Such reflexive positions, in turn, resulted in ELLs' interactive positionings as powerful, strong students or powerless, poor students. These positioning practices shaped ELLs' participatory behaviors and interactions in the classroom context. For example, when one of the teachers positioned ELLs as cultural social beings, their interaction and participation increased. When the other two teachers, on the other hand, positioned ELLs as language learners who simply sat in the regular classroom, ELLs became disengaged and silent. In brief, teachers' positioning of themselves and their ELL students shed light on ELLs' language teaching and learning.

4. *The positions assigned to students by the classroom teacher may impede or facilitate access to opportunities for active participation in classroom (e.g., Tait-McCutcheon & Loveridge, 2016), content learning (e.g., Vetter, 2010), the use of the target language (e.g., Turner, 2017), and second/foreign language acquisition (e.g., Kayi-Aydar, 2014).*

For example, a study by Vetter (2010) illustrates how one high school English teacher and her students reached "successful positionings" (p. 39) that allowed students to shift from disengaged and reluctant to engaged readers, capable writers, and members of a writer community. Positioning herself as a facilitator rather than a director or an authority and as a teacher who trusted and respected her students' interests, as well as using "we" often in her open-ended questions, the teacher positioned the students as members of a particular reading event and as capable and willing, increasing their engagement in literacy activities. On the other hand, in a study by Reeves (2009), one regular classroom teacher positioned ELLs as like any other student, which resulted in the teacher's lack of interest in accommodating ELLs in his instruction. His undifferentiated instruction that provided no language support for ELLs and the deficit-oriented positions he ascribed to his ELL students appeared to set them up for failure.

Positioning and Language Teacher Agency

In the field of applied linguistics, studies on the notion of agency have initially focused on language learners in order to understand their language learning (e.g., Deters et al., 2014; McKay & Wong, 1996; Miller, 2010, 2012; Toohey & Norton, 2003; Vitanova, 2010). A number of studies have particularly focused on language learner agency and positioning (e.g., Arkoudis & Tran, 2007; Miller, 2010). For example, in her study on 18 adult immigrants in the United States, Miller (2010) examined how her participants positioned themselves and were positioned as variously agentive. Instead of locating cases of agency "in action," Miller focused on how her participants "perceived" their own capacity in their autobiographical accounts that were elicited through interviews. Miller's positioning analysis of her corpus of interview data involved identifying and examining the recurrent linguistic constructs (e.g., clausal predicates) used by participants in positioning themselves. The findings indicate that positioning as well as particular ways of acting are enabled or constrained in and through a language learner's experience and interactions in ideologically informed spaces. These and other studies on language learner agency describe agency as a social

construct that is developed and exercised in relationships with others and social discourses.

Davies (2000) challenges the definitions of agency in humanist discourses and redefines it from feminist poststructuralist perspectives. She argues that similar to multiple readings of a text, there are multiple readings of us or our identities that are constituted by multiple discourses.

An agent then is the "speaking/writing subject" who can "move within and between discourses" and also "counteract, modify, refuse, or go beyond" the discourses available to him or her (Davies, 2000, p. 60). Davies explains agency through the notion of *author*ship; that is, agents "take up the act of *author*ship of speaking and writing in ways that are disruptive of current discourses, that invert, invent, and break old bonds" (Davies, 2000, p. 66). The *author*ity that Davies talks about is different than the authority one may use to dictate or control others or to claim and enforce knowledge. This authority or agency is not an individual quality and not coercive in nature. Rather, as Davies (2000) suggests, "agency is spoken into existence at any one moment. It is fragmented, transitory, a discursive position that can be occupied within one discourse simultaneously with its non-occupation in another" (p. 68). In a poststructural framework, Davies (2000) further defines and describes agency as:

- The discursive constitution of a particular individual as having presence (rather than absence), as having access to a subject position in which they have the right to speak and be heard.
- The discursive constitution of that person as author of their own multiple meanings and desires.
- A sense of oneself as one who can go beyond the given meaning in any one discourse and forge something new, through a combination of previously unrelated discourses, through the invention of words and concepts that capture a shift in consciousness that is beginning to occur, or through imagining not what *is*, but what *might be*. (p. 67)

There is a strong link between positioning/positions and agency; this link is neither correlational nor causal. Instead, the relationship is

complex and mutually shaped. It only exists through the subject positions from which individuals speak or act. Therefore, certain positions may allow individuals to exercise agency in certain contexts or prevent them from doing so. Likewise, individuals can exercise agency by assigning certain positions to themselves or other individuals. Agency is then "an individual's ability to choose acts of positioning" (Bomer & Laman, 2004, p. 429).

In line with poststructural understandings and positioning theory, Davies and Gannon (2005) acknowledge that multiple and contradictory discourses shape not only identities but also the possibility of agency. The individual can create strategies to decompose or transform the very same discourses through which s/he is constituted. Seen this way, agency is perceived to be bidirectional in positioning theory (De Fina, Schiffrin, & Bamberg, 2006):

> On the one hand, historical, sociocultural forces in the form of dominant discourses or master narratives position speakers in their situated practices and construct who they are without their agentive involvement. On the other hand, speakers position themselves as constructive and interactive agents and choose the means by which they construct their identities vis-à-vis others as well as vis-à-vis dominant discourses and master narratives. (ibid., p. 7)

While there is a link between discourses and agency, there is also a strong relationship between agency and identities. One's agency is constituted through and in terms of one's access to the subject positions available to one. Inherently unstable, one's agency is understood "as inevitably enabled and constrained in the ongoing co-constitution of identity and social reality" (Miller, 2010, p. 467). In other words, "one cannot act in ways that are deemed relevant or significant, unless one has a recognized identity position from which to act" (Miller, 2010, p. 468). I have shown this agency–positioning interaction in two different studies that focused on teacher identities. In one study (Kayi-Aydar, 2015a), I have indicated how three preservice teachers who taught ELLs during their practicum positioned themselves and their students in different ways. Those different positions affected their pedagogical decisions and choices. For example, one of the teachers positioned ELLs

as students whose primary need was linguistic assistance; she therefore enacted her agency to choose practices that primarily provided linguistic scaffolding for the ELLs. In the other study (Kayi-Aydar, 2018), in which I examined positioning in the narratives of a Hispanic language teacher, I found that the teacher-participant discursively constructed her professional identities as a caring, understanding teacher who knew and understood what her Latinx students experienced in the academic environment, as she had similar experiences. To project her identity position as a caring and understanding teacher, she adopted teaching approaches to address and scaffold the language development of her students. This positional identity enabled her to exercise agency to reach out to her students and share her knowledge and experience with her colleagues to challenge stereotypes. On the other hand, the discourses of racism and linguistic marginalization that she experienced in the work environment and failed to negotiate did not allow her to exercise agency to form the empowered professional identity that she desired. While these two studies highlight the tight connection between a teacher's imposed or self-constructed positions and his/her agency, we still need multiple examples to fully understand the intricate link between positioning and language teacher agency.

Summary

The studies that used positioning theory in LTE have primarily focused on learners; however, there is a strong body of research on teacher positioning in the general teacher education literature. This body of literature focuses on the link between positioning and identity, instructional decisions, learner engagement, and learning/teaching in the classroom. Teacher positioning plays a crucial role in learning and teaching processes; a number of studies even indicate that the way teachers position themselves and their students can be more influential than the resources they use in their teaching (e.g., Tait-McCutcheon & Loveridge, 2016).

In the area of LTE, I have argued in this chapter that positioning theory can be applied to three major areas of research: (a) learning to teach, with a particular emphasis on teacher cognition and self-reflection;

(b) language teacher identities; and (c) language teacher agency. These areas are especially important as they play a significant role in a teacher's professional development. The contemporary views of teacher development do indeed highlight the importance of the development of teachers' professional identities and agency, challenging the traditional views that place emphasis on "the acquisition of predefined competencies, skills, knowledge, and roles offered by institutions and other people" (Arvaja, 2016, p. 393).

Through an analysis of positions imposed on or assigned to teachers or self-ascribed by them, we can begin to understand who language teachers are. Such an understanding will help us challenge the stereotypes associated with certain groups of language teachers. Furthermore, as language teachers interact with their students in the classroom environment, in email communications, and in the context of evaluation and assessment (e.g., giving feedback), they not only position themselves but also assign positions to their students. According to Hazari, Cass, and Beattie (2015), a teacher's actions/choices serve to position the teacher within the classroom, which has implications for "how students will engage with the class and content, how they will see themselves fitting in, and whether they will internally designate the discipline with who they are and construct a related identity" (p. 738). It is therefore crucial to understand the nature of teacher positioning, especially given its strong influence on student and teacher identities and classroom learning.

A language teacher's ability, capacity, or intentional effort to make choices, which I understand and define as a language teacher's agency, is also crucial while teachers learn to teach, become a teacher, and make choices in their teaching practices every day. Agency plays a central role in positioning theory, because what choices teachers or students make in discourse and how they make them are closely linked to the ways they position themselves and others (Turner, 2017). I have explained in this chapter how positioning can affect teacher agency, urging researchers to focus more on the link between the two in order to more fully understand how a teacher's positions, interactively and reflexively constructed, may shape, change, limit, or increase the ways language teachers make certain choices in their professional contexts.

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5

Classroom Discourse for Positioning Research

In applied linguistics, the research on classroom discourse is vast. Classroom-based studies analyzed classroom discourse to investigate numerous topics, such as turn-taking (e.g., Lee, 2017; Waring, 2013), feedback (e.g., Mackey & Philp, 1998; Waring, 2012), language socialization (e.g., Poole, 1992), and pragmatics (e.g., Reddington & Waring, 2015), among others.[1] A common theme in these studies is the connection between classroom discourse and second/foreign language learning. Positioning theory has the potential to elaborate on and expand this scholarship and offer new understandings regarding the nature of language classroom participation as well as second/foreign language learning and teaching.

Various educators and researchers have problematized the notion of classroom participation. Challenging the understandings that perceive classroom participation as an individual act, these researchers have highlighted the social and collective aspects. Schultz (2009), for example, describes participation as a "multiparty accomplishment," a "collective,

[1]For a comprehensive review of foreign language classroom discourse studies, see Thoms, J. J. (2012). Classroom discourse in foreign language classrooms: A review of the literature. *Foreign Language Annals, 45*(s1).

H. Kayı-Aydar, *Positioning Theory in Applied Linguistics*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-97337-1_5

rather than an individual, process" (p. 11) during which the rights and obligations for talk and participation are always established and re-established by not only the classroom teacher but also the students. Classroom participation is therefore not predictable. A student's participation is shaped by interactional factors connected to other students' turn-taking behaviors and responses to their utterances, and is also affected by a large variety of other factors and macro-level discourses (e.g., socioeconomic background, gender, race, moral values, etc.). Seen this way, classroom participation and discourse constitute a contextually complex phenomenon.

This chapter focuses on positioning in language classroom discourse. Just as the meanings of the concept of discourse vary, the types of discourse one can collect to conduct positioning analysis in applied linguistics research will also differ. This variety has led to the discussion of which discourse should be considered *natural*. Scholars who write about discourse analysis have engaged in discussions about what is or is not natural. As I have previously mentioned in this book, *naturally occurring* conversations or narratives are what we need to use as data to conduct positioning analysis. In this chapter, I have selected *classroom discourse* because I see this type of institutional discourse as "natural" in the sense that the classroom students and teacher do not come together to produce talk for research purposes. They engage socially and academically in their context while they produce and are produced by discourses. In the field of applied linguistics, a few recent studies (e.g., Uzum, Yazan, & Selvi, 2017) have used positioning theory to unpack positions in language textbooks. This, I believe, raises some important concerns. Unless taken from conversations recorded as individuals engaged in ordinary talk, the conversations and dialogues used in language textbooks are all scripted and hence not *naturally occurring*. In other words, a great deal of thinking and deliberate planning goes into the choice of words, the use of grammatical structures, the length of the dialogue, and so on. These scripted, planned language pieces are significantly different than naturally occurring, ordinary conversations. Most of the positions constructed in the texts are intentional—therefore, language textbooks would not be considered the best type of discourse data to analyze through positioning theory. Hence, in this book I limit my choices to classroom discourse and narratives, both of which are typically considered authentic and natural.

I begin this chapter with an explanation regarding the importance of analyzing classroom discourse. In second language classrooms where students come from different educational and cultural backgrounds, classroom participation becomes increasingly complex. I explain how positioning theory can help us understand this complexity as a theoretical lens and analytic tool. I describe, step by step, how a classroom-based study can be designed using positioning theory. The chapter ends with examples from two different classrooms that demonstrate how positioning analysis of classroom discourse can be conducted.

Classroom Discourse

In applied linguistics, classroom-based discourse studies focus on the interaction between teachers and their students and between students in the classroom. Analyzing classroom discourse is important for various reasons, some of which I list here:

- Since classroom teachers play an essential role in creating and managing classroom discourse, it is necessary for them to gain "'microscopic understandings' (Van Lier, 2000) of the interactional organization of the L2 classroom" (Walsh, 2011, p. 51) so they can make good interactive and pedagogical decisions. Such "microscopic understandings" also help them go beyond assumptions, stereotypes, and cultural generalizations in understanding differences in learners' classroom participation (Rymes, 2016).
- An analysis of classroom discourse helps us understand who our students are because "discourses are ways of behaving, interacting, valuing, thinking, believing, speaking, and often reading and writing, that are accepted as instantiations of particular identities" (Gee, 2008, p. 3).
- Examining classroom discourse can provide us with an understanding of how broad social issues or categories, such as gender, culture, and race, are (re)created in classroom interactions—overall discourses develop around certain topics and compete with each other (Davies, 2000; Pavlenko, 2002).

As can be seen from the examples here, looking closely and critically at classroom discourse provides important insights regarding the nature of cross-cultural interactions in the language classroom, and enhances both teaching practices and academic achievement (Rymes, 2016).

Developing a Classroom-Based Positioning Analysis Project

The success of a research project partly depends on the quality of the research questions asked. In qualitative research, it is essential to determine whether a "problem" or "phenomenon" should and can be researched. Sometimes my graduate students formulate strong research questions for their dissertation or other research projects, only to realize shortly after that they would not be able to have access to people or sites to conduct their proposed research. They also realize that, despite the strength and meaningfulness of their questions, they would not have the time, resources, and skills to carry out the research project. It is therefore important to consider the issues of "access" along with the necessary "time, resources and skills," which all play a significant role in forming research questions and developing a research project.

Another common issue is about the depth or breadth of the research questions that student-researchers develop. When I ask my students, who tell me that they want to do research on positioning, what specifically they would like to investigate, a typical response I get is: "I would like to know how teachers and students position themselves in the class." Although it might be good and helpful to start with such a generic focus, this is rather a vague and perhaps too broad question. I encourage them to pick a more specific topic and use positioning theory as either a theoretical lens or an analytic approach. This, of course, is not an easy task for novice researchers. The best way to form meaningful and focused research questions actually begins by composing a literature review—it is both

necessary and extremely helpful to see what questions have already been asked, and how they have been investigated in positioning studies. In Table 5.1, I provide a number of classroom-based studies that

Table 5.1 Sample research questions from previous studies

Reference	Research questions
1. Abdi, K. (2011). 'She really only speaks English': Positioning, language ideology, and heritage language learners. *Canadian Modern Language Review, 67*(2), 161–190	• How do SHL (Spanish heritage language) learners identify and position themselves and how are they positioned by their teacher and classmates with respect to their prior knowledge of Spanish as well as their various Hispanic backgrounds and cultural affiliations? • What are the different factors (e.g., oral versus written expertise, age, social groupings in the class) that impact the various positionings of SHL learners? • How do these positionings impact the classroom interactions and language learning in the classroom?
2. Bomer, R., & Laman, T. (2004). Positioning in a primary writing workshop: Joint action in the discursive production of writing subjects. *Research in the Teaching of English, 38*(4), 420–466	• What relational dimensions are evident in talk among child peers in a writing workshop? How do they relate to cognitive dimensions of talk? • What relational and cognitive affordances are present in the zones of proximal development produced as young children talk to each other while they write? • What are the relationships among these relational and cognitive dimensions? •What elements of a theory of positioning illuminate young children's relations vis-à-vis writing? • How does the interpersonal dynamic of peer interactions in a writing workshop suggest insights into literacy growth?

(continued)

Table 5.1 (continued)

Reference	Research questions
3. Clarke, L. W. (2006). Power through voicing others: Girls' positioning of boys in literature circle discussions. *Journal of Literacy Research, 38*(1), 53–79	• How were the boys positioned by the girls in this group? • How did the girls position themselves? • Why was there a change in interactional patterns from the previous year? • What does this positioning tell us about literacy engagement for these students?
4. De Costa, P. I. (2011). Using language ideology and positioning to broaden the SLA learner beliefs landscape: The case of an ESL learner from China. *System, 39*(3), 347–358	• What linguistic practices are valued and denigrated in the school, and what language ideologies are embedded in these practices? • How are these immigrant students positioned by others in the school, and how do they in turn position others? • In what ways do these discursive positionings and language ideologies influence their learning outcomes?
5. Evans, K. S. (1996). Creating spaces for equity? The role of positioning in peer-led literature discussions. *Language Arts, 73*(3), 194–202	• How does the discourse used in literature discussions influence how students position themselves and others in these contexts, and what are the potential consequences of such positioning?
6. Hazari, Z., Cass, C., & Beattie, C. (2015). Obscuring power structures in the physics classroom: Linking teacher positioning, student engagement, and physics identity development. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching, 52*(6), 735–762	• How might teachers' positioning, conveyed through their actions and choices, influence students' engagement? • How might students' engagement in turn influence students' physics identity development?

(continued)

Table 5.1 (continued)

Reference	Research questions
7. Kim, J. I., & Viesca, K. M. (2016). Three reading-intervention teachers' identity positioning and practices to motivate and engage emergent bilinguals in an urban middle school. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 55*, 122–132	• How did the three white teachers position themselves and their students in their social, cultural, and political contexts of reading-intervention classes? • What major practices did the teachers use to motivate and engage emergent bilinguals in reading-intervention classes in an urban middle school, and how did the teachers' positioning relate to their major practices? • What are the implications for the teachers in motivating and engaging emergent bilinguals?
8. Tait-McCutcheon, S. L., & Loveridge, J. (2016). Examining equity of opportunities for learning mathematics through positioning theory. *Mathematics Education Research Journal, 28*(2), 327–348	• How did teachers position themselves to introduce the same learning intention? • How did teachers position students in their lowest within-class ability group to solve the same problem? • What effect did positioning have on teachers' and students' opportunities to participate in mathematics?
9. Wagner, D., & Herbel-Eisenmann, B. (2008). "Just don't": The suppression and invitation of dialogue in the mathematics classroom. *Educational Studies in Mathematics, 67*(2), 143	• How is the word "just" used in mathematics classroom discourse? • What can we learn about the way students and teachers relate to each other in mathematics classrooms by looking at the word's use in practice?
10. Wood, M. B. (2013). Mathematical micro-identities: Moment-to-moment positioning and learning in a fourth-grade classroom. *Journal for Research in Mathematics Education, 44*(5), 775–808	• What mathematical micro-identities are enacted as students engage in a mathematics lesson? • How are the mathematical micro-identities enacted? •In particular, how do they become available to students? •How are they taken up, negotiated, resisted, and shifted? • What connections exist across micro-identities and learning?

used positioning theory and asked strong questions.[2] Looking at such good examples will help novice researchers learn how to articulate meaningful questions.

Discourse Data Collection for Positioning Research

In Chapter 2, I discussed two major approaches to the study of identities using positioning analysis. Each has a different emphasis or focus, which basically involved (a) looking at one or a very few specific story line(s) in detail and engaging in a fine level of microanalysis (emphasis on the immanentist approach); or (b) looking at multiple story lines across a corpus or data sets, identifying accumulations of positions, and understanding positioning within or in relation to larger discourses. The choice of approach will, of course, depend on the intention of the researcher and the aims of the research being undertaken. Regardless of the approach chosen, the researcher should pay attention to a number of important points when collecting discourse data through participant observation for positioning analysis.

As in all qualitative research, taking field notes is essential in positioning studies. Merriam (2009) lists the following regarding what field notes should include:

- Verbal descriptions of the setting, the people, and the activities.
- Direct quotations or at least the substance of what people said.
- Observer's comments—put in the margins or in the running narrative and identified by underlining, italics, or bold and bracketing. (p. 131)

For classroom-based research projects that involve positioning analysis, taking field notes through participant observation is helpful, but insufficient alone. Since the focus is on the ongoing conversations,

[2]A number of studies did not list research questions. I therefore changed their "purpose" statements into questions.

audio-recording is absolutely necessary. According to Erickson (2006), revisiting real-time records of interaction has multiple strengths. First, the endless opportunities to revisit recorded data enable the researcher to approach the data from multiple attentional foci. Second, the recorded material can help the researcher avoid faulty interpretations, which are indeed common in the early stages of data collection. The recordings help confirm understandings and interpreted meanings. Third, the researcher can realize less frequently constructed positions or occurrences of positioning acts through recursive reviews of recordings. This third aspect of audio-recording is extremely important for positioning analysis, as not every position or positioning act repeats itself, and most of them go unnoticed or are not realized during the actual observation. An atypical position or positioning that occurs at one time only may have significant consequences for the subsequent interactions and positioning in the same or subsequent story lines.

In addition to audio-recording, given the strong role that body language, non-verbal communication, and gestures play in both story lines and positioning, I would also argue for the necessity of video-recording for positioning analysis. From a methodological standpoint, placing the camcorder in the right place in a classroom environment to capture as much as possible of what is going on is important. If the focus is on teacher positioning, placing the video-recorder at the back of the classroom facing the teacher can be more useful than placing it on, say, one side of the room. Similarly, if the focus is on student interaction, the camcorder should be placed in a spot facing the students. Using multiple camcorders may not always be possible or feasible due to practicality or various other reasons, so it is important that the camcorder is placed in an appropriate spot and has a good lens to capture everything. Fortunately, technology has improved so much that the variety of camcorders available for classroom recording is quite rich.

I encourage the use of multiple audio-recording devices if the focus is on both student and teacher positioning. In language classrooms, group and pair work are quite common. Having four or five recording devices and placing each within a group of students would yield a good amount of data. It would also help to see if students position themselves and others differently in a group versus whole-class discussion. Like the

rich variety of camcorders, there is also a wide range of digital audio-recording devices. I typically use those by Sony or Olympus that have a built-in USB, which makes data transfer to a computer easier. In the past, I also used an iPod, attaching a microphone to record classroom talk. Nonetheless, I prefer digital recorders that have a high-quality microphone built in, as using a separate microphone to clip onto the participant's clothing, which is typically the classroom teacher in my work, can be both burdensome and distracting.

I also advise drawing a diagram of the classroom setting on each visit and every time the groups are formed, noting who sits where. The seating arrangements in the classroom provide incredibly useful evidence about the social hierarchies of the classroom—who gets to work with whom, who interacts with whom, who gets ignored, and so on—and these are all, of course, highly important for positioning acts or interpretations.

Selecting and Transcribing Story Lines in Classroom Discourse

In longitudinal classroom-based studies that use audio- and video-recordings, transcribing the recordings of classroom discourse or selecting which story lines to analyze can be a daunting task. The common norm in applied linguistics is not to transcribe everything or every recording in a longitudinal study, but to be selective. This is still not easy to do, especially early in the process, because it can be difficult to see what patterns or themes are emerging in the initial days or weeks, what is worth focusing more on, and what needs to or can be ignored. It is therefore highly important to take field notes and later expand them (ideally within 48 hours after the observation) by adding details, thickening the descriptions, and adding notes, noting both typical and atypical moments and later revisiting them for a closer look. Revisiting entire video- or audio-recordings of classroom discourse in the early phases of data collection is also helpful in terms of identifying moments that may not be necessarily noticed during the actual observation.

I find keeping a positioning log useful as I engage in positioning analysis. Word choice and vocabulary are important for both positions and positioning. My positioning log typically includes positions identified in other studies—words or labels, such as facilitator, collaborator, and initiator. The positions from other studies that I include in my log not only make it easier to label positions I identify in my data, but also enhance my thinking. This does not mean that I adopt a deductive approach to my analysis and look for certain positions. My point is that when working with longitudinal, observational classroom data, one may exhaust the words or get stuck on finding the right word for a particular position—this is when the positioning log can become useful.

Transcription, the written representation of the spoken discourse, is used "to capture, relieve, and re-see complex interactions between people" (Rex & Schiller, 2009, p. 10). Rymes (2016) emphasizes the importance and necessity of avoiding stigmatized transcription. Furthermore, she encourages researchers to avoid stigmatizing certain participants by the way their utterances are transcribed. Overly marking speech or changing certain words while transcribing (e.g., changing "going to" to "gonna") may have quite some impact on the ways readers understand the social context where the study took place, relationships among participants and their identities, and interpretations of the story lines. Rymes' point about stigmatized transcription is especially important in applied linguistics research, which typically involves participants from diverse racial, ethnic, and linguistic communities. The following example given by Rymes is helpful in understanding the consequences that stigmas can carry:

> Transcribing all the vernacular features of African American children's speech in painstaking detail, while the European American children's speech is represented in strictly standard written orthography, will result in a wildly skewed transcript of classroom interaction. Nobody speaks in standard written English. (p. 84)

Through such "raciolinguistic bias" (Rymes, 2016, p. 84), researchers may even assign new positions to their participants, which certainly do not represent those participants. The language participants produce is

a representation of their identities. The way they sound, their accents, word choices, and grammar used are all representations of who they are. Therefore, applied linguists must avoid making any changes to the language produced by their bi/multilingual participants.

Identifying and Analyzing Positions and Positioning in Classroom Discourse

For a novice researcher, identifying and analyzing positions and positioning acts may be a challenge. Although Rom Harré and his colleagues explain in detail what a position and positioning is, they do not offer any guidelines as to how to identify or analyze positions in the data. In my experience with graduate students, I have noticed that students usually have a hard time identifying a position and unpacking its meaning, even when they understand clearly the concepts of position and positioning. Herbel-Eisenmann, Wagner, Johnson, Suh, and Figueras (2015) noticed, after an evaluation of a set of positioning publications, that "the authors do not say how they knew a position or a story line when they saw it in data" (p. 191), but rather offer "general processes of analysis" (ibid.) along with excerpts of data and interpretations. This observation suggests that the literature also may not serve novice researchers well regarding this issue.

A study by Hazari, Cass, and Beattie (2015), however, seems to be an exception. This study is noteworthy as the authors provide a specific method for identifying and analyzing positioning, which is based on their argument that "positioning can also occur through actions if those actions provide clearly intelligible *cues* for the role being claimed by oneself or ascribed to others" (p. 738). In Table 5.2, I provide categories of cues along with definitions and examples from Hazari et al.'s study (2015).

At the moment, there are essentially two major approaches one can take when using positioning theory to explore identities, although a few alternatives also exist and I return to this issue in Chapter 7. In the first approach, the focus is on the accumulations of positions. The researchers look at the positions constructed across various discourses over a certain

Table 5.2 Cues for positioning analysis

Categories of cues	Definitions	Examples
Physical cues	Physical proximity or changing stance with respect to students (through physical position and movement of teachers, students, and objects)	Teachers' situating themselves at the students' level Moving around gaining proximity to different students. Having fewer hierarchical physical barriers between teacher and students Allowing greater freedom of movement in the class space
Structural cues	Structurally affording opportunities for themselves and students to take on different roles (through variability in pedagogy and explicit role assignment)	Variability in pedagogy/structure on short time scales (within class periods and across subsequent days) Assigning and enforcing alternate roles for students
Contextual cues	Meaningfully interpreting students' thoughts and contexts (through discussions/activities which included students' points of view and valued experiences)	Discussions to which students could meaningfully contribute and relate Hands-on-activities establishing real-life contextual relevance
Social cues	Obscuring social boundaries between themselves and students (through de-emphasizing traditional roles and barriers between teachers and students)	Explicit indication that "no one gets behind" Showing fallibility Casual, caring demeanor (relaying the feeling of home and wanting to be together) Crossing classroom boundaries

period of time and identify the ones that are recursive and become durable gradually. These positions that stick "are stabilized enough in experience that an individual may appropriate them as a relatively permanent part of an identity" (Bomer & Laman, 2004, p. 429). The accumulation of certain positions is interpreted through larger, macro-level discourses

(e.g., sociocultural histories, sociopolitical issues, etc.) to make sense of the identities constructed. Evans, Morgan, and Tsatsaroni (2006) argue that observing a sequence of positioning activity allows us to see how individuals' identities are produced. They offer the experience of Mario, a student in their study, as an example. They found that Mario was constantly placed in subordinate positions in the classroom. His repeated discursive moves toward inclusion through submission resulted in him gaining the identity of a submissive student and an outsider. Evans et al. thus demonstrate how the rights and duties that are assigned in micro-level positioning, though dynamic and negotiable, are often reissued and solidified over time. Rex and Schiller (2009) state that "if we want students to assume particular identities, then we must be aware of how we position them and what we say, which over time creates identities that students adopt" (p. 21). In this "accumulations of positions" approach, a *systemic* analysis is highly important. Systematicity in the analysis of discursive processes is about identifying patterns in story lines and their consequences (Slocum-Bradley, 2009). A systemic analysis, therefore, involves looking at not only the current context but also the previous contexts, which may include but are not limited to "the question that came before that utterance, a question from a previous conversation, the influence of a television show, [and] lifelong patterns of language socialization" (Rymes, 2016, p. 7). Looking across contexts, one can identify patterns and recurring positions and interpret their meanings more thoroughly.

The second approach is to focus on a particular story line in one single context to identify positions and their impact on or link to the momentarily constructed identities, meanings, and social action(s). "What is going on at this current moment?" is the major guiding question in this approach. Wood (2013) criticizes researchers who use positioning as a method for understanding identity formation through seeking out patterns or routines across an entire observation period. She argues that using the notion of positioning to understand what *kinds* of people individuals become ignores the moment-to-moment emergence of micro-identities, and instead capitalizes on macro-identities that are relatively stable and long term. She contends that framing identities as constructed over time rather than arising in moments of time can be problematic, as identities vary from moment to moment.

She thus suggests that "micro-identities, which are constructed through interaction in the same way as macro-identities, are not any less poignant, significant, or real in the small moment of their construction than a macro-identity that might emerge in another interactional moment" (p. 781). Wood (2013) supports her argument by showing how Jakeel, a fourth grader, enacted three different micro-identities (mathematical explainer, mathematical student, and menial worker) in the same lesson, indicating how those micro-identities shifted across the lesson and affected Jakeel's learning of the content, both positively and negatively. The identities of mathematical explainer and student involved Jakeel's use of mathematical discourse that improved his learning. In contrast, the identity of menial worker involved only recording mathematical words. As a menial worker, Jakeel produced mathematically correct text; however, he did not seem to communicate mathematical ideas or learn the content. Wood's study is in line with a study by Davies and Hunt (1994), who examined positions available to marked marginal members of classrooms in a primary school at micro levels of interactions. They found evidence that seemingly durable marginal positionings are still negotiated from moment to moment in classroom interactions. As can be seen, both approaches to positioning analysis that I have discussed here offer fruitful results. It is up to the researcher to choose the one most appropriate for the study under investigation.

Sample Case Studies

In the rest of this chapter, I offer examples for conducting positioning analysis, hoping that the step-by-step approach I provide here, as well as the strategies I offer, will be helpful for applied linguists who are new to positioning analysis. The two case studies I present come from two very different classrooms—one is a language classroom, while the other is a mainstream or regular classroom that includes learners or speakers of additional languages. The examples are also different in terms of the approach I adopt. In the first analysis, I look at a single story line, engaging in a more in-depth micro-analysis. The other analysis focuses on the accumulations of positions across the data, with less micro-analysis.

Example Case 1

The first example I provide is extracted from an ESL classroom that I visited several years ago in order to collect data for my dissertation research. I have published my findings in various journal articles and book chapters (see Kayi-Aydar, 2013, 2015a, 2015b). Thus, I will not repaint the full picture here or go into details about the research. By presenting a particular story line, my purpose is rather to show *how* positioning analysis is done.

Before moving on to the analysis, I would like to provide some background information, which I believe is necessary to understand the story line thoroughly. The classroom that I visited included a group of international students who were enrolled in an intensive English program at a university in the United States. The following segment is a story line constructed by a student and his teacher in an English oral skills class (Kayi-Aydar, 2015b).

One day, the teacher wrote several sentences on the board, formed pairs, and asked her students to read the sentences aloud in pairs. One of the sentences included the word "separate," both as an adjective and as a verb. Another sentence had "graduate" as an adjective and as a verb. After students read the sentences aloud in pairs, the teacher asked them what was the same or different in the sentences. Students noticed the difference in the grammatical functions of the words. That is, they noticed and seemed to understand that the same word could function both as an adjective and as a verb in the same sentence. The teacher stated that there was also a pronunciation difference. She pointed out and emphasized the difference by reading those sentences aloud again and emphasizing the pronunciation of the words "separate" and "graduate" both as adjectives and as verbs. She then asked students to repeat the words after her, and later called on several students so that each had a chance to practice pronunciation. When she was almost ready to finish and move on to the next activity, one male student interrupted her to ask a question. I include the rest of this story line below.

Both during the observation and later when I revisited my field notes and audio-recording, I found this story line pretty striking and interesting for various reasons. On the same day after class, I immediately transcribed it for a closer look and analysis. To be able to better understand turn-taking, which can play a significant role in positioning, I put the segment into a table (without any frames) that looked like Table 5.3.

Step 1: Organization/Structure of the Story Line

Table 5.3 Organization/structure and turn-taking of a story line

Student: Teacher, just a quick question		
	Teacher: All right	
Student: You know, who told you this intonation?		
	Teacher: Who told me this?	
		[[Class laughs]]
Student: How do you guess to…?	[[The teacher waves at the camera]]	
Student: Sorry, if I asked the wrong question		
	Teacher: Doesn't matter. It's just that I'm surprised that you asked that.	
Student: I mean how did you know that?		
	Teacher: How do I know that?	
	Teacher: By gro:wing up in this culture [and speaking that language all my life	
Student: [Oh, okay]		
	Teacher: Yeah, but, it follows a pattern. It follows a pattern. And, it, uhmm, I told you about it, near the beginning of the course. We were working with the word "indiscriminately"	

Step 2: Preliminary Analysis/Coding

The initial look at turn-taking indicated equal participation between the student and the teacher. It also indicated how persistent the student seemed to be in getting his message across. In the next step of my analysis, I added one more column, an analysis column, which included the positions that I identified in the story line as well as any other codes or notes about the aspects of the story line. This new table is shown as Table 5.4.

Table 5.4 Preliminary analysis of positions and story line

			Preliminary Analysis
Student: Teacher, just a quick question			Interruption/request Reflexive positioning, "interrupter"
	Teacher: All right		Response/allows him to take the floor
Student: You know, who told you this intonation?			Inappropriate discourse competence Pronunciation Reflexive positioning, "help seeker"
	Teacher: Who told me this?		Confusion
		[[Class laughs]]	
Student: How do you guess to…?	[[The teacher waves at the camera]]		Clarification Rephrasing Legitimate question Reflexive positioning, "legitimate student"
Student: Sorry, if I asked the wrong question			Embarrassment Reflexive repositioning/inappropriate question
	Teacher: Doesn't matter. It's just that I'm surprised that you asked that		Surprised Supports the student's reflexive, problematic position

(continued)

Table 5.4 (continued)

		Preliminary Analysis
Student: I mean how did you know that?		Questioning competence Restating the question Resistance and reflexive repositioning, "legitimate student"
	Teacher: How do I know that?	Clarification Restating the question
	Teacher: By gro:wing up in this culture [and speaking that language all my life]	Culture Reflexive positioning, "native speaker of English" Native speaker superiority—power
Student: [Oh, okay]		Confirmation Confirming teacher's superior position
	Teacher: Yeah, but, it follows a pattern. It follows a pattern. And, it, uhmm, I told you about it, near the beginning of the course. We were working with the word "indiscriminately"	More detailed linguistic explanation Confirming student's legitimate position Interactive repositioning, "legitimate member/student"

Step 3: (Re)Constructing the Story Line/Narrating the Analysis

Coding the story line and identifying reflexive and interactive positioning in the previous step now enabled me to see how this story line unfolded and what positions were constructed within it. As the story line showed, the student interrupted the teacher to ask a question. The teacher allowed the student to take the floor, saying "all right," and the student asked his question: "Who told you this intonation?" By this

question, it seemed as if he meant to ask something like "What is the rule for this pronunciation difference?" or "How can we notice this next time when we see a different pair?" However, his question initially functioned in a different way in the discourse. The teacher repeated his question in a surprised way and in the same form ("Who told me this intonation?"). Seeming to recognize there was a miscommunication, the student immediately rephrased his question: "How do you guess to…" By doing this, he positioned himself as a legitimate student as he tried to demonstrate that the question he was trying to ask was indeed a good, meaningful question. However, he was unable to complete his question, since the class laughed and the teacher turned back and waved at the camera, which all made the student more aware that his question was somewhat problematic. He therefore took a step back and apologized, saying, "Sorry, if I asked the wrong question." The teacher's wave and the laughter in the class actually assigned a position, the owner of the weird question, to the student; a position the student took up by apologizing. The teacher added that she was surprised by the question, which further supported the non-powerful, problematic position assigned to the student. After this explicit acknowledgment, the student resisted this position, and tried to reposition himself by rewording the question. He seemed to insist on the quality of his question and his legitimate position, which was in fact finally accepted by the classroom teacher, who eventually provided an answer. Yet, her explanation indicated her native speaker superiority and the subtle power that came with it. Surprisingly, the teacher continued, saying that there was actually a pattern that explained the difference and hence confirmed the student's initial legitimate position. Later in the lesson (not included in the story line above), the teacher thanked the student for asking such a "legitimate question," thereby encouraging him and accepting his participation behavior.

Step 4: Reflection

In this final step, I reflect on the narrative of the story line that I (re)constructed in Step 3. Obviously, this segment and the analysis would be considered insufficient for a journal article, as the journal

editors and reviewers would want to see further data and recurring patterns. Although recurring patterns and codes are important for trustworthiness and soundness, in some instances particular moments in the classroom whose patterns and codes may not repeat can be so crucial for the learning and teaching that occurred during that momentary interaction, as well as for the future social interactions and dynamics in the classroom. The story line above is one of those unique momentary interactions, providing some crucial information about the teacher, student, and classroom. The teacher may never position herself as the native speaker again in her interactions with her student in the rest of the semester. However, the fact that she did in this particular story line obviously had an important function and meant something for the student. I therefore believe that one should not be too concerned about the recurring patterns and themes in positioning analysis.

In the story line above, it is interesting to see the power struggle between the teacher and the student. This can be easily seen in the turn-taking structure—neither the student nor the teacher gave up maintaining the floor. Despite the problematic language use, the student's insistence on finding an answer to his question is also worth highlighting, as it enabled him to construct the legitimate speaker and classroom member identity in that moment-to-moment interaction. The teacher's body language and drawing from her cultural background and native speakerism (Aneja, 2016) are also indications of a power struggle. All these obviously have important consequences for learning and teaching—if the student did not attempt to reposition himself in this story line, he may have never received an answer to his question as to why the pronunciation of the words differed. His positioning acts did indeed enable him to gain access to a learning opportunity. The interpretation is, of course, limited, as we are only looking at one story line. Given the nature of the conversation, positioning theory also does not help us understand *why* the teacher and the student positioned themselves in the ways they did. To be able to bring larger discourses to the analysis, further data would be necessary. Many other factors, such as previous story lines, gender, cultural differences, or age, may have contributed to positions being constructed and created in this story line. While the story line above answers the "how" question

by demonstrating how the student and teacher engaged in positioning moves, it cannot answer the "why" question. The only way to know why the student and teacher positioned themselves in the ways they did would be through eliciting further data, either through additional classroom observations or interviews with the participants. Trying to answer the "why" question based on this single story line would result in speculations and overgeneralization, which are both a threat to the trustworthiness of the analysis. Nevertheless, this story line helps us see the strong role of positioning in classroom learning and teaching, and it also enables us to ask further questions: Will this teacher position herself again in the ways she did in this story line? How will this story line influence the nature of conversations between the teacher and this particular student in the future? Will future story lines including the teacher and this student follow similar structures and topics?

Example Case 2

The second example comes from a multilingual Mariachi classroom that consisted of culturally and linguistically diverse high school students. The data are from a larger project that aims to understand the intersectionality and identity construction of Latinx teachers through the lens of positioning. Unlike the first example, which looked at a single, unique story line to indicate how that particular story line and positions affected student learning, this example focuses on the positional identities. In particular, I show, through multiple story lines, how one Mariachi teacher constructed professional identities for himself and his students. Below I list three story lines from the same class on different days over one academic semester. Before each story line, I provide brief background information, and I leave the analysis to the end.

Story Line 1

This story line begins with a female student looking at her finger and saying her finger hurts as the class was about to play another song. The rest of the story line is presented here.

Teacher: It hurts? Welcome to the life of guitar, right?
Female student: [[Laughs]]
Teacher: Yeah. [crosstalk 00:46:55] the other day I was playing, um, and my- my whole callus right here just split in half.
Female student: Ew.
Teacher: It hurts. [crosstalk 00:47:04] Anyway, [crosstalk 00:47:06] part of- part of- part of the battle wounds that we get, right? Here we go. And, from the top again. [[The teacher continues with the song.]]

Story Line 2

After making a quick announcement at the beginning of this class session, the teacher begins asking the students what song they would like to start with:

Teacher: Okay, let's, um, start… I'll let you guys decide. What do you guys want to start with?
Female student 1: Along the Road.
Teacher: All right, here we go.
Teacher: [crosstalk 00:00:57] Okay. So, um, what I want to focus on this one is you guys have the music. Really beautiful. We just gotta make sure that the point that we left off yesterday … you know, how we're like, playing really, really strong and really confidently, that's our starting point today, okay? Yes. Here we go. Ready? And one, two, three, here we go. (singing)
Teacher: Dude, you guys sound so amazing on that one. That seriously, seriously is like your strongest song. So, um, in the concert, remember, whenever you're planning a concert or whenever you're planning a set, you always want to start strong and end strong.
Students: Okay.
Teacher: So more than likely, this one is gonna be your starter song, unless you want to do it as your end.
Female student 2: That'll be cool as an end [crosstalk 00:08:00].
Male student 1: Yeah, that'll be cool as the end.
Teacher: As an end?
Students: Yeah.
Male student 2: Okay, cool. Cool.

Story Line 3

The following story line is about a particular song that the class had just played:

Teacher: Here we go. And … So before we even begin, let's kind of remember what our state of mind should be for this type of a song, okay? Romantic, more mellow, more love. Love lost, okay? Here we go. I'm sorry. Yeah. Kind of sad but also uplifting.
Female student 1: It's melancholy.
Teacher: Melancholy, that's a great word. When it comes to teaching music courses, even though we're not ELA, we're not teaching English, language, arts, we're not teaching math, we're not teaching science, the state mandates that we have to still incorporate those things into our classroom. A way that I figured out how to do that is by throwing vocabulary words out there. For example, I'll say, "What word other than sad can you think of to describe this song?" Kathryn [[pseudonym]] just said melancholy, and that's using her ELA skills because it's making her think critically about other vocabulary that- that, you know, discusses the exact same motion. You know, because we can always say a song is happy, right? But what are other ways of saying happy?
Female student 2: Joy.
Male student 1: Uplifting?
Female student 3: Joyous.
Teacher: Joyous.
Female student 4: Excited?
Teacher: Excited? Yeah, it could be, right?
Female student 5: Content.
Teacher: Content. Which one? You said content?
Female student 5: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
Teacher: Great minds think alike. Which one?
Female student 6: Pleasant?
Teacher: Pleasant? Yeah. So these are all words that describe the same thing. And like I said, in addition to building the vocabulary, it's a way for us to integrate those standards into our class, even though we're not really teaching those things. Same thing with like with math. When we're talking about subdividing times, you know, three, four, six, eight,

> kind of the same thing but they're not, right? One, two, three, one, two, three, four, five, six, one, two, three. It all relates to math and fractions. Reducing down to lowest common denominators. Stuff like that. That's my creative way of doing it, and it seems to be working because my administrators haven't told me anything. And they're saying, "Great work," so that's just kind of like a little han-, or a little pointer for you when you become an educator, how you can incorporate that because that's been a struggle. How do you incorporate math into a music class?

Analysis and Reflection

In this classroom, I observed many instances when the Mariachi teacher constructed professional identities for his students. Rather than positioning them as students in his interactions, it was interesting to see how this teacher tried to minimize the power differentials and assign equally powerful positional identities to the students. In the first story line, for example, he immediately builds empathy when a female student points out her hurt finger. He then creates a positional identity category through the use of the pronoun "we," and positions himself and the student as members of that community of practice. On another day, in the second story line, he advises his students who are considering a concert or set that they might plan in the future. Through this reference to the future, he positions his students as prospective musicians who have the power to plan and decide on the song setlist for a concert. This positional identity is co-constructed in the rest of the story line when the students share their thoughts, saying that the song could be used as an end. This is significant in the story line for two reasons. First, the students deviate from the traditional IRF (initiation–response–feedback) or IRE (initiation–response–evaluation) pattern by sharing their opinion without being invited to the story line by the teacher. Second, by offering their opinion, they also position themselves as professionals who have the capacity or ability to decide where a song might go at a performance. What allows them to do so is the first-order, interactive positioning by the teacher. Positioned as individuals who are part of a mariachi band who can plan a concert, the students position themselves as agents who can indeed make a choice regarding the placing of a song

at a concert. In the third story line, similar positionings are seen. The students confidently and comfortably contribute to the story line about words. However, the most significant positioning move in this story line is when the teacher shares his own experience regarding integrating ELA skills into his teaching as a piece of advice. Again, the reference to the future in his positioning of students as educators clearly indicates that the teacher positions his students as prospective musicians or teachers.

Summary

In the fields of applied linguistics and second language acquisition, ample evidence has been provided documenting the necessity and importance of social interaction for second language acquisition (van Compernolle, 2010). Social interaction is believed to provide opportunities for language learners to (a) notice gaps in their linguistic competence; (b) negotiate meaning; (c) receive comprehensible input; and (d) produce comprehensible output, among other sociocognitive acts, which are all assumed to be necessary and crucial for second language acquisition. Cazden (2001), in her description of traditional and non-traditional lessons, states that in traditional classrooms, classroom discourse is usually shaped and guided by the teacher through a "three-part sequence of teacher initiation, student response, and teacher evaluation (IRE) or teacher feedback (IRF)" (p. 30). In those classrooms, participation is viewed as an individual activity and therefore each student is seen as responsible and evaluated for the level of his/her participation. I argue in this chapter that classroom participation is not an individual performance; rather, it is a socially constructed act. The social interaction in the classroom may not be equally accessible or beneficial to each student. In a language classroom, positioning shapes access to language learning experiences or opportunities that are believed to foster language learning in the classroom. If students are positioned in ways that limit their access to opportunities to participate, they will have fewer opportunities to be listened to. Insufficient participation is known to have a negative impact on second language learning and use.

Positioning theory, which can be used to analyze any form of interaction, from intimate conversations between two individuals to the interaction between nation states (Harré, Moghaddam, Cairnie, Rothbart, & Sabat, 2009), can also be applied to the analysis of language classroom discourse. It offers new understandings about language classroom participation among many other applied linguistics concepts.

In this chapter, I also focused on a number of important points when designing a classroom-based study that would use positioning analysis. Given that the research questions play a significant role in any qualitative inquiry, I provided a number of example research questions from numerous studies, highlighting their strengths. In longitudinal studies for which the researcher engaged in prolonged observations in a classroom setting, it is crucial to make careful choices to choose the story lines to transcribe for micro-analysis. Even though I highlighted in this chapter the importance of recurring positions and codes in the analysis, I also emphasized the importance of focusing on the unique moments where the positions may not be recurrent in another story line. Even though patterns are important, non-recurring but still powerful or unique positions may have a crucial impact on learning and teaching in a particular context. Therefore, it is important for the researcher to go into the field with an open mind and strong curiosity.

I offered two examples from two different case studies to demonstrate how positioning theory can be done. The analysis in each example had a different focus. In the first example, my goal was to show that researchers using positioning analysis should not always be obsessed with patterns. As my example analysis showed, some unique story lines may provide a great deal of information about a class. In the second example, I used positioning to show how accumulations of positions lead to certain identities. More specially, in that example I demonstrated and described how a Mariachi teacher, in a culturally and linguistically diverse classroom, positioned his students as professional musicians rather than students. Through these two examples, I hope I was able to provide practical strategies for conducting positioning analysis in classroom discourse, and show the crucial impact of positioning on learning and teaching.

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6

Narrative Texts for Positioning Research

In daily conversations, people often tell stories that draw from their lived experiences. Narrating is a culturally embedded practice: "a practice of meaning construction" (Brockmeier, 2012, p. 1). Narratives of events and experiences typically involve personal relationships, sociocultural histories, and emotions. In other words, as individuals talk or write about their personal experience, "they learn about what they know, what they feel, what they do and how they do it, and why they do it" (Cortazzi, 1993, p. 6). Therefore, according to Barkhuizen, Benson, and Chik (2014), narratives can be "temporal (reflecting on the past and looking to the future), emotive (positive and negative experiences and surprises), reflective (beliefs, expectations, and practices), and instructive (advice)" (p. 38). As such, narratives tell quite a lot about subject positions, lives, and cultures, and are an important data source in applied linguistics research and positioning analysis.

H. Kayı-Aydar, *Positioning Theory in Applied Linguistics*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-97337-1_6

Broadly speaking, narrative researchers examine stories, the types of stories individuals tell, the structure of the stories, the order of events, and the identities constructed in and through stories (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006). As narrative researchers aim to understand stories and who storytellers are, they tend to focus on "the immediate context of storytelling (that is, in a narrative interview, in a published text) and the wider 'master' narratives, or cultural story lines of which the local story is a part" (ibid., p. 43). With its emphasis on the immediate context and macro-level discourses, narrative inquiry plays a crucial role in positioning theory. The strand of narrative identity work built on the connection between storytelling and grand cultural narratives is based on positioning theory (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006). As individuals tell stories, they not only share and pass along culturally shared values, but also "learn to position their own values and actions in relationship to established and shared categories, and in doing so, engage in their own formation process as a person" (Bamberg, 2012). I detail the links between narratives, positioning, and identity throughout this chapter.

The chapter begins with an explanation of narratology and narrative inquiry. I describe different types of narrative texts that one can collect to conduct positioning analysis in applied linguistics research, and I give examples of numerous types of narratives from previous studies. After I elaborate on the link between positioning theory and narrative inquiry from a methodological standpoint, I introduce Bamberg's (1997, 2012) and Søreide's work (2006) on narrative positioning. I conclude with two example narrative texts to illustrate how narrative positioning analysis is conducted, and how positioning and narrative analyses complement each other.

What Are Narratology and Narrative Inquiry?

Narrative inquiry emerged in the 1960s within the field of narratology (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006). Clandinin (2013) defines narrative inquiry as "an approach to the study of human lives conceived as a way of honoring lived experience as a source of important knowledge

and understanding" (p. 17). Narratology, Edwards (1999) suggests, "deals with the internal structures of narratives, with distinctions between narratives of different kinds, and also with distinctions between narratives and other kinds of discourse" (p. 229). Connelly and Clandinin (1990) differentiate between "story" and "narrative," stating that while the phenomenon is story, the inquiry is narrative. In other words, "people by nature lead storied lives and tell stories of those lives, whereas narrative researchers describe such lives, collect and tell stories of them, and write narratives of experience" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 2). Seeing narrative inquiry as both a view of and a methodology for studying experience, Clandinin (2013) acknowledges:

> The focus of narrative inquiry is not only valorizing individuals' experience but is also an exploration of the social, cultural, familial, linguistic, and institutional narratives within which individuals' experiences were, and are, constituted, shaped, expressed, and enacted. Understood in this way, narrative inquiries begin and end in the storied lives of the people involved. (p. 18)

The focus in narrative inquiry is not only on one's telling or writing about the lived experience. Rather, narratives are composed by the narrator and listener (or the researcher), and so they are embedded within the narrator–listener relationships (Clandinin, 2013). Clandinin, therefore, uses "narrative texts" over "narrative data," since the narratives are co-constructed between the narrator and the listener (the researcher); and therefore, rather than being objective, they are experiential and intersubjective (Clandinin, 2013). The word "texts" rather than "data" is thus more suitable or meaningful in describing narratives.

The "composing process" involves eliciting stories from the participant and turning them into research texts. In narrative inquiry, this composing process is highly important. During this process, participant(s) and researcher co-construct and negotiate storied interpretations by discussing the multiple meanings that narratives offer. The discussion and negotiation involve eliciting further texts from the participant(s), whenever needed, and further engaging in negotiation with participant(s).

This recursive process is repeated until the researcher and participants agree that the research texts are authentic, compelling, and sufficient (Clandinin, 2013).

Narratives can be oral, written, or multimodal. While interviews can be used to elicit oral accounts, diaries and journals can be used to obtain written narratives. Interviews in narrative inquiry are either unstructured, in which the narrator simply narrates the lived experience with no prompts or guidance from the researcher, or semi-structured, in which the researcher asks a few guiding questions, most of which are based on the accounts narrated during the interview. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) suggest that once the interviews are conducted and transcribed, the researcher and narrator meet or communicate to read, review, and further discuss the transcribed narrative texts. This conversation is then recorded to be used as part of the ongoing narrative record. According to Edwards (1999):

> One advantage of interviewing-for-narratives is that it allows participants to develop long turns and tell things 'in their own way', in contrast to the more question-answer kinds of format used in other interview research, where personal narratives and 'anecdotal' replies may even be systematically prevented from developing. (p. 234)

Narratives elicited through interviews are therefore not just reports through which information is elicited, but occasions where meanings are constructed between researcher and narrator; the knowledge generated is a result of the actions taken by the researcher to obtain it (Miller, 2010).

Images, photos, and various digital tools are used to elicit multimodal narrative texts. Some examples of multimodal narratives include "written narratives embedded with hyperlinks or photographs, or oral narratives supported or supplemented by photographs" (Barkhuizen et al., 2014, p. 53). I discuss some other types of narratives that can be used for positioning analysis in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1 Varieties of narratives

Varieties of narrative	Description	Example studies/work in applied linguistics
Autobiography[a]	"A method of reflecting on the self in lived experience" (Cortazzi, 1993, p. 12)	Connor, U. (1999). Learning to write academic prose in a second language: A literacy autobiography. In G. Braine (Ed.), *Non-native educators in English language teaching* (pp. 29–42) Through her literacy autobiography, Connor talks about her experience as an ESL writer in different contexts
Collaborative biography	The joint description and interpretation of the narrator's life experience by the narrator and researcher(s) (Cortazzi, 1993)	I am unaware of any studies in applied linguistics or language teacher education that particularly use collaborative biography/ies as data
Narrative frames	"A written story template consisting of a series of incomplete sentences and blank spaces of varying lengths" (Barkhuizen et al., 2014, p. 45)	Barkhuizen, G., & Wette, R. (2008). Narrative frames for investigating the experiences of language teachers. *System*, *36*(3), 372–387 Barkhuizen and Wette used four specifically designed narrative frames to collect data from a large group of language teachers, with the purpose of exploring commonalities among the teachers' experiences
Observational narratives[b]	Ethnographic accounts that are constructed through observing a social setting or social practices and then narrating what was observed (Bold, 2012)	In applied linguistics, observational narratives are usually the expanded field notes. The field notes are commonly used in applied linguistics research

(continued)

Table 6.1 (continued)

Varieties of narrative	Description	Example studies/work in applied linguistics
Letter-writing	"A way of engaging in written dialogue between researcher and participants" for various purposes, such as "a way of offering and responding to tentative narrative interpretations" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 6)	Al-Khatib, M. A. (2001). The pragmatics of letter-writing. *World Englishes*, *20*(2), 179–200 This study uses 120 letters written to British English native speakers, with the aim of examining the corpus of letters in terms of the sociocultural background of the writers; that is, to establish interpretive links between the type of material collected and its situational and cultural context I am unaware of any studies in applied linguistics or language teacher education that particularly use letters written between the researcher and participant(s)
Visual texts	These narrative texts are photographs and drawings that are typically used as a base for oral interviews (Barkhuizen et al., 2014)	Vitanova, G. (2016). Exploring second-language teachers' identities through multimodal narratives: Gender and race discourses. *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies*, *13*(4), 261–288 Vitanova illustrates how multimodal narratives could be used in analyzing the formation of personal and professional identities of several female teachers of English

(continued)

Table 6.1 (continued)

Varieties of narrative	Description	Example studies/work in applied linguistics
Learner diaries	"Autobiographical, introspective documents that record the experiences of language learning from the learner's perspective" (Barkhuizen et al., 2014, p. 35)	Miller, J. M. (2000). Language use, identity, and social interaction: Migrant students in Australia. *Research on Language and Social Interaction*, *33*(1), 69–100 Miller explores the links between second language use, membership, and social contexts through the narrative accounts of recently arrived immigrant students in Australian high schools
Language learning histories	Retrospective reflections and accounts of language learning experience (Barkhuizen et al., 2014)	Kayi-Aydar, H. (2018). "If carmen can analyze Shakespeare, everybody can": positions, conflicts, and negotiations in the narratives of Latina pre-service teachers. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, 118–130 Kayi-Aydar analyzes language learning histories of three Latina teachers to understand the impact of their experience as language learners on the construction of their professional identities as teachers

[a]Another term that is used interchangeably with "autobiography" is "life history and experience-centered narratives" (see Bold, 2012)
[b]Connelly and Clandinin (1990) call "observational narratives" "field notes of shared experience" and define them as a "field record collected through participant observation in a shared practical setting" (p. 5)

Narrative Inquiry in Applied Linguistics

Narrative inquiry is commonly used in applied linguistics research that focuses on either learners or language teachers. Narrative inquiry is a useful approach or methodology in applied linguistics research, as "it helps us understand the inner mental worlds of language teachers and learners and the nature of language teaching and learning as social and educational activity" (Barkhuizen et al., 2014, p. 2).

In applied linguistics research, narrative texts are usually collected in various forms (e.g., oral, written, etc.) from language learners, language teachers, and teacher educators and for numerous purposes. Language learners may be asked to keep journals or diaries to improve their writing skills. This would further enable them to have the opportunity to understand and reflect on their own linguistic and cultural experiences. It is also common practice in language teacher education programs to ask preservice or inservice teachers to keep journals, reflecting on their own learning and professional growth. The studies that use teacher narratives may aim to understand teachers' cognition (e.g., thinking, beliefs, values, etc.), culture, behavior, professional lives, identities, and careers (Barkhuizen et al., 2014; Cortazzi, 1993). As teachers or teacher candidates narrate their experiences, they reflect on and learn from doing so (Cortazzi, 1993). Understanding what teachers know and learn then in turn enables us to learn more about educational processes.

In Table 6.1 I illustrate the most common types of narratives that can be used in applied linguistics research. Since I have discussed the use of "interviews" as narratives briefly earlier, I do not include them in the table.

Positioning, Narratives, and Language Learning and Teaching

Brockmeier (2012) states that scholars across various disciplines have "developed conceptual and analytical tools for the investigation of narratives as a cultural form of life" (p. 10). He says that discursive psychology, for example, "studies narrative as a form of intersubjective action, or, to be more precisely, as discursive intervention in ongoing events" (p. 10).

He then gives positioning theory as an example, saying that it "foregrounds the ways narrators carry out various actions by attributing certain positions to characters in their stories, to the audience of their storytelling, to themselves, and in respect to the cultural world at large" (p. 10).

With story lines being one of the three crucial components of positioning theory, narratives are the heart of the theory. Harré et al. (2009) contend that "if we take the view that life unfolds as a narrative, with multiple, contemporaneous interlinking storylines, the significance of the actions that people carry out, including speech acts, is partly determined by the then-and-there positions of the actors" (p. 8). Similarly, Harré et al. (2009) argues that "what the dominant story line of a narrative is can be determined by the local assignments of rights and duties. As positioned, the act-forces of a person's speaking and acting are given this or that meaning, and consequently play this or that role in a story" (p. 12).

Indeed, as individuals narrate events, stories, and experience, they "represent themselves in recognizable story lines" (Wortham, 2001, p. 1). Through narrating lived stories or experience, an individual can "transform or construct the self" (Wortham, 2001, p. 1). Autobiographical narratives, for example, typically include "interactional positioning that autobiographical narrators and audiences accomplish while telling and discussing stories" (Wortham, 2001, p. 9). Wortham (2001) argues that "in telling the story, the narrator adopts a certain interactional position—and in acting like that kind of person becomes more like that kind of person" (p. 9). As individuals *author* their experience and write about themselves, they also become the interpreters of their own experience, a process that positions them as agents "responsible for the shape and texture of their own experiences" (Cortazzi, 1993, p. 13).

In an educational context, engaging in the act of narrating not only tells us about the ways the learners present or negotiate multiple identities, but may also promote learning (Barkhuizen et al., 2014). According to Barkhuizen et al. (2014):

> Further investment may occur as a result of learners' meta-cognitive awareness of their own learning gained through the process of writing their LLHs [language learning histories]. Doing the writing means the learners are reflecting on who they are as learners, what contributes to and inhibits their learning, and how they can best progress in the future. (p. 39)

By analyzing the narratives of language learners, we can understand how they perceive themselves in relation to the language, social environment, and other individuals. Do language learners position themselves as legitimate or successful members of the language classroom, of the L2 community, or in their stories? Do they identify themselves as English users or learners? The ways they position themselves will have ultimate consequences for their learning practices as well as social interactions with others. Narrative inquiry also provides important insights in understanding who teachers are. According to Søreide (2006), "to understand identity construction as a process of narrative positioning is useful, because it opens up an understanding of teachers as active agents in their own lives and the construction of teacher identity as a dynamic and changing activity" (p. 529). Engaging in critical narratives contributes to the professional development and growth of teachers.

Identifying and Analyzing Positions in Narratives

It can be a challenging task to identify positioning moves in analyzing narratives. Regarding the identification and analysis of positions, Wilkinson and Kitzinger (2003) suggest that researchers pay particular attention to the following practices: "(a) naming or indexing a category; (b) invoking categorical membership; and (c) invoking attributes" (p. 174). For example, when someone says "Turkish people enjoy hospitality," s/he is naming a category "Turkish people." If the person says "as a Turkish person, I enjoy hospitality," s/he is invoking categorical membership. When the person says "I'm a reasonable citizen," there is no reference to a particular category but a personal attribute, "being reasonable." Sometimes these categories may overlap, as seen in the following narrative I elicited through an interview with a preservice Hispanic language teacher a few years ago:

1. There's a more noticeable difference when my family moved in '95 and there weren't as
2. many Hispanic families there, and so that was a really big culture shock for me. My
3. parents used to tell me that when we lived in California, I was very active and very social
4. and I would talk to strangers, whether or not they understood me or not.

As she narrates her childhood experience, this teacher engages in indexing a category and invoking categorical membership simultaneously. More specifically, by referring to "Hispanic families," she indexes a category. At the same time she claims membership, but this is quite implicit—the reason for the culture shock was because there were no Hispanic families like hers. Through the end of her account, she engages in invoking personal attributes: "being active and very social."

Also from a methodological standpoint, Edwards (1999) acknowledges that in narrative analysis the focus might be on "(1) the nature of the *events* narrated, (2) people's perception or *understanding* of events, and (3) *discourse* of such understandings and events" (p. 227). Positioning theory uses discourse, "as a performative domain of social action" (Edwards, 1999, p. 226), to analyze both events and understandings of events. Regarding the nature of the events narrated, for example, one can analyze how story lines are structured in certain ways and contexts, and the impact of the structures of story lines on the social relationships that are being (re)constructed momentarily. Listening to or analyzing narratives further allows us to understand how people make sense of or reflect on their stories. Through such sense-making or reflection, we see how individuals get positioned in the stories, or "how they see things, whether as representatives of groups or cultures or as individuals." Drawing on the work by Arthur Frank on dialogical narrative analysis (2012), I suggest that some of the crucial questions that can be asked in narrative positioning analysis include the following:

- What multiple positions are constructed in a single narrator's stories? How do these positions overlap or merge? When do they contest each other?
- Why is someone choosing to be in a particular story line over other possible story lines in a narration?
- What positions or positional identities are included in a story line and which ones are excluded? Which positions or positional identities are constructed in the past, present, and future?

Researching identity through narratives and narrative analysis has recently received strong interest in applied linguistics research. Through telling stories, individuals reshape themselves, situate themselves in stories, and respond to various characters and individuals in the past, present, or future (Frank, 2012). Frank (2012) states that "stories provide an imaginative space in which people can claim identities, reject identities, and experiment with identities" (p. 45). As discussed in previous chapters, positioning theory can be particularly helpful in analyzing narrated selves. Michael Bamberg, who has applied the notion of positioning to the analysis of storytelling, offers further directions on narrative positioning built on the positioning theory originally developed by Davies and Harré (1990). Bamberg (1997; see also Bamberg & Georgakopouolu, 2008) offers three levels of analysis:

(1) How are characters positioned in relation to one another within the story?
At this level, the analysis focuses on the identification of who is the central character and agent in the story, who is at the mercy of others, and who is "rewarded by luck, fate, or personal qualities" (Bamberg, 1997, p. 337).
(2) How does the speaker or narrator position him/herself within the story?
The focus here is on the narrator's response to "Who am I?" and "How do I want to be understood by you?" questions. The analysis focuses on how the narrator uses the language to make claims about him/herself.

(3) How does the speaker or narrator position him/herself in relation to the audience, dominant discourses, or master narratives?
At this level, the analysis focuses on how and when the narrator instructs the listener, makes excuses, blames others, and so on.

Søreide's study on teacher identities (2006) also presents an analytic framework for narratives that can be particularly helpful if the focus is on identities. In her study, which looked at how subject positions were used as a resource by teachers in their narratives to construct teacher identity, Søreide focused on how teachers evaluated or talked about the relevance of the subject positions in relation to teacher identity. She suggests that narrative positioning analysis can be done by looking at distancing and identification in order to understand identity construction. In her study, she considered how teachers distanced themselves through opposition and/or rejection of the available subject positions, which she calls negative positioning. Moreover, she examined how the teachers identified with and recognized the available subject positions, which she describes as positive positioning. In a similar study, I illustrate how two preservice teachers repeatedly distanced themselves from their mentor teachers based on how their mentor teachers interacted with and taught English language learners in various elementary school classrooms. By distancing themselves from certain kinds of behavior, ideas, values, and activities their mentor teachers valued, the preservice teachers in my study were able to position themselves in ways that empowered them (see Kayi-Aydar, 2015). "Positioning by distancing" is also evident in a study by Sosa and Gomez (2012), in which three teachers positioned themselves as effective by explaining and highlighting what they bring to teaching. Those teachers emphasize that what they bring is different or lacking in regard to other teachers. By distancing themselves from other teachers, they claim the right to prove what they believe their students need. Bamberg (2012) describes this process as "sameness versus difference" (p. 104), explaining:

> Category ascriptions or attributions to characters that imply identity categories, or even choices of event descriptions as candidates for category-bound activities, mark affiliations with these categories in terms of proximity or distance. Aligning with (or positioning in contrast to) these categories, speakers draw boundaries around themselves—and others—so that individual identities and group belonging become visible. Thus, it is typically through discursive choices that people define synchronically a sense of (an individual) self as different from others, or they integrate a sense of who they are in terms of belonging to particular communities of others. (p. 105)

Positioning by distancing not only helps develop a sense of belonging to a certain group, community, or category, but may also result in "othering," which Harré et al. (2009) describe as "us against you." Othering, which basically involves the framing of "who is with us" and "who is not" (Harré et al., 2009), denies certain rights and duties to those who are excluded.

In the following section, I demonstrate how the analytic approaches that Bamberg and Søreide suggest can be applied to narrative texts. However, before demonstrating that, I would like to briefly discuss some of the issues involved in the selection of stories for positioning analysis. It is impossible to include all the stories our participants tell in our analysis or in a manuscript that we want to write for publication. Frank (2012) offers a number of practical suggestions regarding selecting stories for analysis. He encourages researchers to be widely inclusive at the beginning, suggesting that some stories will become more useful than others along the way. Coming from a dialogical narrative analysis perspective, he proposes that, from the total collection of stories, the ones that get the researcher's attention the most, "those that call out as needing to be written about" (Frank, 2012, p. 43), should be selected for analysis. This approach is quite different than the common practice in qualitative inquiry that encourages "systematic method for sorting through stories" (ibid.) and identifying patterns. In line with Frank, rather than encouraging pattern-seeking, I believe that it is useful to choose story lines where positioning acts are worth further analyzing and sharing with an audience.

Sample Narrative Positioning Analysis

The first example narrative I provide here is taken from a larger data set of one of my projects that focused on teacher identities, agency, and emotions. In this project, which included six ESL teachers, I asked each teacher to write a brief story, within two minutes, that involved a decision-making process. I then asked each participant to choose one of those mini-stories to expand, adding details and emotions whenever possible. The first narrative below is one of those expanded stories, written by a male ESL teacher who was, at the time of the project, teaching in an intensive English program at a major research university in the United States. What follows the narrative text is Bamberg's three levels of analysis that I conducted to illustrate how my participant, whom I will call John here, engaged in identity work through positioning.

The second narrative also comes from a larger project that focused on heritage language speakers' identities. For that project, I interviewed seven doctoral students to elicit stories relevant to their heritage speaker identities, with a particular focus on their experience in their graduate program. The following text is from the interview with Jim (pseudonym), one of the participants, in response to my question about his overall experience in his graduate program and relationships with his peers. You will see that the text does not follow the conventions of a story because it is more descriptive in nature and does not narrate a series of events. Yet, I include it here to see how this descriptive narrative enables Jim to validate his identity in relation to other students in the program. For this second narrative, I adopt Søreide's methodology in order to understand identity work in Jim's narrative.

Narrative Text 1: John's Plagiarism Story

When I first began teaching at [Name of the Intensive English Program], and even before that at the [Name of the Institution] in the Writing Program, I encountered a fair amount of plagiarism. After a few years of combating this, I came up with a solution out of both experience and by talking with other, more experienced teachers. I even did

some research, distributing a survey to my students to find out what they knew about plagiarism and citation both before and after my classes. What I had thought initially was that students were largely unaware of the processes involved in citation, and due to cultural differences, didn't think it was necessary.

This, according to my survey results, turned out not to be the case. It seemed that students were, at least generally, aware that outside information needed to be cited and that there were consequences for not doing so properly. This caused me to change my curriculum and some policies because I realized the solution was less about making sure they were aware of proper citation techniques, and more about preventing the plagiarism in the first place.

My solution was to change the drafting process. I decided that to prevent students from copying and pasting things found online, or having a friend write their paper, the solution was to have them write drafts under my supervision. Immediately, my incidences of plagiarism all but disappeared. When given time to do the tasks in class, students would not procrastinate and feel forced to extreme measures like cheating, and they had their teacher and classmates available to help if they were confused or had questions. I found this to be a very effective solution to a problem that had plagued my writing classes.

Bamberg's Positioning Analysis of John's Narrative

In order to understand how John engaged in identity work in his narrative, I will analyze this narrative text by following the three levels of analysis offered by Michael Bamberg, along with a fourth level that I will add.

Level 1: How Are Characters Positioned within the Story?

The characters in John's story are John, his students, and his colleagues. I will leave the analysis of John's reflexive positioning to the next level of analysis, and here I will rather focus on John's interactive analysis of his students and colleagues. Throughout his narrative, John positions his students collectively, rather than individually or in groups. He positions his students as plagiarizers. This reflective positioning is

first attributed to the students' diverse cultural background or cultural differences. John's assumption about cultural diversity subtly and initially positions students as unintentional plagiarizers (Chien, 2014). Later in the narrative, however, he repositions students, still somewhat implicitly, as intentional plagiarizers, by offering evidence through the survey results he obtained from his students. In other words, John appears to claim that his students plagiarize and it is not because of cultural differences as he initially thought. Rather, he offers evidence to suggest that students indeed knew what plagiarism meant. Through the end of his narrative, John positions his students as learners who would not procrastinate or cheat as they used to because of new effective practice. There is also positioning of colleagues, although it appears only once in the narrative. John positions his colleagues as more experienced teachers and as a resource. I will explain what all this positioning means or shows after I complete the level 2 and level 3 analyses. I now move on to the level 2 analysis.

Level 2: How Does John Position Himself within the Story?

John assigns so many positions to himself. First, by describing in detail the steps he took to address plagiarism, an issue that "had plagued [his] writing classes," he positions himself as a responsible teacher who cares about his teaching and students' learning. This positional identity is also reflected in his attempt to consult with his more experienced colleagues, which further positions him as a collaborator and someone who values other teachers' thoughts and experience. Perhaps most importantly, John positions himself as an agent: he makes certain choices, takes action, and successfully solves the problem in the end.

Level 3: How Does John Position Himself in Relation to the Audience, Dominant Discourses, or Master Narratives?

Using different resources and individuals, John implicitly positions himself as a credible narrator in relation to the audience. The variety of evidence (e.g., more experienced colleagues, student surveys, etc.) he offers seems to make his case strong and gives him more power to support his claim. John implicitly but quite strongly positions himself in relation to the dominant discourses about plagiarism. In the second/foreign language literature on plagiarism, there are two dominant views that explain why international students in ESL contexts or programs

tend to plagiarize (Chien, 2014). One of them is the discourse of cultural differences. From a cross-cultural perspective, it is suggested that foreign students plagiarize unintentionally and therefore they should not be blamed or punished for that without fully understanding why they plagiarize. This cross-cultural perspective challenges the western perspective on plagiarism, which is based on individualism and direct communication and may not be highlighted in various other cultures.

Level 4: What Do We Learn from the Analysis?

The brief story by John and applying Bamberg's positioning analysis to it tell us quite a lot about John's teacher identities, which have been my focus throughout the analysis. John, in his own story, appears to be a responsible and concerned teacher. In addition, he is an agent: he has freedom in making pedagogical decisions in his class and he takes action to solve problems. Through his implicit engagement in larger discourses about plagiarism, he clearly positions himself in the western discourse, challenging and not accepting cross-cultural differences in plagiarism. Engaging in such a deep level of analysis enables us to unpack hidden meanings and discourses as well as implicit positions in John's narratives. The three levels of analysis help us, at least partially, see who John is as a teacher or what kind of a teacher he is, especially in the context of plagiarism.

Narrative Text 2: Jim's Sameness vs. Difference

> There is also a clear divide among the students. This is my own hypothesis. There are four categories of the grad students in our department. There is the students who are in grad school because they need to be told they're smart or they need the PhD to validate their own worth. There are the students that are in the program because they're literally obsessed with whatever they're studying or they're very passionate about what they're learning. Then there are the students who might be passionate but also are just fed up with the things going on in the department, whether it's other students or the departmental politics, but they stay in it because whatever, they're close to finishing or because the negatives don't outweigh the positives. Then there are the students who absolutely are fed up and they don't care anymore and they just leave which I never really

> understood until this past year. I never understood how draining emotionally it can be. You know like before, I was like, "I was tired. You know, I don't have enough time to do all these things. You know, physically exhausted, mentally exhausted." Before I never really understood why people would choose to leave. You know, like, "You're almost done." Or whatever. Yeah, for some people, it's like they just can't. Either they can't take it anymore. I've had some friends who they passed their comprehensive exams at the PhD level and they start writing their dissertation and they just … They just have difficulties with their advisor or they just don't care anymore and they just leave. I think this past year was the first year where I felt it was emotionally challenging. Which is weird because it's like, "How? Why should this be emotionally challenging?"

Søreide's Positioning Analysis of Jim's Narrative

In order to apply Søreide's positioning analysis to Jim's narrative, I will be focusing on the two interrelated dimensions:

1. *How does Jim distance himself through opposition and/or rejection of the available subject positions?*

To begin with, in his narrative, which was in response to the question about his own experience in the graduate school and his own relationships with peers, it is interesting to see that Jim starts with categorizing graduate students rather than focusing on his own experience in the first place. Even though Jim does not use any explicit linguistic elements to distance himself from any of the four categories of graduate students he describes, he does not seem to associate himself favorably with the first two groups. Rather, he places himself in one particular category, through which he actually distances himself from the other groups. By this implicit distancing, Jim signals that he is not in graduate school because he "need[s] to be told [he is] smart or [he needs] the PhD to validate [his] own worth." He is obviously not in graduate school because "[he is] literally obsessed with whatever [he is] studying." By not choosing to be in these two groups, Jim implicitly gives the message that he neither needs to be validated for being smart nor

is obsessed with a certain topic but nothing else. The other two groups whom Jim constructs in his narrative share one thing in common—the experience of being a graduate student is emotionally draining for both groups of students—however, the groups differ at one point, in that while one group prefers to stay in graduate school despite the emotionally draining circumstances, the other group chooses to leave. Jim initially distances himself from both groups, acknowledging that he "never understood [it] until this past year."

2. *How does Jim identify with and recognize the available subject positions?*

Among the four categories of graduate students Jim constructs in his narrative, he identifies with those who find the graduate school experience emotionally draining. Even though he acknowledges that he did not understand why some students would feel that way and want to leave, he then recognizes this emotional aspect of the experience. Through this recognition, Jim positions himself as a graduate student who is emotionally challenged and seems to be questioning his place in his graduate program.

3. *What Do We Learn from the Analysis?*

As stated earlier, I find Jim's categorization of graduate students quite interesting in his narrative, even though the question was directed at his own experience and relationships. Individuals refer to certain kinds of people or groups or categories in their narratives for various purposes. By constructing certain categories of graduate students, Jim appears to claim the graduate school experience is not same for everyone. Through distancing and identification, he positions himself as a certain kind of graduate student. By positioning himself within a certain category, Jim also seems to give the message that his experience is a shared one. He appears to be aware that feeling emotionally drained and tired and wanting to leave graduate school are not positive attributes. Yet, relying on the collective, shared experience and

positioning himself as a member of a certain group of graduate students, Jim seems to offer the message that there are others who feel the same way.

Summary

The concept of story lines heavily draws on the principles of narratology (Slocum-Bradley, 2009). Narratological analysis can reveal the implicit in story lines (Harré, 2012). Harré (2012) states that "the study of storylines is a branch of narratology. It depends on the principle that strips of life are usually lived stories for which told stories already exist" (p. 9). In this chapter, my focus has been on narrative positioning, which "views the person empirically in interaction and under construction" (Bamberg, 2012, p. 105). Stories can be elicited in a wide range of ways. The varieties of narratives that I have explained in this chapter include autobiographies, collaborative biographies, narrative frames, observational narratives, letters, visual texts, learner diaries, and LLHs.

Narrative inquiry and positioning theory share many common features. Stories our participants tell play a crucial role in positioning analysis. Stories or narrative texts (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990) enable us to understand how story lines are constructed and how they affect social relationships. The narrative texts also help us see how characters get positioned during narration and how identities are constructed and negotiated. According to Bamberg (2012), "functioning to position a sense of self in relation to culturally shared values and existing normative discourses, narrative discourse claims a special status in the business of identity construction" (p. 103). In this chapter I have tried to describe the complex relationships among narratives, positioning, and identities. Drawing from Bamberg (2012) and Søreide (2006), I approached narrative texts from two analytic approaches to demonstrate how narrative positioning can be analyzed.

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7

Trustworthiness, Current Debates, Future Directions

Positioning theory is becoming increasingly popular, both as a theoretical lens and as an analytic framework in various disciplines, including applied linguistics and language teacher education. In studies that use positioning theory, it is important for authors to provide a rationale explaining how they have reached their findings and interpreted them. This is necessary to show the reader that the study was rigorously conducted: the analysis is strong, while the findings, claims, and interpretations are meaningful and adequate.

Researchers who use positioning theory do not typically use the words *validity* and *reliability* as they attempt to evaluate the accuracy of their findings and interpretations. Rather, following the norms in qualitative inquiry, researchers using positioning analysis usually prefer the words *trustworthiness* and *soundness* to assess their methodological choices, findings, claims, and interpretations. Wood and Kroger (2000) state:

> Trustworthy claims are those that can be depended upon not only as a useful way of understanding the discourse at hand, but also as a possible basis for understanding other discourse, for further work, and so on (because they are derived from accountable procedures, are systematic, etc.), whereas sound claims are solid, credible, and convincing (because they are logical, based on evidence, etc.). (p. 167)

H. Kayı-Aydar, *Positioning Theory in Applied Linguistics*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-97337-1_7

In the rest of this chapter, I unpack the issues of trustworthiness and soundness, explaining how they can be accomplished in empirical studies that use positioning analysis. Each theory obviously has its criticisms and shortcomings; positioning theory is no exception. I also discuss in this chapter the shortcomings of positioning theory. Finally, based on the work I have presented in previous chapters, I discuss in detail what positioning theory offers for second/foreign language classrooms and other bi/multilingual contexts. I discuss in depth the implications and insights the theory and relevant literature offer for second/foreign language teacher education. The chapter concludes with my suggestions for future research.

Trustworthiness and Soundness in Positioning Studies

My dissertation research was on positioning in an academic ESL classroom. Once my data collection was over, I had hundreds of hours of video- and audio-recorded classroom interactions. I published a number of research articles using those data within a few years of finishing my dissertation research. I will share here one particular experience, as it is directly relevant to what I am going to discuss: trustworthiness and soundness.

After I submitted my first empirical manuscript for publication, I received comments and feedback from the anonymous reviewers within several months. One of the reviewers offered multiple interpretations, different than my own, for each story line and position I presented in the manuscript, questioning the validity of my findings. S/he wanted to know more about the patterns I identified during my analysis, how often the same positions appeared across classroom interactions, and what the quantification looked like. I revisited the data for quantification and patterns and addressed the comments, and the paper was eventually published.

However, for the most part, I was not pleased with the way I had to go regarding the additional analysis. Throughout this book, I have made it quite clear that my goal in positioning analysis has less to do with pattern-seeking or quantification of positions, and more to do

with the unique and atypical moments that involve impactful story lines and positions. Those story lines or positions may never appear again, but they are extraordinarily unique and powerful in that particular moment and I believe they must be shared with a wider audience. If the researcher is interested in identity development over a long period of time, then of course patterns matter, or they matter more. However, I find it quite problematic to focus solely on quantification of positions or patterns in positioning analysis, especially for "validity" purposes. Furthermore, as Wood and Kroger (2000) argue, "because discourse is socially constructed, it has shifting and multiple meanings. The analyst's account or interpretation of that discourse is thus only one version of its meaning and cannot be said true or false" (p. 166). This is an incredibly important point to consider. Although positioning analysis uses textual and linguistic elements in identifying positions in story lines, the researcher draws largely from macro-level discourses and contextual information to interpret those positions—why and how individuals position themselves in certain ways in a story line. The focus is almost never on the accuracy of the interpretations. Rex and Schiller (2009) argue that an interpretation is a choice and the choices of the reader might be different than those of the researcher:

> We expect that you may have different interpretations from ours. As we have said, one reason for those differences is that we have lived in these classrooms for extended periods of time. We were there when these incidents happened and observed them firsthand. In addition, we have spent weeks at a time living in these schools getting to know the teachers and their students. Our interpretations are not solely based on the words in the transcripts. Rather, we bring our understandings of the dynamics of these contexts to bear on what we think people mean by what they say. (p. 15)

Obviously, the prolonged engagement in the research setting offers unique insights and perspectives to the researcher; insights and perspectives that the readers (or manuscript reviewers for academic journals) may never have. But what if the interpretations of the same story line by the researcher and others (e.g., readers, reviewers, etc.) are too different or even contradictory (Wood & Kroger, 2000)? This is indeed possible

given the contextual nature of interpretations. Even in the classroom where the study is conducted, classroom members and the researcher may have different perspectives on and interpretations of story lines or positions, since both the classroom members and the researcher may be drawing from their own life experiences and different macro-discourses in interpreting them (Herbel-Eisenmann, Wagner, Johnson, Suh, & Figueras, 2015). In such cases where contradictory interpretations of the same story line or positioning act are offered, Wood and Kroger suggest that "the focus should be therefore on closer examination of the two versions; if they are both adequate (supported by the text), one can go on to ask whether one is more useful than the other, more appropriate for one purpose than another, and so on" (p. 167). The choice of which interpretations to include in the analysis is eventually up to the researcher.

That said, a researcher still needs to convince his/her reader (or anonymous reviewers of academic journals) regarding the selection of the story lines as well as the claims and interpretations made. Herbel-Eisenmann et al. (2015) argue that "the researcher's privileged story lines affect which data become important, and the way we present positioning and story lines impacts the update of the research" (p. 197). A number of steps can be taken to ensure the trustworthiness and soundness of studies that use positioning analysis.

To begin with, researchers must articulate the decisions regarding the selection of story lines. A particular story line should not be chosen because the researcher wants to "prove" his or her point. In other words, readers should be able to see that there is no "bias" in the selection of story lines. Furthermore, as I have previously stated, there may be multiple interpretations of a story line or position, so some explanation about the interpretations made should be noted. Ideally, it is always helpful to include all possible interpretations or claims in a manuscript. However, due to space limitations in academic journals, this is not always feasible. The researcher needs to decide which interpretations to choose over others. To show that this choice was done carefully, the researcher can begin by offering a description of his/her own stance in the analysis process. Researchers should clearly explain what contextual factors have contributed to their analysis, or what contextual aspects have

been more influential or important in making certain claims. Since it is the researcher who spent the time in the research setting, s/he is the one most familiar with it. Therefore, both the researcher's stance and his/her description of the context play a critical role in the selection of story lines and the analysis, as well as the choices made in interpreting data or findings. Providing a context for understanding claims is not necessary for the study to be replicated, but to enable the readers to check or compare their own interpretations with those of the analyst (Wood & Kroger, 2000).

The researcher should also be able to successfully demonstrate how the claims and interpretations "are grounded in the text" (Wood & Kroger, 2000, p. 170). Wood and Kroger describe this as "showing vs. telling" (ibid.). Demonstration, rather than mere description, is necessary to show the soundness of claims. This can be accomplished by showing the language use or linguistic elements of the story line through which positioning is accomplished by the participants. "Showing vs. telling" of the claims is done successfully in a study by Glazier (2009). Glazier claims, for example, that one of the teacher-participants in a professional development context was assigned a specific moral or role-based position. She then says, "this role-based/moral position was evident in his narratives" (p. 829). As you can see, this is not convincing for the reader—Glazier is expected to "show" how it is "evident in his narratives." She does so by saying, "this role-based/moral position was evident through his use of prosodic and paralinguistic cues as well as through his use of authoritative utterances" (ibid.). Still, this is insufficient. The reader would need to be able to "see" some of those "prosodic and paralinguistic cues" as well as "authoritative utterances." Glazier does indeed provide examples of those in various story lines that she presents in her paper, and by doing so she successfully convinces her reader about the choices and interpretations she makes and establishes both trustworthiness and soundness.

The soundness of a study that uses positioning analysis can also be achieved through member checking. Having a discussion of the positions identified in the analysis as well as the interpretations made regarding the consequences of positioning acts with the participants allows researchers to eliminate or minimize inaccurate interpretations. I must note, however, that member checking is not always feasible,

especially given the typical participant populations with which applied linguists work. Our participants are usually full-time language teachers or students or immigrants with multiple jobs and responsibilities. These individuals take time out of their busy schedules and volunteer to participate in our research projects. We, as researchers, would have to demand more of their time for member checking to discuss our interpretations and findings, and this is not always feasible.

Current Debates and Future Directions

Davies and Harré are usually criticized for not having provided actual conversational data to exemplify their theory, but instead relying on hypothetical scenarios or examples that would fit well with the theory (e.g., Benwell & Stokoe, 2006). Fortunately, this is no longer the case, as from public relations (see James, 2014) to literacy education (see McVee, Brock, & Glazier, 2011), positioning theory has been applied to empirical work in many different disciplines. While this massive amount of work has advanced positioning theory and taken it in different directions, various shortcomings of the theory have been noted. The constructive criticism offered by numerous scholars has made and will make crucial contributions to the advancement of the theory. In this section, as I discuss the shortcomings of positioning theory, I hope to be able to engage in constructive discourse that will help generate new knowledge, address the gaps, and offer new research directions.

Position and Positioning Distinction

Various scholars have emphasized the lack of clarity in the definitions of the essential concepts used in positioning theory. Perhaps the greatest emphasis has been on the distinction between position and positioning. Drawing from the extensive work on positioning in the scholarly literature of math education, Beth Herbel-Eisenmann and her colleagues (2015) point out the confusing nature of the synonymous use of position and positioning in various studies. They argue that the notion of

position, as "a cluster of beliefs with respect to the rights and duties" (Harré, 2012, p. 196), is presented as an *object* in positioning theory. According to Herbel-Eisenmann, this is problematic because objects relate to attributes and are stable. Instead, they suggest that positions, like positionings, should be seen as *processes* rather than objects. However, Herbel-Eisenmann et al. fail to fully explain how positions are processes or what exactly that would mean methodologically. They appear to use position and positioning interchangeably. This, in my opinion, creates a problem. Especially in the recent writings of Rom Harré, the distinction between position and positioning is actually quite clear. Both position and positioning are dynamic. As individuals engage in the process of positioning themselves or others, they construct dynamic positions. Positions emerge from ongoing conversations, storytelling, and narrating, and therefore they are dynamic, very much like positioning.

Position and Role Distinction

The distinction between positions and roles has also been addressed more critically. In the initial writings on positioning, Rom Harré and his colleagues do not offer a crystal-clear distinction between the two. Indeed, Van Langenhove and Harré (1999) give the example of a teacher–student story line presenting teacher and student as positions. Perhaps this is the cause of the confusion, as teacher and student are clearly roles. How can they be both roles and positions? Furthermore, in the initial description of the notion of position, there is a strong emphasis on personal attributes, biographical characteristics, and so on, which also makes the distinction between role and position pretty blurry. Deppermann (2015) addresses the lack of clarity regarding the distinction between position and role in his evaluation of positioning theory:

> "Role" does not capture facets of identity having to do with psychological, biographical, and moral characteristics. Still, Harré's emphasis on rights is rooted in macro-social orders that transcend the individual instance of conversation, and in this sense it is very much akin to the concept of role. (p. 374)

I believe that the following explanation offered by Herbel-Eisenmann et al. (2015) is incredibly useful in pinpointing the difference:

> Davies and Harré (1999) saw role as a transcendentalist concept and position as immanentist. Although earlier work focused on distinguishing positions and roles, this distinction was described later as occurring along a spectrum. Moghaddam et al. (2008) stated that assignments of rights and duties, as they endure into longer obligations, are the "birth place" of a role. Harré (2012) also seemed to support this view when he wrote that long-term positions come "close to" the concept of role. (p. 188)

This explanation highlights two points, which in my opinion clarify the distinction between the notions of position and role. First, positions, unlike roles, are dynamic. Teacher and student are static roles; however, a student can position him/herself in a teacher-like role in classroom interactions. Teacher in that case may become a position. Second, roles contribute to the constructions of positions. Positions "are mostly complementarily organized in terms of dual or triple socio-categorical relationships, such as doctor/nurse/patient, mother/father/child, leader/disciples, etc." (Deppermann, 2015, p. 373). As people interact with others, they cannot isolate their roles from the context or social interaction. The relationships associated with their roles (e.g., mother, student, Muslim, etc.) may affect the discourse choices that learners and teachers use to initiate, maintain, and negotiate positioning acts (Herbel-Eisenmann et al., 2015). Similarly, Dennen (2011) describes the role and position distinction and relation in the classroom environment:

> In a class setting, it may be difficult to altogether escape roles; the inherent power structure of the class context in which paid facilitators assess learners, combined with the goal-orientation of much classroom discourse and long-standing social norms governing classroom behavior, tends to situate expectations within roles. In other words, role-based expectations may serve as the genesis for a positioning exchange (Davies & Harré, 1999). Once the interlocutors begin engaging with each other, their positions may deviate from expected roles or may differentiate individuals within the group (e.g., Jenny is very knowledgeable about this topic and Joseph is very deferential to others). (p. 529)

As can be seen, Dennen's explanation also supports the argument that while role and position are two different constructs, they are intertwined. Indeed, in his study that used positioning theory to investigate identities of college instructions in online discussions, Dennen (2011) found that the traditional roles of teacher and student, along with the respective expectations, influenced the majority of the positioning that occurred in online discussions. Throughout the courses in which the study was conducted, instructor identities and presence remained stable. Future studies may examine this complex relationship between roles and positions to better understand the mutual interaction between the two.

The Interaction of Story Lines

Another concept in positioning theory that has received some quite critical evaluation is story lines. I agree with a number of scholars who have argued that story lines have neither been developed fully in positioning theory nor been examined adequately in the existing empirical work. Furthermore, a large majority of the studies have solely or primarily focused on positioning acts; we need further studies to focus on the interaction between story lines and positioning acts (Herbel-Eisenmann et al., 2015). According to Herbel-Eisenmann et al. (2015), the previous studies have either underrepresented or missed completely the story lines and communication acts that inform positioning acts. They suggest that "additional attention to story lines and communication acts (in combination with the attention to positions) would provide the field with richer description of classroom interactions and how those interactions are shaped by participants in them" (p. 199).

While the notion of story lines may need further conceptualization, the interaction among different story lines also required additional work. Positioning theory highlights the immanentist view, which places the emphasis on "the moment in time and the people present in this moment" (Wagner & Herbel Eisenmann, 2009, p. 4), in explaining how a story line is jointly constructed in momentary interactions; however, it also recognizes the impact of macro-level discourses on the moment-to-moment construction of micro-level story lines and positions:

> According to the immanentist point of view there are only actual conversations, past and present. Similarities between various conversations are to be explained by reference only to whatever concretely has happened before, and to human memories of it, which form both the personal and the cultural recourses for speakers to draw upon in constructing the present moment. (Davies & Harré, 1999, p. 187)

This "larger-scale interaction manifesting in the moment" (Herbel-Eisenmann et al., 2015, p. 192) is especially crucial in classroom-based research, as classroom members bring previous experiences and interaction patterns into classroom discourse. Similarly, Pinnow and Chval (2015) state that story lines "address the dynamic unfolding of social interactions that can make prior or new narratives available to participants, and where the histories of classroom interactions contribute to future narratives available to participants" (p. 2). This certainly does not mean that, by drawing on previous story lines or discursive resources, individuals "are trapped into ready-made cultural patterns, as they can do new things with the old material" (Bomer & Laman, 2004, p. 427).

I use the following conversation from a college-level, academic ESL classroom to illustrate micro- and macro-level interaction. The conversation takes place between one ESL student and his teacher when the teacher provides answers to the questions of a test that the students had taken earlier in the class:

Teacher: We have time one more question. If anybody has [
Student: [No, just. Can I argue for the answer one virtually and immune. I am not agree with you to be an A. For number A, I think it's more clearer to be A and number two more clearer to be B or that that's just it?
Teacher: Okay, so number one and number two are the ones that you have questions about? Okay.
Student: I am agree with you for the rest. We're okay, but just if you have [
Teacher: [Well, what did you put for number two?
Student: I think it's B.
Teacher: Okay, it [
Student: [I don't know it's up to you. You are the director.
Teacher: That's it's out of my hands.

Student: Really?
Teacher: It's the dictionary.
Student: Oh, okay, so sorry.

In this story line, the student tells the teacher that he provided a different answer for one of the questions than the answer offered by the teacher. Before the teacher begins explaining, the student interrupts her to say, "I don't know it's up to you. You are the director." This positioning move is certainly interesting in the conversation, as the student positions the teacher as the authority on the knowledge or information. While the student positions the teacher as "the director" in this micro-level conversation, one can wonder why he does so, especially as there are no relevant cues in the story line in which this position emerges. It is highly possible that this interactive positioning is based on other macro-level discourses or story lines. As Benwell and Stokoe (2006) argue, "in order to identify the speech acts through which positioning takes place we need to identify the wider story lines of which these turns are a kind of intertextual moment" (p. 140). There may be a number of readings regarding the story line above. It is possible, for example, that teachers are perceived as the source of knowledge or authority in the classroom in a grand cultural discourse that this student is drawing from. It is also possible that the teacher positioned herself as the authority or source of knowledge in previous story lines over the academic semester in the same classroom. It is possible that the student is drawing from native speakerism (Aneja, 2016) discourse while positioning the teacher as the native speaker; hence the ultimate decision on this linguistic dilemma is up to the teacher. These varied possibilities indicate one point in common: the student is drawing from a macro-level discourse in positioning his teacher as "the director" in this micro-level story line.

Although the macro- and micro-level interaction is somewhat visible in the story line above, the relationship between positioning and macro-level discourses, one of the highlights of positioning theory, is not always visible or easy to examine. Even though Davies and Harré (1999) suggest that the interaction of micro- and macro-level story lines is inevitable, they explain neither the sources from which people draw as

they position each other nor how they do so (Herbel-Eisenmann et al., 2015). Deppermann (2015) similarly argues that positioning theory is quite vague in explaining the interaction between the immanentist view and larger discourses. He begins with the argument that macro-level discourses on their own are difficult to define. This difficulty subsequently transfers to methodological choices. Deppermann further claims that macro-level discourses are not unitary or monolithic. They are composed of various counter-discourses or counter-narratives that are open to change due to globalization, multimodality, social change, and so on. It is also difficult to know "whether one discourse is really dominant, obligatory, or more powerful than alternative discourses" (Deppermann, 2015, p. 381). Deppermann further argues:

> even if it can be methodologically demonstrated that some discourse matters more in some segments of society (e.g., certain media sources), it does not necessarily follow that actors in some field – tellers of a given story, for example, or, more precisely, participants in some stretch of interaction under study – orient to this discourse. (p. 382)

In addition, the identification of macro-level discourses is self-evident (Deppermann, 2015). That is, researchers can draw on their knowledge as members of a culture or multiple cultures, as well as their theoretical knowledge as social scientists, to identify macro-level discourses (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006). In their study about positioning and teacher identity, Schieble, Vetter, and Meacham (2015), for example, identified macro-level institutional and contextual factors and generated codes based on their own experiences as English teachers and teacher educators. Similarly, Bomer and Laman (2004) acknowledge that their identities as members of working-class, white, English-speaking families positioned them as competent members of the culture from which their participants drawn certain positioning acts. Their own cultural resources and identities allowed them to identify, analyze, and interpret story lines rather than making *claims* about their participants' autobiographies.

Even though researchers may rely on their own background and identities to identify and analyze macro-level discourses, examining them and their impact on momentarily constructed positions and story

lines is a challenge (ibid.). Deppermann asks, for example, "what statements and assumptions does a D-discourse consist of?" (p. 381). This is indeed a methodological challenge. Even though macro-level discourses, also called grand discourses in the writings of Beth Herbel-Eisenmann and her colleagues, shape everyday conversations, it is a challenge for a researcher to empirically document the interaction between macro-level discourses and micro-level story lines. Especially in ESL classrooms where students belong to different ethnic groupings, a researcher either needs extensive exposure to the histories and cultures of participants or should come from the same sociocultural background in order to fully make sense of how macro-level discourses impact the micro levels of classroom interaction. A lack of understanding of societal forms only leads to misinterpretations of micro-level discourse.

A number of suggestions have been offered to adequately address the interaction of story lines or accurately discern how local positioning acts or story lines connect with the wider contexts of social structure (Deppermann, 2015). Deppermann (2015), for example, suggests combining ethnographic research with conversation analytic approach to study positions. He argues:

> such knowledge is needed to grasp more subtle and indirect ramifications of the positions accomplished in situ (De Fina, 2013). One ethnographically-based methodology that seems to be particularly promising is to attend to iterative patterns of action and interpretation that recur throughout a community of practice or across the actions of an individual speaker. In this way, the more stable, overarching social discourses that people orient to may be recovered from interactional data (Georgakopouolu, 2013), enabling us to take a further step across the gap between so-called "micro" and "macro" concerns. (pp. 383–384)

Another alternative analytic framework is offered by Anderson (2009), who approaches "the discursive and material mediation of classroom positioning from an integrated micro-, meso-, and macro-social perspective" (p. 291). Anderson emphasizes that there is not a "dualism between micro and macro but rather their mutual implication, or double hermeneutic, whereby each is a position by which to appreciate

the other" (ibid.). Anderson's three-way method appears to reject a positioning analysis that adopts an exclusively micro- *or* macro-social perspective, arguing instead for a multidimensional positioning analysis. In her analytic framework for applying positioning theory to classroom data, Anderson states that "learning and identity are mediated by classroom participation, social and textual artifacts, and discursive processes that cross micro-, meso-, and macro-scale social life" (p. 292). She uses the terms *micro*, *meso*, and *macro* "to indicate social processes at different scales—local/immediate, institutional/intermediate, and structural/distal, respectively" (p. 292), which she also describes as "interactional, intertextual, and intercontextual" (p. 307). Anderson maintains that "by appealing to persons and settings as kinds that span interactions, acts of positioning can be linked to the construct of identity" (p. 308). She further offers a mediation matrix for analysis that consists of (a) scales of social practice (e.g., moment-to-moment practices, characterization of practice); (b) discursive mediation (e.g., participation with tools and others); and (c) forms of evidence (e.g., forms of student and teacher participation).[1]

Drawing on the work of Lemke on time scales for education and related processes (2000), Herbel-Eisenmann et al. (2015) suggest the idea of scales, especially given that "multiple story lines co-exist and can be embedded in broader sets of discursive conventions" (p. 192), to offer a clearer analytic framework in explaining the interaction of story lines and "clarifying the identification of levels of positionings and story lines" (p. 193). In their framework, typical processes include "utterance, exchange, episode, lesson, lesson sequence, school day, unit, semester/year curriculum, multiyear curriculum, lifespan educational development, educational system change, worldsystem change, ecosystem/climate change." The following example from their work is helpful to understand how scales work:

[1]For further explanation of Anderson's mediation matrix, see Anderson, K. T. (2009). Applying positioning theory to the analysis of classroom interactions: Mediating micro-identities, macro-kinds, and ideologies of knowing. *Linguistics and Education, 20*(4), 291–310.

> When a student contributes a response to a question, he/she brings forward interaction patterns experienced in other classroom practices across lessons, lesson sequences, and units. The larger-scale interactions that are brought to bear on the interaction constrain the range of utterances the student might contribute. (Herbel-Eisenmann et al., 2015, p. 193)

While conducting positioning analysis in relation to scales might help researchers "explore the relationships among positions and story lines, make stronger connections between and among articles using positioning theory, and be more precise about the foci of their studies" (p. 196), it is important to remember that Herbel-Eisenmann's scales-based framework is offered in the context of math education research, and therefore is limited to classroom-based, educational research. It can be difficult to apply to empirical work in other disciplines, such as government relations, or non-classroom-based contexts.

That said, further studies are needed to indicate the micro and macro interaction. More specifically, we need to see further examples that illustrate how cultural backgrounds along with race, class, and gender affect the ways individuals in bi/multilingual contexts position themselves and others. We need to know how language teachers' beliefs and attitudes about second/foreign language pedagogy, students, and teaching contexts influence their positioning of themselves and their students. Understanding the link between the intersectionality of various social categories and positioning will also help further develop the notions of story lines and positions.

Modes of Positioning

In Chapter 1, I describe the differences among first-, second-, and third-order positionings. To briefly summarize, the first-order positioning consists in the initial positioning acts in the discourse or narrative, and they are almost always tacit. The second-order positioning, on the other hand, is almost always explicit, as it is accomplished in response to the first-order positioning. Third-order positioning is usually evident in the retellings of events in which the narrator positions him/herself and

others based on the previous story lines and interactions. In their evaluation of positioning studies in educational contexts, mostly in math education, Herbel-Eisenmann et al. (2015) acknowledge that "most authors who use positioning focus on second-order positioning examples, in which there is tension among participants in relation to negotiation of power" (p. 199). They highlight the need for studies that would look at the other two modes of positioning. For example, they suggest that it would be helpful to find out how tensions and power relations identified in an ongoing story line would be worked out in other interactions (third order) and what happens "when everyone seems to agree on their rights and duties" (first order; p. 200). Furthermore, although not described as a mode of positioning, the notion of prepositioning, which has been recently introduced by Harré et al. (2012), needs to be not only conceptualized further but also empirically examined.

An important element in different modes of positioning is power. However, power is usually ignored or not sufficiently integrated into positioning analysis. Positioning theory also does not appear to give sufficient attention to the notion of power, although it is mentioned in the theory. How power shapes different modes of positioning is important to consider. Future studies in the field of applied linguistics should pay special attention to the "sociohistorically-situated nature of positioning while injecting a power dimension" (Block, 2017, p. 32) into positioning analysis.

Other Future Directions

While the shortcomings discussed above can be the springboard for future research, there is a number of other areas to which applied linguists can contribute through new research. One of them is digital bi/multilingual spaces. Advanced technology has redefined the notions of learning and teaching. Increasing computer technology and globalization are constantly affecting the ways courses are developed and taught. While many language learning programs are offered online around the world, many institutions also offer their language teacher education

programs online. More specifically, especially in the United States, the number of online TESOL master's and certificate programs has increased quickly in recent years. Computer-mediated discussions in the language classroom (e.g., Darhower, 2002), social media (e.g., Kessler, 2013), and online gaming (e.g., Reinhardt & Sykes, 2014) have become important areas of research in the field of applied linguistics.[2]

While studies that examine positioning in online learning environments are extremely scarce, research on positioning in digital language learning/teaching contexts, to my knowledge, is non-existent. There seems to be an urgent need for studies that examine positioning in online bi/multilingual spaces (Kayi-Aydar & Miller, 2018). Vanessa Dennen (2007, 2011) is one of the initial scholars who used positioning theory in her research on online classrooms and discussions. She (2011) examined, for example, facilitator presence and identity in online discussion from two college classrooms. Her findings indicated that facilitator presence, identity, and position were related to role-based expectations. More specifically, the "students were unlikely to challenge indicators of identity, presence, or position that fit within the bounds of a traditional instructor role" (p. 539). In light of the findings of her study, Dennen encourages researchers to further examine "structural relationships between types of messages, looking for trends in positioning and repositioning based on demographic characteristics of discourse partners" in online learning spaces. She further contends that "positioning theory has great promise for helping to address some of the current areas of interest in online learning such as collaboration, group dynamics, student persistence, and effects of gender and cultural differences" (ibid.).

Furthermore, a large majority of the classroom-based studies that used positioning theory have relied on spoken discourse or the language itself by incorporating semiotic resources minimally into the analysis. Pinnow and Chval (2015) argue that future studies should

[2]See the following reviews on the topic: Hubbard, P. (2013). Twenty-five years of theory in the CALICO Journal. *Calico Journal, 25*(3), 387–399. Lai, C., & Li, G. (2011). Technology and task-based language teaching: A critical review. *Calico Journal, 28*(2), 498–521.

include multimodal positioning analysis; "this is especially helpful in research examining L2 learners as these students often rely upon semiotic resources other than spoken or written language to participate in the classroom interactional architecture" (Pinnow & Chval, 2015, p. 5). They further argue that

> multimodal analysis of classroom interactions provides insight to the manner in which moral and social orders are achieved among participants. This is particularly useful in examining classroom discursive practices among students with differing social capital (Bourdieu, 1991) and differing skills with which to enact positioning in interactions. (ibid.)

Another topic that needs to be investigated further is teacher positioning in the language classroom. Even though teacher positioning has been extensively investigated in regular (mainstream) classrooms and general education contexts (e.g., Arvaja, 2016; Cremin & Baker, 2010; Dennen, 2007; Hazari, Cass, & Beattie, 2015; Ly Thi & Renos, 2018; Ma & Singer-Gabella, 2011; Rainville & Jones, 2008; Sato, Walton-Fisette, & Kim, 2017; Schieble et al., 2015; Tait-McCutcheon & Loveridge, 2016; Vetter, 2010; Vetter, Hartman, & Reynolds, 2016), we need to better understand how language teachers position themselves in their interactions with students in the language classroom. Especially given the strong linguistic diversity in the language teacher population, it is important to understand how language teachers draw from their own linguistic autobiographies in positioning themselves and their students. Further examples of teacher positioning will also help to explain how teachers can become better at navigating or improving classroom interactions that position language learners in powerful or positive ways (Vetter, 2010). In addition, we need further empirical evidence to understand why some students take up the positions assigned to them by the teacher, whereas others resist or reject them. The impact of teacher positioning on language learners' identities and second/foreign language development should be further examined.

The link between positioning and emotions is another area where research is needed. Bomer and Laman (2004) assert:

> With positioning so basic to being, belonging, and becoming, it must be the case that people are likely to *feel* strongly about the way they are positioned in a situation, especially if that position contrasts with the ways they want to position themselves. Emotions, thinking, and power relations, then, are unified in an analysis of positioning. (p. 428)

Indeed, in studies that adopt a social constructivist or poststructural approach to the study of emotions, positioning theory "provides a useful theoretical framework for an analysis of the functions served by emotion discourses in interpersonal relations" (Walton, Coyle, & Lyons, 2003, p. 46). My understanding of the notion of emotions is consistent with that of Walton et al., who acknowledge that emotions are constructed through language. Since discourses construct emotions and narratives are emotionally structured (Kleres, 2010), it is possible to look at story lines and positions to identify emotions along with their social functions. The link between emotions and position/ing is a complex one. Kleres (2010) attempts to explain this complexity through an example: a hope narrative might involve reference to previous story lines that resulted in positive outcomes as well as references to other individuals who share similar positions with the narrator. Such comparisons or similar positions of the narrator and others may result in feelings of hope but also envy, leading to anger or admiration.

Applied linguists have begun to empirically document the complex relationship between position/ing and emotions only recently. Gkonou and Miller (2017) examined how EFL teachers in one school in Greece positioned themselves in relation to anxious students, and found that the emotions contributed to the ways the teachers positioned themselves and that such emotion-based positions influenced their pedagogical choices. For example, the teachers positioned themselves as caring in relation to students who experienced language anxiety. Subsequently, to help those students minimize their anxiety, these teachers focused on explicitly teaching cognitive, metacognitive, and affective strategies to their students. Gkonou and Miller encourage researchers to further examine how language teachers position themselves in relation to students with strong emotional needs and negative emotional attitudes and responses.

They conclude that "such further understandings could help improve teaching practices, teachers' emotional well-being, and student learning in low-anxiety classroom environments" (p. 14).

Implications for Classroom Practice

Second/foreign language teaching goes beyond equipping learners with the vocabulary, phonology, and grammar of the target language as well as language teaching strategies and techniques. Rather, second/foreign language teaching is about patterns of interactions that position students and teachers in certain ways, limiting or increasing opportunities for content learning and the acquisition and learning of additional language(s). Positioning theory (Davies & Harré, 1990) helps us understand the complexities associated with social interaction in the language classroom. First of all, analyzing classroom interaction through positioning theory helps classroom teachers understand the nature of classroom talk and its impact on their relationships with their students. Teachers "may enact a story line that invites or discourages student initiative and thus influence the willingness of a student to risk initiating a new story line" (Wagner & Herbel-Eisenmann, 2009, p. 5). Rex and Schiller (2009) indicate that by critically analyzing transcripts of classroom conversations, teachers can understand the nature of difficult or awkward story lines as well as their roles in them. They argue that the transcripts of classroom talk "allow us to freeze-frame a moment, replay and reconstruct it, and in the process of doing so, open up previously invisible choices of actions" (p. 10).

Positioning analysis also allows teachers to become aware of the assumptions that they have about themselves as teachers and their students as learners. Engaging in such analysis, teachers also critically analyze their assumptions about second language learning, teaching, and use. The assumptions teachers have about their students or language learning and teaching practices influence the ways they interact with their students, position the students as particular kinds of students, and make certain pedagogical choices among others (Rex & Schiller, 2009).

Second language classrooms are rich in terms of cultural and linguistic diversity. In an ESL classroom, students make references to the ethnic and cultural categories of which they are part. By listening to how they index an ethnic or cultural category or how they invoke categorical membership(s), classroom teachers can understand how those students may want to present themselves ethnically, racially, or culturally. Gu, Patking, and Kirkpatrick (2014) state that in an ELF (English as Lingua Franca) context, there may be no authority on the language used. Moving beyond language use in certain interactional contexts, English speakers may draw on their own histories and cultural knowledge in order to position their own varieties of English in certain ways. Gu et al. argue that

> by adopting an intercultural teaching approach, teachers teaching English as a second/foreign language (L2), as ELF users, can position themselves as legitimate speakers of English, help students to develop a pragmatic awareness of the potential difficulties in cross-cultural interactions, and enable them to develop strategies to negotiate these differences successfully (Davies, 2004), such as seeking clarification, establishing rapport and minimizing cultural differences (McKay, 2002). (p. 140)

The cultural discourses in which students are involved may have various functions: for example, they may, as Wagner and Herbel-Eisenmann (2009) acknowledge, serve a student positively in his/her cultural communities outside of the classroom or school, but "may not allow her to resist teacher-enacted story lines in a classroom" (p. 5). By engaging in positioning analysis, teachers can "reposition themselves and their students toward more productive relationships" (Rex & Schiller, 2009, p. 10), reshape story lines, and offer more equitable access to learning opportunities in the classroom environment. Dennen (2011) states, for example, that teachers, though engaging in positioning analysis, may "learn how to position themselves more as peers when greater student autonomy or ownership of the learning experience is desired, and how to reposition learners in ways that increase their self-confidence and sense of agency with regards to learning" (p. 538).

As stated earlier in this book, positioning theory is helpful in examining identity work in the L2 classroom. In an L2 writing classroom, for example, as students learn how to write in a new language, they form particular writer identities. The process of identity development is not a smooth but a complex one, since learners "bring their own individual histories, agendas, and sense of self to their writing" (Tardy, 2016, p. 349), which clearly influences the ways they position themselves as particular kinds of writers in the second/foreign language. Furthermore, as Tardy (2012) argues, while L2 writers construct a voice, or self-representation, through text, multiple aspects of the writer's identity beyond the text, such as age, race, and sex, shape the construction of an L2 writer's voice. By analyzing the ways learners draw from those personal histories and previous discourses, language teachers can not only understand how learners position themselves as bi/multilingual writers and construct their voice, but also develop practices that support learners' identity development and negotiations. Bomer and Laman (2004) thus encourage writing instructors to provide bi/multilingual writers with multiple opportunities to reflect, in the midst of writing, on their feelings and thoughts about themselves as writers. They further suggest that "in individual writing conferences, it may be worth monitoring the options the teacher has in positioning the student—and the observable consequences of that positioning" (p. 457).

Analyzing positioning acts in the classroom environment can help teachers understand better not only who their students are, but also what kinds of identities are constructed for them in the classroom environment. In earlier chapters, I explain how accumulations of positions lead to certain identities. As Rex and Schiller argue, "others recognize these identities because they are displayed over and over again" (p. 20). Students do not become "arrogant" or "lazy" all of a sudden. They take up these positional identities because of the ways they position themselves and the ways they are positioned by their classroom teacher and peers over time. In particular, there is strong empirical evidence indicating how teachers construct certain identities for students through interactive positioning. By paying strong attention to positions, teachers may invent strategies to shape the classroom discourse to help learners position themselves in ways beneficial to their identity development and language learning. Van Langenhove and Harré (1999) suggest:

> First, people will differ in their capacity to position themselves and others, their mastery of the techniques so to speak. Secondly, they will differ in their willingness or intention to position and be positioned. Thirdly, they will also differ in their power to achieve positioning acts. (p. 30)

Students in a classroom differ in their capacity, willingness, and intention to position themselves in positive ways. The task of the language teacher should be to diagnose these differences, look for ways to handle unequal power differentials, and help each student use them to their advantage. Literacy activities in language classrooms are great resources for positioning in a variety of ways. By using positioning theory in analyzing language use and participation in such activities, classroom teachers can see alternative ways of saying things and look for alternatives to existing practices. By critically listening to the voices of students in classroom talk, teachers can get a better understanding of how power is negotiated in classroom discourse. Such an understanding will help them recognize different dynamics of classroom participation and create more effective classroom talk, through which learners can create positive selves.

Implications for Language Teacher Education

Teacher candidates enter teacher education programs with previous personal and professional discourses. Indeed, studies (e.g., Varghese et al., 2005) have consistently indicated that "teacher identity is not merely a professional construct but includes personal histories as well" (Arvaja, 2016, p. 400). Once introduced to positioning theory, language teachers can become more aware of the story lines of which they are part and bring these with them into their classrooms. It is important for teacher educators to understand these story lines so that they can help teachers and teacher candidates critically analyze and challenge them. Vetter (2010) claims that "teachers would benefit from examining how their beliefs, attitudes, and philosophies about education position students in the classroom" (p. 62). By engaging in discourses and activities that involve critical reflection, teachers and teacher candidates in teacher education programs can analyze different story lines and interactions and the possibilities that they offer. Teachers can do so when they are

invited to share their linguistic histories or educational autobiographies whenever applicable in classroom discussions, or asked to do so in professional journals that they may be asked to complete as part of a course requirement. Engaging in discussions around positioning in teacher education programs will help teachers and teacher candidates to challenge story lines that support native speakerism (Aneja, 2016), understand what positions are privileged or silenced (McVee, 2011), and enable minoritized and non-native speaker teachers reposition themselves in more powerful ways. Furthermore, discussions around and analysis of positioning provide a powerful means to expand understandings of issues related to race, ethnicity, sex, religion, and social class, most of which are still overlooked in language teacher education programs (Vandrick, 2014; Varghese et al., 2016).

Numerous studies have shown that the way teacher candidates position themselves and are positioned in teacher education programs has consequences for their identity development and language teaching (e.g., Steadman et al., 2018; Kayi-Aydar, 2018; Pavlenko, 2003). If they are positioned in ways that do not empower them, they may not fulfill the duties expected of them as effective teachers. In order for them to engage in agentic action, for example, they need to be positioned as agentic teachers. It is therefore important for teacher educators to position teachers or teacher candidates in teacher education programs in ways that empower them. While it is important for teacher educators to provide their students with opportunities and safe spaces so that they can position themselves in desired ways and challenge unwanted story lines and positions, it is equally important for teacher educators themselves to engage in similar practices. Vanassche & Kelchtermans (2014) argue that "teacher educators' reflexive positioning of themselves is a crucial factor in understanding the rationale of their practices, as well as their understanding of student teachers' learning about teaching" (p. 125).

Novice teachers are not always completely prepared to navigate classroom interactions or atypical and difficult moments in classroom talk, nor may they "construct and enact preferred teaching identities" easily (Schieble et al., 2015, p. 255). Both through professional

development and training in and outside of teacher education programs, novice teachers should be introduced to strategies that they could use to navigate classroom interactions in order to position their students as capable, agentic, and engaged (Vetter, 2010). Recognizing the difficulties these teachers may have in negotiating unusual classroom conversations and positions, Vetter (2010) offers a number of practical implications:

> Oftentimes, it is difficult for new teachers to break free from their scripted lesson due to inexperience. Analysis of case studies would provide pre-service teachers with the opportunity to critically examine how interactions occur in current classrooms. […] Our pre-service teachers need more models of what is working in classrooms rather than a deficit model of what is not working. I am not arguing that educators should not examine classroom interactions critically; however, I am arguing that we need to spend more time helping teachers leave the university with agentive narratives about how to successfully interact with students. (p. 61)

A common method suggested in studies to prepare teachers to navigate story lines in classroom discourse is the analysis of their own teaching through videotaping their classroom interactions during practicum or micro-teaching activities in teacher education courses (e.g., Schieble et al., 2015; Vetter, 2010). Teachers in practice are also often encouraged to engage in similar reflective practices. Rainville & Jones (2008) encourage teacher educators to use "roleplaying scenarios contextualized in power-laden situations or simulations," through which teachers can engage in positioning analysis, consider alternative possibilities, and "experiment with ideas that could change their practices" (p. 447). Vetter (2010) points out that there will never be a script for teachers or teacher candidates to use in positioning themselves and their students in desired, positive ways, but "it is important that teachers pay attention to the power of their words and how they shape students' experiences" (p. 62) in classrooms.

Summary

This chapter began with an introduction to the notions of trustworthiness and soundness, which have an important role in evaluating studies that use positioning analysis. Articulating the choices made in selecting story lines for analysis is important to show the reader that the selection process did not include any bias and was done in a systematic way. Describing the researcher's positionality and context is significant for establishing trustworthiness and soundness (Herbel-Eisenmann et al., 2015).

In this chapter, I have also highlighted shortcomings and directions for future research in four areas. I discussed conceptual fuzziness regarding the notions of position, positioning, and story lines. The clarity of the concepts is important, as how researchers understand those concepts shapes their data collection and analysis procedures along with their interpretations of the findings. While further work would help to clarify the meaning and functions of story lines, more research is needed to empirically document the interaction of those story lines (the interaction of micro- and macro-level discourses). I have particularly emphasized the challenge of connecting micro-level story lines to macro-level discourses. In any interaction, it is possible that multiple story lines exist, but it can be challenging for the researcher to identify and analyze them simultaneously (Herbel-Eisenmann et al., 2015). The chapter concluded with implications for classroom practice and language teacher education.

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H. Kayı-Aydar, *Positioning Theory in Applied Linguistics*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-97337-1