

CO-CONSTRUCTING IDENTITIES IN SPEECHES: HOW THE CONSTRUCTION OF AN ‘OTHER’ IDENTITY IS DEFINING FOR THE ‘SELF’ IDENTITY AND VICE VERSA

Dorien Van De Mieroop

Abstract

This paper investigates the way speakers construct their identities as representatives of their companies (institutional identity construction) in relation to the way they “project” an identity onto their audiences. The audience is “altercasted” (Weinstein and Deutschberger 1963) in the role of potential buyer of a product, thus evoking the standardized relational pair (Sacks 1972) of seller/buyer. The speaker then presents his company in the complementary role of seller of a product and as such a link is established between the identities of the speaker’s company and the audience. This discursive co-construction of identities is crucial for the way both identities receive meaning. The two cases that are discussed here on the one hand show similarities in the general pattern of the two identity constructions and the way they are interwoven with one another, but on the other hand also demonstrate that there are many unique and diverging ways of constructing and linking these identities.

Keywords: Identity construction; Speeches; Altercasting; Standardized relational pairs; Recipient design.

1. Introduction

The study of identity has taken an important position in language research in recent years. By now, du Gay et al’s statement that the study of identity “attained a remarkable centrality within the human and social sciences” (du Gay et al. 2000: 1) seems almost a little outdated because of the addition of the word “remarkable”. Nowadays, this centrality would not be perceived as remarkable anymore, neither would the essential link between language and identity cause any surprise. As De Fina et al describe: “The time when scholars in the field needed to advocate for the centrality of language in the study of identity (...) seems far away indeed.” (De Fina et al. 2006: 1).

Current research on language and identity relies heavily on insights from social constructivism, which contributed to reinterpreting the conventional view of identity as a stable and consistent concept and adjusting this to the idea that it is an emerging and changing construct. This view “accepts that identities are never unified and, in late modern times, increasingly fragmented and fractured; never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and positions” (Hall 2000: 17). Partially because of this fragmentation, which results in different identity constructions in differing contexts and situations, it is logical that

identity is “an extremely complex construct” (De Fina 2003: 15) – but this is not the only reason for the complexity of the issue (cf. section 3).

Furthermore, identities may be constructed simultaneously in discourse and focusing on these co-constructions is a further challenge for identity analysis which may be very fruitful: “Rather than artificially keeping one identity aspect apart from others, and examining it in isolation, it seems more productive to investigate co-constructions and co-articulations of positions in discourse” (Androutsopoulos and Georgakopoulou 2003: 1). Indeed, speakers may easily shift positions in discourse, and it is also through the way they position themselves in an interaction, that others are positioned as well. Again, this ‘other’ positioning then gives their own identities further content and depth. This cyclic process can for example be evoked by the use of “standardized relational pairs” (SRPs – Sacks 1972), which refer to the fact that the mentioning of a category, for example ‘husband’, can evoke another category, which in this case can be considered as its other half, namely ‘wife’, while when the same person is referred to as ‘father’, another category is drawn on and this makes another part of the standardized relational pair relevant, namely ‘child’. Moreover, next to this categorizing device, that is of course not limited only to the recipients within an ongoing interaction, there are also a number of interactional concepts that are crafted especially for the recipient’s perspective and these can be grouped under the term “recipient design” (Sacks 1992: 765). An interesting recipient oriented concept is “altercasting”, which can be defined – in symbolic interactionist terms – as “projecting an identity, to be assumed by other(s) with whom one is in interaction, which is congruent with one’s own goals” (Weinstein and Deutschberger 1963: 454). Weinstein (1969) interpreted this concept of “altercasting” as a conscious strategy, but this strategic character is not essential to the concept, as was shown by Malone (1995). He disregarded this intentional aspect and showed that the concept of “altercasting” is a useful tool to explicitly bring the listener’s perspective in the focus of analysis. In his analyses, he focused particularly on the way “altercasting gets done turn by turn” (1995: 154) and concludes that “altercasting” is a mutual construction of identities, which is built through the reactions of the listeners to the hearers and vice versa (Malone 1995: 161). For example, in his analyses, the presence of “trouble spots” is quite telling since repetitions and word replacements typical of relatively unplanned discourse “may be motivated by the speaker’s desire to select a term or construction that is appropriate to the addressee” (Ochs 1979: 70) and can thus function as possible markers of recipient design.

Building on these concepts, I aim to investigate the identity constructions in professional speeches (cf section 2: data) in which the speaker presents himself as the seller of a product and the audience members as potential buyers of this product. These are membership categories which are “institutionally relevant”, because they are “directly related to the organizational aspect of the interaction” (Ferencik 2007: 359). In this case, these membership categories form SRP’s and following Jayyusi’s observations on similar pairs, the ‘seller/buyer’ pair can be characterized as a subset of standardized relational pairs, since it “operates only within a specific practical domain” (Jayyusi 1984: 122) and is “descriptively tied to an occasioned relationship” (Jayyusi 1984: 125). Furthermore, it is an asymmetric category set, because it is a “locus of a set of asymmetrical rights and responsibilities, knowledge and need” (Jayyusi 1984: 171). I will particularly look at how the identity of the ‘other’, namely of the audience members that are categorized as ‘buyers’, is projected, or “altercasted”, in discourse and which repercussions this identity projection has on the identity construction of the ‘self’,

namely the speaker who presents him-/herself as the ‘seller’ and representative of his or her organization. However, unlike the interactional and relatively unplanned data which was the focus of previous analyses on this topic (Malone 1995), I will focus on relatively planned data which are far less interactional in nature, namely speeches. I argue that speeches are particularly interesting for this kind of analysis, since on the one hand, the audience’s reactions are severely limited to paralinguistic features such as particular gazes and smiling which can be easily disregarded by the speaker, thus potentially leaving this process of ‘self’ and ‘other’ identity construction in the hands of one participant, namely the speaker, while on the other hand, the way these speeches are formulated is the result of the speaker’s preparation process, which leaves room for careful – although probably unconscious – planning of the construction of identities and this could offer an interesting view on the possibilities of identity construction. I will now go into a detailed discussion of the data under study here.

2. Data

The data are selected from a corpus of 40 professional speeches that were collected in the fall of 2001 and spring 2002. These speeches were given during eight business seminars that were organized by associations of professionals (e.g. engineering association) and focused on technical topics, such as the handling of water sediment in the industry or newly emerging pathogenetic organisms in the environment. During each seminar, several speakers from different organizations were scheduled, who all discussed their views on this central topic from their own particular professional backgrounds, which could be government institutions, universities or companies. All the speeches were given in Dutch by Belgian native speakers of Dutch. The 40 speeches were all videotaped and transcribed which resulted in a corpus of approximately 180,000 words. Partial analyses of this large corpus have been published before and these showed that although quite a lot of speeches had an informative goal (Van De Mierop 2006), some speeches were clearly persuasive in nature (Van De Mierop 2005 and 2007).

The specific setting was quite formal, since the speakers were introduced by the chairmen, who also kept track of the time and led the discussion afterwards. During the speeches, the speakers were never interrupted by the audience, who kept their comments for after the speech. So the institutional character of the setting is clearly “procedurally consequential” (Schegloff 1992: 111) and thus the speeches had a highly monologic character, even though the audience undoubtedly responded to the speaker non-verbally.¹

¹ I will not attempt to map the paralinguistic reactions of the audience, since interpretations of the implications of these – often very diversified – audience reactions on the way the speeches were formulated, would be a highly subjective undertaking because of the difficulties to interpret such body language, especially of an entire group, and since it would also imply making inferences on the speaker’s cognitive responses to these non-verbal reactions, which was not probed for at all in the current research design. Such analyses would require an entirely different approach, which would for example require extensive technical support (for example the recording of eye-gaze of the speaker and reactions of the individual audience members). Furthermore, no other paralinguistic, but acoustically recognizable signs of approval or disapproval (e.g. laughter or whispering) were present on the recorded tapes.

From this corpus, I selected two speeches in which an interesting interaction between ‘other’ and ‘self’ identity construction was present, as I will demonstrate in the analyses. Both speeches were given during the same seminar day, which focused on the energy market in Belgium. This central theme was directly linked to the recent changes that were taking place at that time in the Belgian energy context, which moved from a government-run situation to a liberated market. This change resulted in new legislative bills concerning this issue and the seminar day was oriented at providing information about all these new regulations to people who were working in energy-related companies.

A bit of extra background information about the two speeches that are being studied here is relevant for a better understanding of the data that are discussed in this paper. First of all, speech A was given by a speaker who represented an energy focused consultancy firm that helped big companies to enhance their energy buying strategy. Secondly, speaker B came from the energy provider that used to be related to the government and thus used to hold the Belgian monopoly position. This company is now becoming one of the many players in the market and has to start dealing with competition for the first time in its history. Both contexts will be referred to in the analyses.

3. Method

As I mentioned before, identities are extremely complex constructs (De Fina 2003: 15), not only because of their socially constructed character, but also because of the difficulties one experiences when trying to analyze identity, because of the following reason:

“(...) no matter how crucial language is for understanding social identity and social identity for understanding the social meaning of language, social identity is rarely grammaticized or otherwise explicitly encoded across the world's languages. In other words, the relation between language and social identity is predominantly a sociolinguistically distant one.” (Ochs 1993: 288)

Because of this distant relationship, identity is rather hard to grasp and therefore an integrative analysis of different elements that contribute to identity construction is needed. As De Fina discusses, these elements can be situated on three different levels of analysis:

“The lexical level refers to the use of specific words or expressions. The textual pragmatic level refers to textual logical and argumentative relationships both explicit and implicit. The interactional level refers to the devices and strategies used by narrators to index their stances and attitudes both towards their own texts and other interlocutors.” (De Fina 2003: 23)

Thus in my analyses, I will integrate these three levels in order to obtain a holistic view of how identities are being constructed in the two speeches.

4. Analyses

I will now give a detailed discussion of the two speeches, focusing on the way the speaker constructs his own identity in relation to the audience's identity construction. In this case, the speakers' identity constructions are clearly related to that of their companies. The speakers typically act as mouthpieces of their organizations and they construct a specific image, which is usually positive, of their companies by using a range of discursive resources. This institutional identity construction was extensively discussed in a previous article (Van De Mieroop 2005), in which a selection of seven speeches was analyzed. The analyses showed that there are three main techniques that contribute to this type of identity construction, namely identification, company presentation and the suggestion of excellence. In speech B, we will see examples of all three techniques and I will critically discuss them more thoroughly there. Albeit to a lesser extent, also in speech A aspects of institutional identity construction are discussed.

As will become clear from the analyses, there are quite some similarities between the ways in which the two speakers construct identities. I will come back to these in the discussion section. I will now start my analyses with the discussion of speech A, in which the identity co-construction remains fairly implicit, especially when compared to speech B in which the construction of identities is not only more explicit, but also more elaborately interwoven in the speech.

4.1 *Implicit identity constructions in speech A*

In the beginning of his speech, we see that the speaker almost immediately starts presenting his company. While most speakers in this corpus start their presentations by directly addressing the audience (e.g. Goodmorning ladies and gentlemen) and thanking the chairman for his introduction (Van De Mieroop et al. 2008), this speaker starts his speech a bit chaotically. First he comments on the fact that he is changing microphones, then he briefly presents his company and finally, he starts introducing the subject of his speech. As we can see in the example below, the company presentation (underlined part) is interspersed between his technical comments and a topical opening phrase.

1. *Ik ga van micro veranderen om mijn eigen exposé te gaan geven. Dus, als u een klein beetje geduld heeft. Dank u wel. ... In de eerste plaats zou ik willen zeggen dat wij dus geen nieuwe speler zijn op de markt, dus, X bestaat sinds 1971 en is actief als onafhankelijk adviesconsulent op de markt als euh energie- en milieumanagement. Ik heb dus het genoeg om vandaag dus een aantal zaken toe te lichten.*

'I am going to change microphones to start giving my presentation. So, if you are a little bit patient. Thank you. In the first place, I would like to say that we are thus not a new player on the market, so, X exists since 1971 and is active as independent advisory consultant in the market as erm energy and

environmental management. So I have thus the pleasure of explaining a couple of things today.’²

Although being short, this company presentation gives key information about the company. Its unusual position in the speech (when compared to other speeches in the corpus) and the metadiscursive marker *in de eerste plaats* (‘in the first place’) suggest that the speaker adheres quite some importance to this relatively brief presentation. There is no further explicit information about the company’s activities, but implicitly the speaker immediately introduces the topic of knowledge and expertise. Although this topic is of course closely related to a consultancy firm’s main business, namely selling expertise, the link between this topic and the company is never explicitly expressed. Indirectly however, a link is established because the speaker, as a representative of the organization, immediately stresses his own extensive knowledge of the subject. He does this by drastically exaggerating the potential length of his presentation, suggesting that he could talk for twenty days instead of twenty minutes, which is the allotted time for his speech, about the issue.

2. (...) *maar in plaats van 20 minuten te spreken zou ik gemak..gemakkelijk dus 20 dagen kunnen spreken over deze materie (...).*
 ‘(...) but instead of talking for 20 minutes, I could eas..easily talk for 20 days about this subject (...).’

On the one hand, the speaker positions himself explicitly as an expert by means of this “extrematization” (Potter 1996: 187), which is not only achieved through the use of the “extreme case formulation” (Pomerantz 1986) ‘20 days’, but also by the expression ‘easily’ that downgrades the difficulty such an undertaking would entail for the speaker. On the other hand, by the speaker’s initial identification as a representative of his firm, which was introduced in his opening words through the use of the exclusive *we*-form in example 1, he implicitly connects the two elements, namely the possession of knowledge as a feature of his company.

After this implicit institutional identity construction, the speaker continues his speech in a neutral and even impersonal tone. Because the speaker often uses the impersonal subject *men* (‘one’), there is often vagueness about the agent of the action that is being described. Such vagueness contributes to “fact construction” (Edwards and Potter 1992: 162), which gives the impression that the speaker is absent from the speech and that the dilemma of “stake” (Edwards and Potter 1992) or potential self-interest is irrelevant in this speech. An example of a sentence with this impersonal subject can be seen in 3:

3. (...) *dan ziet men dus in vergelijking met verschillende types van verbruikers, dus verbruiker 1, 2, 3, 4, ziet men dus dat de prijzen dus, euh, verschillen in land per land (...).*
 ‘(...) then one sees in comparison with different types of users, so user 1, 2, 3, 4, one sees that the prices, so, erm, differ from country to country (...).’

² I chose to translate the Dutch examples as literally as possible in order to ensure a maximal analysis of the fragments. This may sometimes lead to odd sentences and poor English.

In spite of its factual tone, there are some persuasive elements to be found which are interwoven in the speech by means of the use of a metaphor. Metaphors “limit what we notice, highlight what we do see, and provide part of the inferential structure that we reason with” (Lakoff 1991). The speaker introduces this metaphor in the beginning of his presentation:

4. *Dus ik heb gesproken over het labyrint van de deregule. deregulering van de markt.*
 ‘So I have spoken about the labyrinth of the deregula. deregulation of the market.’

Especially since the seminar day is about the changes in the Belgian energy market, the speaker’s use of a metaphor is not surprising. Because the subject is so novel and a “new experience” for the audience, metaphors are extremely well suited to give such novelties meaning:

“If you think about what happens when you have a new experience, you cannot miss the part that metaphor plays in fitting it in with your view of the world and in modifying the world view as you go along.” (Bolinger 1979: 259)

Since the whole speech deals with these new aspects of the market, the speaker implicitly refers to this labyrinth-metaphor throughout the speech, so that it almost starts to “drive [the] entire account” (Antaki 1994: 101) and supports the main idea thanks to its “holistic structure” that is “intuitively understood” (Chilton 2004: 52) by the audience. To enhance this intuitive comprehension, we see that “altercasting” is coming into play: the speaker explicitly positions the audience inside the labyrinth by stressing the fact that the audience members have to find their way in the new market:

5. *Dat zijn de zaken waar u dus moet uw weg gaan vinden om dus te gaan zien hoe dat u op die markt aankoopt.*
 ‘So those are things in which you have to start finding your way in order to start seeing how that you can buy on that market.’

Remarkable in this fragment is the direct address of the audience by means of the 2nd person pronoun, which positions the audience within the metaphor, but also in the real world as buyers on the market. As such, the speaker projects the ‘buyer’-identity onto the audience, as such introducing the first part of the SRP. This role of buyers is further explored by the polarization between the buyers and the sellers, namely the energy-producers, who are not only placed in opposite positions (cf e.g. 6), but between which the relation is suggested to be problematic (cf underlined part in e.g. 7):

6. *Dus, enerzijds hebt g’uw energieleverancier, anderzijds bent u de verbruiker (...).*
 ‘So, on the one hand you have the energy supplier, on the other hand you are the user (...).’
7. *Ik zou zeggen: de kunst bestaat erin om dat zozegd belangenconflict om te zetten in een win-win situatie tussen beide partijen.*

‘I would say: where the art comes in is to transform that so-called conflict of interests in a win-win situation for both parties.’

Remarkable in example 6 is the repetition of the direct identification of the audience (‘you’) and their projected category (‘the user’). The speaker then further establishes the link between a strong position in the market and knowledge, which he explicitly contributed to his company in the beginning of the speech (see e.g. 2). So next to the basic buyer/seller pair that is related to the product ‘energy’, the speaker implicitly inserts the buyer/seller pair that revolves around ‘knowledge’, and this is of course his company’s product. While establishing this link, the speaker is not directly addressing the audience anymore, but instead he is talking in neutral terms. From the perspective of “face”, which can be defined as “an image of self delineated in terms of approval social attributes” (Goffman 1967: 5), this is fairly logical since the speaker is actually even using negative terms to talk about the energy users and he is explicitly characterizing the weaker users as being indifferent and lacking the necessary information:

8. *De zwakkere gebruikers, degenen - ‘t is misschien slecht geschreven - om verschillende.., dus mensen die zeggen: ‘Voor mij is dat niet belangrijk, laat da maar gebeuren’, en dus mensen die dus niet over de volledige informatie beschikken of de minder performente, euh, aankopers.*

‘The weaker users, those – it may be badly written – for different.., so people who say: ‘That is not important for me, just let it be’, and so people who, therefore, do not have all the information at their disposal or the less performing, erm, buyers.’

By polarizing these two positions and by equalizing ‘weak’ with ‘ignorant’, a space is created for the speaker’s company as an in-between party, a sort of guide in the labyrinth of the new market. Thus the company takes on an advisory role, which is implicitly introduced in the speech by adding brief references to the company’s knowledge in the field:

9. *Energie aankopen da’s volgens ons een keuze maken in functie van prijs, kwaliteit, service, risico’s en comfort.*

‘Buying energy, according to us that is making a choice in relation to price, quality, service, risks and convenience.’

10. *Dat zijn 4 mogelijkheden waarbij dus naar onze ervaring en onze ideeën, dus de markt zal gaan evolueren.*

‘Those are 4 possibilities to which thus according to our experience and our ideas, thus the market will evolve.’

Although the speaker never explicitly expresses a direct link between his company and the audience as potential customers of his company, an implicit connection is established because of this element of knowledge that is presented as crucial in the buying process. This element is intuitively acknowledged by the audience by means of the labyrinth-metaphor’s entailments, which strongly supports the speaker’s reasoning (cf. Chilton 2004: 52) and which functions as glue here that links the social positioning of the audience to the implicit identity construction of the speaker’s company as a guide in the energy labyrinth.

Thus through the direct address of the audience that is being positioned as buyers and users of energy, the audience's identity is being projected and further content is attributed to it by using a metaphor that gives a meaningful position to the audience. Because of the intuitive way in which the metaphor structures our understanding of reality, it is actually not surprising that the link between the audience identity projection and the limited institutional identity construction remains fairly implicit in this speech, but it creates the necessary space for the speaker's company as a guide, thus making the product of 'knowledge' the renewed focus of attention for the SRP of buyer/seller.

4.2 *Explicit link between two extensive identity constructions in speech B*

In this speech, both the identities of the company of the speaker and the audience are being constructed explicitly. On the one hand the company of the speaker is gradually being presented in the best possible light given the contextual circumstances, while on the other hand the audience is positioned in the role of potential customers of the company. These two identity constructions are then linked together by the speaker, while stressing their complementary character. I will structure my analyses by briefly discussing the three elements of the institutional identity construction (cf. Van De Mieroop 2005), in which the audience identity is then inserted.

4.2.1. Identification

First of all, the speaker strongly identifies with his company. This is shown through the frequent use of the *we*-form with an institutional referent. Since this pronoun is a form of deixis, its referent depends closely on the context and can thus vary widely. Some speakers in this corpus frequently use this referential lack of clarity and keep the referent quite vague (cf. Van De Mieroop 2006), but this speaker is quite the opposite. He explicitly links the *we*-form to its referent, thus clearly identifying the institutional referent:

11. (...) *de strategie van X wordt toegelicht, welke ambities wij toch hebben (...).*
 '(...) the strategy of X is being explained, which ambitions we yet have (...).'

4.2.2. Company presentation

In the beginning of his presentation, the speaker explicitly states that he is not going to advertise for his company:

12. (...) *het is ook niet de bedoeling dat ik hier een soort promotiecampagne voer, ik ga me daar proberen van te onthouden.*
 '(...) it is also not the intention that I am sort of conducting a publicity campaign here, I am going to try to refrain from that.'

However, this statement soon proves to be an example of a “disclaimer” (or a “praeteritio” in rhetorical terminology). Such a “disclaimer” can be defined as “a verbal device employed to ward off and defeat in advance doubts and negative typifications which may result from intended conduct” (Hewitt and Stokes 1975: 3), since this statement is immediately followed by a company presentation. In spite of the speaker’s reassurance that he is going to keep it short, this presentation takes quite some time (1/8 of the entire length of the speech) and information about the structure of the company, its history, its core businesses and its website (at the end of the speech) is given. The institutional *we*-form is used and repeated throughout:

13. *Wij zijn ook een netmaatschappij, wij zijn ook een technisch georganiseerde maatschappij of georiënteerde maatschappij, wij beheren netten, netten van allerlei slag zou ik zeggen, transportnetten, distributienetten, noem maar op.*
 ‘We are also an electricity grid association, we are also a technically organized association, or oriented association, we manage electricity grids, grids of every sort I would say, transport grids, distribution grids, you name it.’

4.2.3. *Suggestion of excellence?*

The institutional *we*-form is used quite consistently in the speech and a further connotation is attributed to it by means of the speaker’s categorization of his company as an older player in the field. This entails a category entitlement, which “obviates the need to ask how the person knows; instead, simply being a member of some category (...) is treated as sufficient to account for, and warrant, their knowledge of a specific domain” (Potter 1996: 133). So on the one hand, we see many implicit expressions of the experience of the company (cf e.g. 14) and on the other hand the speaker explicitly identifies the referent of the *we*-form as a ‘traditional player’ on the market, a phrase which occurs several times in the speech (cf e.g. 15 and 16).

14. *Dit is ook een activiteit die wij jaren doen (...).*
 ‘This is also an activity we have been doing for years (...).’
15. (...) *dat betekent toch ook wel wat voor een, ja, traditionele energiespeler, zoals wij toch kunnen genoemd worden.*
 ‘(...) that means something for a, yes, traditional energy player, as we can be called anyhow.’
16. (...) *dit zijn taken die wij denken als, euh, traditionele speler (...).*
 ‘(...) these are tasks that we think as, erm, traditional player (...).’

In example 15, the categorization of the ‘traditional player’ is being introduced for the first time and it is being mitigated by means of a hedge, which are “word[s] whose job it is to make things fuzzier” (Lakoff 1973: 471). In this case, the hedge functions as a statement of belief, which provides “a built-in hedge such that the speaker is partially immune from criticism and challenge” (Schiffrin 1985: 40), which makes the introduction of the categorization of ‘traditional energy player’ fairly safe.

However, the rest of the speech shows that this categorization is quite problematic. When taking the context of the Belgian energy market into account, it is quite obvious why: the company the speaker represents used to have a monopoly position in the

Belgian market and, quite logically, not much effort nor money was spent on customer care. Therefore its reputation in Belgium was not spotless, especially concerning customer friendliness. But now that the Belgian energy market is liberated, the company of the speaker is losing its comfortable position and needs to make efforts for keeping their customers. This new evolution is clearly noticeable in this speech and the use of modality is quite telling in this respect. Modal verbs typically express the speaker's attitude "towards themselves, towards their interlocutors, and towards their subject-matter" (Fowler and Kress 1979: 200). The speaker marks this turning point in the market by explicitly shifting modality from the past to the present and the future. When discussing the company's past activities, the speaker stresses obligation (*moesten*, 'had to' in 17) and lack of possibility (*niet konden*, 'could not' in 18).

17. *Een activiteit die we, misschien vroeger, op een, euh, niet zo elegante manier moesten doen, was verkopen.*

'An activity which we, maybe in the past, had to do in a, erm, not so elegant way, was selling.'

18. (...) *daarin worden een aantal concrete afspraken gemaakt die vroeger niet konden gemaakt worden.*

'(...) where we enter into a number of concrete agreements, which could not be made before.'

Example 17 is especially interesting, since it clearly demonstrates the speaker's doubts and prudence when discussing the company's past activities. Not only does he express the involuntary character of the company's actions through the use of the modal verb, but we also see that he hedges his time indication (*misschien vroeger*, 'maybe in the past') and that he explicitly admits the flaws of the firm in the past (cf. underlined part). Again, this 'confession' of past mistakes is carefully formulated by means of a litotes, which has the effect of an understatement here (cf Harris 2006) that is softened by the gradual indicator *zo* ('so'). The speaker's hesitation further indicates that he is carefully weighing his words.

This use of modality is totally different when discussing the present: here we see that the speaker consistently uses the verb *kunnen* ('can'), thus expressing possibility instead of obligation. In example 19, the speaker stresses that these possibilities are situated in the new liberated market, which is stressed by means of the speaker's paraphrase (cf underlined part).

19. (...) *een aantal afspraken die binnen de vrije markt, binnen de geliberaliseerde context kunnen gemaakt worden.*

'(...) a number of agreements that, in the free market, in the liberated context, can be made.'

To mark this difference in modality between past and present further, the speaker makes it more explicit by contrasting the modal verbs, thus putting past and present in opposite positions.

20. (...) *als u naar zo'n all - in service stapt dan kan u de programmaverantwoordelijkheid overlaten aan - hoeft niet, kan - aan uw leverancier.*

‘(...) if you move to such an all-in service, then you can leave the program responsibility – don’t have to, can – to your supplier.’

21. *U kan dus uw leverancier voor een stukje gaan aanspreken, gebruiken om ... 't Is wel heel belangrijk dat u met al die vragen daar terecht kan. Moet dat? Nee (...).*
 ‘You can talk to your supplier, use for ... It is very important that you can go there with all your questions. Do you have to? No (...).’

The degree of explicitness in these examples is quite surprising, thus showing that the speaker thinks this difference between past and present to be extremely important. Especially in example 21, we see that the speaker voices potential reactions and questions the audience members might have, as such inserting a small “constructed dialogue” (Tannen 1989) – or “subiectio” in rhetorical terminology – to illustrate the time-related change in modality further.

Furthermore, the speaker stresses the differences between past and present by explicitly talking about the changes that are going on in his company. The advantage of tradition is immediately combined with the new evolutions the firm is going through, as we see in example 22. The speaker supports his statement by referring to the words of a previous speaker (cf underlined part), thus changing “footing” (Goffman 1979) and providing external evidence for his claim (cf Matoesian 1999: 507-508).

22. *Dit is ook een activiteit die wij jaren doen maar ook daar - hebt u gehoord daarstraks - zijn toch wel een aantal fundamentele veranderingen aan het gebeuren.*
 ‘This is also an activity that we have been doing for years, but also there – you heard that earlier – there are still happening a number of fundamental changes.’

All things considered, one can ask oneself why the speaker is stressing this element of tradition in the first place, since it is obvious throughout the speech that there is a negative connotation attached to this word in relation to the speaker’s company. In the rest of the speech, it gradually becomes clear why the speaker inserted this element after all. Quite similar to the previous speech, the reason is to be found in the speaker’s neutral description of the new market. In this case, this description contains a general principle that holds for all suppliers, namely that suppliers need to be able to deal with risks. This principle is again backed up by briefly changing footing and referring to a previous speaker, as in the example above, and by explicitly asking the question *Waarom?* (‘Why?’), thus again constructing a brief dialogue.

23. *Nu, dat leveringsbedrijf is in staat, normalerwijze, om dat risico voor een stuk af te dekken. Waarom? 't Is hier daarstraks ook al gezegd door, euh, meneer Y, denk ik, euh, omdat die leveringsbedrijven .. door het feit dat ze natuurlijk grote hoeveelheden verkopen (...).*
 ‘Now, that supplier company is able, normally, to cover that risk for a certain part. Why? It has also been said here before by, erm, mister Y, I think, erm, because those supplier companies .. because of the fact that they sell large quantities of course (...).’

Interesting in this fragment is the rather contradictorily formulated claim that it is self-evident for suppliers to counter these risks in the market. On the one hand, he says that

the reason for this is the *fact* that they sell large quantities, which goes without saying, as is expressed by *natuurlijk* ('of course'). On the other hand, the speaker leaves space for doubt by strongly hedging the first sentence, which in itself is quite factual. This time the truth-condition of the proposition is being affected by means of the "approximators" (Prince et al 1982: 85) *normalerwijze* ('normally') and *voor een stuk* ('for a certain part'). The contradiction in this formulation is quite emblematic for the thesis the speaker implicitly constructs in the rest of his speech, namely that his company has previously proved to be a successful supplier that is able to deal with the risks of the market, while others still have to prove their ability. So in spite of its negative connotation, the term tradition is exploited further in the speech as a sort of insurance of success. Example 24 demonstrates this: we see that the speaker again categorizes his company as a traditional player with a well established position in the market. This is opposed to the other suppliers that are entering the market, which are introduced by a conditional clause (*als*, 'if'), instead of a temporal clause, thus also contributing to the uncertainty of the position of new companies.

24. *Wel, dit zijn taken die wij denken als, euh, traditionele speler .. en als andere leveranciers op de markt komen is dat natuurlijk ook voor hen een zeer belangrijke taak die weggelegd is voor hen (...).*

'Well, these are tasks that we think, as, erm, traditional player .. and if other companies enter the market, then that is of course also a very important task for them (...).'

Furthermore, the speaker's conditional clause is actually a reformulation and this "replacement cannot excise all traces of the word that was initially said or starting to be said" (Schegloff 1979: 263), so we see that the speaker was going to assert that his company is able to perform these tasks, a statement which is being hedged again by *wij denken* ('we think'). In the remaining part of the sentence, the speaker expresses his views on the tasks other companies have to perform. Instead of hedging, he is actually boosting (cf. Holmes 1984) this sentence (cf. underlined parts) and by doing this, he is taking on an evaluative stance, as such positioning himself – and thus also his company – above the other companies.

Furthermore, by frequently narrowing down the group of supplier companies to his own company, the speaker implicitly supports the thesis that his firm is the only one of which success is guaranteed.

25. *(...) dat de leveringsbedrijven - ik probeer een beetje algemeen te zijn - maar in alle geval, zoals wij het alleszins doen, dat wij proberen ons als soort tussenpersoon, als een soort spock single point of contact op te stellen (...).*

'(...) that the supplier companies – I try to be a little bit general – but in any case, like we do that anyhow, that we try to position ourselves as some sort of go-between, as a sort of spock single point, or contact (...).'

4.2.4 Audience identity

This speaker also positions his audience by categorizing them as customers. This categorization is a lot more explicit than in the previous speech and it also refers to the

basic SRP of buyer/seller of energy, which is much more straightforward than in speech A. In this speech, the speaker repeats his positioning a couple of times, thus stressing “that prior identification as being critical” (Sacks 1992: 712):

26. (...) *als klant in die nieuwe markt wordt u verondersteld van zodra u in de eligible markt mag stappen, wordt u verondersteld een leveringscontract, een overeenkomst af te sluiten (...).*

‘(...) as a customer in the new market, you are supposed to, starting from the moment you are allowed to step into the eligible market, you are supposed to close a supplying contract, an agreement (...).’

27. *U dient als klant (...).*

‘You, as a customer, have to (...).’

28. (...) *is het zelfs mogelijk dat de klant, dat u dus (...).*

‘(...) it is even possible that the customer, so that you (...).’

On the other hand, the speaker positions his company explicitly in their dealings with customers. His formulations are quite neutral and again fairly stereotypical, since they are being repeated a number of times throughout the speech.

29. *Het is altijd zo geweest dat wij proberen samen met de klanten op zoek te gaan naar middelen (...).*

‘It has always been like this that we try together with the customers to look for resources (...).’

30. (...) *dit is een .. een heel belangrijk aspect in de markt waar wij samen met de klant denken toegevoegde waarde te kunnen leveren (...).*

‘(...) this is a .. a very important aspect in the market where we together with the customer think to be able to deliver added value (...).’

Especially when considering on the one hand the context and on the other hand the tainted connotation of the repeated categorization of his company as a traditional player, the repetition of this collocation is significant. First of all on a content level, because it suggests the company’s customer-orientedness, which was problematic in the past (cf supra). Secondly, as Johnstone (1996: 174-176) points out, repetitions can have many different functions and effects, but they are certainly meant not to go unnoticed by the listeners. One can assume that these repeated phrases stick in the minds of the listeners more easily than when being uttered only once and thus may contribute to persuading the audience (cf Cheng 2006: 602). This is especially the case because of the parallel phrase the speaker constructs on the other side of his positionings, namely that of the audience as a customer. While his company is working ‘together with the customer’, the audience is doing things ‘together with their supplier’, as we see in the following examples.

31. *Dit zijn zaken die u samen met uw leverancier kan doen (...).*

‘These are things that you together with your supplier can do (...).’

32. (...) *het is evident dat een leverancier daar op een of andere manier zal op inspelen en ook samen met u naar opportuniteiten zal zoeken (...).*

‘(...) it is self-evident that a supplier will anticipate that one way or another and will also look for opportunities together with you (...).’

Through these parallel formulations, the link between the company and the audience that is being “altercasted” as customers is implicitly established. But also explicitly, we see that the speaker constructs this link, directly positioning the audience as customers of his company.

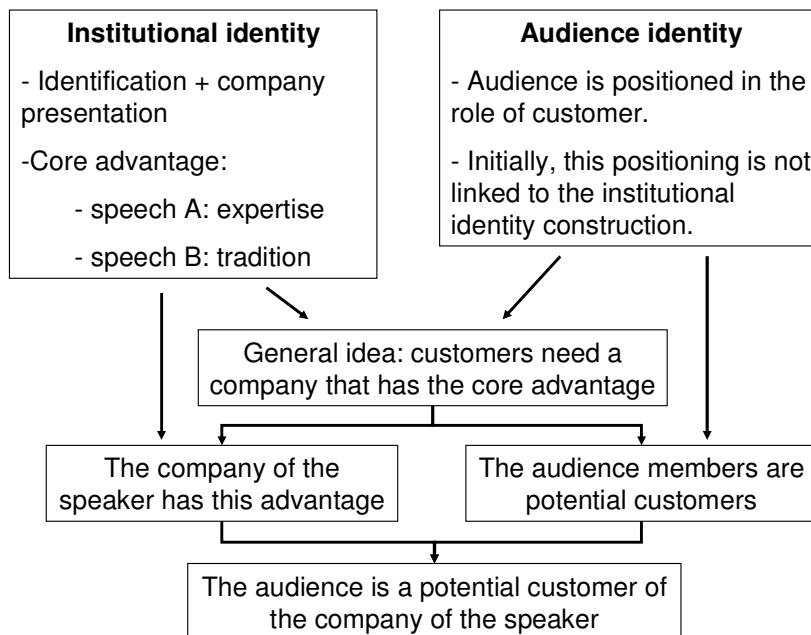
33. (...) *dat wij proberen ons als soort tussenpersoon ... op te stellen voor u als klant* (...).
 ‘(...) that we try to position ourselves as a sort of go-between ... for you as customer (...).’

In speech B, we not only saw a more explicit example of the way the link between audience and institutional identity is being established, but also how the complicated case of institutional identity construction was designed for its recipients and their knowledge of the context. For example, through constructed dialogues, the audience’s potential questions are being voiced and possible prejudices about the past of the company are explicitly inserted in the speech, thus countering the audience’s potential remarks. Furthermore, the institutional identity construction and more specifically the categorization of the company as a traditional player in the market, seemed to be “designed” to have the audience conclude that the speaker’s company is the only one that is able to cover all the risks. Thus when the phrase ‘with your supplier’ is being uttered and repeated (cf e.g. 31 and 32), the audience is expected to automatically think of the speaker’s company, which is being positioned as the only one with prior proof of success. So in speech B, audience and institutional identity constructions are very closely related.

5. Discussion

The analysis of the two speeches has clearly shown that the audience identity takes quite a different form when it is being constructed in a monologic situation rather than in a dialogue (cf Malone 1995). Next to drawing on the relevant SRP’s and directly addressing the audience by means of the 2nd person pronoun, not many explicit examples of audience identity construction could be discerned. However, the link between the audience identity construction and that of the company of the speaker is of the utmost importance in the analysis, since it is exactly through this link that both the speaker’s and the audience’s identity receive more content, albeit in a mostly implicit way. Both in speech A and B, the institutional identity construction is not only focused on constructing a content for the company of the speaker, but it is also directed at the audience, which becomes very clear in speech B in which the audience’s potential problems and prejudices with the company are explicitly voiced by the speaker.

In spite of a number of differences, we see that both speeches share a similar pattern of both institutional and audience identity construction and establishing the link between those two. Considering both content and degree of explicitness, speech B is a much more outspoken case of linking the two identities, which are constructed as being complementary towards one another. However, the metaphor in speech A is also a powerful device that constructs a similar link on a more implicit level. The way these links are constructed is represented schematically in figure 1:



Figuur 1: schematic overview of the link between the two identity constructions

In this figure, we see that the key point in the construction of a link between the two identities is a general and neutrally formulated core advantage, within which both identities then receive a place and are unified, a step which can be taken both implicitly (speech A) and explicitly (speech B).

6. Conclusion

As was discussed in the introduction, I investigated the way the speaker constructs his own identity in relation to his company (institutional identity) and how the audience members' identity is "projected" upon them by means of "altercasting". However, it is mostly through the analysis of the two identities in relation to one another, which is supported by the fact that they can be typified as SRP's, of which one part evokes the other part, that the identities get more content. On the one hand, it is through the institutional identity construction that it was made evident that the audience identity projection went beyond a simple categorization of the audience in a certain role, but also that this role received a place within the institutional identity and that it thus received a more nuanced identity. On the other hand, it is through the analysis of the audience identity, that the institutional identity construction of speech B, which seemed unusual and contradictory at first sight, becomes fairly logical. Projecting an identity onto the audience in the speech and linking it to the company would be rather unproductive without explicitly voicing the audience's potential prejudices. Thus the analysis of the audience identity provided an explanation for this seemingly contradictory institutional identity construction. Therefore, it can be concluded that the two identity constructions are complementary in a fairly drastic way, since the analysis of each identity separately would result in incomplete and contradictory conclusions.

Through the analysis of an interactional notion such as “altercasting” in a monologic corpus, it also became clear that such a concept extends beyond interactional contexts alone. Although there is no direct feedback from the recipients, which not only makes “altercasting” less pronounced, but also less attested explicitly - because of the lack of direct proof in the interactant’s responses - than in dialogues such as in Malone (1995), the monologue also demonstrated a fair deal of corroboration of the data, which was found in the interaction with the institutional identity that was being constructed in the two speeches. So we can conclude that it is indeed fruitful to analyze co-constructions of identity constructions, and that identity projections, or examples of “altercasting”, are equally interesting to integrate in these analyses. “Recipient design” is a central notion in communication and also for identity construction the idea of integrating the perspective of the recipients in the analyses has been demonstrated here to be of great importance for a fuller insight into the way identities are meaningfully constructed.

Transcription symbols

The data are transcribed as literally as possible and regular punctuation was inserted to indicate the way the speakers pronounced their sentences. Dots were added to indicate pauses and the number of dots is a reflection of the length of the pause. Irrelevant parts which are deleted are indicated by means of the following symbol: (...). Finally, underlining is only used for referring to a part relevant for the analyses, but has no a meaning as far as intonation is concerned.

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