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#### **Acknowledgements**

Part of this research is framed within the *Vir Teach (A virtual Solution for comprehensive and coordinated training for foreign language teachers in Europe)* project, funded by the Erasmus+ programme. The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

UDC 37.06

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#### **ANALYZING SEXUAL IDENTITY ISSUES: DEFINITION AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS**

*This paper aims to define the phenomenon under study and outline its key features in relation to language, sexuality, and gender, as well as some pedagogical implications. Drawing upon interdisciplinary research, this analysis begins with an overview of approaches to understanding sexual identity, its nature and definitions. Finally, based on the current literature analysis, the paper discusses relation of sexual identity to language and communication, and provides the author's ideas for pedagogical implications of sexual identity construction issues.*

**Key words:** *sexuality, sexual identity, sexual orientation, gender, identity.*

Ця робота має на меті визначити явище сексуальної ідентичності та окреслити його ключові особливості стосовно мови, сексуальності та статі, а також розглянути окремі педагогічні аспекти. Спираючись на міждисциплінарні дослідження, аналіз починається з огляду підходів до розуміння сексуальної ідентичності, її природи та дефініцій. Нарешті, на основі аналізу літератури, у статті обговорюється зв'язок сексуальної ідентичності з мовою та спілкуванням, пропонуються авторські ідеї щодо педагогічних аспектів проблеми побудови сексуальної ідентичності.

**Ключові слова:** сексуальність, сексуальна ідентичність, сексуальна орієнтація, стать, ідентичність.

Эта статья направлена на определение феномена сексуальной идентичности и очертание его основных характеристик в отношении языка, сексуальности и пола, а также некоторых педагогических аспектов. Анализ, основанный на междисциплинарных исследованиях, начинается с обзора подходов к пониманию сексуальной идентичности, ее природы и определений. На основе анализа литературы, в статье обсуждается связь сексуальной идентичности с языком и общением, а также приводятся авторские идеи относительно педагогических

аспектов проблем конструирования сексуальной идентичности.

*Ключевые слова:* сексуальность, сексуальная идентичность, сексуальная ориентация, гендер, идентичность.

**Introduction.** Various aspects of a person's life (national, political, economic, community, family, occupational, developmental, to name but a few) have been the focus of attention in identity studies to this or that extent, however, the sphere of sexuality somehow has been confined to silence, or regarded as "a taboo issue", though it is assumed in psychoanalytical research, mainly based on Freudian ideas, that sexuality is a crucial aspect of one's identification with sexual desire to be perceived as the core of one's identity and thus behavior, determining the choice of a life style, as well as other important choices. As a result, the studies of sexual identity have been scattered in a number of domains, ranging from medical, psychological, anthropological, sociological, philosophical, ethical, cultural, discourse and pedagogical, bringing about more misconceptions and understandings, than commonly accepted consensus and clear-cut comprehension. In our paper, we **aim at** analyzing the issue of sexual identity, providing an array of attempts to define the concept in relation to interchangeably used terms of sexual orientations and sexualities, at the same time suggesting possible approaches to sexual identity representations in discourse settings, as well as outlining possible ideas of how to negotiate the mentioned issues with young adults in pedagogical settings, thus helping them realize what kind of "sexual identity" they would be happy to relate themselves with.

**Definition.** In order to define the concept of sexual identity, one should clarify the general idea of identification process, which unfortunately is not an easy thing to do because of the lack of generally accepted approach to understanding the nature of a person's identity. There exist at least three dimensions from the perspective of which identity is being interpreted: behavior-based and cognitive, social constructive, ethnomethodological and interactive.

In many behavior-based and cognition oriented studies, identity is treated as "an essential cognitive, socialized, phenomenological or psychic phenomenon that governs human action" (Benwell&Stokoe, 2006, p. 3). The proponents of this dimension stress: a) the autonomy of the self as an agent responsible for constructing the self (the term used as a substitute for "identity") (Bauman, Giddens); b) the continuity of the subject with consciousness (rather than the body) to be the key uniting matter governing all the different actions an individual has performed (Locke, 1964, p. 213); c) the consciousness making an individual conscious of bodily states (Woodward, 2002, p. 7); d) the experience as the source of knowledge about the self, to some extent rejecting the transcendental, universal principles that constitute a person's identity (Woodward, 2002, p. 7).

Social constructive approach suggests that individuals' identification process takes place within social groups where opposing motives of distinctiveness and belonging are satisfied (Jaspal &Coyle, 2009, p. 152).

Close to the mentioned above viewpoint is the interactionist and ethnomethodological approaches, premised on the impossibility of understanding of personal development, including the issue of identity development, without the analysis of social interaction processes (which may take place in a number of settings, like institutional environments (Lecourt, 2004), spatial locations (for example, neighborhoods (Scollon, 2003)), or digital contexts (social media services, SNSs (social networking

sites) (Manago, 2015)).

Meer analysis of definitions of sexual identity illustrates the lack of common understanding of the very nature of commonsense identity (probably caused by numerous approaches mentioned above), as well as the one related to sexuality. We could assume this to happen due to the fact that "...Few topics are as complex and controversial as human sexual orientation and gender identity. These matters touch upon our most intimate thoughts and feelings, and help to define us as both individuals and social beings. Discussions of the ethical questions raised by sexual orientation and gender identity can become heated and personal, and the associated policy issues sometimes provoke intense controversies" (Mayer&McHugh, 2016, p. 10).

The mentioned above constraints result in the synonymous use of such notions as "sexuality", "sexual orientation" and "sexual identity", identifying sexual preferences of an individual in terms of the same or the other sex partner (gay, lesbian, homosexual, heterosexual, bisexual, etc identities). Deborah Cameron and Don Kulick, in their book *'Language and Sexuality'*, use the terms of "sexual orientation" and "sexual identity" without any seeming difference, claiming that sexuality is often interpreted as "the socially constructed expression of erotic desire", but at the same time arguing that sexuality cannot be limited to sexual orientation which is in their view "stable erotic preference for the people of the same/the other sex" and then sexual identity is "a social identity based on having such constructed preferences" (Cameron&Kulick, 2003, p. 4).

Similar ideas can be found in a number of social and political studies concerned with the so called "identity politics" and preoccupied with sexual minority rights (lesbian feminists, or the first-wave feminists; homosexuals, transgender groups, travesties etc): "The concept of 'gay' not only refers to the sexual and affective orientation of a person; it refers to the construction of an identity. ...To construct sexual identities, people build, define, and understand their desires and erotic practices within cultural, social, historical and personal contexts. ....Thus, identity reflects a multifaceted, dynamic, and dialectic process through which a person answers the question 'Who am I?' and achieves a sense of self" (Lozano-Verduzco&Rocha Sánchez, 2015, p. 56). The mentioned above authors clearly state that homoeroticism and gayness should be understood as identity.

Even if sexual identity and sexual orientation are differentiated (which we believe to be the reasonable idea), there exist some conflicting ideas concerning the nature of both. For example, sexual orientation is claimed to be a choice by some, while others say it is a fixed feature of a person's nature, and one is "born that way" (Mayer&McHugh, 2016, p. 13).

Some studies suggest to refer to sexual orientation as a constituent part of sexual identity, viewing the former as "an enduring emotional, romantic, sexual or affectional attraction to ((an)other person(s)) . . . that ranges from exclusive homosexuality to exclusive heterosexuality and includes various forms of bisexuality" (American Psychological Association, 1998)", but at the same time claiming that sexual identity should be considered as something people "adopt" (Worthington and others, 2002, p. 497), again linking sexual identity to homo or heterosexuality and how those can be developed/ constructed by an individual or in institutional settings.

**Pedagogical implications.** The way sex and gender are conceptualized has implications for all aspects; ...dangerous and static associations between women and femininity and men and masculinity are often assumed, eroding much of the diversity that exists within and among these categories (Dworkin, 2005). That means that gender can be conceptualized and described from the perspective of a number of approaches:

institutionalized gender, gender as choice, gender roles, gender identity, and gender as performance.

In relation to pedagogical settings, gender roles get more and more attention in academic literature. “Gender roles structure the various “parts” that individuals play throughout their lives, impacting aspects of daily life from choice of clothing to occupation. Informally, by virtue of living in a social world, individuals learn the appropriate or expected behavior for their gender. While individuals can accept or resist traditional gender roles in their own presentation of self, gender roles are a powerful means of social organization that impact many aspects of society. ... Gender roles shape and constrain individuals’ experiences; men, women, and other genders are treated differently and have diverse life trajectories as a result of their ascribed role and the degree to which they conform” (Johnson et al., 2007, p. 83).

The nature and structure of gender roles change with the so called “fashion” of gender performativity. What in the past was considered typical of girls’ stereotypical behavior (gender performance), is now viewed as something to be avoided and presented as inappropriate. Such state of social development should be of primary concern of pedagogical professionals, helping young adults in interpreting and understanding the messages of popular culture, which is driven by competitive consumerism-oriented economies, and construct both their sexual and gender identities independently, without the influence of those messages. “Postfeminist popular culture provides a rich source of ‘girlie, hyper-sexualized’ representations that underpin anxieties, concerns and ‘panics’ about the sexualization of girls. ‘Sexy’ clothing embodies hyper-sexualized, hyper-feminine meanings of postfeminist media subjectivities, for example the constitution of women as both (hetero)sexually desiring and (hetero)sexually desirable. Concerns about the premature sexualization of girls frequently cohere around clothing, particularly the direct marketing to girls of body-revealing attire, adult underwear such as G-strings, and clothing emblazoned with adult sexual messages” (Jackson&Vares, 2011, p. 134).

**Conclusions.** It is clear from the mentioned above that not only the problem of sexual identity is still open for discussion, needs further research and clarification, but the very primary notion of identity in general. “Identity has a long history, but there are key debates which emerge for consideration of contemporary illustration and from the historical development of identity stories. Much of the debate has centered on the construction of the self and the extent to which the self can be seen to shape its own destiny and be an active agent in the production of identities. Identity necessarily involves interrelationship between the ‘inside’ and the ‘outside’, the personal and the social, but this relationship is very differently inflected in different accounts” (Woodward, 2002, p. 20), one of which is sexual, being considered as specific, since it combines the “outside” of social, political, cultural, economic with the unknown, latent “inside” perceptions of personal, and there – “inside” – it is being silently interpreted, making a person draw certain conclusions on what kind of individual he/she is.

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УДК [378.147.091.3:005.332.4]:615.1

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АКМЕОЛОГІЧНІ ТЕХНОЛОГІЇ ЯК НЕОБХІДНА УМОВА  
ОСВІТНЬОГО ПРОЦЕСУ ДЛЯ ВИХОВАННЯ  
КОНКУРЕНТОСПРОМОЖНИХ ФАХІВЦІВ ФАРМАЦІЇ**

*У статті розглянуто значення акмеології з точки зору науки та акмеологічні технології навчання як технології досягнення успіху і високих результатів у навчанні та розвитку особистості. Визначено їх основні принципи, охарактеризовано методи їх використання та переваги. Акмеологія характеризується як нова необхідна галузь наукових знань, яка знаходиться у взаємозв'язку з психологією та педагогікою як стрижня в системі наук про людину. З'ясовано, що акмеологія успішно вирішує завдання досягнення вершин майстерності та професіоналізму засобами навчання, сприяє формуванню ціннісного ставлення до самовдосконалення й саморозвитку. Внутрішніми умовами досягнення професійного акме є мотивація, активність, цілеспрямованість, здатність застосувати на практиці професійний досвід. Зовнішніми умовами вияву акме в професійному розвитку є сприятливе*