Title:

The complementarity of two identities and two approaches
Quantitative and qualitative analysis of institutional and professional identity

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Keywords: institutional (company) identity, professional (speaker) identity, quantitative analysis, qualitative (discourse) analysis, professional speeches, Dutch

Abstract

This paper focuses on the analysis of two types of identity construction in a corpus of 40 professional speeches, namely: institutional identity (of the company) and professional identity (of the speaker). Since the corpus under study is rather large, two of the most interesting speeches were selected on the basis of a quantitative pronoun analysis. A further, qualitative discourse analysis of this subcorpus revealed the complexity of the techniques used to build the two types of identity. On the basis of this qualitative analysis, it is hypothesized that there is a very clear division between the two complementary identities: institutional identity stresses the achievements of the company, while professional identity emphasizes the speaker's thoughts and critical attitude. This hypothesis is tested and corroborated by the quantitative analysis of the dichotomy between agentive and epistemic self-reference, the former reflecting institutional, the latter professional identity.

Biographical note:

Dorien Van De Mieroop received her PhD in Linguistics in 2005 from the University of Antwerp, where she wrote a dissertation on the construction of identity in professional speeches. She is currently working at the Lessius Hogeschool in Antwerp, where she teaches Dutch linguistics and language proficiency.

1. INTRODUCTION

Recently, the study of identity has “attained a remarkable centrality within the human and social sciences” (du Gay et al., 2000: 1). Anthropological and social constructivist insights have 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 has now become a truism within the field of discourse studies (Androutsopoulos and Georgakopoulou, 2003: 1). Still, identity remains “an extremely complex construct” (De Fina, 2003: 15), especially since many identities may be drawn upon or affiliated to in discourse. Studying the interaction between these different aspects of identities is thus an interesting subject for analysis:

“(…) 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)

The focus of the present paper is on the local construction of identities as they emerge in a text, and on the interplay between such identities. The corpus under study consists of 40 professional speeches given between 2001 and 2002 at eight business seminars where technical topics were discussed. Each seminar consisted of several speeches by different speakers; the length of the speeches varied from 20 to 45 minutes. In the morning, the speeches usually covered a theoretical or governmental angle on the issue, while in the afternoon, case studies from companies were presented. The 40 speeches were all videotaped and transcribed; this resulted in a corpus of approximately 180,000 words. All the speeches were given in Dutch by Belgian native speakers of Dutch.

This 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).

My corpus demonstrates several types of identity being constructed in the speeches; here, I focus on two types, namely *institutional* and *professional* identity. The term ‘institutional identity’ refers to the social positioning of the speaker as a member of his organization. In this specific setting, speakers were introduced as representatives of their organizations; the organizations were only latently present in the context and if the speakers wanted to convey an idea of what type of organization they worked for, they needed to include explicit references to their organizations. As I will explain in more detail later, the speakers quite often categorized themselves explicitly as company representatives and elaborated upon this categorization, for example by providing information on the history and structure of their company. By using such discursive devices, the speakers could build a – usually positive – identity of the company. In other words, the speakers acted as mouthpieces of their organization (Lammers, 2000) and, by using a range of discursive resources, they constructed a specific image of their companies.

By the term ‘professional identity’, I understand the identity speakers are constructing by presenting themselves as experts (Dyer and Keller-Cohen, 2000). In this particular setting, the chairman introduces each speaker and provides him with a “relevant identity and status” (Thornborrow, 2001: 477). Some speakers dwell on this identity and actively “display the relevance, or validity, of their occupancy of that role” (Thornborrow, 2001: 477-478), so that, during their speeches, these speakers actively demonstrate their expertise and discursively construct their professional identities.

However, since identity is locally produced in language use and thus strongly related to its context, the above introductory definitions of institutional and professional identity are necessarily rather vague. Identity can be produced in so many forms, and be related to so many different contexts, that even within the limits of institutional and professional identity I just described, a great deal of variation may be expected. I will come back to this in the Conclusion (Section 6).

2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHODOLOGY

The main research question that I am addressing here is how institutional and professional identity interact. In spite of the omnipresence of identity in language practices (Fairclough, 2000: 168), mapping identity remains a difficult issue for 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)

Since the relation between language and identity is a distant one, the notion of identity is very hard to grasp. Therefore, I think it is of the utmost importance that all elements that can possibly contribute to identity construction are taken into account in the analysis. These elements are situated on different levels of analysis; De Fina (2003) discerns three of these:

“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)

Following De Fina, I propose to integrate all these levels in the analysis so as to obtain a holistic view of how identity is constructed in the speeches. Doing this, I hope to overcome the distant relation between language and social identity. Because the elements that contribute to identity construction are very much context-dependent, a bottom-up approach is needed in order to ensure that a maximum of aspects of the identity construction process is incorporated in the analysis. In this way, I hope to bridge the gap between language and identity.

Since identity studies usually base themselves on a relatively small corpus from which a number of extracts are selected and analyzed (e.g. Schiffrin, 1996; De Fina, 2000), a second research question emerges: namely, how can identity be analyzed in the context of a large corpus such as this one? In order to answer this question, I propose to combine a quantitative with a qualitative analysis. I begin my study by analyzing the entire corpus quantitatively. This gives me a bird's eye view of the presence of identity in the forty speeches. Previous studies (Van De Mierop, 2004, 2005, forthcoming) have shown the efficiency of this method. Speeches that appeared to stand out in terms of identity construction were then selected for qualitative analysis. The focus here is on the local study of a small number of cases so as to reveal the strategies and techniques that support and create the two types of identity. On the basis of these qualitative findings, a new hypothesis is created concerning the complementarity of the two types of identity. This hypothesis is finally corroborated by further quantitative analyses and in this way, the two methodologies are integrated.¹

3. QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF INSTITUTIONAL AND PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY²

Previous studies have shown that pronouns are not only excellent markers of identity (Dyer and Keller-Cohen, 2000; Fairclough, 1995), but also that they are ideally suited for quantitative analysis (cf Alber et al., 2002). Here, the pronouns *we* and *I* were selected for quantitative analysis; the reason is that the *we*-form is quite often used to refer to an institutional referent, thus positioning the speaker as a representative of the organization, while the *I*-form can reflect the presence of the speaker in his speech through which he may present himself as an expert. However, since pronouns are indexical markers that “anchor” language in the real world (Verschueren, 1999: 18), the referents of the pronouns can differ quite remarkably. If we ignored this fact, the quantitative data would become invalid for comparison. Therefore, I identified the different referents of the pronouns by means of local contextual analysis and I subcategorized these referents. Since this is not the main issue of the present paper, I will not go into detail here; in Van De Mierop (forthcoming), I have given a lengthy description of how this subcategorization was implemented for the institutional category.³ For the purpose of this paper, the subcategorization was used as a filter to

¹ The explanation of the quantitative analysis and the discussion of the institutional identity construction have been kept to a minimum here, and are only presented in the interest of a better understanding of the present paper. For more details, see my previous publications (Van De Mierop, 2005, forthcoming).

² The use of the terms ‘quantitative’ and ‘qualitative’ does not imply that the analysis under these respective headings is strictly limited to these methods. My approach integrates both quantitative and qualitative analyses where in each of them, one of the two methodologies is predominant. For example, in quantitative analysis, qualitative subcategorization is used as a filter; similarly, in qualitative analysis, quantitative comparisons are used. The names are thus only used to indicate the prevalent method in the respective approaches.

³ Since this subcategorization is based on criteria in which subjectivity may interfere, the interrater reliability of the subcategorization of the pronouns in five randomly

select the pronouns relevant for the type of identity construction that is being analyzed here. In table 1, I provide an example of the pronouns that were selected from the speeches:

TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

Table 1: Overview of the two identities and matching examples of pronouns contributing to this identity construction

After careful contextual analysis, the relevant pronominal forms were selected and pronouns were counted; the results were standardized to a text length of 1,000 words in order to allow for a comparison of the presence of the selected pronouns across the speeches. Figure 1 presents the results of the quantitative analysis regarding institutional and professional identity.

FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

Figure 1. A quantitative analysis of the forty speeches with regard to institutional identity, as reflected in the relevant *we*-forms (black bars) and professional identity, as reflected in the relevant *I*-forms (shaded bars).

As Figure 1 shows, institutional identity scores remarkably higher than does professional identity. Since this paper focuses on the interplay between the two types of identity construction, the speeches that scored high for each identity were selected for analysis. A motivated choice was made possible through establishing the upper limit of the average group; this was done by adding the average result to the standard deviation, thus creating a top boundary for average speeches (the dotted lines in figure 1). The data above these boundaries may be considered as scoring remarkably higher than average; by means of this method, two speeches, 9 and 11, were selected (circled in figure 1)⁴. These two speeches contained institutional as well as professional identity construction techniques and were thus of the utmost interest for the purpose of this paper.

The next section will apply a qualitative, discourse analytical approach in order to analyze the various construction strategies in more depth.

chosen speeches was measured. Both the subcategorizations of the *I*-form and the *we*-form of the second rater were quite similar to my own subcategorization and these results were statistically significant (*I*: Cohen's $\kappa = .719$; $p = 0.000$, *we*: Cohen's $\kappa = .717$; $p = 0.000$).

⁴ Speech 27 is a borderline case, since its score on the professional identity is situated exactly on the boundary line. As I prefer to deal with speeches that have a clearly marked presence of the two types of identity construction, I will exclude speech 27 from the analysis.

4. QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

In this section, I will discuss the ways the two types of identity are locally constructed and combined in the two selected speeches. I use a highly inductive approach, letting the text speak for itself and focusing on a whole range of different elements that support the construction of identity. Since I aim to provide an exhaustive view of the various ways these two types of identity are interwoven in the speeches, I need to include several, sometimes quite disparate, elements in the discussion.

In order to ensure a correct understanding of the examples provided below, I first give some contextual background: tables 2 and 3 summarize the content of the two speeches. .

TABLES 2 & 3 ABOUT HERE

Table 2: summary of speech 9

Table 3: summary of speech 11

I also quote two crucial passages of the two speeches in Appendices A (speech 9) and B (speech 11)⁵; in this way, it will be easier for the reader to get an idea of their content. Also, the relevant passages in the Appendices will be referred to by underlining and numbering.

The two speeches examined here were given during the same seminar day, organized by a Belgian association of engineers. On this day, speakers from fairly different backgrounds and organizations addressed the problem of silt in non-navigable rivers. Due to changes in Belgian legislation, this problem became a hot topic in 2000. Issues such as the current state of affairs in riverbed and silt research, the legal aspects of the problem and practical ways of handling silt on-site and off-site were addressed in the speeches. At the time, speaker 9 represented the government institution responsible for these legal amendments, while speaker 11 was a lawyer and local politician involved in enforcing the new regulations. Since dealing with this problem of silt, either from a legislative or a practical angle, was part of the daily work of most speakers⁶, speaker 11 was rather an exception. Being a full-time lawyer, it was only through his position as alderman of the city that he came into contact with the silt issue. This piece of background information will be made relevant by the speaker in his speech, as I will discuss later.

The two speeches differ greatly in the way the speakers construct their institutional and professional identities: speaker 9 pays relatively little attention to the institutional identity construction, but he positions himself as a ‘typical’ expert: besides demonstrating his knowledge through the use of jargon and showing his familiarity

⁵ The English translation is as close as possible to the Dutch original. This sometimes results in odd sentences and poor English.

⁶ Information about the speakers was obtained through questionnaires and informal conversations with the speakers during the seminar days.

with the social environment, he also presents himself as somebody who is in a position to evaluate actions and prescribe rules. Moreover, he explicitly pays attention to his personal career in a sort of epilogue to his speech. In contrast, speaker 11 puts much more work into his institutional identity construction and he starts his speech by pointing out that he is not a ‘typical’ expert. He goes on to demonstrate his ‘alternative’ expertise in order to establish his authority and competence as a speaker at the seminar. Since the differences between institutional and professional identity construction in these two speeches are crucial, I will discuss each speech separately.

4.2 Discussion of speech 9

In this speech, the construction of institutional and speaker identity are closely connected to one another. Except for the final part, in which the speaker focuses on his personal career, throughout the speech the speaker and the organization he represents are linked closely.

First of all, the speaker demonstrates his expertise, which implicitly builds the professional identity of a well-informed speaker. The speaker’s familiarity with the theme of the seminar day is shown in two ways: one, through the use of a specialized register, he draws attention to his knowledge of the subject. Thus, in example 1, we see the speaker using jargon (*waterbodemsaneringen*, ‘decontamination of the river bed’; *M-plan*) and showing that he is very well informed of all the details (*actie 36*, ‘action 36’). Two, the speaker’s constant use of non-transparent abbreviations (*GRUP*, *VVC*, *AWZ*, *FITO*...) supports this construction of an expert identity.

1. (...) *het M-plan (...), meer bepaald actie 36 had tot taak om eigenlijk voorbereidingen te treffen voor waterbodemsaneringen.* (9)
 (...) the M-plan (...), more specifically, action 36 properly had the objective of making preparations for decontamination of the river bed (...).

Secondly, the speaker shows his familiarity with the social environment of the water sediment business. While other speakers refer to the other people in the room by means of formal references and constantly use polite terms of address, this speaker addresses them in an informal way, using their first names, as in 2.

2. (...) *wat Wouter heeft toegelicht (...).* (9)
 (...) as Wouter explained (...).

Already in the beginning of his speech, this speaker shows that he is proud of the achievements of his organization by adding evaluatives to his description. In this way, his institutional identity is also being constructed. Using such evaluatives, the speaker often mitigates the content of his statements by the use of hedges. As Lakoff states, hedges are “words whose job it is to make things fuzzier” (Lakoff, 1973: 471) and in this case, they serve a very specific function. As can be seen in example 3 and in appendix A, (3) and (5), the hedges function as statements of beliefs, which provide “a built-in hedge such that the speaker is partially immune from criticism and challenge” (Schiffrin, 1985: 40). Prince, Frader and Bosk (1982: 90) call these hedges “plausibility shields”, “implicat[ing] that the speaker is asserting a belief acquired via ‘plausible’ reasoning” These statements of belief are added after the use of an evaluative, cf. *serieus* (‘seriously’) in 3. In this example, the addition of the hedge

denk ik ('I think') shows that the speaker adds this qualifying hedge after he has produced the main sentence.

3. *Wij hebben daar euh serieus aan gewerkt, denk ik (...) (9)*
We worked erm seriously on that, I think (...).

This example shows clearly how institutional and professional identity construction are closely linked in this speech: the description is presented in the institutional *we*-form and is then evaluated ('seriously'). This evaluation contributes to the construction of a positive image of the speaker's organization, but at the same time it is accompanied by a hedge referring to the speaker ('I think'). So the hedge not only makes this evaluative immune to criticism, but also puts the speaker in a position where he can exercise independent judgment and evaluation. Therefore, this hedge, too, presents the speaker as a professional, while contributing to his identity construction of expert.

A similar type of hedges is used in potentially face-threatening contexts. As such, these statements of belief serve to mitigate the statements of the speaker that could threaten the audience's face (Brown and Levinson, 1989). To express a modality of obligation (*moeten*, 'to have to'; as in appendix A, (7) and the following example, 4), the speaker uses quite strong words; this use of the hedge as a 'face-saving strategy' (Clemen, 1997: 239) is a safe way of countering potential problems. In example 4, the modal verb *moeten* can be regarded by the audience as imposing on their personal freedom of having an alternative opinion; the hedge is added to mitigate this face-threatening act. However, the speaker clearly feels that his statement is expressing too much uncertainty, therefore he moves it up on the certainty scale (cf. Latour and Woolgar, 1986, cited in Edwards and Potter, 1992: 106) from 'I think' to 'I mean it'. In doing so, he explicitly supports his own opinion, but keeps the immunity to criticism that the hedge confers on him.

4. (...) *dus, ik denk, en ik meen dat, dat wij echt met de overheid en met de privé-partners de volgende jaren aan tafel zullen moeten zitten (...).* (9)
(...) so, I think, and I mean it, that we really will have to sit down around the table with the government and the private partners during the next years (...).

Again, in this example we see how institutional and professional identity construction are intertwined: the speaker shifts from a personal footing (*I*) to an institutional one ('*we*'). This time, the speaker prescribes what the organization should do in the future, again hedging these statements and putting himself in the relatively powerful position of somebody who can tell others what to do.

At the end of the speech, the professional identity construction is brought into focus: there is an obvious shift in footing (Goffman, 1979), from a presentation on a technical subject to a reflection on the speaker's personal career. This shift in footing is markedly present as the speaker repeats what would normally be considered an opening salutation, clearly indicating that a new part of the speech is starting (cf. appendix A, (1)).

In this section of his speech, the speaker explains that he is going to change jobs and he looks back on his achievements and those of his colleagues over the last five years

(appendix A, (2)). His personal actions and feelings are central in this speech and he explains them mostly by introducing a boat metaphor. In appendix A, (4) we see that he starts with a literal term, *romp* ('hull') which he compares to a boat. In appendix A, (6), this metaphor starts to "drive the account" (Antaki, 1994: 101) and it is further elaborated upon in appendix A, (8) (cf. *speedboot*, 'speedboat'; *vrachtboot*, 'cargo ship'). The speaker finishes his speech by almost lyrically looking to the future, expressing his hopes and beliefs, cf. appendix A, (9).

Because of the explicit stress on the speaker's own past career, the audience's attention in the final part of the speech is fully drawn to his person. His professional identity is therefore strongly emphasized in a quite straightforward way in this section of the speech, whereas in the rest it is much more implicit and clearly linked to the construction of his institutional identity.

4.3 Discussion of speech 11

4.3.1 Institutional identity construction

This speaker constructs both his institutional and professional identity, but unlike in speech 9, these two identities are to a certain extent independent of one another. Therefore, I focus first on the way the speaker sketches a positive image of his institution. In a previous paper (Van De Mierop, 2005), I discussed at length the way institutional identity is constructed in a number of speeches. It was shown how the various discursive devices, some of which were unique in these speeches, contributed to three main aspects of the construction of institutional identity that are also present in speech 11.

Firstly, the speaker often explicitly links the referent of the *we*-form, namely the city the speaker works for, to this pronoun; therefore, there is no doubt as to the referent of this deictic marker. An example of this clarifying technique can be seen in example 5, in which the institutional *we* is literally put right next to the referent so that any doubt as to the correct interpretation of this pronoun is excluded.

5. *Wij staan een beetje als stad, als gemeente onmachtig (...).* (11)

We, as a city, as a community, are somewhat powerless (...).

Secondly, the speaker elaborates on the presentation of his institution, as can be seen in appendix B, which contains the opening section of speech 11. The speaker extensively discusses the origins of his city through a vivid description of its history. The speaker so strongly identifies with the institution he works for that this identification is exaggerated to the extent of almost becoming an anachronism. In appendix B, (5), the speaker starts building up his identification very strongly by using the *we*-form and by choosing a tense in Dutch whose closest equivalent in English is the present perfect, a tense which, by being situated itself between present and past, also establishes a link between the present and past of the story. The speaker's use of tenses thus suggests that the legendary past of the city is still alive in the minds of the people who identify with it. Moreover, as the story evolves, the speaker almost identifies his institution with one historical figure in his narrative, namely the city's gate-keeper. He corrects himself in time so that the feat of 'cutting' the dikes is not attributed to the institutional *we*-form, but even in his reformulation,

he still uses the possessive form *our*, which implies a very strong link between this legendary figure and the present institutional *we*-form.

Finally, speaker 11 presents his institution as an organization that strives for perfection and feels very strongly about moral values. This speaker is quite explicit in his description of the leading role of his institution (cf 6) and the willingness to work hard: the use of the verb *zwoegen*, which can be translated as ‘to toil; to perform very hard labor’, demonstrates this in example 7.

6. (...) *indien wij die [resultaten] zullen publiceren (...), dat veel meer gemeenten hun waat... koudwatervrees zullen euh overwinnen om toch ook te gaan meten (...).* (11)
(...) if we publish these [results] (...), so that a lot more communities will overcome their wat... their cold feet erm, to start measuring all the same (...).
7. *Het is wel jammer dat het zo zwoegen is om aan correcte informatie te geraken, maar dat mag geen alibi zijn [om het niet te doen].* (11)
It is a pity that it is such hard work to find the correct information, but that should not be an excuse [for not doing it].

So excellence is suggested by stressing the achievements of the company. Of course, mentioning the company in negative contexts may damage this suggestion of excellence and therefore the speaker sometimes avoids explicit identification. For example in 8, the speaker distances himself from his statement, which sounds negative because of the connotation of the word combination *aansprakelijkheid ontlopen* (‘eschew responsibility’). Here he uses the exact referents instead of the *we*-form. This is quite an exceptional way of expressing oneself, since the speaker himself is a politician of the city. So in this case, the speaker would normally have used the *we*-form, but this third person self-reference is a typical “ploy to deflect, or delimit, (...) ‘existential involvement’” (Wilson, 1990: 79). Avoiding involvement in this negative context protects the positive institutional identity construction.

8. (...) *en die aansprakelijkheid die willen de ambtenaren van stad X, de politici van stad X, willen die ontlopen.* (11)
(...) and that responsibility, the civil servants of city X, the politicians of city X want to avoid it.

By using discursive devices which are unique in this corpus, the three aspects that create a positive identity of the speaker’s city are interwoven in the speech.

4.3.2 Speaker identity construction

The speaker, in addition to constructing an extensive institutional identity, also builds up his own identity in a rather complex way. In the beginning of the speech, we see an overt self-presentation, in which the speaker claims to have the identity of an outsider. By doing this, the identity of an underdog is constructed. Then the speaker gradually upgrades this identity, for instance by using epistemic self-references that demonstrate the identity of an expert with ‘alternative’ knowledge. Finally, interactional elements also contribute to this identity construction by explicitly drawing attention to the professional and fluent way in which the speaker manages to give a speech in this formal setting. Therefore, the speaker not only demonstrates his alternative

knowledge of the subject, but also shows his competence as a public speaker, which is another aspect of his professional identity.

4.3.2.1 Outsider identity

Already at the beginning of his speech, the speaker positions himself as an outsider because of his different professional background. He immediately stresses this in his self-identification by explicitly contrasting his own position with that of the audience and of the other speakers. Furthermore, the fact that the speaker focuses so much on his self-presentation is remarkable in itself because the chairman already had introduced him – something which actually makes the speaker's statements redundant. In this contrastive self-presentation (cf. appendix B, (1)), the speaker first gives a negative self-categorization (*ik ben geen ingenieur*, 'I'm not an engineer'), after which he discusses his professional background and how this is valuable for the seminar day. This explicit self-identification is a typical form of "discursive grounding" (Thornborrow, 2001: 477): the speaker categorizes himself within a certain group ("self-categorizing"), of which the relevance to the theme of the seminar day is made clear. This is done by establishing a direct link between his self-categorization (*ik ben advocaat*, 'I am a lawyer') and a consecutive clause (*dus...*, 'so...') in which his knowledge is stated. This is what Potter calls "category entitlement":

"In practice, category entitlement obviates the need to ask how the person knows; instead, simply being a member of some category – doctor, hockey player, hospital worker – is treated as sufficient to account for, and warrant, their knowledge of a specific domain." (Potter, 1996: 133)

So on the one hand, the speaker establishes his identity as an outsider, but on the other hand, the complementary value of this category is stated and stressed.

In appendix B, (2), we see that the speaker goes beyond simply showing the contrast between himself and the audience; he adds that most people are filled with horror by his profession. This is an example of the interactional strategy of self-mockery that I will discuss later. The example is of a rhetorical nature: the speaker tries to get the audience's attention and benevolence. This is part of the classic '*captatio benevolentiae*' that is constructed in combination with other elements: for instance, the speaker also ironically reassures the audience about the length of his speech (cf. appendix B, (4)).

This '*captatio benevolentiae*' is also part of the interactional strategy that the speaker uses to connect with his audience and display his communicative competence (as will be discussed in more detail later). Actually, as Johnstone (1996) argues, the rhetorical choices of a speaker are good indications of the construction of identity. Compared with the rest of the corpus, in which very few traces of rhetorical strategies are found, this speech is exceptional. Because of this uniqueness, the speaker attracts attention and this also contributes to his identity construction as an expert in speaking skills.

However, the speaker's introductory self-categorization as an outsider proves not to be only a rhetorical technique: his different background and knowledge is apparent in his entire speech. For example, the speaker's choice of words demonstrates that he is less well-informed than the other speakers. On the whole, he is more prone to use

plain language, as he states himself in example 9. This is confirmed in his speech, as in examples 10 and 11.

9. *Ik vat het zeer kort samen in lekentaal (...).* (11)
I summarize it very briefly in layman's language (...).

Also hesitations and reformulations, which can be interesting markers of identity construction (Montgomery, 1999), point in the same direction. When the speaker uses complicated terminology, this is often accompanied by long-winded wordings and hesitations, as can be seen in examples 10 and 11.

10. (...) *gaan wij een dijk bouwen om euh euh een grote sluis, een stuw eigenlijk om euh om te voorkomen dat steden gaan overstromen (...).* (11)
(...) we are going to build a dike to erm erm a big sluice, a dam actually to erm to prevent the cities from flooding (...).
11. (...) *meer minimum inspanningen moeten leveren vooraleer u een frank subsidie krijgt euh om het aan het euh duo- duurzaam lokaal waterzuiveringsbeleid euh te kunnen werken.* (11)
(...) have to make more minimum efforts before you get one franc of subsidy erm to it to be able to work on the erm pre- permanent local water treatment policy erm.

In example 10 the speaker is searching for the right word: it is only after having tried two other terms (*dijk*, 'dike'; *grote sluis*, 'big sluice') that he comes up with the correct word (*stuw*, 'dam'). Also in example 11, the speaker has a lot of trouble finding the right words, which results in an almost unintelligible sentence. The number of hesitations is striking, especially in comparison with the rest of the speech: the average number of hesitations in the entire speech is only 1 per 33 words. In table 4, we see that the hesitations in these examples are much more frequent, with an average that is notably higher than the entire text average.

TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE

Table 4: number of hesitations in examples 10 and 11

Apart from the speaker's frequent searches for the correct term and the accompanying hesitations, the speaker also mispronounces technical terms. For example, he uses a term that is typical of the jargon of silt problems, namely *polluente contaminanten* ('pollutant contaminants'). This term seems to be quite well known, since it occurs in other speeches of the seminar day as well. In this speech however, the speaker not only hesitates when using this term, but he also mispronounces it (*contaminaten* instead of *contaminanten*). This further demonstrates that the speaker is not part of the group of technical silt-experts and it confirms his identity as an outsider.

4.3.2.2 Upgrading the underdog position

In the beginning of the speech, the speaker presents himself as an underdog. But in the course of the presentation, he gradually consolidates his position: he starts countering his limited technical knowledge with another type of expertise, namely that of a successful professional who has two prestigious jobs: lawyer and political representative of the town (cf appendix B, (1) and (2)). The speaker stresses the

complementarity of the content of these two jobs, which he situates in the integration of theory and practice.

To support this presentation of his know-how even further, the speaker refers to himself in a number of fragments, which I analyzed by means of the dichotomy between agentive and epistemic self-references. Dyer and Keller-Cohen (2000), who draw on Bruner's psychologically oriented analysis of narratives (1990), discuss the suitability of this contrast.

“The agentive self is associated with action and the temporal progression of narrative, and the epistemic self with thoughts, feelings and beliefs. Such a template seems well suited to the construction of professional expertise, since the narrator is able to depict himself as the main protagonist in the narrative, controlling the action, and also explaining and justifying his actions through his epistemic self.” (Dyer and Keller-Cohen, 2000: 294)

In this speech, epistemic self-references contribute to the professional identity construction of the speaker. These illustrate the fact that the speaker is well informed and careful. In example 12, the speaker explains that he was invited to a meeting on a polder project.

12. *Ik vertaal dat dan naar de slibproblematiek. Wat betekent dat? Dat als water gaat overstromen van hoog naar laag, (...) dan gaat daar, volgens mij, een probleem komen van slib want wie garandeert mij dat er geen slib van de Schelde zal overkomen op onze Potpolders, wie garandeert mij dat het slib dat gestort is op de oevers niet mee zal stijgen?* (11)

I translate that then to the silt problems. What does that mean? That if water is going to flood from high to low, (...) then there is going to be, in my opinion, a problem of silt because who can give me a guarantee that no silt is going to come from the Scheldt to our polders, who can give me a guarantee that the silt that is dumped on the banks, will not come over with [the rising water]?

The speaker puts himself in the spotlight by emphasizing his critical mind: he shows that he has thought seriously about the problem, that he has drawn his own conclusions, and that he wants to be careful. He frames this epistemic self-reference in a narrative in which he tells about the meeting that he attended together with an engineer. By adding this background information, he puts himself on an equal footing with the typical expert, namely the engineer. His personal insight into the situation is further emphasized by the repetition of the rhetorical question at the end of the extract.

There are many other epistemic self-references in speech 11, similar to the ones in speech 9 (e.g. example 3), that show the speaker's ability to reflect on the issue with a discerning mind, but that are less marked than example 12. So by adding these self-references, the speaker creates a positive image of himself as an expert with 'alternative' knowledge. By starting as an outsider, he covers himself against possible criticism concerning the technical issues under discussion. This lack of knowledge is offset by his critical reflections, presented as equally good as those of the 'real', technical experts (e.g. 12).

4.3.2.3 Interactional elements

In this formal setting and institutional context, the speeches were solely monological: the audience never intervened and comments and reactions were only heard during question time and coffee breaks. In this respect, speech 11 is markedly different from the other speeches: by inserting a number of interactional elements into his speech, the speaker comes to the fore and connects with his audience. This also supports his professional identity construction, because the audience looks upon him as a person, instead of as a mere representative of his organization. Furthermore, the speaker proves his competence in giving speeches and using rhetorical devices⁷.

Quite a number of different strategies are used by the speaker to demonstrate his skills and shows that he is a fluent speaker who takes the reaction of his audience into account. Firstly, the speaker goes into direct interaction with his audience: he watches them closely and he also displays this in his speech. In example 13, he reacts to a couple of listeners who are silently shaking their heads. Although they are in no way disturbing the speech, the speaker anticipates to their criticism and tries to improve his story's credibility.

13. (...) [*reactie in het publiek, mensen schudden het hoofd*] ik zie d'er al euh nee knikken - maar ik heb het nagekeken bij onze diensten (...). (11)
(...) [reaction in the audience, people are shaking their heads] I already see erm people marking 'no' with their heads – but I checked it with our services (...).

At the end of his speech, the speaker also explicitly reflects on the goals of his story. He wants to clarify the reason for his presence, in which the dilemma of stake (Edwards and Potter, 1992) clearly plays an important role: everything a person says, can be interpreted as if it was driven by self-interest. The speaker explicitly addresses this issue in example 14: he states that his aim was only to testify and he positions himself as a witness rather than as an interested party, thus preventing his personal image from being damaged and his words from being evaluated as self-promoting. At the same time, he implicitly demonstrates his communicative insight and his expertise as a professional speaker.

14. *Euh, ik heb u niet willen overtuigen van iets, ik heb willen getuigen van de problemen waar gemeenten en steden op dit ogenblik mee zitten en kampen.* (11)
Erm, I did not want to persuade you of anything, I wanted to testify to the problems that communities and cities at this moment have to deal with.

The speaker quite often includes jokes in his speech, to which the audience responds by means of laughter. Since laughter has the status of an “official conversational activity” (Jefferson, Sacks and Schegloff, 1987: 156): the monological character of the speech is temporarily cancelled. These jokes make the atmosphere more relaxed and less confrontational (Morreall, 1991: 372), because they offer a “time off and time out from the more real, literal, serious, and informational uses of language”

⁷ The audience, whose opinions I collected via questionnaires, thought this speech was highly successful, with a median of 6 on a scale of 7. So the speaker effectively proved his speaking competence.

(Sherzer, 1985: 219). In example 15, we clearly see this transition from the literal sense to the joke in the form of a pun.

15. *Volgens Van Dale wil ik u nog meegeven dat slib onzijdig is, het slib, dat is verkeerd dunkt me, volgens mij is slib veelzijdig.* (11)

Following Van Dale⁸ I want to add that silt is neutral [literally: no-sided], the silt, that is wrong I think, in my opinion silt is many-sided.

Besides a number of neutral jokes, the speaker also inserts self-mockery into his speech. Dyer and Keller-Cohen (2000) focused on such ironic self-references and they showed that these jokes can support the construction of expert identity and at the same time prevent the speaker from coming across as arrogant. An example of such an ironic self-reference can be seen in appendix B, (7). Furthermore, self-mockery can bring the speaker more to the fore and it can emphasize his solidarity with the audience (cf Holmes and Stubbe, 2003); we see in appendix B, (3) and (6) how the speaker positions himself as belonging to the social network of this seminar day, in spite of his previous identity construction as an outsider.

Sometimes the speaker attributes an explicit role to his listeners by putting words into their mouths, as in appendix B, (2) and (3). He creates a kind of pseudo-interaction with his audience that enables him to anticipate possible criticism. These pseudo-interactions can be used in an ironic way, but they can also occur in serious talk about the issue, as in 16.

16. (...) *nu kunt u zeggen: 'U meet maar dat wil toch niet zeggen dat je moet gaan saneren', maar uw meting wordt gepubliceerd (...).* (11)

(...) now you can say: 'You measure, but that does not mean that you will have to clean up', but your measurements are being published (...).

The pseudo-interactions are most frequently found at the beginning and at the end of the speech, such that an immediate connection with the audience is established in the beginning and taken up again at the end. The technique of pseudo-interaction supports the construction of an expert identity, since the speaker demonstrates his ability to anticipate and refute criticism; at the same time, it demonstrates his competence as a speaker, since it makes the speech more lively and entertaining.

In this monological situation, a clear form of interaction is established by which the speaker puts himself in the limelight without appearing to be arrogant. The reactions of the audience in the form of laughter and the pseudo-interaction establish a link between audience and speaker. These techniques bring the speaker to the fore and support his professional identity construction, both as a person who has 'alternative' knowledge of the subject and as a professional speaker.

5. INTERACTION BETWEEN THE TWO TYPES OF IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION

⁸ Van Dale is the name of the standard Dutch reference dictionary.

The two speeches discussed here exhibit a complex interplay of identity constructions: on the one hand, the speakers are characterized by a differing degree of institutional identity construction; on the other hand, both speeches contain a number of markers that build up the speaker's professional identity. As for the speaker's identity construction, there is quite some variation as well: in speech 9, the professional identity construction is mainly built through hedged evaluatives and the use of jargon, while in speech 11, a wide range of strategies are used to construct a complex professional identity of the speaker as an 'alternative' expert with good speaking skills. In section 5, which dealt with the qualitative analyses, I briefly discussed the ways in which these two types of identity construction co-exist and interact. This issue is further addressed in the present section.

From the previous analyses it became clear that, regardless of the number of techniques or the amount of stress on a certain aspect of professional identity, there is one feature that is constant in the construction of professional identity: the speaker's self-presentation as a critical person who adds his personal opinion. The construction of the institutional identity seems to be focused mainly on factual information concerning the achievements of the company, complemented by a description of the actions of the organization. This division between opinion and thoughts of the speaker on the one hand, and actions and achievements of the company on the other, is reflected in the dichotomy between agentive and epistemic self-references, as I discussed above. From the qualitative analyses, it seems that the professional identity is closely linked to the use of epistemic self-references, whereas the institutional identity is constructed by means of agentive self-references. In order to verify this impression, a more detailed analysis of these two types of self-references was seen to be necessary, and in fact, the quantitative analysis of this division clearly demonstrates the presence of these two types. The results of the analysis are given in table 5, which shows all the agentive and epistemic self-references in the group of institutional *we*-forms and identity-constructing *I*-forms⁹.

TABLE 5 ABOUT HERE

Table 5: Agentive and epistemic self-references in the two speeches

The first observation concerning these absolute numbers is that the institutional identity is much more strongly represented; this conclusion is supported by the previous quantitative analyses. But there is also a clear difference in the relative proportion of these two subcategories. When calculating the statistical significance of this difference, the diversity in group size has to be taken into account as well, as can be seen in figure 2.

FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE

Figure 2: A graphic representation of the relative proportion of the subcategorizations of the two types of identity in a speech

⁹ Like the process of filtering pronouns, the categorization of the agentive and epistemic references was a selection process in which many verbs, such as descriptive verbs, were filtered out.

The arrows demonstrate the relation that is being investigated here; the figure also incorporates the relative group size, which is included in the calculation by means of the statistical test performed on two proportions. The figure shows the significance of the contrast that these subcategorizations represent in relative amounts; for instance, the proportion of the agentive group within the institutional group is contrasted with its share within the professional identity group. The differences are all statistically significant and the results are shown in table 6. The rather low p-values indicate a marked contrast.

TABLE 6 ABOUT HERE

Table 6: Statistical significance of the differences between the subcategories in the two speeches¹⁰

A graphical representation of the proportions (in percentages) shows very clearly that the two subcategories work in opposite directions. This can be seen in figures 3 and 4.

FIGURE 3 & 4 ABOUT HERE

Figure 3: Agentive and epistemic self-references for the two identity groups of speech 9

Figure 4: Agentive and epistemic self-references for the two identity groups of speech 11

The results show a clear interaction effect which confirms that the speakers sharply distinguish between their two identity constructions: they consistently attribute all the information on actions and achievements to the company while they ascribe thoughts and opinions explicitly to themselves. This clear division, as it is reflected in the dichotomy between agentive and epistemic self-references, drastically limits the interference between the two types of identity construction and consequently allows them to be easily co-constructed in one and the same speech.

6. CONCLUSION

At the beginning of this article, I set the boundaries of what was to be understood by institutional and professional identity construction. Not being able to contextualize these terms at the beginning of these analyses and having to take into account the necessarily contextualized nature of identity construction, I had to content myself with rather sketchy definitions of the two types of identity under study. Having scrutinized the two speeches both qualitatively and quantitatively, I have a more detailed view of what exactly can be understood by institutional and professional identity construction in the two speeches that formed the basis of my analysis. On the one hand, I can draw some conclusions as to what is typical of these two identities in my analyses, namely the clear division between the institutional and professional identity construction.

¹⁰ The double asterisk indicates that the statistical significance is very high, namely below the border of 0.01.

While discussing the achievements of the organization, the speaker presents himself as an expert in the field by adding his personal comments and remarks on the issue. This way of positioning oneself and the organization is present in both speeches, as it was demonstrated by both the quantitative and the qualitative analyses. On the other hand, the qualitative bottom-up approach resulted in a more detailed analysis of the way these identities are created. This fine-grained level of analysis mainly revealed the many differences between each speaker's unique way of constructing a specific identity. At this level, speaking of a *type* of identity construction is almost a contradiction in terms: not only do speakers build an identity in different ways, but these various ways highlight different aspects of the specific identity. These may be variations of the same theme, a concept that in a rudimentary sense applies to the construction of institutional identity in speeches 9 and 11; however, the unique and changing ways in which the speakers construct identity may also result in totally different dimensions of identity being touched upon, as became evident in the case of the professional identity. Speaker 9 not only demonstrated his expertise, he also drew explicit attention to his professional career. By speaking extensively about his own career, the speaker clearly implied that he judged this information to be relevant for the audience. Therefore, he presented himself as an expert who has a central position in the social network of the audience. Conversely, speaker 11 emphasized totally different aspects of his professional identity since he presented himself as an expert with 'alternative' knowledge. Furthermore, his expertise as a professional communicator and gifted speaker were demonstrated by his frequent use of interactional devices. Although belonging to totally different dimensions, both aspects contribute to the construction of an identity that can be regarded as professional. Keeping these two dimensions separate would be artificial, since they go hand in hand in speech 11, similar to the way the institutional and professional identity complete one another in speech 9.

This article aimed to address two research questions: a content oriented question concerning the interplay between two identities, and a methodological question about the combination and complementarity of the two approaches. As described above, the first question was mainly dealt with in the qualitative analysis, which typically focuses on the fine-grained aspects of identities and how they interact with one another. However, this analysis would not have been possible without the selection process of the quantitative pronoun analysis that identified potentially interesting speeches in the first place. Secondly, the quantitative analyses not only had hypothesizing value concerning the presence of identity construction, they also corroborated the qualitative findings by statistically mapping the institutional and professional identity markers' distribution among agentive and epistemic references. Therefore, this quantitative approach has evidential value in this paper as well, and the combination of these two methods proved to be quite productive.

7. POINTS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Besides pointing, in a rather general way, to areas for further research, such as the analysis of other types of identity construction in the speeches and explorations of the possibilities of the quantitative data, the present article also identifies two interesting issues that emerge from these analyses. Firstly, the results presented here raise the question if the tendency to link the institutional and professional identity to

respectively agentive and epistemic self-references can be generalized. Is this tendency typical of speeches that have a marked presence of these two types of identity, or is it a more general phenomenon, perhaps characteristic of the entire corpus? A further exploration of the present findings is needed to answer this question. Secondly, qualitatively analyzing identity construction in other speeches may lead to a deeper insight in what is typical of a specific *type* of identity construction, and what can be regarded as peripheral within the boundaries of that specific identity. Basing myself on the conclusions of this article regarding speaker identity construction and comparing these findings with previous analyses (Van De Mierop, 2004; 2005), I would argue that the construction of institutional identity is not only more explicit and more frequent in the present corpus, but also that the way of building this identity seems quite conventionalized. Most of the speeches analyzed in Van De Mierop (2005) had very similar ways of constructing institutional identity; and the differences were mainly found in details. In stark contrast with this, there is, in the present context, no ‘typical’ content of the identity construction of the speaker, nor are there generic ways of building a certain identity: speaker identity construction seems to be closely linked to the personal creativity of the speaker. The only aspect that is similar in the two speeches, is the interaction between institutional and speaker identity. It seems almost as if the closeness to the typical ways of constructing institutional identity puts the speaker identity construction in this – almost conventionalized – frame. More conclusive answers to these issues and the ones described above may be found by comparing the qualitative findings offered here with additional analyses undertaken on other speeches.

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