

**The Performance of Binationalism:
A Study of Bilingually and Biculturally Raised Individuals' National Identity
Construction**

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Abstract

This Honours BA thesis explored how bilingually and biculturally raised individuals, whose parents have different national backgrounds, construct their national identity. In addition, how attitude towards this identity is formed and is part of the identity construction was also addressed. A questionnaire concerning attitude formation and an hourlong focus group on interactive identity construction have provided the data for the answers to the research questions. The results showed that the majority of the participants identified as binational and that factors such as significant others and upbringing influence how attitude towards identity is established. Moreover, it was found that national identity was constructed in interaction through the processes of self-identification and identity-ascription-by-others (Zhu, 2019), and (dis)identification with others (Messelink & Ten Thije, 2012). In practice, identity was discursively constructed through the tactics of intersubjectivity proposed by Bucholtz and Hall (2005b). The results suggested that the participants' separate attitudes towards their nationalities in a specific interaction influenced how they performed their binational identity. Moreover, the binational identity was discursively constructed in such a way that its performance showed an inclination towards either nationality, depending on the interlocutor, conversation topic, and environment.

Keywords: attitude, bicultural, bilingual, binational identity, national identity, performance

1. Introduction

Identity is a much-researched topic within the humanities and social sciences. Bucholtz and Hall define identity as “the social positioning of self and other” (2005a, p. 586). According to Burke and Stets (2012a), “an identity is a set of meanings that define who one is when one is an occupant of a particular role in society, a member of a particular group, or

claims particular characteristics that identify him or her as a unique person” (para. 1). The fulfilment of a particular role in society is achieved through what social identity theory describes as the use of agency. This enables individuals to act in specific ways under specific circumstances, marking how an individual performs each of their existing identities through the use of speech (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005b). Elaborating on this idea, it is widely argued that identity is constructed in interaction (Bamberg et al., 2011; Bucholtz & Hall, 2005a; Damari, 2010). Bucholtz and Hall (2005a) suggest that “[i]dentity is best viewed as the emergent product rather than the pre-existing source of linguistic and other semiotic practices and therefore as fundamentally a social and cultural phenomenon” (p. 588). This implies that the formation of identity is inherently a process that occurs in interactional contexts where language functions as the vehicle for the expression of identity, which in itself is influenced by the social and cultural factors in the individual’s life and the specific conversational context.

Although identity is such a frequently studied concept, the construction and perception of national identity by individuals who were raised by parents with different nationalities and thus different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, specifically, has not been adequately studied before. Most of the previous research on national identity construction has been conducted with individuals who were raised with one nationality, language, and culture. The existing literature on attitude towards national identity mainly focusses on the experiences of individuals who acquired either a second language and culture through language education or the dominant language and culture in addition to both their parents’ minority language and culture, as is the case with immigrant families for example. Furthermore, as also discussed by Chen (2015), previous research conducted on biculturalism has mainly focused on individuals acquiring a second, oftentimes dominant, culture later in life as a result of temporary or permanent immigration. How individuals who simultaneously acquired two nationalities,

languages, and cultures during their upbringing, construct a national identity and an attitude towards this remains an understudied area in the literature.

This paper aims to fill this gap in the literature on national identity by providing new, notable insights into national identity construction and perception as this is experienced by people with a mixed linguistic, cultural, and national background. This is achieved by taking both an interdisciplinary approach wherein sociolinguistic and cultural and linguistic anthropological views are combined, and an in-depth academic approach in which the relation between language and identity is further explored, qualifying this study as Honours thesis. This thesis adopts a methodology that reflects this interdisciplinarity as it combines the use of a questionnaire, semi-structured interview, and open discussion which are all methods used in the fields of sociolinguistics and anthropology. This specific approach allows for the study and analysis of identity as it is created and perceived in a social context. The wide array of languages, cultures, and nationalities that are represented here makes it possible for the findings of this study to be positioned within a broader, international academic context related to the study of identity.

By combining interdisciplinary perspectives on national identity construction and perception with several research methods applied by sociolinguists and anthropologists, this study aims to answer the following research questions and sub-questions:

1. How do bilingually and biculturally raised individuals construct a national identity and what role does attitude play in this?
 - a. How do these individuals experience national identity?
 - b. How is national identity constructed in interaction?
2. What factors form and influence their attitude towards this identity?
 - a. To what extent do context and interlocutor influence attitude?

- b. What role do upbringing and exposure to both languages and cultures play in this?
- c. To what extent does attitude towards language and culture influence attitude towards national identity?

2. Theoretical Framework

The following sections provide an overview of the existing literature on identity construction and attitude formation. Section 2.1 discusses the discursive nature of identity construction; section 2.2 describes what is important for national identity construction; section 2.3 considers bilingualism and biculturalism and their roles in identity construction; and section 2.4 provides insight into how attitudes towards language and identity are created.

2.1 Identity Construction

The construction of any identity is inherently a social and discursive practice that occurs in interaction (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005a). According to Bucholtz and Hall's (2005a) *partialness principle*, “identity may be in part intentional, in part habitual and less than fully conscious, in part an outcome of interactional negotiation, in part a construct of others’ perceptions and representations, and in part an outcome of larger ideological processes and structures” (p. 585). Identity construction is thus a dynamic process (Wodak et al., 2009), suggesting that it is context-dependent and highly personal.

To illustrate the practice of identity construction, Burke and Stets (2012a) address the *structural symbolic interactionism* theory (Stryker, 1980, as cited in Burke & Stets, 2012a, para. 4). Structural symbolic interactionism includes three key concepts: “the self, language, and interaction” (Burke & Stets, 2012a, para. 20). Here, *the self* refers to an individual’s own conscious perception of their identity in a particular interaction, which enables the individual

to assign meanings to themselves and others through the use of language. *Language* involves symbols that acquire meaning from the social context in which it is used. Following Bucholtz and Hall's (2005a) *indexicality principle*, identities are indexed in discourse through the use of "labels, implicatures, stances, styles, or linguistic structures and systems" (p. 585). Damari (2010) argues that "particular linguistic strategies [...] are used to make temporary stances more powerful and to recruit them in the development of locally specific positions or identities" (p. 625). Moreover, since "language and culture are interrelated" (Chen, 2015, p. 1), the meaning of symbols, and therefore language as a whole, is culturally dependent. Chen (2015) argues that language is therefore "a marker of group identity" (p. 1). Using a different culturally determined language enables an individual to appear differently (Bamberg et al., 2011).

The alteration of appearance marks the performance of a specific identity (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005b), which results from language-use in *interaction* (Burke & Stets, 2012a). Burke and Stets (2012a) emphasise how both interlocutors perform one particular identity of the numerous identities they can assume. The intersubjectivity of interaction enables the construction and negotiation of identity (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005b), resulting in "a sense of self" (Bamberg et al., 2011, p. 178). This suggests that identity formation is dependent on the social context in which the interaction takes place. Thus, *the self*, the culturally determined *language* that is used, and the (social) aspects of *interaction* all conjunct in the construction of identity.

Furthermore, this discursive construction of identity is aided by various semiotic practices (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005b). Bucholtz and Hall (2005b) have proposed three pairs of *tactics of intersubjectivity* speakers utilise to establish their unique identity performance in a specific conversation. The three pairs are: *adequation/distinction*, which are used in conversation to either align oneself with a certain group or distinguish oneself from a certain

group; *authentication/denaturalization*, which are used to either construct a genuine or non-genuine identity; and *authorisation/illegitimation* which are used to either legitimise or delegitimise an identity. The tactics are employed to establish certain relations “vis-à-vis some reference group or individual (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005b, p. 383).

Bucholtz and Hall (2005b) note that not only *how* an identity is constructed but also *why* it is constructed is important to consider as this indicates the social purpose of identity performance. Identities can be established with various goals in mind. Messelink and Ten Thije (2012) discussed how interlocutors use “cultural (dis)identification [...] to confirm or contradict their belonging to their cultural group” (2012, p. 86). According to Berzonsky (2011), individuals are only aware of what *they* think about their identification (processes) and needs, and that this does not necessarily represent reality. Still, Zhu described how both “self-orientation” (2019, p. 228) and “ascription-by-others” (2019, p. 228) are identification processes. She argues how individuals can either accept ascription-by-others, thus aligning the self-orientation with this, or resist the ascription, thus misaligning with this (Zhu, 2019). According to Luyckx et al. (2011), individuals’ self-perception of their ascribed identities, for example national identity, is important in the identity performance.

In addition, Wodak et al. (2009) studied national identity construction and found that the tactic of *adequation/distinction* was important for the identification with a national in-group and distinction from a national out-group. Furthermore, the findings of Waugh’s (2010) study on a French-English bilingual showed how this individual used an “explicit national identity act” (p. 121) to explicitly state the in-group they felt a sense of belonging with, and an “implicit national identity act” (p. 121) to distance themselves from a national group by referring to the one as ‘they’ and the other as ‘us.’

2.2 National Identity

The previously discussed discursive processes of identity construction are also applicable to national identity construction. National identities are not formed in one specific way and heavily depend on, among others, context, conversation topic, and interlocutor (Wodak et al., 2009). In their study on Austrian discursive identity construction, Wodak et al. (2009) also found that language, everyday culture, the idea of a *homo Austriacus* (i.e., Austrian persona), a sense of national pride, and state-based factors such as citizenship were deemed important for national identification. Referring to a shared history, culture, and territory in conversation was also found meaningful (Wodak et al., 2009).

Moreover, Verdugo and Milne (2016) argued that “national identity is a sense of belonging to and being a member of a geopolitical entity” (p. 3) and that various “relational, normative, contextual, kinship, and historical factors” (p. 2) influence this.

2.3 Bilingualism and Biculturalism

As discussed previously, language and culture guide the process of identity construction. However, when an individual is bilingual and bicultural, this process becomes more intricate. These individuals acquired their two languages and cultures simultaneously and went through a process of biculturalism (Chen, 2015; Huynh et al., 2011) and bilingual language development. How such individuals who were simultaneously immersed in two cultures and taught two languages, specifically, establish a national identity is a scarcely researched area. However, other research has been conducted on what multiculturality means for identity construction.

First, biculturals can “shift between their two cultures in accordance with the situation” (Huynh et al., 2011, p. 829) but also “subscribe to a ‘fused’ or emergent third culture created by mixing and recombining their two cultures” (p. 829). According to the

Bicultural Identity Integration (BII) theory, multicultural individuals can experience a sense of “cultural harmony versus conflict” (Chen, 2015, p. 3; Huynh et al., 2011, p. 830) and/or a sense of “cultural blendedness versus compartmentalization” (Huynh et al., 2011, p. 830). The degree to which biculturals experience harmony or blendedness is different for each individual and can have different combinations.

Huynh et al. (2011) describe how the experience of harmony and conflict affect a bicultural individual’s attitude towards their cultures. They elaborate on this by stating that biculturals who mainly incorporated one culture into their lives experienced more harmony. Harmony, in turn, was found to positively influence attitude towards, specifically for the mentioned study, ethnic identity. In addition, the more the two cultures differ, the more a bicultural individual may experience conflict (Huynh et al., 2011). According to Huynh et al. (2011), a sense of conflict can be resolved by combining the two cultures into one, merged bicultural identity, or by keeping the two cultural identities completely separate from one another. Huynh et al. (2011) propose that biculturals who acquired their two cultures at the same time are likely to experience more blendedness and suggest that future research should address this. Hence, this assumption will also be incorporated into the present study.

Second, parents pass on their languages and cultures to their children, providing the means to establish an identity in conversation. In addition to interaction as an important vehicle for identity construction, family relationships can be considered even more important since they “bind people together over time, even without their being aware; it refers to what has been established (and continues to be agreed), implicitly or explicitly, with regard to values, meanings, rituals, and the assignment of roles” (Scabini & Manzi, 2011, p. 567). The meanings established by family relations are said to “transcend those that emerge from interaction” (p. 568). The family forms a social group with its own identity constructed from its cultural and social environment. When an individual identifies with this family identity,

the family is regarded as in-group (Scabini & Manzi, 2011). Scabini and Manzi (2011) refer to the “relatedness need” (p. 573), which highlights individuals’ need to feel “closeness to, or acceptance by, other people, whether in dyadic relationships or within ingroups” (p. 573-574). An important aspect of this is the acquisition of family heritage and its biological, social, and cultural elements through the parents.

In addition, Scabini and Manzi (2011) mention factors such as intimacy, commitment, emotional support, and family values as essential to the family bond. A well-functioning family with supportive bonds results in “positive psychosocial outcomes” (Scabini & Manzi, 2011, p. 569). Scabini and Manzi (2011) indicate how the ethical and affective side of the family bond, which are based on trust, hope, and loyalty, are culture dependent. If one of these is absent, family members experience distress.

Third, Oetting and Beauvais (1990-1991, as cited in Chen, 2015, p. 2) have studied cultural identification and focused on individuals’ ability to identify with multiple cultures. They established four distinct categories of identification for this: “(i) high identification with two cultures, (ii) high identification with one culture and medium identification with another, (iii) low identification with either culture, and (iv) identification with one culture” (Chen, 2015, p. 2). They found that adjusting identification was uncomplicated for a mixed cultural identification, whereas adjusting when cultural identification was weak was problematic (Oetting & Beauvais, 1990-1991, as cited in Chen, 2015, p. 2).

Furthermore, this problematic experience can be related to Huynh et al.’s (2011) description of harmony and conflict between cultures and the role family plays in cultural identification. An example of this as discussed by Luyckx et al. (2011), is how overly controlling parents result in their children’s dissatisfaction with their constructed identity. This distress can negatively influence the perception of the family identity, and by extent the national identity connected to this. Nicolini and Cherubini (2011) and Oliver and Purdie

(1998), too, suggest that significant others such as family members and friends influence attitude towards both language and identity. The next section will elaborate on this idea.

2.4 Attitude

Since language and culture are fundamental to the construction of identity, an individual's attitudes towards their language and culture could influence that person's attitude towards their constructed identity. Attitude can be defined as “a construct, an abstraction which cannot be easily apprehended, [...] an inner component of mental life which expresses itself, directly or indirectly, through more obvious processes and stereotypes, beliefs, verbal statements or reactions, ideas and opinions, selective recall, anger of satisfaction or some other emotions and in various other aspects of behaviour” (Oppenheim, 1982, as cited in Garrett, 2010, as cited in Santello, 2015, p. 2). Thus, attitude is presented in discourse, is related to emotions, and can affect an individual's behaviour and, by extent, their identity performance. This section will provide insight on what shapes bilinguals' and biculturals' attitude towards language, culture, and identity.

2.4.1 Attitude Towards Language

Santello (2015) discusses how bilinguals' attitude towards languages can be influenced by the perceived attractiveness, prestige, and efficiency of the languages. Furthermore, he argues that “the concurrent presence of the two languages in a bilingual mind” (Santello, 2015, p. 11) can influence how the bilingual perceives their languages, for the two are compared when forming language attitudes. According to Santello, language attitudes are possibly related to “language exposure, competence and cultural identification” (2015, p. 19), suggesting that language attitude is connected to an individual's identification in a specific situation. In addition, Chen (2015) suggests that fluency in the languages influences an individual's “ability to express themselves” (p. 5). Elaborating on this idea,

these elements of language attitude can thus provide insights into how a bilingual and bicultural individual constructs their identity.

Furthermore, Chen (2015) suggests that bilinguals switch between their languages depending on the interactional context, which also stimulates variation in their emotional responses as self-perception is dependent on the language that is used. Moreover, she suggests that “[i]t is the environment and the interlocutors together that give rise to a change of attitudes and behaviours” (Chen, 2015, p. 7).

2.4.2 Attitude Towards Identity

First, Nicolini and Cherubini (2011) state that a sense of self image, or attitude towards the self, is “associated with particular emotional states and affects” (p. 190). McCall and Simmons (1978, as cited in Burke & Stets, 2012b, para. 12) argue that these emotional states, or feelings, derive from the challenging of one’s identity in a specific interaction. The positive or negative feelings individuals experience are not static, these can change over time and are context-dependent (Burke & Stets, 2012b).

In addition, Burke and Stets (2012b) state that an individual will view themselves negatively if their performed identity is nonverified. Moreover, they describe how individuals base their self-perceptions on others’ evaluation of them. In interaction, an identity is either verified or dismissed by the interlocutor, meaning that the identity performance is either recognised or not (Burke & Stets, 2012b). Verification stimulates positive feelings, like pride, towards the performed identity, whereas nonverification leads to negative feelings like shame (Burke & Stets, 2012b). For example, family support of a constructed identity aids identity verification, whereas a lack thereof causes nonverification.

Burke and Stets (2012b) discuss how “the frequency by which an identity is disrupted and the significance of the source of the disruption” (para. 29) also intensify the negative feelings associated with nonverification, for example when a performed identity is rejected. In

the case of multicultural individuals, disruption arises when an individual is unable to maintain their cultural identities simultaneously as one will likely dominate over the other (Burke & Stets, 2012b).

Second, Burke and Stets (2012b) describe how significant others are more influential on the emotions resulting from (non)verification since an individual has already established “mutually verified expectations” (Burke & Stets, 2012b, para. 32) for identity performance with these people. In addition, “positive affect rather than negative affect is the catalyst for increased commitment to groups. In turn, increased commitment leads to greater positive shared feelings in the group” (Burke & Stets, 2012b, para. 16). Nicolini and Cherubini (2011), too, found that social ties influence whether an individual forms a negative or positive attitude towards themselves. Parents’ praise, for example, influenced the way adolescents perceived themselves (Nicolini & Cherubini, 2011).

3. Method

A mixed methods approach, which included the use of a questionnaire and focus group, was adopted to collect both quantitative and qualitative data that would aid finding answers to the research questions. Given identity construction’s discursive nature, the study’s structure was based on the three categories of structural symbolic interactionism: *the self*, *language*, and *interaction* (Burke and Stets, 2012a). The use of these categories allowed for the exploration of identity construction and the role of attitude in this, as well as what influences attitude, on all three levels. The questionnaire allowed for analysis of the self and language. The focus group was aimed at analysis of all three components of discursive identity construction.

3. 1 Participants

This study's main focus lies on national identity construction by bilingually and biculturally raised people in general. Therefore, it was deliberately decided to include a range of participants with different mixed linguistic, cultural, and national backgrounds. The participants for the questionnaire were gathered using convenience sampling and subsequently snowball sampling. In total, 26 individuals responded to the questionnaire out of which four who identified as binational also participated in the focus group.

All of the participants in this study were raised by two parents with different national backgrounds who incorporated both of their languages and cultures into the participant's upbringing. Together, the participants represent a variety of mixed backgrounds (Table 1).

In both the questionnaire and focus group, the participants were asked to reflect on their sense of national identity in terms of their upbringing, exposure to both languages, cultures, and nationalities, and the role of attitude towards either nationality. In order to allow for sufficient reflection on the self, it was decided to only include adults of 18 years or older since this would enable the participants to reflect on their experiences of national identity over the span of their whole upbringing, including both childhood and teenage years. The ages of the participants ranged from 18 to 34. In addition, the majority ($n = 22$) of the individuals are female.

Table 1

Number of Participants With Each Represented Mixed National, Linguistic, and Cultural Background in the Study

Background	Number of participants (N = 26)
Dutch – American	1
Dutch – French	7
Dutch – Russian	1
Dutch – Scottish	1
Dutch – British	2
Dutch – Danish	1
Dutch – Thai	1
Dutch – German	2
German – Spanish	1
German – Italian	2
German – Peruvian/Venezuelan	1
Dominican – Portuguese	1
Finnish – French	1
Austrian – Danish	1
British – Indian	1
Italian – Canadian	1
English – Albanian	1

3.2 Questionnaire

For the first part of this study, a questionnaire containing 23 questions related to attitude towards language, culture, and identity, and the roles of and exposure to both languages and cultures during upbringing (Appendix A), was distributed. Three types of questions were used to gather the data: 7-point Likert scale questions, open-ended questions, and multiple-choice questions. Some questions explicitly asked the participants to state what influenced their attitude. Other questions asked about factors that previous research deemed important for the perception of language, culture and/or identity. Overall, the questionnaire's aim was to gain insight in what factors influence attitude towards language, culture, and

nationality, as well as the experiences of language, culture, and nationality during upbringing, reflecting structural symbolic interactionism's *the self* (Burke and Stets, 2012a).

Additionally, the options presented for question 9 ("How do you identify with your nationalities?") included the identification categories proposed by Oetting and Beauvais (1990-1991, cited in Chen, 2015, p. 2). The options presented for question 10 ("How would you refer to your identification?") were based on the identification categories in question 9 and built on Huyhn et al.'s (2011) claim that biculturals could resolve conflict by combining their cultures into one bicultural identity or by keeping them separate from each other. From here the options "binational identity in which the two are merged" and "two distinct national identities" for question 10 followed.

3.3 Focus Group

The hourlong, video-recorded focus group marked the second half of this study and was split into two parts. Prior to the session, the participants were asked to give consent for the recording.

Part 1 was a semi-structured interview, part 2 was a spontaneous, informal discussion between the participants. The aim of the first part of the focus group was to understand how the participants themselves experienced national identity construction and what roles their languages and cultures played in this, reflecting structural symbolic interactionism's *the self* and *language* (Burke and Stets, 2012a).

During the interview in part 1, the participants were presented with six prompts related to their perception of identity construction (Table 2).

Table 2*Prompts Used in Part 1 of the Focus Group*

Prompts
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All of you specified in the questionnaire that you would describe your national identity as a binational identity or as a blended national identity. I was wondering if you could all elaborate on this, and on your experience of this, and why you identify in this specific way instead of, for example, having two distinct national identities. 2. What roles do your languages and cultures play in this identification? Do both languages and cultures influence this? Or is one side more important than the other? 3. When you are speaking with other people, is the context in which you are speaking – so, the particular situation, the interlocutor, the topic of your conversation – important and do these aspects influence how you nationally identify in that specific moment? 4. What about the person you are speaking to? Does their background matter? Their nationality, for example? Does that influence how you identify? 5. What role do your family members play in your sense of national identity? So, for example, your family heritage or particular rituals or habits? 6. In the questionnaire, I asked you about your attitude towards your national identity and your languages and cultures. To what extent do you believe that these attitudes shape the way you construct your national identity? So, to what extent does attitude towards your languages and cultures play a role in how you identify?

Part 2 of the focus group was an unstructured, spontaneous interaction during which experiences of national identity were discussed among the participants. This live interaction allowed for the observation of how national identity is constructed in practice, reflecting structural symbolic interactionism's *interaction* (Burke and Stets 2012a).

3.4 Analysis

3.4.1 Questionnaire

Out of the 26 questionnaire responses, 24 were complete. The responses to the two incomplete questionnaires were still used in the data analysis since the elaborate responses to the filled in questions suggested that the questionnaire was filled in seriously, but that the participants did not have time to complete the questionnaire.

As the questionnaire's structure included three parts that focused on attitude towards language, culture, and identity, the responses to these questions were also categorised as such.

This allowed for the observation of which factors are influential for each component and to what extent these were of negative or positive influence.

In addition, statistical analyses in SPSS were used to analyse the responses to the 7-point Likert scale statements. First, the Cronbach's alpha of the responses was determined. Second, descriptive analyses for the means and standard deviations of the response values were executed in order to establish which proposed factors were negative or positive influences on attitude towards national identity.

3.4.2 Focus Group

The focus group recording was transcribed using Otter.ai and checked by the researcher. The transcription data of part 1 was categorised using the processes of self-identification and identity-asccription-by-others as proposed by Zhu (2019), and (dis)identification as proposed by Messelink and Ten Thije (2012). The participants' responses to the prompts were assigned to the categories, illustrating which factors caused which type of identification.

In addition, the interactional data of part 2 was categorised using Bucholtz and Hall's (2005b) proposed tactics of intersubjectivity. These categories allowed for the analysis of how bilingual and bicultural individuals construct a national identity and which discursive actions enable this in practice. Furthermore, as Bucholtz and Hall (2005b) emphasised the importance of both how and why a particular identity is constructed, the analysis of the tactics of intersubjectivity also provides insight into what drives the construction of national identity in a specific interaction.

4. Results

Both the questionnaire and focus group enabled the collection of meaningful data for this specific research project. What influences attitude towards identity was explored in the

questionnaire. Following this, the focus group allowed for more in-depth observation of how identity is constructed and to what extent attitude affects this.

4.1 Questionnaire

The questionnaire (Appendix A) posed numerous questions related to the participants' upbringing and factors known to influence attitude towards identity taken from the existing literature.

First of all, the majority of the participants stated to either highly identify with both nationalities or highly with one nationality and medium with the other (Table 3).

Identification with only one nationality or low identification with both were chosen by fewer participants. In addition, when asked to specify how they would then refer to this identification, over half of the participants chose "binational identity in which the two are merged" (Table 4).

Table 3

Indicated Degree of National Identification

Identification type	Choice count (N = 26)
High identification with both nationalities	9 (34.6%)
High identification with one nationality and medium with the other	12 (46.2%)
Low identification with either nationality	1 (3.9%)
Identification with one nationality	4 (15.4%)

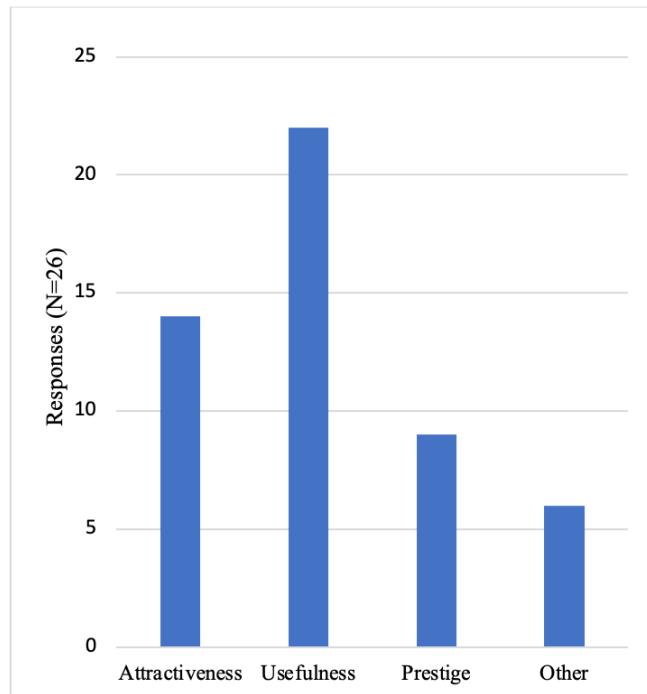
Table 4*Reference to National Identification*

Reference type	Choice count (N = 26)
Single national identity	4 (15.4%)
Two distinct national identities	7 (26.9%)
Binational identity in which the two are merged	15 (57.7%)

Moreover, when asked about their experiences of growing up with two languages, cultures, and nationalities, the majority described how these were mainly positive except for some confusion between the languages and the fact that those in their surroundings were monolingual and -cultural. Following the questionnaire responses, the participants indicated that their attitudes towards language, culture, and nationality were influenced by various factors. The next sections will elaborate on this.

4.1.1 Factors Influencing Attitude Towards Language

The respondents were asked to indicate which of the proposed factors – attractiveness, usefulness, and prestige – influenced their attitude towards their languages (Figure 1). The majority (n=22) indicated that the usefulness of the language influenced their attitude. Over half of the participants (n=14) opted for attractiveness as another influencing factor. Prestige was deemed influencing by the least respondents (n=9). In total, six respondents indicated that other factors also influenced their attitude. These mainly concerned family heritage, the expression of emotion, and communicating with family.

Figure 1*Factors Influencing Language Attitude*

Furthermore, the respondents were asked to indicate to what extent they experienced harmony or conflict between their languages as this could possibly affect their attitude. Few respondents explicitly indicated to experience harmony ($n=2$) or conflict ($n=2$). However, many ($n=15$) suggested that one language was more dominant due to their past and current surroundings – both the home and elsewhere –, the language they needed in daily life, and the language they used to express feelings and emotions. It was explicitly stated by one respondent that they felt conflicted when one language started to dominate as “that didn’t feel fair.”

4.1.2 Factors Influencing Attitude Towards Culture

When asked about the presence of both cultures, most respondents ($n=18$) stated that they were blended together. Cultural aspects were acquired in a mixed manner and thus present in a mixed manner. Nevertheless, some respondents explicitly stated being able to distinguish between the two cultures, especially in specific situations. From the 23

respondents who answered the question on the role of culture in their sense of national identity, 14 stated that this was important for how they identified and where they felt they belonged.

Moreover, the majority (n=13, N=23) indicated that their cultures were balanced in their lives. There were 10 participants who stated that one culture was more dominant than the other, but that this was not necessarily cause for conflict. This dominance was caused by feeling more connected to that culture and by its dominant status in the participants' surroundings. Those who experienced conflict (n=3) described how this was related to familial issues and childhood experiences.

4.1.3 Factors Influencing Attitude Towards National Identity

The questionnaire included Likert statements containing factors that might influence attitude towards national identification (Table 5), which were answered by all 26 respondents. The responses to the Likert statements were found to be reliable ($\alpha = .712$). Based on the 7-point Likert scale, the factors included in statements 1 to 12 all contributed to a positive attitude towards national identification. Statement 13's factor caused a slightly negative attitude, and the 14th factor possibly would not affect identification that much.

Table 5

Means (and Standard Deviations) for the Effect of Different Factors on Attitude towards National Identity (1: extremely negative, 7: extremely positive)

Statement	M (SD) (N = 26)
1. Feeling connected to the culture(s)	6.0 (0.7)
2. Incorporating cultural practices into my life	5.8 (1.0)
3. Having well-established, maintained, and supportive family bonds	5.5 (1.2)
4. Feeling connected to and having a sense of belonging with family members	5.7 (1.2)
5. Speaking the language(s) adequately	6.2 (1.0)
6. Having the ability to express myself (thoughts, emotions) well in the languages	6.0 (1.2)
7. Spending time in my parents' countries of origin	5.9 (1.5)
8. Knowing my family heritage	5.6 (1.5)
9. Interacting with a person who shares one of my languages and cultures	6.0 (1.0)
10. Interacting with family members	5.7 (1.2)
11. My parents' attitudes towards their nationalities	5.6 (1.3)
12. My friends' positive attitudes towards my nationalities	5.2 (1.5)
13. My friends' negative attitudes towards my nationalities	3.3 (1.4)
14. Existing stereotypes of the nationality/nationalities	3.7 (1.3)

In addition, the respondents also indicated other influential factors. Reading about heritage in anthropological articles, others' positive or negative views of their nationalities, and the lingua franca status of a language all established pride and thus a positive attitude towards national identity. Discrimination based on speaking a minority language, the perception of family members as "bad people," and being forced to speak a language growing up all negatively influence attitude. Also, how each respective country manages global issues and affairs and how each family side treats the other are both context-dependent factors influencing attitude.

Moreover, the majority (n=21) indicated being closer to one side of the family and over half (n=15) stated that their family bonds influenced their attitude towards either nationality. Depending on the experience of the family dynamics and the connection that is felt with family members' personalities, this could add to either a more negative or positive attitude towards each nationality. Feelings of closeness and trust, frequent communication, and having a big family resulted in a positive attitude. Closeness was experienced when the family lived in the same country as the respondent, but also when there was distance between the respondent and their family as this made their relationship stronger. Also, interestingly, those who identified with a binational identity often discussed attitude in terms of the separate national identities instead of their merged, binational form.

4.2 Focus Group

The focus group explored how the participants themselves experienced national identity construction and how their two languages and cultures are part of this construction. Furthermore, it also allowed for the further exploration of attitude in identity construction and for the analysis of identity formation in live conversation.

4.2.1 Part 1 – The Interview

The first part of the focus group focused on how the participants created a sense of national identity and what their experiences of this entail. Moreover, to what extent attitude prevails as a factor in national identity construction was also discussed. The participants' responses illustrated the significance of self-identification, identity-ascription-by-others (Zhu, 2019), and (dis)identification with others (Messelink & Ten Thije, 2012).

4.2.1.1 Self-Identification

In the questionnaire, the four focus group participants all expressed identification with a binational identity in which their two languages, cultures, and nationalities were merged.

When asked to elaborate on this, all participants stated that both languages and cultures were present in their upbringing:

Example 1

- Participant 1 “So, my mother's French, and my dad is Dutch. **And at home, we always, I always spoke French to my mom and Dutch to my dad, and to my siblings, it always has been a mix. So that's why I think I could blend it because I, as a child, I was always used to, like mix up both languages.**”
- Participant 2 “I grew up in Northern Ireland, and my dad is Northern Irish, and my mom is Dutch. **And we also grew up speaking both languages in the house, which kind of, it got a lot less as we were growing up, once we started going to school.** I think, all me and my sisters kind of went through a phase of **we don't want to speak Dutch in the house anymore, you know, kind of rebelling against that.** But if I think about my house, like my home, it's a **complete mix.** [...] So, so many daily things that I do come from, like both nationalities, which is why **I think it's blended, I couldn't say that they're two separate things, because they're always mixed.**”
- Participant 3 “I speak English to my dad and Dutch to my mom most of the time. And my siblings again, like, who knows it, we might even **switch mid-sentence.** So, like, it's very hard to be like, Okay, this is where this ends and that's where that starts. **It's all blended together.**”
- Participant 4 “I distributed the language a bit more kind of, like, at least like I speak with my mother Spanish, she's from South America. And with my father and my sister German, just maybe because of the **environment we grew up in.** But in the end, it's kind of like, it kind of went to an **equal basis.**”

For all participants, both languages were used in their households while growing up. Each language was, and is, mainly used to speak to each respective parent. However, both languages are used for communication between siblings, sometimes resulting in codeswitching. Where most of the participants stated that they used both languages without any second thought, participant 2 specifically stated to have experienced a “kind of rebelling” against using Dutch in their Northern Irish environment as being bilingual in a primarily monolingual environment made them feel less normal. The participants’ identification as binational individual seems to be reflected in the mixed presence of their languages in their childhood and adult lives. Overall, participant 3 stated that this blended nationality also meant that they did not possess both cultures in the same way any monocultural person does:

Example 2

Participant 3 “Personally, I'd say it feels like I'm both nationalities but also neither nationality because I'm missing so much in both of them. [...] Yeah, you're both but neither, I'd say.”

In addition, when the participants were asked about what roles their languages and cultures play in their binational identification, all indicated that they were inherently linked to the places they have lived. The participants who grew up in one of their parents' countries of origin described how being surrounded by one language and culture made them lean more towards that side of their binational identity than the other. Furthermore, this also caused some feelings of unease, as participant 2 stated:

Example 3

Participant 2 “But at the same time, I don't speak the way other 23-year-olds speak Dutch. So, I find that kind of like a problematic relationship with that **I don't feel good enough**. Speaking Dutch even though I am Dutch, that's a bit weird.”

Participant 2, who grew up in Northern Ireland, said they did not “feel good enough” when speaking Dutch regardless of being fluent in it. Participant 3, too, grew up in one of their parents' countries of origin but did not have a similar experience. They explained that:

Example 4

Participant 3 “Yeah, I definitely agree that **the country you're in really determines which culture at that moment you're closer to**. Yeah, I mean, when I lived in America [...] I was closer to American but that's, that's because what I did with all my friends every day, so. And then when I moved to the Netherlands, I felt a lot closer to my Dutch side.”

Living in the Netherlands for a longer period of time has enabled this participant to feel closer to one side of their family and thus lean more towards that nationality. Reacting to this, Participant 2 also indicated that “it has to do with where you feel like you belong as well.”

Participant 4, the only one who did not grow up in a parent's country of origin, specified the following:

Example 5

Participant 4 “And for me, I think like the part plays a bit of a role I never actually lived in South America. [...] So, and So yeah, maybe the actually present dominant one was the German side, but I still kind of like, **seek out to be with the other part**. Like for example, now I'm in the Netherlands and I really enjoy, I'm **really happy if I meet someone else from South America**. So, I can still speak the language and or maybe exchange some cultural values that are the same.”

Although they did not grow up in the environment of either of their nationalities, Participant 4 leans more towards one side of the binational identity by actively seeking connections to that side.

In addition, family shapes self-identification too. The participants specified how context with family members and their parents' use of specific values and traditions in their upbringing affects their self-perception. Out of the four participants, three expressed the view that both sides of their family were equally important to their upbringing and identification:

Example 6

Participant 1 “Personally, I feel like **I got more of the French culture because I grew up in France**, and also because my mother is very patriotic, I would say. [...] I think it's a common thing in France. [...] So, I feel like **my mother shared more of her culture** than my dad did. And I got most of my Dutch culture from my grandparents.”

Participant 2 “Yeah, I, I think the same, but in a different light, because it was Northern Ireland that I grew up in a culture wasn't as explicitly dealt with, [...] because that's just, you get that in **your daily experiences**. So, it wasn't like 'right girls sit down, we're gonna learn a bit about x, y, and z today', whereas that is kind of more what we would have done with the Dutch culture side of things, **because it was further away from our daily life**. [...] It's more like I think it's more to do with **values and how you think about the world** and which is possibly harder to teach.”

Participant 3 “Like, it's important to have the **same norms and values**, so [my parents] have the same norms and values, it matches up a lot. So that's very difficult to say which ones are actually American and which ones are Dutch. [...] I think both my parents have also kind of really taken over each other's culture.”

The environment they grew up in, contact with family members, and their parents' active involvement of their cultures in the upbringing instilled both national cultures in these participants. Also, values and traditions are to a greater or lesser extent present in the

participants' lives. Somehow, these are also blended together making it challenging to consciously distinguish between the two cultures.

On the other hand, Participant 4's family connections are better with one side of the family than the other:

Example 7

Participant 4 "I think, like, I have more the values or family values, and the relationship is **stronger** with, my mother's side because they are more **open**. And even if I didn't see them a lot, [...] they [...] showed way more **love**. And also, my father's side, I think, part of the family is not really keen of my mother or something like that. [...] But then I also myself maybe want to **distance myself** a bit from them simply because **they don't seem very [accepting]**. And so, I kind of probably have or I carry more of the values that my mother showed me and that I grew up from the one side, so."

Due to family dynamics, one nationality is regarded more positively than the other. The values of that culture are also more present in Participant 4's life.

4.2.1.2 (Dis)Identification With Others

The other participants had also experienced this search for connection. Connection, they explained, was important for how they identified themselves. When discussing the context of a conversation – interlocutor, environment, and conversation topic – the participants expressed that feeling connected to others who share one of their nationalities was important for how they would identify themselves:

Example 8

Participant 1 “Well, you try to connect with the person so you try to identify with the culture you know, like, you both know, I would say. Yeah, I mean, if I speak with a French person, I would try to connect with French culture we both share and a Dutch person I would try to share the Dutch culture.”

Participant 2 “Regarding topic, I think, definitely, to give an example. Was it a week ago or a couple of weeks ago, when there were the riots here. And I was like, listening to myself **talking about them**. And I kept on using the word 'they' like, oh, my goodness, what are they doing? Like, everybody needs to calm down. And, and I was really like, **distancing myself from that half part** of me that I am so proud of. And it really made me step back and think like, Whoa, okay, so in this, because you don't agree with what's happening, you're not identifying with that or you're putting them in a box, which you're not part of. And I do the same with Northern Ireland when we're talking about like the troubles and like political stuff that goes on there that I also don't agree with, **I also talk more about 'them.'** [...] Then regarding the person, I think, in, if I'm not in the Netherlands, and I come across someone who is from there, then I do, like, **strongly identify them-with them, and I, like connect with them**, like [Participant 1] said, but then sometimes when I'm here, and say I was talking to another group of people exactly the same as me, like all around my age, but fully Dutch, **I wouldn't feel like I have the same rights.** [...] But like, I'm not the exact same as them. Because I have a part of me that is different. So, I wouldn't like claim things the same way that they could claim things. [...] But I'm like, well aware of the fact that I'm not the exact same as them. So, then I would also speak differently about things and maybe tap more into the fact that I'm half Northern Irish. And that's where I grew up. And Holland isn't actually like, yeah, the place where I was born, that kind of thing. So, **space also plays a part** in that then I think,”

Participant 3 “Yeah. I definitely have to agree like, you know, **context** really matters. I mean, **it also determines like, which language I speak in**. Like, if I'm talking to my family, I mean, if, when I was still in high school, that was Dutch. So, like, if I wanted to talk about something that happened that day I'd speak in Dutch. And I'd feel more Dutch. But yeah, like, indeed, like, like, for example, like America? [...] So, when I was younger, I'd be like, 'hey guys, I'm American. Look how cool, please be my friend.' [...] But now, I kind of hide the fact that I'm American. Like, if people ask me about it, I'll like, yeah, I'm American. But also, because a lot of times, if you bring it up right now, people will be like, what do you think of that? I'm like, please, don't ask me that. Yeah, you know, because it's very **difficult to balance** you know, because **they expect you to be Dutch** in that moment when you're discussing America actually, like, to **match the Dutch views.**”

These comments illustrate how the participants in general thought about others' influence on their identification. Communicating with others who share one of their languages and cultures enhanced a feeling of connectedness, which caused the participant to identify more with that side of their binational identity in order to maintain this established connection. The

interlocutor seems to determine the degree of identification with either side of the binational identity.

Furthermore, conversation topics – often political – that negatively highlight one of the nationalities provoke the tendency to disidentify with that nationality and identify with the other, therefore leaning more towards the nationality that is not negatively regarded in a broader social sphere. Participant 2's comment, for example, and their use of "they" to refer to actors in negative situations connected to either nationality illustrates disidentification.

Also, the above comments suggest that the environment or space where the conversation is held somewhat determines the identification. Participant 3 explained how the context determines which language is used, which stimulates identification with that nationality.

Moreover, Participant 1 also stated that if the topic of a conversation was related to the hobbies they practiced while growing up in a specific environment, this made them identify more with that nationality:

Example 9

Participant 1 “For example, **if I talk about music, I feel French**. I mean, I speak in French and I feel French because **I always had music class in the French language**. I won't even know like, the Dutch terms for music.”

Here, the participant evidently identified more with their French side because this is the natural environment they associate with music. Conversation topics can thus enhance either identification or disidentification depending on the social, political, and personal context connected to them.

In addition, the participants were asked to explain how their attitudes towards both nationalities influence their identification. All participants discussed how their attitude towards their nationalities determines, to a certain degree, how they identify and with whom:

Example 10

Participant 1

"When I arrived in the Netherlands, because I couldn't keep that identity of like French with a bit of Dutch, so, I had to balance it more out. So yes, I had to be more open to the Dutch culture to **fit in**, fit in, at least to be accepted- **feel accepted** and make Dutch friends. So yeah, so it's but it's hard because like, even if you change your attitude, like, **your culture always** plays a big part of your identity. So, one of the first questions that come up is like, where are you from? And like, at first, I really tried to hide the fact that I was from France, because I was like, I don't, I want to fit in. I want to be like, like the other Dutch students [...]. I think like when I, once I've told people I'm from France, I speak like, my Dutch worsens, like I speak, I don't speak as well after, words I don't know in Dutch. I think like, I want to prove people like I'm really French, you know, I'm not like completely Dutch. [...] So, it's kind of hard to find the right attitude. Because like, **you always feel like it's not balanced enough like or you're too French or too Dutch in my case. It's never good.**"

Participant 2

"And, yeah, for, one thing that I can think of that I said earlier, about there was a time in my childhood, when I kind of had more of a **negative attitude** towards speaking Dutch because my mom would like, pick us up from school and immediately speak in Dutch and I'm like, my friends are around me, like, **I don't want to be the weird one** that's speaking in a different language. [...] It's only upon reflection now that I think, yeah, okay, probably I was maybe a bit more **distant**. Because at that age, **all you want to do is fit in**. And attitudes towards Northern Ireland, and Northern Irish culture is a lot more difficult of a question to ask, because it's just because I lived there. And those things are **normal**, like, yes, there are some things in Northern Irish culture that **I don't agree with, but I can more easily accept** like, okay, yeah, but that's, that's really part of who you are. Like, you can't just distance yourself from everything that you don't like, that kind of thing. Whereas there may be more parts of like Dutch culture that because I didn't grow up there, **I don't feel like I have to put up with them or something like that.**"

Participants 1 and 2 described how trying to fit in with and feel connected to those in their immediate surroundings was important and affected how they would nationally identify and which national identity they would perform. Identification with others who share one nationality would occur when trying to fit in. Simultaneously, disidentification with the other nationality that made the participants stand out also occurred. Attitude played a part in this identification since trying to fit in would cause a more positive attitude towards one nationality and a more negative one towards the other. However, Participant 1 described how attitude is altered depending on the situation. Nevertheless, both cultures remain part of who they are regardless of their stances towards these. Furthermore, Participant 2 stated how growing up primarily surrounded by one of their cultures meant they would sooner accept all

parts of that culture, whereas they would adopt a negative attitude towards the parts of their other culture with which they do not agree.

Besides attitude depending on where the participants were raised, Participant 3 also specified how friends' and local society's attitudes towards either of their nationalities influences their own attitude:

Example 11

Participant 3 "Most of my life I have been positive about both countries. [...] I started to become a little more negative about America, that's also **because people would make more fun of it in a negative way**. [...] So, yeah, in that case, I'd say that my attitude is a bit **more negative** towards America now. So, I identify with [it] a bit less. I still **identify** with both countries very **strongly**. But yeah, I'm now definitely more of Dutch because it's, it's **more positive**."

Similar to what Participant 1 expressed about both cultures being part of their binational identity regardless of their attitude towards this, Participant 3 explains how they still strongly identify with both nationalities although they now view one more negatively. This negative attitude was developed because of others' negative views.

4.2.1.3 Identity-Ascription-by-Others

The identity ascription the participants received from others did not seem to majorly influence their national identity construction. Participant 3 spoke about how their American father would identify them as Dutch:

Example 12

Participant 3 "I still feel more Dutch, like with the presidential election last year. My dad was like, wow, you're, **you're really Dutch** [...], because I had to decide between Republican and Democrat. And I was like, I can't go Republican, like, no. He's like, **yeah, you're Dutch**."

Similarly, Participant 2 was assigned one of their nationalities by friends:

Example 13

Participant 2 "And when I'm in Northern Ireland and say, I can speak Dutch, it's like super impressive. And 'oh, my goodness, **you must be native standard'**."

Participant 2's friends could be argued to impose a Dutch nationality on them since they assign them the status of Dutch native speaker.

4.2.2 Part 2 – The Discussion

The second part of the focus group was centred around spontaneous discussion concerning the participants' experiences of their binational identities. Here, the focus was on observing how the participants constructed their national identities in real-time and how their interaction reflected Bucholtz and Hall's (2005b) tactics of intersubjectivity. The tactics include: *adequation/distinction*, which are used to either align or misalign with a specific group; *authentication/denaturalization*, which are used to either construct a genuine or non-genuine identity; and *authorization/illegitimation* which are used to either legitimise or delegitimise an identity.

4.2.2.1 Adequation/Distinction

During the conversation, the participants made ample use of the *adequation* and *distinction* tactic:

Example 14

Participant 3 “I have two nationalities. [...] Again, until only recently, nobody ever negatively made fun of it, but especially like when discussing like, your childhood, like, like, oh, ‘we watched this and this and how have you never seen...’ I’m like, I’ve never even heard of it, but I do have this. And then **they've** never heard of that because it’s from America, for example, or, you know, like, like, so yeah, especially when discussing like childhood favourites is like, that’s when I realised like, okay, yeah, I’ve definitely had a **very different childhood than you.**”

Participant 2 “Yeah, food I definitely agree with like things like hagelslag when you explain that **they're** like, that’s so weird. [...] And I’m, and I just think, well, **you guys** are really missing out because it’s the best thing ever.”

Participants 2 and 3 both refer to themselves as “we,” Participant 2 referring to their Dutch identity and 3 to their American identity. By using “we” they align themselves with one of their nationalities and by using “they” or “you guys” to refer to acquaintances they distinguish themselves from the other nationality. It seems that this tactic is either used when alluding to childhood experiences in a specific country or to specific aspects of national culture.

4.2.2.2 Authentication/Denaturalisation

All participants expressed the view that creating an authentic binational identity out of two sets of nationalities, cultures, and languages is a difficult process:

Example 15

Participant 4 “I think growing up, I struggled a lot to find a **balance** between [my nationalities]. But to be honest, I think at some point, I stopped caring and just accepted oh okay, that there are just **some things that are around and maybe overlapping, and maybe not**. [...] And it's I, to be honest, not sure exactly how I completely in the end would describe it. Maybe with what I, with which national identities I'm identifying at the moment. It's just like, working around [...]. It's just like, **[I have] kind of accepted being, having just multinational things around in my identity bubble.**”

Participant 2 “I can't actually acquit everything that I do to it comes from this culture or that culture, or both. There are other parts of me that are not to do with national identity at all. And I think that kind of helps me to, I guess, be proud of **the bits that are to do with national identity** and then, but also to be proud [of] the other parts and not to be so insecure, you know, to just think like, okay, this is me, because, because I read books on it, or because that's just something that I really value in life, and **it doesn't have to do with anybody else. It's just me.**”

Both participants specified how they combine features that fall within the boundaries of each respective national identity, to construct their own. These features are infused in their binational identity, creating an authentic binational identity. Moreover, both discussed how they sometimes experienced overlap of their two cultures in their binational identity.

In addition, Participant 2 stated that their binational identification “doesn't have to do with anybody else.” How they identify thus appears personal and separate from others' perceptions. They also marked that “it's just me,” suggesting that the national identity they consciously create by combining features of each nationality is specific to them as individual. Likewise, Participant 1 states that multicultural features are present in their own “identity bubble,” which suggests the same unique experience of identity as Participant 2 described. Both of these examples show how these individuals use authentication by combining both national cultures to create their own unique binational identity that represents both to a certain (overlapping) extent.

4.2.2.3 Authorisation/Illegitimation

The participants mainly authorised either side of their binational identities by validating this based on the culture of each specific nationality:

Example 16

Participant 1 “I mean, I want, I tried to fit in, but then people like, look at me, like, why are you fitting in? Because you're French but I mean, I'm both. I tried to be more Dutch because I'm in the Netherlands, but that's not okay neither. So, what do I do? So, it's kind of hard to like, I mean, **some people expect you to be more Dutch others to be more French and, like, I don't know, I feel a bit lost.** Like, I don't know what to do. [...] You have those stereotypes you should fit into, but it also feels like, I mean, it's not, not all French people are like that. Not all Dutch people are like that. But **it's hard to find your own identity between those two, like national identities.**”

Participant 2 “So, before it used to be **national identity was pure, and it was connected to one language** and all these countries went through this whole process of **nationalism**. But we're kind of moving out of that. And I think that that allows us to kind of be binational as well. [...] So I think that we are kind of like an emerging generation of people who do have this mixture. And yeah, like you said, [Participant 4], it's like, it's up there, and some of it overlaps and some of it doesn't, and like, **everyone's still kind of navigating what that is**, and maybe we don't need to give it a name or put it into a category or whatever [...]. And actually, the mononationalists will maybe be a minority one day, I don't know. But I really just, I think we're in this, like, changing world.”

In these examples, culture seems to be regarded as authoritative source as it provides the participants with a sense of what is accepted in their respective identifications and what is not within the broader scope of each national culture's practices. Here, their unmarked culture determines the validity of their binational identity based on the part their marked culture plays in this identification.

Participant 1's comment on not conforming to stereotypes could be seen as a form of illegitimation since they deny the stereotypes of their marked culture that are imposed on them by those who share their unmarked national culture, which in this case is the environment's dominant culture. Moreover, they also stated that it is difficult to find their own binational identity between the two separate, seemingly predetermined, national identities.

In addition, Participant 2 addresses how nationalism used to authorise national identities, suggesting that the notion of nationalism can be an authoritative source since it determines national identities' legitimacy. Participant 2 specifies how from a nationalistic perspective the binational identity used to be seen as illegitimate since it was not as "pure" as a mononational identity. However, they also suggest that society is moving away from this and that nationalism is being denied its power in determining which national identity is authorised and which is not.

However, because all participants have two nationalities, they also specified that it is difficult to authorise or illegitimate either nationality since both are inherent to their national identification and integral parts of them as individuals. As Participant 1 stated prior in the focus group, "it's never good." The authorization of a binational identity, specifically, seems to be more complex than that of an identity connected to one specific sphere of life as there is not one particular authority that validates the existence of this binational identity.

5. Discussion

The questionnaire and focus group offer several valuable observations regarding national identity construction and attitude towards national identity.

First of all, most participants identified with both nationalities to a greater or lesser extent (see Table 3), and more than half indicated having a binational identity in which these nationalities are merged (see Table 4). Also, the majority ($n=18$) stated that their national cultures were blended together. The focus group participants discussed how speaking both languages adequately (Example 1) and engaging with both cultures (Example 6) from childhood onwards also aided this mixed experience of identity. This is in line with Huynh et al.'s (2011) proposal that it is likely individuals experience blendedness when they have acquired their two cultures simultaneously. Therefore, it seems that the concurrent presence of

both languages, cultures, and their respective nationalities in the participants' upbringings resulted in their merged existence in the participants' identification.

However, even though the participants experienced the blended presence of their languages, cultures, and nationalities, many stated that one of their cultures ($n=10$, $N=23$) and languages ($n=15$, $N=26$) dominated in their lives. Similarly, Burke and Stets' (2012b) found that biculturals are unable to maintain both cultures at once and therefore experience dominance of one over the other. Huynh et al. (2011) suggested that biculturals can actively assume either culture depending on the situation. Thus, biculturals are enabled to change which national culture they align with and are, by extent, able to shift their national identity performance to correspond to the situation. The participants' identification with both nationalities facilitates their ability to change the performance of their national identity (Chen, 2015).

The experience of this binational identity performance includes the discursive construction process itself and the attitude formation that is part of this. Section 5.1 will discuss how attitudes towards national identity are created, and section 5.2 will discuss how national identity is constructed and what attitude's role in this process entails.

5.1 What Factors Form and Influence Bilingually and Biculturally Raised Individuals' Attitude Towards National Identity?

Attitude is created and presented through language and therefore inherently a discursive practice (Santello, 2015). Likewise, identity is also constructed through the use of language in interaction (Bamberg et al., 2011; Bucholtz & Hall, 2005a; Damari, 2010), suggesting that attitude is part of the identity construction process. As such, attitudes can determine how identities are performed and are influenced by various sources. The formation

of attitudes towards identities is context-dependent and thus subject to change (Burke & Stets, 2012b). The context-dependency of attitude was also illustrated by the participants.

To start, it was suggested by Santello (2015) that language attitudes can be related to cultural identity. The participants of this study described how their attitudes towards their languages mainly depended on their usefulness and attractiveness (Figure 1). This usefulness can be connected to their experience of the dominance of one language due to its relevance in their daily lives and environment.

Furthermore, the dominant presence of one language, and by extent culture and nationality, were also found to influence attitude towards nationality. The focus group participants indicated how their perceptions of their nationalities influenced their identification (Examples 10 and 11). Burke and Stets (2012b) argued that self-perceptions of identity are affected by others' views of that identity. When others do not recognise an identity, this causes non-verification and results in an individual's negative attitude towards that identity, whereas verification of an identity leads to a positive attitude towards this identity (Burke & Stets, 2012b).

Similarly, the participants grew up in an environment in which one of their languages, cultures, and nationalities were dominantly present, causing the desire to fit in with their peers and not feel like "the weird one" (Example 10). They described how (at least) one of their nationalities was not recognised by those in their environment, excluding their family members. Consequently, a positive attitude was adopted towards the dominant nationality, whereas the minority nationality and its language and culture were regarded more negatively since these were not verified by those in their surroundings. Participant 2, for example, attempted to distance themselves from one of their nationalities (Example 10), mimicking the feeling of shame that derives from non-verification (Burke & Stets, 2012b).

In addition, Participant 2 described how they were able to keep a positive attitude towards the environment they grew up in when this environment presented behaviour or actions they did not agree with. If the same happened in the environment of their other nationality, this would negatively influence their attitude towards that identity. This illustrates how both the environment and the actors in it can influence an individual's attitude towards their national identity.

However, childhood experiences do not define which attitude is adopted towards either national identity. Attitude's dependency on environment and interlocutors highlights its changeability. What attitude is formed, is especially connected to whether the interlocutor is regarded a significant other (Nicolini & Cherubini, 2011; Oliver & Purdie, 1998). The importance of significant others was already briefly alluded to but will be further explored.

In the focus group, the participants argued that interlocutors' attitudes and the environment in which their interaction took place, determined their attitude towards their nationalities (see Examples 6 and 7). Participant 3 described how recently their friends would negatively make fun of one of their nationalities, which resulted in the participant adopting a negative attitude towards that nationality too (Example 11). The questionnaire responses, too, indicated that friends and family members' attitudes affected the participants' attitudes (Table 5). Furthermore, when an interlocutor shared one of the participants' languages and cultures, this positively influenced their attitude towards the respective nationality (Table 5).

In addition, Scabini and Manzi (2011) suggested that well-established family bonds, parents' attitudes, knowledge of family heritage, and feeling connected to and feeling a sense of belonging with family all contribute to a positive attitude towards the family identity. Here, the same factors were found to establish positive attitudes towards nationality (Table 5), suggesting that the family identity is connected to the national identity it represents.

Furthermore, Scabini and Manzi described the “relatedness need” (2011, p. 573) which refers to individuals’ need to feel accepted by and close to others, specifically family. A trustworthy, hopeful, and loyal family bond all contribute to a positive attitude towards the family identity. In this specific research, the respondents and participants all seemed to have the relatedness need for at least one familial side (see 4.1.3 and Examples 6 and 7). The presences of closeness, trust, and loyalty stimulate positive emotions, which in turn contribute to a positive attitude towards the respective family nationality. Interestingly, closeness was experienced regardless of the proximity in which the family members lived. Closeness and connection were mainly based on personality and how one side of the family treats the other, suggesting that the characteristics of the significant other also influence attitude formation.

Thus, the factors connected to environment and the significance of the interlocutor influence the formation of attitude towards national identity. What the discussed examples also illustrate, is that the participants do not form an attitude towards their binational identity as a whole. Rather, they create separate attitudes towards each national identity depending on the context in which they find themselves. How attitude towards the complete binational identity containing both of these national identities is formed, is unclear. Participant 1 stated that the identity they performed never seemed to be good enough (Example 10), suggesting that their binational identity as a whole could never be verified and that its duality is cause for a divided formation of attitude. This comment also suggests that the performance of the binational identity can be altered to try to achieve verification. How this is accomplished and how attitude is used for this, is explored in the next section.

5.2 How Do Bilingually and Biculturally Raised Individuals Construct a National Identity and What Role Does Attitude Play in This?

Similar to the formation of attitude, the construction of national identity also depends on the interactive context in which it is performed (Wodak et al., 2009). As discussed previously, most participants displayed identification with both nationalities, often resulting in the experience of a binational identity, which enables them to change their performance of this identity.

Following structural symbolic interactionism (Burke & Stets, 2012a) and the focus group interview and discussion, *the self* includes the processes of (dis)identification with others (Messelink & Ten Thije, 2012), self-identification, and identity-ascription-by-others (Zhu, 2019) for the performance of identity. In *interaction*, the tactics of intersubjectivity (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005b) make the actual discursive performance of identity possible. These processes provide the tools for the chosen performance of the binational identity, depending on the interaction's context.

Wodak et al. (2009) found that language and culture were inherent features of national identity. Similarly, the participants indicated that their initial self-perception of their binational identity was mainly rooted in their upbringing's combined use of both languages and cultures (see section 4.2.1.1). In addition, the environment they grew up in and their contact with family members helped instil this binational identity (see section 4.2.2.1). This forms the basis of the self-identification of their binational identity.

However, the participants described how they did not possess both cultures, and by extent nationalities, to the same degree mononationals would (Example 2). Participant 3, for example, stated: "it feels like I'm both nationalities but also neither nationality because I'm missing so much in both of them" (Example 2). The emphasis on the inclusion of both but neither of the nationalities suggests that the binational identity consists of an altered

combination of the two, similar to biculturals' creation of a third culture in which the two are recombined (Huynh et al., 2011).

In addition, the participants' comments suggest that how they construct their *self* also relies on their interlocutor and their characteristics (see sections 4.2.1.2 and 4.2.1.3). Identity-ascription-by-others (Zhu, 2019) was not found to be meaningful for identity construction. Interestingly, others' *evaluation* of the national identity was found important for the attitude formation towards that identity (see section 5.1). This suggests that, unlike Zhu's (2019) proposal that the ascription can either cause identity alignment or misalignment, the ascription of national identity seems to be dismissed because it directly projects an identity on the participant. The expression of others' attitudes towards the national identity, on the other hand, seems to be acknowledged because it does not force an identification upon the participant, thus creating space for the negotiation of attitude towards and performance of the binational identity.

Furthermore, connected to this negotiation is the identification or disidentification with others that results "in a sense of self" (Bamberg et al., 2011, p. 178). In the focus group, the participants discussed how they constructed their identities based on the connection they felt with their interlocutor (see section 4.2.1.2). According to Verdugo and Milne (2016), national identity is naturally a feeling of belonging somewhere. If the interlocutor shared a language and culture, the participants identified more with that nationality. The questionnaire responses illustrated how such circumstances caused a positive attitude towards the shared nationality (see Table 5). This implies, then, that the binational identity is performed with an inclination to one of the nationalities in such a situation.

In addition, the participants stated that identification was also connected to the topic of their conversation (see section 4.2.1.2). On the one hand, conversation topic could stimulate identification if it concerned certain activities that were related to a specific national

environment (see Example 9). On the other hand, participant 2 expressed how talking about negatively charged, often political, topics resulted in their disidentification with that nationality by distancing themselves from that group.

The (dis)identification with nationality thus seems to be fuelled by attitude and follows the specific contextual factors of the interaction, suggesting that each conversation could lead to a different performance of the binational identity. As Wodak et al. (2009) also specified, national identity is not static and therefore its performance depends on context, conversation topic, and interlocutor.

Identification is used to align the performance more with one nationality and disidentification is used to misalign with the other. This is in accordance with the previous claim that binationals are able to shift their identity performance. Also, the previous section proposed that the participants' formed separate attitudes towards the two nationalities instead of one towards the binational identity. These separate attitudes seem connected to the performance of nationality-favoured versions of the binational identity instead of the complete binational identity.

In addition, this performance emerges from the use of language in interaction (Burke & Stets, 2012a). The tactics of intersubjectivity (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005b) determine which performance is established. The discussed process of (dis)identification resembles the *adequation/distinction* tactic, which was employed by the participants through the use of “we” and “they” (see Example 14). Waugh argued that the use of such words is an “implicit national identity act” (2011, p. 121), which is used to either create distance or alignment with a nationality. With “we” the participants seem to favour that national side of their identity as they align themselves with that group. “They” suggests distance and thus a shift away from the performance of that nationality.

The *authorisation/illegitimation* tactics seemed to be more difficult to employ for the participants (see section 4.2.2.1). Since there is not a single authoritative source that legitimates a binational identity, the participants' comments suggest that they seek authorisation for their identification from either marked or unmarked cultures, depending on the context. Participant 1, for example, stated "I tried to be more Dutch because I'm in the Netherlands, but that's not okay [either]" (Example 16). This illustrates how aligning with the dominant culture was expected to authorise the identity performance. However, similar to Burke and Stets' (2012b) description of identity-nonverification, the identity performance here seems to be dismissed as it still does not completely correspond to the nationality that dominates in the environment.

However, the performance of the binational identity could also be seen as a unique identification process for which there is no specific authoritative source that provides the borders wherein the performance of the binational identity can exist.

Finally, whereas the other tactics are employed in relation to interlocutors, the *authentication/denaturalisation* tactics seemed to be aimed at the establishment of a self-perceived binational identity in which the two nationalities are blended together (see Example 15). It can be suggested that this tactic is used to create a mixed binational identity, akin to the third recombined culture Huynh et al. (2011) discussed. The participants indicate that they have accepted themselves for who they are and that both their nationalities are innately part of them (Example 15). This could suggest that this authentic binational identity forms the foundation from which the context-specific nationality-favoured performance of identity can be accomplished.

6. Conclusion

This study has shown how bilingually and biculturally raised individuals whose parents have different nationalities, construct their national identity. The national identity is mainly constructed as a binational identity that is performed with varied inclinations towards either nationality. How this inclined version of the binational identity is performed, depends on the specific context of the interaction and whether the individual wishes to identify or disidentify with their interlocutor and the conversation topic. It was found that these inclinations are likely the result of the separate attitudes that are formed towards the nationalities in a particular interaction. The formation of these attitudes is influenced by the significance of the interlocutor, conversation topic, environment, and upbringing.

However, this project was only a pilot study considering the sheer number of participants. The small number of focus group participants, for instance, only included individuals who identified with both nationalities, which prohibited the further exploration of national identity construction by those who identified less with both of their nationalities. Furthermore, the research's structure did not enable the study of the influence of the language used in interaction on national identity construction.

Still, the presented findings represent a start for further research on the topic. Such research should consider including more participants to acquire a more adequate image of bilingually and biculturally raised individuals' general national identity construction. In addition, how the language that is used in interaction affects national identity construction is also interesting to explore in future research.

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Appendix A. Questionnaire

BA thesis: Bilingual and bicultural individuals' attitude towards national identity

This is a research study on bilingual and bicultural individuals' attitude towards their own national identity. The questionnaire is anonymous. Your answers will only be used for the study and will not be shared with anyone other than the researcher and their supervisors. If at any point you wish to withdraw, you can do so freely without any penalty. It should take approximately 10 to 15 minutes to fill in this questionnaire. Thank you for your participation.

I have read the above and agree that my answers may be used for the study.

Yes

No

This study focuses on individuals who are bilingual and bicultural and who have two parents from different national backgrounds. It is important that the participant is proficient in both languages, but these need not be perfectly balanced. In addition, the participant should be 18 years or older. Please complete this questionnaire only if you meet these criteria.

Yes, I meet the criteria

Part 1 - General background

Q1 What is your age?

Q2 What is your gender?

Female

Male

Non-binary

Q3 Please state your parents' nationalities.

Parent 1 _____

Parent 2 _____

Q4 Please state your parents' languages.

Parent 1 _____

Parent 2 _____

Q5 What languages were you brought up with?

Q6 In which country did you grow up?

Q7 What is your current country of residence?

Part 2 - National identity experience

Q8 How did you experience growing up with two languages and cultures? Please provide examples.

Q9 How do you identify with your nationalities?

- High identification with both nationalities
 - High identification with one nationality and medium identification with the other
 - Low identification with either nationality
 - Identification with one nationality

Q10 How would you refer to your identification?

- Single national identity
 - Two distinct national identities
 - Binational identity in which the two are merged

Q11 How would you describe your relationship with family members from both sides of your family? Think of closeness, trust, loyalty, support etc.

Q12 To what extent do you think this bond influences your attitude towards the two nationalities?

Q13 Please indicate to what extent the following statements apply to you with regards to how these influence your attitude towards national identity/identities.

	Extremely negatively (1)	Moderately negatively (2)	Slightly negatively (3)	Neither negatively nor positively (4)	Slightly positively (5)	Moderately positively (6)	Extremely positively (7)
Feeling connected to the culture(s) (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Incorporating cultural practices into my life (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Having well-established, maintained and supportive family bonds (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feeling connected to and having a sense of belonging with family members (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Speaking the language(s) adequately (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Having the ability to express myself (thoughts, emotions) well in the languages (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Spending time in my parents' countries of origin (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Knowing my family heritage (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Interacting with a person who shares one of my languages and cultures (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Interacting with family members (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My parents' attitudes towards their nationalities (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My friends' positive attitudes towards my nationalities (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My friends' negative attitudes towards my nationalities (13)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Existing stereotypes of the nationality/nationalities (14)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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Q14 Are there any other factors that positively or negatively influence your attitude towards national identity?

Part 3 - Languages

Q15 Which division of percentages (%) would you say describes your exposure to both languages while growing up best?

- 10-90
 - 25-75
 - 40-60
 - 50-50
-

Q16 Which division of percentages (%) reflects your use of the two languages now?

- 10-90
 - 25-75
 - 40-60
 - 50-50
-

Q17 On a scale from 1 to 7, how competent do you feel using:

Q18 To what extent have you experienced a sense of conflict or harmony between your two languages? For example, is one more dominant than the other?

Q19 What factors influence your attitude towards the two languages? You can tick multiple boxes.

- Attractiveness
 - Prestige
 - Usefulness
 - Other:

Part 4 - Cultures

Q20 How did your parents expose you to both cultures? For example, did they use specific norms or traditions during your upbringing?

Q21 How would you say your two cultures are present in your life, are they blended or are they distinct?

Q22 To what extent have you experienced a sense of conflict or harmony between your two cultures? For example, is one more dominantly present than the other?

Q23 What role does culture play in your sense of national identity?

Part 5 - Focus group participation

Finally, for this study I'm also looking for people who would like to participate in a focus group session that will be held via an online medium such as Skype or Microsoft Teams (to be determined later). A focus group is similar to a discussion group. I will present questions or prompts to which you can respond. In addition, you are encouraged to also respond to the other participants to really start up a discussion rather than just a question-and-answer session. You would also be very welcome to introduce any prompts or ideas you would like to discuss among the group. Would you be interested in joining this focus group?

- Yes
 - No
-

If yes, please fill in your email-address so I can contact you with further details.
