There is no ‘I’ in identity: A dialogic, social and discursive exploration of professional identity within inter-agency interactions.

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Declaration: This thesis has been submitted for the award of Doctorate in Applied Educational Psychology. I declare this thesis is my own work and has not been submitted for any other purpose. I have acknowledged where material is the work of others.

Acknowledgements: I would like to dedicate this thesis in memoriam of Lorna Robson (1958-2004). Her professional legacy, the care to her patients, her service to the Royal Victoria Infirmary in Newcastle Upon Tyne, and her bravery throughout her illness inspires this thesis.

To my partner Paul, there are no words that do your love and support justice.

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Overarching Abstract

This thesis explores professional identity and its relevance for frontline professionals working in Children's Services. Specifically, this thesis aims to illuminate how practitioners mobilise their professional identities (i.e., the fluid shifts in an individual's conceptualisation of their identity) during inter-agency activity. The document is comprised of four chapters: a systematic literature review (SLR), a critical discussion of the research methodology, an empirical project, and a reflexive synthesis.

Chapter 1: ***Mobilising professional identity during inter-agency activity? A meta-ethnography of research conducted with professionals working in UK Children's Services***

This chapter presents a SLR aiming to explore how practitioners within Children's Services mobilise their professional identity during inter-agency activity. By using a meta-ethnography approach to synthesise the available literature, the findings of the SLR support postmodern accounts of identity and show the construct as fluid, contingent and constituted within interaction. Here, professional identities are mobilised through the sharing of professional knowledge and positioning of the other identities, which can lead to both positive and negative affective consequences. To articulate the SLR findings, I advance a tentative model demonstrating how identities are mobilised during inter-agency activity, which would be of interest to professionals working in Children's Services. Please note, this chapter has been written for submission to the Journal of Children's Services.

Chapter 2: ***Critical reflection of research methodology and ethics***

In this chapter, I reflect on my approach to understanding professional identity by outlining the main findings of the SLR and how this informed the focus and aim of the empirical project. I critically consider my philosophical assumptions about the world, and how my conceptualisations of identity emerge from the qualitative paradigm and a discursive psychology approach. I then examine what implications these assumptions had on the design, method, sample, analysis, and validity of the

empirical project. Finally, I explore ethical issues through a relational lens and highlight the tensions this posed during my research journey.

Chapter 3: ***Mobilising professional identity during inter-agency activity: a contribution from discursive psychology***

Despite the interest in understanding professional identity, the link between the phenomena and work behaviour remains unclear especially during inter-agency activity. The empirical project explores how professionals working across organisational boundaries within an inter-agency team located in Children's Services mobilised their identities discursively during their interactions and to what psychological ends. I adopted a discursive psychology approach and used a case study design to conduct participant observations and stimulated recall interviews. The findings show that professional identities were mobilised as social identities where the participants orientated to three positions (i.e., 'I', 'us' and 'they') to accomplish various interpersonal social actions. Finally, I outline the study's implications, strengths, and limitations before arriving at a conclusion. Please note, this chapter has been written for submission to Educational and Child Psychology.

Chapter 4: ***Critical synthesis***

This final chapter provides a critical synthesis of the thesis. To begin, I highlight the importance of reflexivity by presenting my interactions with this thesis, my influence on certain aspects of the research and how I think this has impacted on the knowledge produced. Next, I consider what this knowledge means for me as a trainee educational psychologist and explore the implications of both the empirical knowledge and acquired research skills for my practice. Finally, I reflect on what I will do next by discussing how I plan to disseminate the findings and what direction I might take for future research.

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Chapter 1: *Mobilising professional identity during inter-agency activity? A meta-ethnography of research conducted with professionals working in UK Children's Services*

Abstract

Purpose: Professional identity is a key phenomenon influencing work behaviour, especially during inter-agency activity. Yet, this link is complex and not well understood within the context of UK Children's Services. With an agenda of improving outcomes for children and their families, I conducted a systematic literature review of the current research on this topic to develop a conceptual model aimed at informing how practitioners mobilise their professional identity during inter-agency activity.

Design/methodology/approach: I used meta-ethnography to synthesise the available research. This method is suitable for researchers who are interested in developing conceptual understandings of a particular phenomenon as opposed to describing individual accounts or experiences.

Findings: The findings support postmodern accounts of identity and show the construct as fluid, contingent on context, and constituted within interaction. Professional identities are mobilised through the sharing of professional knowledge, which is underpinned by the performative nature of language. Mobilisations can lead to both positive and negative affective consequences, which can act as both a barrier to and facilitator of inter-agency activity.

Originality/value: By drawing on relevant psychological theory, the proposed model provides an original psycho-social perspective that articulates how identities are mobilised during inter-agency activity, which would be of interest to professionals working in Children's Services and researchers interested in psychology.

1. Introduction

Inter-agency activity is a broad concept used within Children's Services describing how professionals from different agencies provide joined-up service delivery (Department for Education and Skills, 2003). Professional identity is a key psychological phenomenon that influences work behaviour during inter-agency activity (Best & Williams, 2019; Hogg & Terry, 2014). Sadly, serious case reviews remind us that we have much to learn about how professionals work together across inter-agency boundaries (Taylor & Thoburn, 2017). Here, grappling with professional identity is critical as misunderstanding the purpose of other agencies leads to missed opportunities (Department for Education, 2021). Of course, this issue is intensified by the current socio-political context and blame culture, which depletes the efficacy of frontline professionals (Hendrix, Barusch, & Gringeri, 2021; Munro, 2019). There is a lack of an adequate theory to guide inter-agency practice within this socio-political arena (Taylor & Thoburn, 2017). Rather than examining current practice to attribute blame or point out failures, I aim to contribute an original, psychological perspective to the current understanding of inter-agency activity within UK Children's Services by exploring what research can tell us about how individuals mobilise their professional identity.

Inter-agency activity is a highly subjective phenomenon (D'Amour, Ferrada-Videla, San Martin Rodriguez, & Beaulieu, 2005; Salmon, 2004) that relies on personal, cultural and political contexts (Gaskell & Leadbetter, 2009; Greenhouse, 2013). Different conceptualisations in several policy examples reflect this subjectivity: multi-agency working in Every Child Matters (Department for Education and Skills, 2003), joint-commissioning in the Children and Families Act (Department for Education, 2014) and co-ordinated delivery of services in Working Together to Safeguard Children (Department for Education, 2018). This variation in terminology appears to perpetuate the observation that:

> co-ordination is discussed in the political arena as though everyone knows precisely what it means, when in fact it means many inconsistent things and occasionally means nothing at all (Weiss, 1981, p. 41).

Consequently, there is a lack of consistency in the terminology used by researchers (Duggan, Corrigan, & Social, 2009) leading to difficulties in making comparisons between studies (Atkinson, Jones, & Lamont, 2007); please see Appendix 1 for a plethora of terminology. To narrow this discussion to one definition could be argued to limit the topic's conceptual richness, given this paper's exploratory purpose. Therefore, an open-minded definition of inter-agency activity to capture the essence of the term is advanced: a situation where more than one agency joins together in an activity to pursue a common goal or outcome that would not have been possible for one agency alone.

Notwithstanding the challenges in research due to its various definitions and unique contexts, inter-agency activity has not waned in academic interest. Following the death of Victoria Climbié and the publication of Every Child Matters (Department for Education and Skills, 2003), the core literature concerned itself with respective barriers to and facilitators of efficient inter-agency activity (Barclay & Kerr, 2006; Sloper, 2004; H. Watson, 2006). More recently, qualitative studies explore the context of inter-agency activity from professionals' perspectives and experiences (Beal, Chilokoa, & Ladak, 2017; Jennings & Evans, 2020; Lalani & Marshall, 2021; Phillipowsky, 2020). A slow transition to increasingly qualitative methods could indicate a paradigm shift from pinning down universal truths using quantitative methods to understanding professionals' sense-making within inter-agency activity subjectively.

Inquiry into how individuals make sense of their professional world is where psychology can make a distinctive contribution to current understandings of inter-agency activity. Notably, professional identity is a key phenomenon influencing practitioners' sense-making of inter-agency activity (Haslam & Ellemers, 2011; Rose, 2011). Here, we can conceptualise professional identity at two levels: the self-image of a profession at the macro level and the tacit behavioural norms of the profession at the micro or individual level (Wackerhausen, 2009). Though, there is little distinction between these two levels within the literature, which perhaps suggests a fluidity between these conceptualisations within professionals' sense-making.

Notwithstanding this critique, psychological research has revealed that the link between professional identity and inter-agency activity is complex. The literature

base describes it as both a barrier to and facilitator of effective practice. The proposed barriers include personal constructs about professional identities (Hymans, 2008; Wiles, 2013), the absence of clear roles and responsibilities underpinning professional identities (Sloper, 2004), role blurring (Anning, 2005) and perceived identity threat (McNeil, Mitchell, & Parker, 2013; Rose, 2011). Contrastingly, a firmly grounded professional identity can lead to an enhanced sense of meaning for employees and more satisfaction from their work (Best & Williams, 2019; Gaskell & Leadbetter, 2009). Despite this research, the broader picture of how inter-agency practitioners mobilise their professional identities to work seamlessly alongside others towards holistic outcomes remains unclear (Best, Robbé, & Williams, 2020; Best & Williams, 2018). Here, mobilisation refers to fluid shifts in a practitioner's conceptualisation of their professional identities in practice (Best et al., 2020). Whilst Best and Williams (2019) explore this issue within health organisations, there are no systematic literature reviews that focus explicitly on professional identity within Children's Services to my knowledge. With a research agenda of improving outcomes at the fore, a systematic literature review in this area would interest frontline professionals working in inter-agency ways to serve children, young people, and their families.

In addition to practitioners within Children's Service, a systematic literature review that focuses on professional identity would also interest psychologists due to the debate over the phenomenon within the discipline (Swann & Bosson, 2010; C. Watson, 2006). Ibarra (1999) suggested a professional identity tends to remain unchanged once formed, although it can develop across one's career. According to Ibarra's argument, practitioners may find themselves with a relatively stable professional identity that becomes redundant as their working-world changes around them. This implication is important for all professionals working within Children's Services, given how legislation, policies, and initiatives have re-conceptualised inter-agency activity continually. Nevertheless, a fair critique of Ibarra's (1999) view is that it implies that professional identity is a somewhat compartmentalised, essentialist entity, which tells us little about how to support practitioners' sense-making in a changing professional world.

Alternatively, Identity Theory (Burke, 2006; Stryker & Burke, 2000), Social Identity Theory (SIT) (Tajfel, 1974), and Self Categorisation Theory (SCT) (Turner & Oakes, 1986; Turner, Oakes, Haslam, & McGarty, 1992) adopt an interactionist view. This view highlights the intricate intersubjective processes involved in identity formation and sustenance (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006, 2010; Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995), although these theories have nuanced differences that must be acknowledged. A simplistic but practical distinction being that Identity Theory focuses on social structures while SIT and SCT emphasises psychological processes; Hogg et al. (1995) provided a comprehensive, detailed paper comparing both theories. Despite these differences, these theories provide a useful framework that suggests how dissonance and cohesion can arise from identity formation within interaction (Burke, 2006; Hogg & Turner, 1987).

Arguably, the latter SIT and SCT have made significant contributions to organisational understanding from a psychological perspective. Recently, research applications of SIT and SCT have led to new insights on organisational issues such as leadership (Hogg, 2018; Knippenberg, 2018), motivation (Van Knippenberg, 2000), productivity (An, Kreutzer, & Heidenreich, 2020), resilience (Gray & Stevenson, 2020), wellbeing (Willis, Reynolds, & Lee, 2019), workplace bullying (Glambek, Einarsen, & Notelaers, 2020) and discrimination (Brown, Fleming, Silvestri, Linton, & Gouseti, 2019). A systematic literature review conducted from a psychological perspective on the topic of professional identity *and* inter-agency activity within UK Children's Services would be an original, lucrative contribution to the current research. Moreover, a systematic literature review of this topic area could allude to a better understanding of how individuals mobilise professional identities during inter-agency activity. This understanding could inform how inter-agency professionals work together more effectively to achieve holistic outcomes for children and their families within Children's Services. Consequently, this systematic literature review aims to answer the following question:

What can research tell us about how individuals working in UK Children's Services mobilise their professional identities during inter-agency activity with other professionals?

1.2 Method

I systematically reviewed the literature base using Noblit and Hare's (1988) meta-ethnography method. This approach consists of the seven phases as shown by Table 1.

Table 1: The seven phases of meta-ethnography

Phase	Description as described by Noblit and Hare (1988)
1. Getting started	Researcher identifies "an intellectual interest that qualitative research might inform" (1988, p. 27).
2. Deciding what is relevant	Researcher makes decision on what studies are relevant based on "who the audience for the synthesis is, what is credible and interesting to them, what accounts are available to address the audiences' interests: (1988, p. 28).
3. Reading the studies	Researcher engages in "repeated reading of the accounts and the noting of interpretative metaphors" (1988, p. 28).
4. Determining how the studies are related	Researcher creates a list of key metaphors and makes an initial assumption about the relationships between studies. This assumption "is one of three possibilities: (1) the accounts are directly comparable as reciprocal translations, (2) the accounts stand in relative opposition to each other and are essentially refutational, or (3) the studies taken together represent a line of argument" (1988, p. 35).
5. Translating the studies	Using key metaphors, the researcher is "to construct translations based on this assumption" (1988, p. 35), referring to the assumption made in Phase 4.
6. Synthesizing translations	Researcher synthesizes translations to make "a whole into something more than the parts alone imply" (1988, p. 37).
7. Expressing the synthesis	Researcher addresses "the problem of how to express and inscribe the synthesis" (1988, p. 37).

1.2.1 Phase 1: Getting started

As articulated thus far, inter-agency activity and professional identity are challenging phenomena to operationalise because they are highly subjective (D'Amour, Ferrada-Videla, San Martin Rodriguez, & Beaulieu, 2005; Salmon, 2004) and rely heavily on personal, cultural, and political contexts (Gaskell & Leadbetter, 2009; Greenhouse, 2013). Therefore, a qualitative synthesis aimed at generating understanding whilst acknowledging such subjectivity seemed appropriate as opposed to a meta-analysis of quantitative research. There are several approaches to qualitative synthesis: meta-ethnography (Noblit & Hare, 1988), thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), critical interpretative synthesis (Dixon-Woods et al., 2006), meta-narrative (Greenhalgh et al., 2005); I acknowledge that a comprehensive discussion on the merits and critiques of different-synthesis approaches is beyond the scope of this paper (see Barnett-Page and Thomas (2009) for an overview).

Uniquely, in a meta-ethnography, the reviewer re-interprets the conceptual explanations of a phenomenon in from a selected number of studies using a unique translation method (France, Wells, Lang, & Williams, 2016). This advantage is particularly suited to the context-dependent nature of professional identity and inter-agency activity where research studies are conducted with different populations, settings, and methods. Additionally, meta-ethnography is suitable for generating rigorous conceptual or theoretical understandings of a particular phenomenon, given that it integrates the findings from multiple studies into a higher conceptual level (Sattar, Lawton, Panagioti, & Johnson, 2021). This approach also complemented my research aim of developing a conceptual model to inform practice rather than synthesising individual experiences. Therefore, I decided that a meta-ethnography was the best-suited approach for synthesising the available literature.

1.2.2 Phase 2: Deciding what is relevant

1.2.2.1 Search strategy

A search strategy was generated by documenting key definitions from my scoping reading and then organising them into two main lemmas: inter-agency activity and professional identity. I used the thesaurus function on ERIC and PsychINFO to ensure I included alternative terms in the search strategy. Next, I inputted the

following search string into SCOPUS, PsychINFO, ERIC, CINAHL, British Education Index, Child Development and Adolescent Studies, and Web of Science databases: identity OR role AND profession$ OR work AND multi$ OR inter$ OR integrated OR joint OR joined-up OR trans$ AND $agenc$ OR $disciplinary OR professional.

1.2.2.2. Developing inclusion criteria

I applied several inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure the research identified through the search strategy was relevant to the review question (Petticrew & Roberts, 2008). To be transparent about what a relevant study entailed, Table 2 details my rationale for the inclusion and exclusion criteria. These criteria were applied to the 390 records identified through searching, and the PRISMA diagram in Figure 1 shows how many records were excluded at each point (final papers for review *n=5).*

Table 2: Inclusion and Exclusion criteria

Included if…	***Rationale***	***Excluded if…***
Must involve an inter-agency activity	Relevance to review questions	Not mentioned in abstract
Must have focus on concept of identity	Relevance to review question	Not mentioned in abstract
Must involve professionals from Children's Services in sample	Relevance to review aim	Professionals from Children's Services are not in sample
Published in Peer Reviewed Journal	Negates quality of research	Not published in Peer Reviewed Journal
Published 2003 or later	Inter-agency first mentioned in policy for professional	Published pre-2003
Qualitative methods	Appropriate for review aims and method of research synthesis	Quantitative method or mixed methods

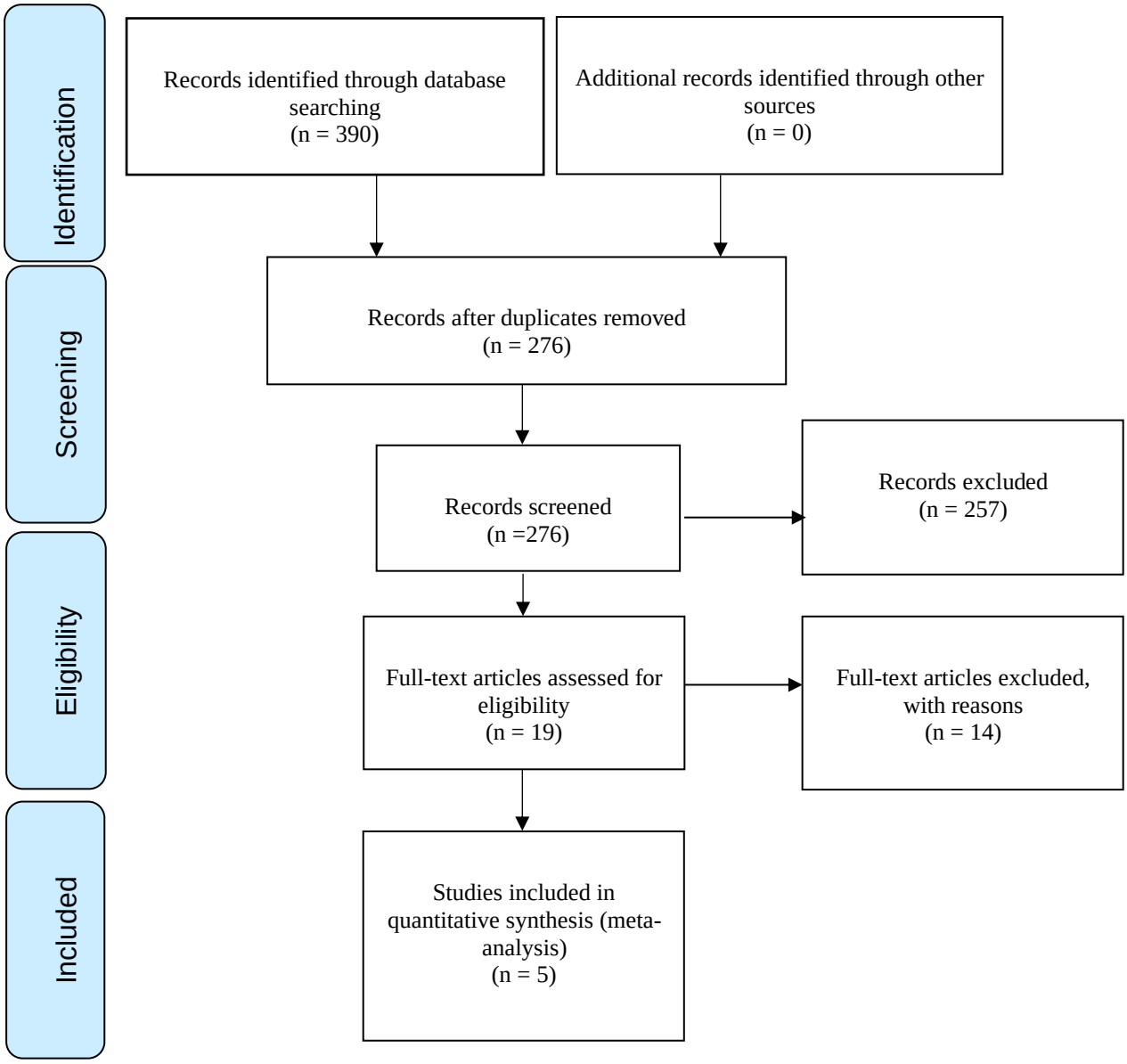

***Figure 1**: PRISMA diagram*

1.2.2.3. Quality appraisal

Quality appraisal is contentious in qualitative systematic literature reviews as researchers debate its appropriateness. Whilst it is not my intention to over-simplify this rich discussion (see Campbell et al. (2012) for a comprehensive overview), it is important to note that such debate involves the exploration of philosophical assumptions about the nature of reality and truth, which are beyond the scope of this paper. Although they did not mention quality appraisal in their writing, Noblit and Hare (1988) highlighted the importance of conceptual richness. This position was more recently advocated by (Toye et al., 2013), who argued that researchers should interrogate studies critically for conceptual clarity and interpretative rigour.

Conversely, some researchers have strongly endorsed quality assessment as an exclusionary tool (Cahill, Robinson, Pettigrew, Galvin, & Stanley, 2018; France, Cunningham, et al., 2019; Sattar et al., 2021). Notably, these authors were predominantly from the medical field and perhaps had an agenda to develop meta-ethnography to the point where the scientific community perceives the approach with as much esteem as meta-analysis. In a stance similar to Toye et al. (2013), I did not employ quality appraisal as an exclusionary tool but I used it to be transparent about the trustworthiness and conceptual richness of the synthesis, which seems more congruent with Noblit and Hare's (1988) original view.

Therefore, I employed Bond et al.'s (2016) tool (please see Table 3) as it arguably provides more transparency in ascertaining conceptual richness than other tools, such as the Weight of Evidence tool (Gough, 2007). According to Bond et al.'s (2016) tool, one point is awarded to a study for each of the following thirteen criteria met:

1. Appropriateness of the research design
2. Clear sampling rationale
3. Well-executed data collection
4. Analysis close to the data
5. Emergent theory related to the problem
6. Evidence of explicit reflectivity
7. Comprehensiveness of documentation

8. Negative case analysis
9. Clarity and coherence of the reporting
10. Evidence of researcher–participation negotiation
11. Transferable conclusions
12. Evidence of attention to ethical issues
13. Social validity

Here, a study could be judged with a maximum of 13 points. If a qualitative study scored between 0 and 5 points, it was categorised as 'low quality'. A score of 6–9 points was categorised as 'medium quality' while a score of 10–13 points was categorised as 'high quality'.

However, I believed 'Social Validity', which is the applied value and tangible impact of a specific intervention (Khazdin, 2005), did not apply to the research studies I was aiming to synthesise and was therefore omitted in my application of the tool. So, I adjusted the scoring; if a study scored between 0 and 4 points, it was categorised as 'low quality'. A score of 5–8 points was categorised as 'medium quality', while a score of 9–12 points was categorised as 'high quality'. The quality appraisals of the selected research papers are described in Table 3.

1.2.3 Phase 3: Reading the studies

First, papers were re-read to extract the contextual details of each study (Petticrew & Roberts, 2008), which can be found in Table 4. This detail was critical to set the contextual parameters for the translation in Phase 5 (Britten et al., 2002) as it provided me with the context for the explanations provided by each primary researcher[1] (Sattar et al., 2021; Uny, France, & Noblit, 2017). Next, I ascertained the terms, themes, and perspectives used by the primary researchers to explain how participants mobilised their professional identities.

[1] Please note, I use the term "primary researcher(s)" to refer to the individuals who undertook the original studies included in the meta-ethnography.

Table 3: Quality appraisal of selected studies

Criteria	***Gaskell & Leadbetter (2009)***	***Messenger (2013)***	***Robinson et al. (2005)***	***Robinson & Cotterall (2005)***	***Rose (2011)***
1	1	1	1	1	1
2	0	1	0	1	0
3	1	1	1	1	1
4	0	0	0	0	0
5	1	1	1	1	1
6	0	0	0	0	0
7	1	1	0	1	0
8	1	0	0	1	1
9	1	1	0	1	0
10	0	0	0	1	0
11	0	1	1	1	1
12	0	0	0	1	1
13	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
Total Score	6	7	4	10	6
Rating	***Medium***	***Medium***	***Low***	***High***	***Medium***

By following a method outlined by Willig (2013), I made continuous notes on each primary researcher's use of comparisons, associations, sign-posting, summary statements, language use, absences, descriptive labels, and so on.

1.2.4 Phase 4: Determining how the studies are related

The key metaphors used in each primary researcher's account were cross-referenced using the constant comparison method so I could juxtapose them (Willig, 2013). Related 2nd Order Constructs were noted down if they appeared in two or more studies. Whilst this decision was motivated to make the translation phase more manageable due to the constraints of being a sole researcher, some of the contextual detail within individual papers was lost during this process if a 2nd Order Construct only appeared in one study (e.g. Robinson and Cottrell's (2005) argument about organisational factors). Table 5 details which 2nd Order Constructs appeared in which study.

Overall, I judged the studies to be related through a line of argument, which describes "dissimilar but related studies" (Noblit and Hare 1988, p. 64). This judgement was based on the observation that the studies emphasised various aspects of professional identity. Unlike a reciprocal translation, the papers in this synthesis were not directly comparable.

However, the explanations did not stand in opposition to each other, which ruled out a refutational translation, but instead highlighted different aspects of the same phenomenon. For example, the papers did not disagree completely that professional knowledge and expertise were involved in professional identity formation (i.e., refutational) but were too dissimilar to be described as converging (i.e., reciprocal). Therefore, the selected research studies used for synthesis were related through a line of argument and were best described as dissimilar but complementary.

Table 4: Key characteristics of the selected studies

Study	Purpose	Setting	Sample	Design/ Method	Analysis	Key Metaphors
Gaskell & Leadbetter (2009)	Explored changes in views about the professional identity of Educational Psychologists (EPs) working between an inter-agency team (MAT) and an Educational Psychology Service (EPS)	MATs (Behaviour and Education Support, Early Years, Child Development, Child and Adolescent Mental Health and Health teams)	10 EPs, working for part of their week in a MAT and part in an EPS	Interview	Grounded approach Thematic analysis	• Professional identity • Group identification • Development of skills • Valued contributions
Messenger (2013)	Examined the relationship between professional culture and collaborative working in Children's Centres	Part of a larger, ongoing study with staff in Children's Centres in one region in England.	24 professionals working in Children's Centres (Early Years practitioners, teachers, familiar support workers and health professionals)	Interview	Thematic analysis	• Tacit knowledge, explicit knowledge and the 'the expert' • Knowledge and status • Knowledge and role • Acquiring knowledge together • Differences in language
Robinson et al. (2005)	Explored the impact of belonging to inter-agency teams on professional roles, identities, and learning	Draws on an Economic and Social Research Council funded research project, based in the UK	Education professionals in 5 inter-agency teams (n= unspecified)	Observation, analysis of pre-existing data, interviews, focus groups	Coded; based on theoretical framework	• Dilemmas of professional knowledge exchange • Tension within belonging to new learning communities on professional identities • Transformation and renegotiating identities

Study	Purpose	Setting	Sample	Design/ Method	Analysis	Key Metaphors
Robinson and Cottrell (2005)	Explored the perspectives and experiences of professionals regarding the impact of inter-agency teamwork on their professional knowledge, learning, and ways of working	Draws on an Economic and Social Research Council funded research project, based in the UK and involves Health, Social Services, Police and Voluntary MATs.	Purposive sample of five multi-agency teams (Youth Crime: n=13, Child Mental Health: n=11, Special Needs Nursery: n=11, Neurorehabilitation: n=13, Assessment of Child Development: n=14).	Observation Analysis of pre-existing data (documents about team function) Interviews Focus groups responding to vignettes	Coded; based on theoretical framework	• Models of professional practice • Roles, identities, status, and power • Information sharing • Relations with external agencies
Rose (2011)	Examined the challenges of inter-agency collaboration through dilemmas in practice around role, identity, and control.	Local authorities and councils located in various urban and metropolitan settings	8 inter-agency teams working in Children's Services (n= unspecified)	Interviews Focus groups	Themed analysis	• Collective preferences • Identity • Expertise • Territory • Power

Table 5: Common 2nd Order Constructs across the selected studies

2nd Order Construct	*Gaskell & Leadbetter (2009)*	*Messenger (2013)*	*Robinson et al. (2005)*	*Robinson and Cottrell (2005)*	*Rose (2011)*
Individual professional identity	√		√		√
Role boundaries and blurring	√			√	
Perception of other professional identities	√	√	√		
Collective identity	√	√		√	
Collective purpose	√		√	√	√
Identity fluidity	√		√		
Contextual influence	√		√		

2nd Order Construct	*Gaskell & Leadbetter (2009)*	*Messenger (2013)*	*Robinson et al. (2005)*	*Robinson and Cottrell (2005)*	*Rose (2011)*
Culture	√	√			√
Identity transition dilemmas			√	√	√
Professional knowledge		√	√	√	√
Sharing and acquiring knowledge	√	√	√	√	√
Opportunities for sharing and acquiring knowledge		√	√		
Power and status		√	√	√	√
Language		√	√	√	

I acknowledge that some authors do not recognise a line of argument as a translation method (France, Uny, et al., 2019; Sattar et al., 2021) but, as already referenced, these authors may have had a specific agenda of contributing to evidence-based practice for clinical settings. The type of knowledge produced by research located within education and social studies, such as the studies selected for this review, did not emerge from specific research questions and contexts with clear boundaries that are identical across studies (Evans & Benefield, 2001). For this reason, a line of argument must be recognised as a method for translation as different research questions will lead undoubtedly to different aspects of the same phenomena which do not fit a reciprocal or refutational translation (Hughes & Noblit, 2017).

1.2.5 Phase 5: Translating the studies into another

I organised the 2nd Order Constructs[2] thematically by grouping together key metaphors with dissimilar but complementary meanings before translating them into 3rd Order Constructs[3] (see Table 6). Here, I employed a constant comparison method across studies to arrive at an interpretative summary of the themed 2nd Order Constructs to create a new 3rd Order Construct.

1.3 Findings

1.3.1 Phase 6: Synthesising translations

Like Toye et al. (2014), I used Table 6 to develop an emerging visual structure that made sense of the developing analysis and 3rd Order Constructs. This visual model was iterative and revisited over a period of time to arrive at Noblit and Hare's (1988) notion of a whole.

[2] I use the term '2nd Order Constructs' at this point to refer to the themed key metaphors used by the primary researchers to describe '1st Order Constructs' (i.e., participants' constructions of phenomena in the original research studies). I also use the term '3rd Order Constructs' to refer to my synthesis of a '1st Order Construct' and '2nd Order Construct' to help distinguish between my interpretations and the interpretations of the primary researchers.

Table 6: Synthesised translations and 3rd Order Constructs

2nd Order Construct	3rd Order Construct
Individual professional identity ***Professional knowledge*** ***Perception of other professional identities*** ***Identity fluidity***	**Individual professional identity formation:** Professional identities were formed within interaction with others. They were dynamic and were in a continuous state of flux based on the participants' self-knowledge and their perception of others. Participants mobilised their professional identities mutually through the contribution of distinct professional knowledge, which was made available through language and was orientated towards the group's purpose.
Language ***Sharing and acquiring knowledge*** ***Subject positioning***	**Active knowledge construction:** During inter-agency activity, participants exchanged their professional knowledge according to the group's purpose. Here, the active process of knowledge exchange can be described as a key process in the participants' mobilisation of professional identities because it was responsible for sustaining a state of flux. Language served as a mutual tool for the conversion of professional knowledge. Individual participants used language to engage in social actions during knowledge exchange, which contributed to the state of flux. Participants assimilated newly constructed knowledge leading to new schemas and understandings of mobilised professional identities.
Power and status	**Power and status dynamic:** Participants each held assumptions about power based on the perceived status of their professional identity and the identity of others, which hindered an individual's contribution to the knowledge

2nd Order Construct	3rd Order Construct
	exchange in some cases. However, other participants eroded power structures by contributing professional knowledge that was perceived to be valuable to the group's purpose by others.
Collective identity ***Collective purpose***	**Collective identity formation:** Group activity was orientated towards the construction of a shared purpose, aims, objectives, goals, a common agenda etc. This supported the mobilisation of a collective identity, which has positive effects that can help ground individual professional identity (e.g., perceived feelings of belonging or pride).
Context ***Opportunities for sharing and acquiring knowledge***	**Contextual influence:** This construct relates to the immediate relational context of the inter-agency activity in which the mobilisation of professional identities always took place.
Culture ***Identity transition dilemmas*** ***Role boundaries and blurring***	**Individual-collective identity transition continuum:** This construct refers to the incremental transition from retaining a strong association between individual professional to mobilising a new collective identity. This transition was subjective and resulted affective consequences (i.e., feelings of loss, belonging etc.) depending on how encultured the individual participants became within the inter-agency group. The continuum demonstrates the gradual process of acquiring the cultural norms of the inter-agency team rather than the instantaneous, ongoing process of active mobilisation.

1.3.2 Phase 7: Expressing the synthesis

Noblit and Hare (1988) stated that the researcher must express their synthesis in a way that is accessible and appropriate for their intended audience. Since this paper is intended for those involved in inter-agency practice or service delivery, I expressed the synthesis as a conceptual model (Figure 2) to convey the intricate psychosocial processes visually.

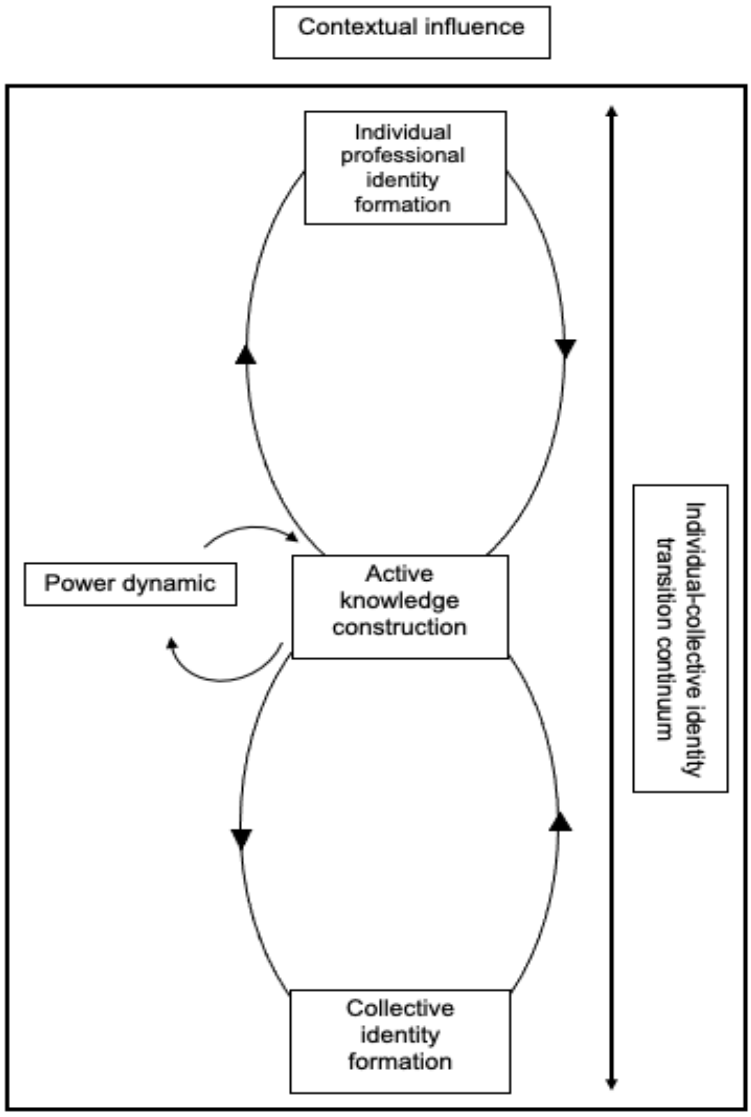

Figure 2: Conceptual model from meta-ethnography findings

1.4. Discussion

1.4.1 Exploration of synthesis

The notion that professional identities are mobilised within participants' dialogue is the central premise of the proposed model (Figure 2). This interactionist view broadly converges with Tajfel's (1974) SIT and Stryker and Burke's (2000) Identity Theory by asserting individuals engage in a process of identity mobilisation in which they shape and re-shape their respective identities within dialogue (Swann, Johnson, & Bosson, 2013). This ongoing process contrasts with Ibarra's (1999) view that professional identities are relatively stable across the career span once they are established, and supports Burke's (2006) notion of identity change by experiencing a dissonance between one's perception of their identity, and the feedback they receive from others.

Furthermore, and congruent with SIT, in the model I propose that participants' professional identities were dynamically mobilised through a continuous state of flux between a participant's individual professional identity and the collective identity of the group. The findings of this review suggest that professional identity is not an essentialised, individualised construct because participants constantly mobilised their professional identities according to the social meaning they derived from others. The findings reported here can be explained by symbolic interactionism where people derive self-knowledge from social interaction and engage in a process of identity mobilisation upon initiating relational dialogue (Swann et al., 2013). Here, I advance a dialogic view of how identities are mobilised during inter-agency activity where self-knowledge is derived from an ebbing flow of meaning between two or more individuals (Cox, 2016). Thus, I argue that it is less about the individual agency any single professional that is crucial in how identities are mobilised, but the psychosocial processes involved in the dialogic flow of meaning between beings within their interactions (Sampson, 2008).

Specifically, the proposed model shows that professional identities were mobilised through a process of active knowledge construction between participants. Within this exchange, participants contributed specific professional knowledge during their interactions, which underpinned their professional identity at that moment in time. As

well as pointing to a social constructionist epistemology, this finding implies the significant role of the immediate relational context as professional identity cannot be mobilised without the presence of the other and that knowledge construction is intersubjective. This contextual influence was inextricably linked to the social meaning used by the participants to mobilise identities where they relied on the symbolic use of language (Gregg, Sedikides, & Gebauer, 2011; Swann et al., 2013). Arguably, language served as a tool where the participants converted professional knowledge into the meaning that underpinned their professional identities; the role of language is depicted by the arrows in Figure 2.

Here, I must emphasise the performative nature of language, which is rather unexplored by SIT or Identity Theory but is discussed in depth by discursive psychology researchers (McAvoy, 2016; Wetherell, 2007). In their seminal work, D. Edwards and Potter (1992) reframed the way language is understood in psychology and described it as an arena for action as opposed to a neutral vessel merely reflecting inner cognition. Thus, I argue that language is a crucial tool for the mobilisation of identities as its performative nature facilitates social actions (e.g., positioning, externalising etc.) that accomplish psychological ends (e.g., affective reactions, a sense of belonging etc.). This view opposes the idea that language simply externalises an agentic, professional identity through the contribution of specialist knowledge.

Another key element in the mobilisation of professional identities is the notion of collectivism, which is prominently expressed within SIT and SCT. Tajfel's (1974) work in particular is frequently cited regarding intergroup conflict and prejudice, but Reicher, Spears, and Haslam (2010) noted that Tajfel was concerned with collective action, particularly how identity dynamics led people to act together to change their social world. Tajfel's interest in collective action is reflected by the many goal-orientated theoretical frameworks employed by primary researchers to make sense of the purpose of inter-agency activity (Robinson, Anning, & Frost, 2005; Robinson & Cottrell, 2005; Rose, 2011). Therefore, this sense of collective action is reflected in the synthesis where group activity was orientated towards the mobilisation of a collective identity through a shared purpose (i.e., aims, objectives and goals etc.). In several of the studies reviewed here, collective identity appears to have had a

positive effect for some participants as it supported them to anchor their individual professional identities (e.g. perceived feelings of belonging or pride), which aligns further with the affective cognitive processes outlined by Hogg and Turner's (1987) discussion of SIT. From this perspective, we can see the link between the harmonious mobilisation between individual professional identities to a collective identity and the collective actions that underpin effective inter-agency work (Rose, 2011; Rose & Norwich, 2014).

Of course, in this paper, I am not suggesting that mobilising professional identities always leads to group harmony and/or cohesion. Rather, many of the primary researchers concluded that participants experienced tension when mobilising their identity depending on how strongly they identified with their individual professional identity and how much they perceived this identity as converging with the collective identity (Messenger, 2013; Rose, 2011). Therefore, the proposed model includes an individual-collective identity continuum representing the incremental mobilisation from retaining a strong association with an individual professional identity to mobilising towards the collective identity of the group. As explained by Robinson and Cottrell (2005), mobilisation can result in feelings of loss over individual professional identities as they become encultured within the inter-agency group. Conversely, Gaskell and Leadbetter (2009) concluded that professionals can also experience positive feelings towards their changing identity within an inter-agency group. Whilst they appear to disagree, both Gaskell and Leadbetter (2009) and Robinson and Cottrell (2005) highlight the emotional significance and value of belonging to certain groups, which is a key tenet of SIT.

A further key feature of the proposed model is the power dynamics that were created due to the assumptions held by participants about the perceived status of their professional identities. These power assumptions hindered several participants' contribution to the inter-agency dialogue according to the accounts explained by Rose (2011) and Robinson and Cottrell (2005). But, as further demonstrated by Robinson et al. (2005), some participants eroded perceptions of power by demonstrating professional knowledge perceived to be valuable to the group's purpose. It seems that power is another resource involved in the mobilisation of professional identities that continually shifts with the ebb and flow of interaction. This

implies that there may be contests of symbolic capital or an unfair distribution of the right to claim certain prestigious fields of knowledge during inter-agency activities (Wackerhausen, 2009).

Overall, the findings from this systematic literature review are consistent with postmodern accounts of identity where the phenomenon is conceptualised as fluid, contingent on context, and constituted interaction (Stokoe & Attenborough, 2014). Professional identity can be described as a social identity, an individual's sense of who they are based on group membership (Hogg et al., 1995; Tajfel, 1974), and this relies on the symbolic use of language (Gregg et al., 2011; Swann et al., 2013) to achieve social actions (D. Edwards & Potter, 1992; McMullen, 2021). Professional identities are mobilised dialogically through the sharing of professional knowledge, but such mobilisation can lead to both cohesion and tension. The cohesion and tension brought about by the mobilisation of professional identities help to explain why the literature base describes professional identity as both a facilitator of and as a barrier to inter-agency activity. This finding further highlights the emotional significance and value of belonging to certain groups (Tajfel, 1974), including professional groups. Furthermore, the social actions accomplished in our talk stratifies distributions of power through demonstrations of professional knowledge (Robinson et al., 2005; Wackerhausen, 2009), which can help or hinder an individual professional's contribution. In sum, language emerges as a critical tool to mobilise professional identities during inter-agency activity.

Finally, we must recognise that inter-agency activities within Children's Services operate within a neoliberal context (Hendrix et al., 2021). Within this ideology, there is a temptation to conceptualise the complex phenomenon of how professional identities are mobilised in terms of productivity and cost-effectiveness. Indeed, Thompson (2013) challenges such objectivist assumptions within Children's Services by arguing that understanding a child's circumstances is a complex process of sense-making that does not have the same meaning for all professionals. It is evident from this review that the psychosocial processes that occur within interaction to mobilise our professional identities also play a crucial role in this sense-making. Rather than ostracising and depleting the efficacy of frontline professionals further (Hendrix et al., 2021; Leedham, 2021), serious consideration ought to be given to

fundamental questions about who we are as professionals and how we relate to others if we are to improve holistic outcomes for children, young people and their families.

1.4.2 Recommendations

I propose four recommendations based on the findings of this systematic literature review. First, managers or leaders within Children's Services may wish to allocate protected time for professionals to share and learn about each other; this exercise may not always need to be a formal team building activity but could equally be frequent, informal opportunities. Second, team managers or professionals may wish to network with other agencies to develop an understanding of a common language and shared purpose to support the sense of collective identity. Third, the affective factors associated with mobilising professional identities imply a role for formal support such as supervision. Supervision could occur at the individual or group level, but it must allow employees to make sense of their professional identities and how they might be mobilised in a safe, contained, and supportive way. Fourth, the proposed model also implies that professionals within Children's Services should consider the relationship between language and power, and how these factors are inherent within inter-agency contexts especially those activities which involve different degrees of qualification. This awareness should be applied throughout all aspects of inter-agency activity, but it is perhaps more relevant in the planning of service delivery and within individual supervision or appraisal procedures. In sum, this paper recommends that an appreciation of the psychosocial processes that constitute our sense-making about our professional identities within inter-agency contexts would be a valuable investment of resources.

1.4.3 Strengths and Limitations

In this paper, I have contributed an original psychological perspective to an identified gap in the literature by synthesising a set of dissimilar but complementary research studies to illuminate our current understanding of professional identity during inter-agency activity. Arguably, the meta-ethnography method carries more rigour than a thematic analysis or narrative synthesis due its complex translation phase (France et al., 2016). Additionally, this systematic literature review would be of practical interest

to policymakers and professionals alike within Children's Services as it provides an overdue understanding to tensions in practice regarding professional identity and inter-agency activity.

This paper has two salient limitations in its validity and scope. First, S. Atkins et al. (2008) raised a concern about the meta-ethnography approach regarding the validity of combining primary research from different theoretical perspectives or that employ different data collection methods. Alternatively, an approach such as meta-narrative maybe advantageous in synthesising research from opposing theoretical perspectives (Greenhalgh et al., 2005). It is important to note that Atkins et al.'s (2008) critique of meta-ethnography arose from the medical field where they were concerned with the synthesis of a large number of studies to improve health initiatives. Atkins et al.'s agenda here is juxta-positioned with Noblit and Hare's (1988) original stance, where they developed meta-ethnography to synthesise more open-ended, exploratory inquiry. Nevertheless, I accept the tensions in combining research using different qualitative methods in the pursuit of exploratory synthesis. Second, the practical limitations of being a sole researcher also limited the scope of the meta-ethnography. Several phases of the meta-ethnography could have been strengthened by either more time or labour (e.g., translations being cross-referenced by a panel, more key metaphors being brought forward for translations etc.). Indeed, the observation that limited resources could have impeded the rigour of the synthesis is a fair critique.

1.4.4 Future research

I propose two possible directions for future research. First, further empirical research could be undertaken to explore how individual and collective professional identities are mobilised discursively during inter-agency interactions, given the paramount importance of language as a performative tool. Second, I focused on professional identity in this paper but I acknowledge the intersectionality of identities and important discussions around social, political, cultural, economic, racial and ethnic values and inequitable distribution of power (Mertens, 2007). So, further research that explores the intersectionality of professional identity and other important aspects of identity (i.e., race, gender, social class etc.) would be welcome.

1.4.5 Conclusion

Inter-agency activity is a dominant narrative within Children's Services following enthusiastic political endorsement, although serious case reviews serve as a sombre reminder that we still have much to learn. How professional identities are mobilised during inter-agency activity has thus far remained unclear through conflicting accounts within the available literature due to the disparity in terminology amongst researchers. To advance our understanding, I employed a meta-ethnography approach to synthesise the available research rigorously and proposed a model from the findings. Overall, the findings are consistent with postmodern accounts of identity where the phenomenon is conceptualised as fluid, contingent on context, and constituted interaction with language emerging as a key resource for identity mobilisation. Here, professional identities are mobilised discursively through the sharing of professional knowledge. Nevertheless, mobilisations can lead to both positive and negative affective consequences, which serves as both a barrier to and a facilitator of inter-agency activity. Notwithstanding the review's potential limitations in scope and validity, the proposed model could be useful to managers, leaders, and supervisors within Children's Services to support professionals with their sense-making about identity within the context of inter-agency practice.

Chapter 2: *Critical reflection of research methodology and ethics*

2.1 Identifying an area for research

In Chapter 1, I proposed a conceptual model (Figure 2) to explain how professional identity might be mobilised during inter-agency activity. The model demonstrates that mobilising professional identity is a complex ongoing process set within a unique psychosocial environment. This premise seemingly rebuts the proposition that identities exist purely within the invisible mental world of an individual (Lester, 2011). Thus, my empirical research project focused on the interaction between people as opposed to studying individuals as the sole psychological and/or social reality (Turner & Oakes, 1986).

The decision to take an interactional approach towards the empirical research project steered me towards a psychosocial line of inquiry where identity is:

at its core psychosocial: self and other; inner and outer; being and doing; expression of self for, with, against, or despite; but certainly in response to others (Josselson, 1994, p. 82).

Here, I assumed language plays an essential performative role in Josselon's definition due to its prominence in my discussion of the systematic literature review (SLR). Billig (2006) argued conceptualizing language as a purely abstract system of signs used to reflect our thoughts detracts from the point that people constantly speak in diverse ways for various purposes. From Billig's stance, identity is not just a social, dialogic entity but a discursive one too; my tentative understanding at this point in my research journey is articulated through the conceptual framework in Figure 3. At this time, my thinking located identity in the public domains of discourse rather than the pre-discursive sphere of inner cognition (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006, 2010). Yet, I identified a significant question remained in how professional identities are mobilised discursively and what this mobilisation looked like in everyday practice within Children's Services.

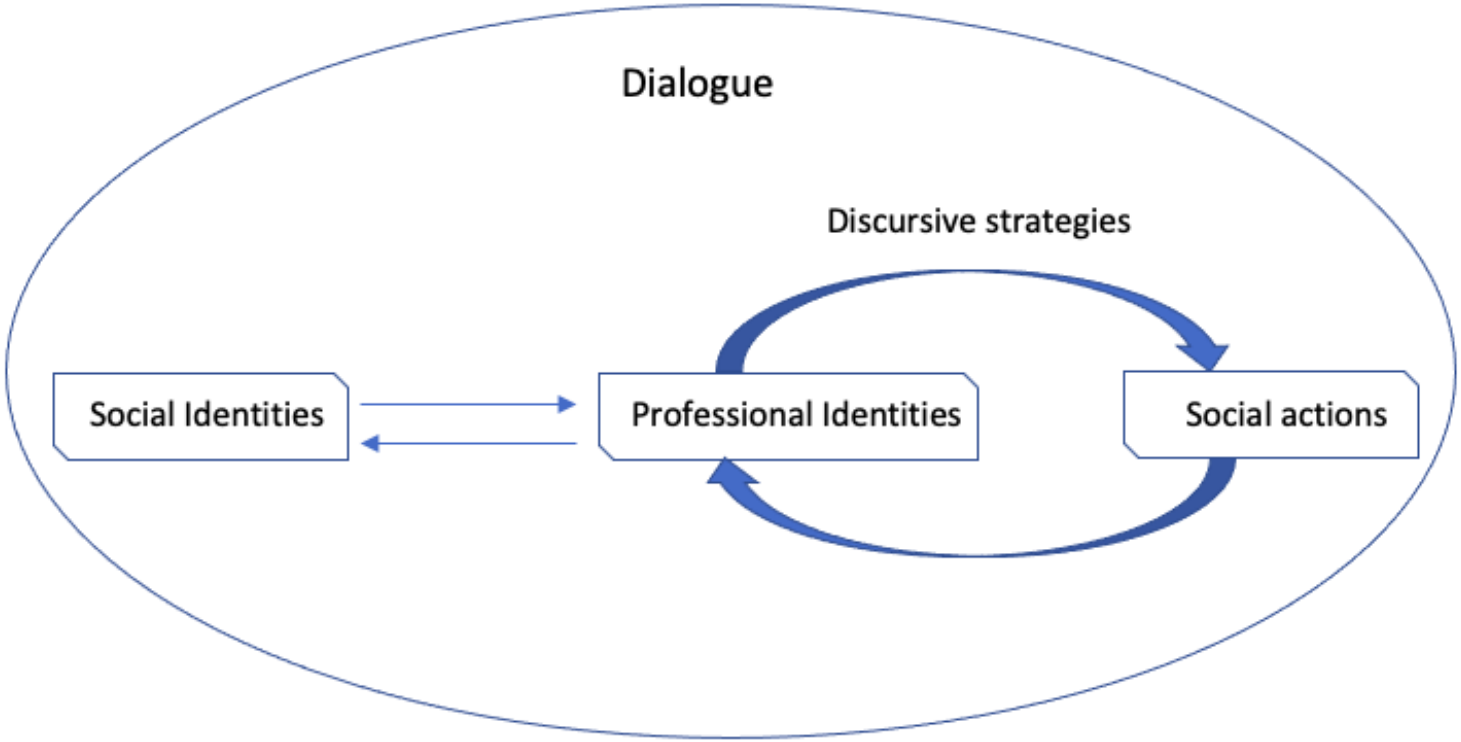

Figure 3: Conceptual framework articulating identity as a social, dialogic, and discursive entity

Arguably, I thought a discursive understanding of identity here could illuminate how professionals may relate, orientate, and invest in certain identities within their interactions, and to what psychological ends. Within the context of inter-agency work, an empirical study within this topic area would be fruitful as researchers argue for a greater understanding of professional identity to inform intergroup theory, future professional collaborations and supportive inter-agency environments (C. A. V. Atkins, 2018; Oliver, 2013).

2.2. Formulating a research aim

Admittedly, I found it difficult to formulate a *specific* research question at this stage without limiting the possibilities of what may unfold during the analysis as my inquiry was exploratory. Indeed, Potter (2003b) suggested questions framed as 'the influence of X on Y' are in danger of inferring cognitivist assumptions about experience or positivist connotations of experimentation and manipulation. Inferring such assumptions in my research aim would have conflicted with the findings from the SLR where I concluded that identity is dynamic, fluid and context dependent. Given this subjectivity and complexity, it seemed reasonable to formulate an exploratory research aim as opposed to a formulaic question. This decision avoided narrowing the empirical project's focus based on my assumptions as an exploratory inquiry should be open to what emerges in the specific research context (Wiggins, 2016).

Thus, the exploratory aim of the research was to illuminate how professional identities were mobilised discursively during interactions between professionals in an inter-agency team working across organisational boundaries within Children's Services and to what psychological ends. Regarding the political dimension of this aim (Willig, 2013), I assumed the beneficiaries of producing this kind of knowledge would be professionals working within Children's Services and the clients, children and families that they serve. This assumption was based on my belief that an enhanced understanding of our professional identity can lead to better wellbeing within organisations (Haslam & Ellemers, 2011) and improve inter-agency collaborations (Anne Edwards, 2009), which can only support effective service delivery.

2.3 Ontology

Regarding ontology, I was influenced by critical realism where an individual's constructions are theorized as being shaped by a stratified material world (Bhaskar, 2020). Here, material practices are given an ontological status that is independent of discursive practices (Sims-Schouten, Riley, & Willig, 2007). Bhaskar (2020) describes this ontology as a stratified reality that conceptualizes the real (i.e., fiscal resources, organisations, and institutions etc.), the actual (i.e., a debate within an inter-agency meeting etc.) and the empirical (i.e., experiences, the psychosocial processes that occur concerning professional identity etc.). As opposed to an extreme relativist position, the advantage in taking a critical realist stance was that I could make analytical conjectures between participants' discursive practices and their material world (Sims-Schouten et al., 2007).

2.3 Epistemology

As articulated throughout the SLR, inter-agency activity and professional identity were challenging concepts to operationalize because they are subjective (D'Amour, Ferrada-Videla, San Martin Rodriguez, & Beaulieu, 2005; Salmon, 2004) and rely heavily on personal, cultural, and political contexts (Gaskell & Leadbetter, 2009; Greenhouse, 2013). Here, I conceptualised that language is not neutral as it constructs social reality. Given my aim was to understand *how* participants constructed their social reality (i.e., mobilising professional identities within dialogue between inter-agency professionals), I held to a constructionist epistemology as I was concerned with exploring various constructions of social reality and tracing their implications for social practice (Willig, 2013). A constructionist epistemology complements my ontological stance as critical realism acknowledges that our knowledge about our stratified reality is relative, partial, and fallible (Parra, Said-Hung, & Montoya-Vargas, 2020).

2.4 Methodology

At this point, I assumed that, within a stratified reality, identities are mobilised within unique personal, cultural, and political contexts (Gaskell & Leadbetter, 2009; Greenhouse, 2013) where our knowledge about them is relative, partial and fallible

(Pilgrim, 2019). Thus, my research inquiry emerged from a qualitative methodology as I was concerned with how events, actions, and meanings were shaped by the unique circumstances in which they occurred (Maxwell, 2012).

I considered a range of approaches within the qualitative paradigm, for example phenomenology, narrative inquiry, or Grounded Theory. For this study's aims, it seemed that a discursive psychology (DP) approach was the most appropriate, given that the focus of the empirical project concerned how language mobilises professional identities within inter-agency contexts. Distinctively, DP investigates how people practically manage psychological themes and concepts such as identity, emotion, or agency within their discourse and, perhaps most crucially, to what ends (McMullen, 2021; te Molder, 2015; Wiggins, 2016; Wiggins & Potter, 2007). Adopting this approach allowed me to explore how individuals mobilised their professional identities discursively during their inter-agency activities.

DP's distinctiveness over the other approaches I considered, such as phenomenology and Grounded Theory, lies in its acknowledgement of language as a performative resource rather than a neutral route to inner cognition. This acknowledgement stands in contrast with phenomenology's focus on lived experience (Flood, 2010; Neubauer, Witkop, & Varpio, 2019; Willig, 2013), narrative inquiry's emphasis on the meanings of personal stories and events (Wang & Geale, 2015) and ethnography's concern with patterns within a culturally defined population (Prasad, 1997). Grounded Theory is perhaps the closest approach to DP in theorizing about social practices rather than analysing the human; though, its focus is primarily on the referential rather than performative features of language (Dodgson, 2017; O'Reilly, Kiyimba, Lester, & Edwards, 2021). Similarly, DP is slightly distinct from Critical Theory as DP emphasizes the publicly available and purposeful social practices which constitute the psychological (J. Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Wetherell, 2007; Wiggins & Potter, 2007) whilst Critical Theory illuminates inequality with social practices (Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith, 2008). Considering the goals of these alternative approaches within the qualitative paradigm, I deemed that a DP approach was the most appropriate for addressing the research aim as it permits research designs and analysis methods that consider participants' discursive constructions in fulfilling psychological means.

2.5 Design

One of DP's main projects has been the re-specification of psychological constructs, such as cognition, memory, and identity, as being discursive entities (Lester, 2014). This approach has opened up opportunities for psychological inquiry by allowing researchers to design studies that "capture psychological phenomena in the wild" (Huma, Alexander, Stokoe, & Tileaga, 2020, p. 314). Therefore, discursive psychologists must:

> step outside the experimental laboratory or the interview room and take a recorder to the research settings where life happens (Huma et al., 2020, p. 314).

Given Huma et al.'s (2020) argument, I employed a naturalistic case study design as I deemed it the most appropriate for exploring the research's aim through a DP approach. Alternatively, I could have explored the research aims through methods associated with longitudinal and ethnographic research designs. Nevertheless, I held reservations about whether some of the micro-level discursive detail involved in understanding how participants mobilised identities in their mundane talk would be understated by these designs as they focus on macro-level themes (e.g., cultures, systems, communities etc.).

2.6 Methods

The preference for naturalistic data over researcher generated sources is valued in DP studies since artificially situated methods omit rich interactional detail (Wiggins & Potter, 2007). For example, interviews are organized through a question-and-answer structure and do not reflect everyday discourse. I considered focus-groups and diamond ranking as possible methods as they arguably would have allowed more interactional detail, although I still conceptualized them as researcher-generated (J. Potter, 2003b). Moreover, I deemed methods with no instantaneous interaction, such as self-report questionnaires, unsuitable given the arguments made thus far about DP's purpose. Therefore, I agreed with Potter's (2003b) advocation of naturalistic data sources and concluded that observational methods were the most suitable for exploring my research aim. I decided to audio-record several inter-agency

discussions between professionals to generate a sufficiently sized corpus for my analysis.

In my reading of seminal works by advocates of the DP approach (D. Edwards & Potter, 1992; Wetherell, 1998), I was intrigued by Pomerantz's (2005) use of a two-phased research design to add a further level of meaning to her analysis. Here, she asked each of the participants she observed to listen to an audiotape of the interaction and offer comments whilst listening to it. So, I decided to use stimulated recall interviews (SRIs) where I interviewed a group of participants who were involved in one interaction by playing them the audio recording and discussing different aspects of that recording using an open-ended interview schedule (Dempsey, 2010); please see Appendix 9. Given the size of the corpus from the observations, I conducted SRIs with participants involved in one recorded interaction so I could manage the data efficiently within the constraints of being a sole researcher.

I acknowledge that SRIs are routed in the introspective movement (Calderhead, 1981) and this would have been problematic for the DP approach if I was not cautious about cognitivist assumptions. Rather than using this method to explore experience, I used SRIs in the same way as Pomerantz (2005): to explore different aspects of those recorded interactions with participants to illuminate aspects of practices that otherwise may have been analysed more conjecturally.

2.7 Sample

Regarding sample size, there is no correct, natural limit in DP studies but I needed to ensure that the selected sample was appropriate to my research aims (J. Potter & Wetherell, 1987).Therefore, I used purposive sampling by selecting participants according to the criteria of relevance to the research question (Willig, 2013). This meant I approached professionals who worked together in an inter-agency way so there would be dialogue between participants from different agencies. So, I recruited participants who worked in an inter-agency team within the local Children's Services. I approached this team specifically as it was the only team within Children's Services that worked across the organisational boundaries of Education, Health and Social Care. Given the pragmatics of undertaking a lengthy form of discourse analysis as a

sole researcher (Willig, 2013), there I also used a convenience sampling strategy as I had good access to these participants as the team was located within the Local Authority I worked in.

2.7 Data Analysis

It is generally accepted by scholars that there are no procedural guidelines to follow when conducting analysis (McMullen, 2021; J. Potter, 2003a). McMullen reminded us that "engaging in data analysis in discursive psychology is not a lockstep process" (2021, p. 35). At the same time, to avoid analytical pitfalls such as under-quotation and circular dilemmas, Wiggins (2016, p. 115) proposed a useful analytic framework (please see Figure 4). Wiggins' framework seemed coherent with the iterative nature of both qualitative research and DP by emphasising the cyclical reality of conducting analysis. Therefore, by using this framework, I engaged the analysis in a non-sequential fashion where the analytic phases overlapped and occurred concurrently.

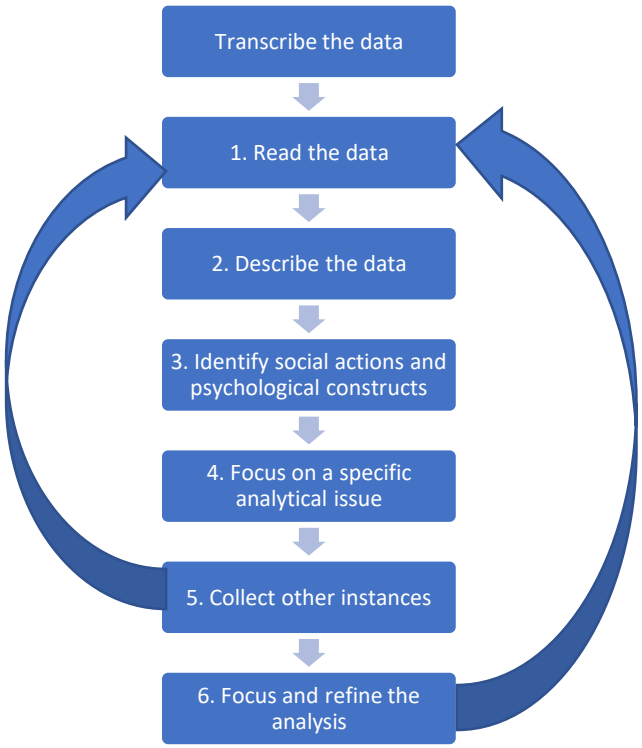

Figure 4: Wiggins' (2016) proposed framework for DP analysis

2.9 Validity

Validity is “the extent to which the research describes, measures or explains what it claims to describe, measure or explain” (Willig, 2013, p. 24), and this concept had three implications for my research. First, I acknowledged that the findings from the empirical research project were idiographic and reflected only one view of one snapshot context as with all naturalistic inquiry (Crystal & Wildemuth, 2009). On the other hand, I was able to stay more faithful to the phenomena (Wiggins & Potter, 2007) by working with naturalistic materials as opposed to a researcher-generated context. Second, I could not infer anything beyond the parameters set by the DP approach (McMullen, 2021; J. Potter, 2012), such as thoughts and feelings, as this would compromise my goal of exploring *how* identities were mobilised as opposed to participants’ experiences or beliefs. So, I abstained from commenting on participants’ inner thoughts throughout my analysis. Third, as opposed to participants’ verifying claims, DP academics argue strongly that validity is achieved by grounding findings by turn-by-turn analysis where the researcher’s claims are verified by the observable outcomes within the interaction (Wiggins & Potter, 2007). Therefore, I ensured that I attended to the turn-by-turn sequence of talk and presented the analysis alongside the transcribed extracts so that readers could make their own assessments of the plausibility and validity of my interpretations (Wiggins & Potter, 2007).

2.10 Ethical considerations

All research is subject to a set of ethical principles and practices (O’Reilly et al., 2021). For example, the British Psychological Society (2014, 2021) outlined ethical principles for human research such as confidentiality, informed consent, minimizing harm etc. These procedural ethical issues (Creswell, 2009; Willig, 2013), as well as those required by the University’s ethics board are addressed by Table 7.

Table 7: Procedural ethical considerations

Principle	Consideration
Informed consent	Participants were fully informed about the research procedure and gave their consent to participate in the research before data collection took place. Informed consent was formally documented via a consent form (see Appendix 3 and 7).
No deception	No deception took place, and the project's full intentions and my role as a researcher was fully stated on all paperwork (see Appendices 2-8).
Right to withdraw	Participants were free to withdraw from participation in the study without any consequence. This was stated clearly on all paperwork (see Appendices 2, 3, 4, 6, 7 and 8).
Debriefing	Participants were re-informed about the full aims of the research following data collection through a 'debriefing' document (see Appendix 4 and 8). Participants will be given access to any publications arising from the study they took part in.
Confidentiality	No identifiable information was collected from participants other than their professional title and/or occupation. Whilst participants could be identified by their voice on the audio recordings, the audio recordings were destroyed once the anonymised transcription was completed.

An important critique of procedural ethics is that the decisions taken at the beginning of a research project are far removed from what may unfold during the research journey (Moriña, 2021). Instead, Guillemin and Gillam (2004) argued that researchers must go beyond procedural ethics and proposed the concept of ethics in practice (i.e., the everyday ethical issues that arise in doing research). Ethics in practice also encompasses relational ethics, which requires the researcher to navigate changing relationships with their research participants over time (Ellis, 2007; Moriña, 2021). Concerning the empirical project outlined in Chapter 3, this approach to ethics posed three tensions specific to my use of naturalistic data and my reliance on detailed transcription.

First, relational ethics argues that we must conduct research with people as opposed to *on* them (McMullen, 2018), but this argument seems in tension with the

observation method where the researcher adopts a removed role from the participants' behaviour. Here, my role as a researcher may have contributed to a power imbalance between the participants and I as they could have perceived that they were under scrutiny. As Orb, Eisenhauer, and Wynaden (2001) suggested, I made my role as a researcher and the purposes of the study clear throughout data collection verbally on an on-going basis to minimise the perception that my purpose was dubious. I also gave participants' control over the recording devices so they could stop the recording if they felt uncomfortable rather than approaching me.

Second, observing participants in a natural work setting implies that I had to recruit them through a gatekeeper (see Appendix 5), which could have introduced issues of power as participants might have felt obliged to participate in the study since their manager had granted me access. Likewise, and relevant to both the observations and the SRIs, participants might also feel compelled to participate because I am known to them professionally. This possibility made me reflect on how my fluid, dynamic identities (i.e., a researcher, a trainee educational psychologist, a professional colleague etc.) influenced the research context (Gunasekara, 2007). This reflection reinforced my acknowledgement that informed consent was on-going as the relational dynamics were subject to change throughout the course of the research (Ellis, 2007; Moriña, 2021). By seeking informed consent, including the right to withdraw, on an ongoing basis verbally, I maximised the opportunities to establish trust as participants were given multiple opportunities to exercise their rights as autonomous persons to voluntarily accept or refuse to participate in the study throughout the course of the research (Orb et al., 2001).

Third, DP studies generally produce transcripts for analysis which are significantly more detailed than those required for other methodologies due to its focus on *how* something is said using a transcription system attending to the micro-details of the talk (O'Reilly et al., 2021). The heavily annotated transcripts' appearance can be interpreted, by participants unfamiliar with such conventions, as making them look inarticulate (Weatherall, Gavey, & Potts, 2002). Whilst procedural ethics may suggest that this issue might be adequately addressed by briefing and debriefing the participants, relational ethics required me to address perceived power issues in their

representation beyond the transcription process (Ellis, 2007; Moriña, 2021). To address this issue, I carried out the following:

- *I included a disclaimer in the write-up of the empirical project so that readers understood the conventions and features of naturalistic speech and conversation*
- *I offered each participant to view an anonymised transcript of their discussion and the opportunity to omit/withdraw*
- *I discussed with the team what might be produced from the research, its modes of dissemination including the opportunity to co-author where appropriate*

Ultimately, in my view, the costs of not including such transcriptional detail outweighed issues of representation. The transcripts aimed to represent how the participants spoke as closely as possible to give them more voice whereas creating impoverished transcripts would have given them less voice (Huma et al., 2020).

2.11 Summarising the methodology: epistemological reflexivity

I would like to summarise briefly my decision making and thinking in this chapter through a critical reflection about the knowledge produced from this research and how that knowledge was generated. Such epistemological reflexivity encouraged me to reflect upon my philosophical assumptions and the implications of these beliefs for the research and findings (Willig, 2013). Table 8 summarises my thinking around three questions of epistemological reflexivity posed by Willig (2013).

2.12 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter provided me with an opportunity to critically explore my thinking from the SLR and how this informed the decision-making that shaped the empirical project's focus, methodology, design, data collection methods, analysis, and validity. I have also considered the ethical implications of my decisions and highlighted how I addressed such issues using a relational lens.

Table 8: Epistemological Reflexivity

Reflexive question posed by (Willig, 2013)	**Consideration**
How has the research question defined and limited what can be 'found'?	DP proposes that constructs, such as thoughts or feelings, are beyond the remit of any research design (Billig, 2006). This point, in conjunction with my Critical Realist stance, meant that my findings were partial and cautious. Furthermore, I conceptualised identity mobilisation as a social action, and this limited what could be found about participants' thoughts, feelings, and experiences of identity.
How has the design of the study and the method of analysis 'constructed' the data and the findings?	DP values naturalistic data (Wiggins, 2016). My avoidance of researcher-generated methods restricted the research designs to those where the researcher takes an observer role. This limited opportunities for participants to co-construct meaning with me, and meant the findings were subject heavily to my influence. Additionally, as naturalistic data could only be analysed in the here and now (Wiggins, 2016), this meant that the analysis restricted to only what the participants' explicitly referenced in their discourse. This meant I could not make inferences that are beyond the immediate context of the discourse.

Reflexive question posed by (Willig, 2013)	Consideration
***How could the research question have been investigated differently, and to what extent would this have given rise to a different understanding of the phenomenon under investigation*?**	As DP focuses only on the immediate context of the discourse, the research question could have been investigated differently by exploring how past interactions and experiences shape people's identities (Ibarra, 1999; Slay & Smith, 2010). Within the qualitative paradigm, research interest in this area might have been better explored through the use of narrative inquiry as it focuses not only on individuals' experiences but also "on the social, cultural, and institutional narratives within which individuals' experiences are constituted, shaped, expressed, and enacted" (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, p. 35). Alternatively, research from the quantitative paradigm could have alluded to understanding universal truths about identity (i.e., factors underpinning identity formation etc.)

Chapter 3: Mobilising professional identity during inter-agency activity: A contribution from discursive psychology.

Abstract

Aim: Grappling with professional identity during inter-agency activity is an arduous task for professionals, especially for educational psychologists. Whilst it is accepted that professional identity influences work behaviour, there is a gap in our understanding of this phenomenon within Children's Services for professionals working across organisational boundaries from a discursive psychology approach. This study provides an original perspective on how professionals working across organisational boundaries mobilise professional identities during inter-agency activity and to what psychological ends.

Method**:** I employed discursive psychology methods, participant observations and stimulated recall interviews, to explore how participants drew on discursive resources to mobilise relevant professional identities during naturalistic inter-agency dialogue.

Findings: Participants drew on a range of linguistic features and discursive devices to mobilise three professional identities: their individual identity within a group, their collective identity, and identities of the 'other'. Participants' investments in these identity positions enabled them to orientate to a range of social actions in their interactions.

Limitations: This study is limited in its focus by its theoretical assumptions, and in its generalisability due to its design. These limitations highlight new avenues for further research.

Conclusions: The study illuminates the multiplicity of identities, which seems unlikely to be explained by a fixed, biological cause and monologic reasoning. Rather, professional identities, like other social identities, are discursive and dialogic. We belong to professional groups that are not biological, and thus our professional

identity is socially constructed, fragmented and fluid based on our dialogic encounters with others.

3.1 Introduction

Grappling with professional identity is an arduous task for professionals. How practitioners identify themselves professionally during inter-agency activity has become a pertinent issue as policy examples, such as the Children and Families Act (2014) or Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018), have routinely promoted seamless, joined-up service delivery. Despite this emphasis, the translation from policy to practice falls short. Recently, the Department for Education (2021) concluded that frontline practitioners' misunderstanding of other agencies constituted a barrier to effective inter-agency practice. Communicating a sense of professional identity is not a new issue for educational psychologists (EPs) who are extensively involved in inter-agency activity (Farrell, 2006). Therefore, there is a need for current research to explore how frontline professionals within Children's Services, including EPs, mobilise their professional identities during inter-agency activity and to what psychological ends. Here, mobilisation refers to fluid shifts in a practitioner's conceptualisation of their professional identities in their practice (Best et al., 2020).

Professional identity describes how an individual identifies themself as belonging to a professional group of other individuals who have a unified approach to a form of work (Best & Williams, 2018). Psychology has much to offer to the study of professional identity, given that the phenomenon influences work behaviour (Best & Williams, 2019; Rose, 2011). The link between professional identity and work behaviour is complex as previous studies within inter-agency teams have reported contradictory findings where professional identity was both a barrier to (Hymans, 2008b; Wiles, 2013) and a facilitator of (McNeil, Mitchell, & Parker, 2013; Rose, 2011) effective practice. Within this literature base, there is a gap in research to explore this link with individuals working across organisational boundaries within inter-agency teams (Best & Williams, 2019).

The lack of clarity within this topic could reflect the polarised debate over identity within psychology (Swann & Bosson, 2010). On one side of the debate, there is the dominant tradition of locating the self, a construct which subsumes identity, within a "self-contained individual" (Sampson, 2008, p. 17). For example, animalism (Olson,

1999) and primordialism (Bayar, 2009) presume identities are fixed and can be explained by biology, albeit to different extents. On the other side, many researchers have suggested identities are dynamically constructed in the moment (Batory, 2010; Oyserman, Elmore, & Smith, 2012). Within this postmodernist view, the relationship between professional identity and practice is not unidirectional in which some essential, stable tenet of self determines how we act in a given situation (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006; C. Watson, 2006). According to Social Identity Theory (SIT) (Tajfel, 1974), our sense of self is shaped through dialogue and by knowing not only that we belong to particular groups, but also that we are different from members of other groups (Reicher et al., 2010; van Dick & Haslam, 2012). Whilst this theory is helpful in explaining the link between professional identity and work behaviour, it suggests little about *how* identities are mobilised dynamically within the dialogue between frontline professionals.

Alternatively, discursive psychology provides some theoretical direction in studying how people use language to construct social realities, such as identities, and how those constructions fulfil social actions (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006, 2010; de Kok, 2012). Here, dialogue is understood as crucial in exploring the link between professional identity and work behaviour as language is conceptualised as a primary resource for constructing social identities (Hogg, 2018; Miller, 2000). If social identities are to be understood discursively, then the motivating objective for the prospective researcher is to explore the resources professionals draw upon to mobilise their identities within their day-to-day practice. This means approaching analysis in a way that focuses explicitly on what psychological business is accomplished by participants' talk as opposed to drawing cognitivist assumptions about what they might be thinking or feeling (D. Edwards & Potter, 1992; J. Potter, 2003b). It is reasonable to suggest that research within this area can be applied to improve inter-agency relationships (Lee, Ong, & Martimianakis, 2021) and communication (Farrell, 2006).

Within Educational Psychology, a few studies have explored professional identity (Gaskell & Leadbetter, 2009; Hymans, 2008a) but none from a discursive psychology approach. Although not focusing on professional identity, Nolan and

Moreland (2014) is a seldom example of how research from this approach can be useful to EPs wishing to reflect on the differences between their espoused and actual practice. Therefore, the present study aims to illuminate how individuals, including EPs, mobilise their professional identities in their interactions discursively and to what psychological ends. By locating the research study in the context of an inter-agency team within Children's Services where professionals work across organisational boundaries, this research aim provides an original insight by relocating professional identity from the pre-discursive sphere of inner cognition to the public domain of dialogue (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006, 2010).

3.2 Methods

This research employed a two-phase case study design and was conducted with an inter-agency team located in northeast England. I approached this specific team using purposive sampling as it was located within Children's Services and comprised of professionals working across organisational boundaries (i.e., education, health, and social care). A total of 19 individuals participated in the project: team manager (n=1), administrators (n=3), educational psychologist (n=1), occupational therapist (n=1), counsellors (n=3), teachers (n=4), nurses (n=2), paediatricians (n=2), clinical psychologist (n=1) and social work therapist (n=1). First, I undertook naturalistic field observations by audio-recording inter-agency discussions between groups of professionals during a team-building day. Second, I used stimulated recall interviews (SRIs)[4] with individual participants involved in one discussion to provide data triangulation. These phases will now be outlined in more detail.

3.2.1 Phase 1

3.2.1.1 Method

[4] SRIs involve interviewing individuals by playing audio or video recordings of their behaviour in social situations and discussing different aspects of those recorded interactions (Dempsey, 2010).

Using the naturalistic field observation method, I audio-recorded seven inter-agency strategic discussions between professionals during a team away-day. These discussions occurred in groups of three or four professionals with individuals allocated purposefully by the team manager, so that each group contained participants from different professional backgrounds. I adopted an observer role and did not participate in any of the discussions since discursive psychology values naturalistic over researcher generated sources (J. Potter, 2003a; Wiggins & Potter, 2007).

3.2.1.2 Participants

A total of 19 professionals participated in this phase (please see above). I used an opportunistic sample based on which professionals attended the team building day. Although not all members of the whole team were present that day, every profession involved in the inter-agency team was represented by at least one professional.

3.2.1.3 Materials

I recorded seven hours of audio data, which provided a sufficiently sized corpus to allow rich analysis within the constraints of being a single researcher whilst also being representative of the inter-agency team (Wiggins, 2016). Following transcription, all participants in Phase 1 were offered an opportunity to check an anonymised transcript of their discussion.

3.2.1.4 Ethical Considerations

The phase was designed to meet the ethical principles outlined by the British Psychological Society (2014, 2021). Ethical approval was granted from Newcastle University (please refer to the Appendices 2-5 for the relevant paperwork). All participants gave informed, written consent, but I also sought this on an on-going basis verbally. I notified participants of their right to withdraw up to the point of analysis without any consequences on an on-going basis also. I selected the recording opportunities deliberately to only include strategic conversations as it was not anticipated that individual children or families would be named in the discussions, and I believed it was not ethical to obtain their consent in retrospect.

3.2.2 Phase 2

3.2.2.1 Method

I conducted SRIs to explore one recording of a discussion with participants to provide some data triangulation. Here, participants were invited to reflect on an audio clip of the recorded interaction to illuminate aspects of interaction that may have been analysed more conjecturally (Pomerantz, 2005). The interview schedule consisted of an open structure, which is detailed in Appendix 9.

2.2.2 Participants

The three participants involved in Phase 2 were the team manager, an educational psychologist, and an occupational therapist. I selected these participants through purposive sampling as they were part of a recorded interaction that had equal representation across education, health, and social care backgrounds. I decided not to approach all participants in Phase 1 for involvement in Phase 2 as this would likely create an overwhelming amount of data for one researcher.

2.2.3 Materials

The three SRIs yielded just over three hours of audio recorded data. All participants in Phase 2 were offered an opportunity to check a transcript of their interview.

3.2.2.4 Ethical Considerations

The phase was designed to meet the ethical principles outlined by the British Psychological Society (2014, 2021). Ethical approval was gained from Newcastle University (please refer to the Appendices 6-9 for the relevant paperwork). Informed, written consent was given by all participants at the beginning of the interviews, but I also sought this on an on-going basis verbally. I notified participants of their right to withdraw up to the point of analysis without any consequences on an on-going basis also.

3.2.3 Analytical procedure

I used the Jefferson (2004) transcription conventions (please see Appendix 10) to transcribe around 10 hours of audio data gathered from Phase 1 and 2 for analysis. Table 9 details how I analysed the data using a framework proposed Wiggins (2016).

Table 9: Analytical phases and description of actions

Phase	Description of my analysis
1. Read the data	I repeatedly read the transcripts in an undirected way (Goodman, 2017; McMullen, 2021) I familiarised myself with the content and organisation of the data (Wiggins, 2016).
2. Describe the data	I annotated the transcripts through line-by-line coding to identify broad, open themes (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002).
3. Identify social actions and psychological constructs	I used NVIVO software to code the discursive strategies in each social action involving an identity position (Goodman, 2017; J. Potter, 2003a).
4. Focus on a specific analytical issue	I focused on pronoun use and footing shifts (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). Footing describes the alignment or stance that an individual adopts in an interaction towards the other participants (Goffman, 1979; Levinson, 1988).
5. Collect other instances	I collected more examples of the focus issue from the transcribed corpus (Goodman, 2017; McMullen, 2021; Wiggins, 2016) using NVIVO to classify groups of cases.
6. Focus and refine the analysis	I compiled examples relevant to my analytical focus in a separate Word document and worked through each data segment (McMullen, 2021; Wiggins, 2016) to refine my analysis.

3.3 Findings

I present my findings according to three prominent identity positions that the participants mobilised in their interactions: individual (i.e., “I”), group (i.e., “Us”) and out-group (i.e., “They”). The relevant line numbers are indicated by a number within brackets (i.e., line 5 will be represented as [5]), and extracts are presented using the

Jefferson (2004) conventions; these conventions can be found in Appendix 10. Please note, the extracts are heavily annotated and are representative of spontaneous speech as opposed to verbal fluency.

3.3.1 Who am I? Constructing an individual identity within a group

Some participants attempted to mobilise their individual identity within the inter-agency group through a category entitlement[5]. Here, the participants positioned themselves against the "traditional" conceptualisation of their profession to show that they could offer more to the team. The participants redefined[6] themselves by presenting other aspects of their identity that could be favourable to the group's collective purpose. Thus, the participants sought to construct a sense of 'I' within the group.

In Extract 1 (Table 10), where the group discussed what a clinical psychologist could offer to their service, we see how some participants used a category entitlement to mobilise their individual professional identity. The educational psychologist (EP) stated what she valued in her practice [1-4]. For example, her declarative of "*I'm definitely mo::re for the systemic work now*" revealed a stake confession[7] that is reaffirmed by the modifier "*definitely*" and the elongation of the word "*more*". This individual identity position is further mobilised [4], where the EP drew on the interpretative repertoire of the "*traditional bread and butter EP stuff*" to evoke a category entitlement. This category entitlement brought the rhetorical advantage of being a competent EP, but also one who could contribute more than the status quo. The EP's strategy of mobilising her individual identity within the group by positioning

[5] Category entitlement is a discursive strategy that evokes the belief that certain categories of people are entitled to have reliable knowledge about a certain issue than most people (Potter, 1996)

[6] Defining and redefining involved participants expressing relevant new information and readjusting existing viewpoints so as to provide a platform for sensemaking (Kwon, Clarke, & Wodak, 2014)

[7] A stake confession is the discursive process through which people admit or "confess to" having a particular stake, interest, or motive (Potter, 1996: 130).

herself against the “traditional” conceptualisation could be considered successful as the occupational therapist (OT) also used this category entitlement [10]. The backchannelling[8] [6, 9] showed an acknowledgement of the identity position and, potentially, an acceptance of the construction since no further counter strategy was offered in response.

Table 10: Extract 1: Phase 1 group interaction involving an educational psychologist, an occupational therapist, and a team manager

1 **2** **3** **4**	**EP**	=and I think (.) >in some ways< (0.5) I'm definitely mo::re for the systemic work now (5.0) Yeah (.) I (.) >I really like working at a systemic level I like working at the supervision type of level (.) th::e er::m (.) professional consultation (.) the multiagency co-ordination.hhh (0.2) I like all of that kind of work but obviously the traditional bread and butter EP stuff as well=
6	**TM**	[Mm::mm]
7 **8**	**EP**	=[the individual work] >is still< (.) because I like having the complete mixture [across the board]
9	**TM**	[Mm::mm (.) mhmmm]
10 **11** **12**	**OT**	and then I might then go to the very functional (0.2) practical (0.2)< traditional > OT bit (.) which is what actually (0.5) you know I'm kind of at u::mm (0.2) you know we can't translate that skill into (0.5) um

Thus, due to the team manager introducing the clinical psychologist, the EP and OT used the interpretative repertoire to define and re-define themselves against the available identity position, which is the traditional status quo of their profession.

The interpretative repertoire of “*traditional bread and butter work*” was revisited with the EP in Phase 2 where she reflected on the interaction denoted in Extract 1. As seen in Extract 2 (Table 11), the EP presented her account of the interaction [1-3] and used emphasis to present a concern over the introduction of a clinical

[8] Backchannels are intermittent vocal noises (i.e., *oh, right, yeah* etc.) made by the listener while in conversation with another person (Peters & Wong, 2014).

psychologist. Next, the EP disclosed a stake in the interpretative repertoire [6] and elaborated why this stake was significant to her at that moment in suggesting she was protecting her professional identity from being marginalised by other group members [6-8].

Table 11: Extract 2: Phase 2 interview with the educational psychologist

1 2 3	**EP**	And I THINK (0.2) I dunno what you'd call it (3.0) it not an insecurity it's a concern (1.5) a professional concern aro::und (2.0) here's a clinical psychologist going to come in and take away some of the nice bits of the work that I do that actually I re::ally e:::njoy
5	**I**	Yeah (0.2) is that what you meant by the < bread and butter > educational psychologist?
6 7 8 9 10 11	**EP**	Hhhhhh.I think I was trying to hang onto the creative systemic work that I named (2.0) and not be reduced to marginalize to individual ↑assessment (1.0) I think that's why I probably didn't go into any detail of the bread and butter work because it was a bit like (1.0) in my view (.) I was seeing that as the traditional EP work >the individual assessment the one-to-one work< (3.0) and I think (.) I suppose there is a little bit of a concern in is that how people see EPs? Is that what people think EPs do.hhhhh?

However, the mobilisation of an individual identity position did not always result in a broader conceptualisation of a role that affiliated with the group's collective purpose. In Extract 3 (Table 12), the team manager consulted the group about what action to take with a mock referral.

Table 12: Extract 3: Phase 1 group interaction involving a social worker therapist, a nurse, and a team manager

1 2 3	**TM**	I I guess in terms of our team (.) I think there's a bit of something for everybody and it's kind of like who's going to take the lead on it? Where do we start with it? Are there some quick wins here? >you know< it's [um so]
4 5	**SWT**	[is it] sort of a Theraplay Thrive kind of thing first which is sort of (1.0) I'm not that

The team manager opened with a declarative assessment that defined the team's collective identity position as a versatile or dynamic group, as opposed to one with a narrow skill set [1]. Her quick succession of questions [2, 3] may suggest an

equalising strategy, where individuals encourage participation by relaxing power dynamics to create the space for participants express their viewpoints (Kwon et al., 2014). Notably, the team manager signalled common knowledge with '*you know*' [4], which inferred a shared, affiliative category membership (Stokoe, 2012). Her strategy of equalising could indicate her goal was that another professional within the group will come forward and take the lead, given the group's versatile identity position. Her goal is presupposed by the social worker therapist, as demonstrated by the overlapping speech [3, 4], and he used hedges (i.e., '*kind of thing' and* '*sort of)'* and a pause to moderate his explicit affirmation of his individual identity position. These linguistic features mitigate the bluntness of his self-categorisation of a singular professional identity rather than mobilising towards the available collective identity position when he says, "*I'm not that"* [5].

3.3.2 Who are we? Forging a collective identity through affective discursive practices

At times, professionals from different backgrounds forged a collective identity through affective discursive practices. Such practices are patterned forms of social activity that articulate emotion within discourse (Wetherell, McCreanor, McConville, Barnes, & le Grice, 2015). Notably, participants did not talk about emotions explicitly but instead used discursive devices to draw on emotions implicitly (Winkler, 2020). Through these practices, participants shared an embodied emotional experience which facilitated the mobilisation towards a collective identity position that was mutually 'felt'. Thus, the participants forged a sense of 'we'.

For example, in Extract 4 (Table 13), a group discussed the point of access to the inter-agency team and how easy it was to action a referral when it may not be appropriate. Here, the participants attempted to justify their emotional responses to incoming enquiries and, in doing so, forged a collective sense of 'we'. The nurse used an Extreme Case Formulation[9] (ECF) to mobilise her identity position as a

[9] Extreme Case Formulations are statements using semantically extreme terms (i.e., *all, none, most, every, least* etc.) to defend or justify a stance (Pomerantz, 1986).

caring professional [3, 4], which was later shared by the counsellor [9] and the teacher [15].

Table 13: Extract 4: Phase 1 recording of group interaction involving a teacher, a nurse, and a counsellor

1	**N**	We need more information around this kind of (.) could the school nurse see them in the interim? (.) that's kind of what you need isn't
2	**T**	Yeah yeah
3 4	**N**	But from an admin perspective (0.2) as soon as you engage in an email conversation ya ↑hooked
5	**T**	It's very true
6	**C**	So it could be maybes (.) anybody who's got access (0.5) but it's time consuming
7	**T**	[It is]
8	**N**	[Yeah]
9 10	**C**	[so whoever] has access to the e-mails because then you're hooked and you're the key
11	**N**	Yeah
12	**T**	but you do(.) you get emotionally involved once you start [answering the questions]
13	**N**	[.hhhyeah]
14 15	**T**	you get that the child needs help and you want to help them >so its< easy just to say yes to everything
16	**C**	Yeah (.) definitely
17	**N**	It's what we do

As Pomerantz (1986) suggests, the participants used ECFs to portray the circumstances that precipitated their actions as demanding their actions (i.e., they must action a referral immediately and help the referrer), and this helped the participants to mutually claim the available identity position of being a group of similarly empathic professionals. The metaphor of being "*hooked*" within the ECFs [3, 4, 9, 10] orientated the participants' shared accounts of their actions as emotional (D. Edwards, 1999) and suggested they had a mutual commitment to helping the referrer. The acceptance and endorsement of "being hooked" through backchannelling [5, 7, 8] indicated that an empathic identity position is evaluated as "good" at this moment (Calder-Dawe & Martinussen, 2021) and alluded to a deeper identity investment (Wetherell, 2003) that was shared by all three participants. Thus, through the use of ECFs and metaphor, the participants established a common framework for understanding their social world by mobilising a collective identity position through their discursive construction of a shared, emotional experience. This formulation is seemingly confirmed as the nurse made an explicit collective reference to the team when she said, "*it's what we do*" [17] as a consequence of the affective discursive practices that unfolded.

In Phase 2, the above interpretation was similar to the Team Manager's view on her Phase 1 encounter. In Extract 5 (Table 14), we discussed how a sense of team was constructed when professionals have different backgrounds. Like Extract 4, the team manager used an affective repertoire when she highlighted that having a "*real common desire*" [5] is important for mobilising a sense of team or 'we'; her elongation of "*real*" claims the available identity position of being authentic as well as empathic as opposed to ungenuine. This identity position was further bolstered by her use of the category of "*those children*", which positioned service users as a social group where members are to be helped or supported. This affective discourse entailed semantically a sense of empathy and care. As in Extract 4, these affective discursive practices allowed the Team Manager to claim an empathic identity before mobilising a collective identity position of "we". Thus, as Winkler (2020) suggests, participants drew on affective discursive practices to gain a sense of collective identity.

Table 14: Extract 5: Phase 2 interview with Team Manager

1 2	**TM**	that sense of te::am still exists (.) so I think it's an absolutely fascinating team when you when you start unpicking it like this
3 4	**I**	So (.) how do you think you established that sense of team when you're all coming at this from that transdisciplinary perspective?
5 6 7	**TM**	I think that helps because I think there's a re::al (.) common (.) desire to make a difference for those children↓ >and I think that< together < we will have a bigger impact > than doing it individually.

3.3.3 Who are 'they'? Legitimating constructions of 'the other' as a precursor for collective action to solve a shared problem

In response to a shared problem, some participants successfully mobilised the professional identity of another social group outside of the team to legitimise[10] their collective position and inoculate their stake in a particular issue. Successful, legitimised mobilisations of 'the other' (i.e., other professional groups external to the team) often served as a precursor to a proposed collective action. Here, 'the other' refers to a person or group who is objectified, disempowered and/or depersonalised by the dominant culture or group (Stewart & Logan, 1993). In Extract 6 (Table 15), where the participants discussed the point of access to the service, we see how an example of how legitimating mobilisations of 'the other' operated in this way to establish a sense of 'they'.

The EP used a narrative as a key rhetorical means to persuade the other participants that seeking more clarity was a shared issue [3-5]; narratives are often used in discussion to establish an individual's legitimacy to speak on a topic (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2011).

[10] Legitimating involves team members establishing control by justifying underlying assumptions and building up the credibility of particular views (Kwon et al., 2014)

Table 15: Extract 6: Phase 1 recording of group interaction involving a clinical psychologist, an educational psychologist, and a counsellor

1	**EP**	And we might actually need more clarity before we [can make a decision]
2	**C**	[One hundred percent]
3 4 5	**EP**	I think we feel the pressure in that meeting on Thursday afternoon (.) to make the decision (0.5) of >who< (.) [what one who we put on as the lead professional on this]
6 7 8	**C**	[mmm (.) often (.) though the social worker] (0.5) is (.) °you kno::w if they are the referrers° (.) >the social worker< (0.2) they're just ticking boxes (.) you know for counselling (.) ed psych
9	**EP**	>aw they tick everything<
10 12	**C**	they tick everything (1.0) actually (.) when we pick up some of them (.) it's actually the social worker's role to be doing that job
11 12	**CP**	OK (.) so the::re's (0.2) there's something about how will we make sure that the referrals come through with what the issues are

The EP stressed specific detail of "*Thursday afternoon*" [3] to add credibility to her account, although this was prefaced by hedging and a footing shift "*I think we feel"* that also suggested a tentativeness to her claims. Whether intentional or not, the EP's narrative seemingly primed the counsellor's next turn [6]. The counsellor made an assessment of social workers to legitimise her view that social workers should be taking a proactive role when referring children into the team [12]. Here, a key device was her use of an interpretive repertoire (i.e., "*ticking boxes*" [8]), which mobilised the available identity of bureaucratic or administrative professionals and positioned the social workers as to blame for the shared problem introduced by the EP.

The counsellor's othering of the social workers as a group was legitimised by prefacing her talk with a script formulation[11] beginning with "*often*" to highlight the regularity of the issue [6] and using minimisation [8] to discredit the social workers' role through the use of "*just*". Working together, the script formulation and minimisation strengthened the counsellor's interpretive repertoire by mobilising social workers' bureaucratic identity as typical. The counsellor's discursive constructions could be considered successful as the EP agreed in her next turn [9] and drew on the box-ticking repertoire. Additionally, the EP used an ECF of "*everything*" that emphasised the scale of the issue, and further mobilised social workers within an undesirable identity position of "box-ticking" professionals.

As a consequence of the counsellor's legitimised positioning of social workers, the clinical psychologist proposed a collective action for the team [11, 12]. His use of the modal verb "*will*" prompted a collective obligation [11], which suggested the discourse is organised through an "if X then Y" pattern: if social workers are bureaucratic professionals, then we will be pro-active professionals and do something about this issue. Thus, legitimating mobilisations of 'the other' (i.e., social workers) successfully served as a precursor for a collective action suggesting that a comparison to the outgroup provides the ingroup with more coherence by forging a sense of 'they'.

3.4 Discussion

The findings from this case study support the notion that professional identity operates as a social identity comprised of collective, intergroup and individual identities (Hogg & Terry, 2014; Tajfel, 1974). As seen in the extracts, a sense of professional identity was gained through dialogue (Sampson, 2008) and constructed relative to broader social dynamics as opposed to an expression of some essential self (Guilfoyle, 2016). From the findings, a tentative conjecture would be that we

[11] Script formulations are devices that present a behaviour or event as a regular or frequent occurrence (Wiggins, 2016)

belong to professional groups that are not biological, but instead, we orientate to memberships of socially constructed groups. We saw this in Extract 1 where professionals drew on interpretive repertoires to mobilise the traditional conceptualisations of their macro-level professional identity in order to affiliate with the group (Wackerhausen, 2009).

Specifically, the participants' investments in certain identity positions enabled them to orientate to a range of social actions within their dialogue (Wetherell, 2007), such as legitimating or positioning. Regarding identity, the psychological ends of these social actions varied across the extracts in what I describe as relational outcomes where identities are accepted, bolstered, re-framed, rejected, and so forth. This notion builds on Edwards' (2005) relational agency, which involves a professional's capacity to offer support and ask for support from others. Here, practitioners sought support by mobilising an identity position discursively so it could be endorsed (or not) by others. The relational outcomes then, of whether a particular identity position is endorsed by the group, have real world consequences (i.e., actions that occur outside that given interaction). For example, Extract 4 demonstrated how discursive investments in an us versus them position was endorsed (i.e., the relational outcome) by participants and led to a collective action to the group's constructed shared problem (i.e., the real-world consequence). Of course, discursive psychology proponents would question the validity of any analytical speculation beyond the immediate context of the discourse but postulating about real world consequences are reasonable given that they were alluded to specifically by the participants in this case study.

Ultimately, the findings support Gergen's (2009) central thesis that all human actions are constituted relationally, and this is no different for identity. This notion implies the critical role of the other as the recipient of these actions, and so, identities are also dialogic in that they rely on "the moment-by-moment unfolding of relationally responsive events" (Shotter & Cunliffe, 2003, p. 18). Thus, the mobilisation of the participants' identities was a dialogic activity and dependent on relationality as opposed to introspection. Therefore, I disagree with Chen and Reay's conclusion (2021), it is simply impossible to "park" our professional identities for more effective

practice as identities have a discursive purpose and exist outside our inner thought. Therefore, I conclude my discussion on professional identity with a broad, transferable finding from this case study, which is best argued by Sampson (2008): it is not what is exists within individuals that is most significant, but what transpires between them.

3.4.1 Implications

Since professional identities are mobilised discursively as opposed to an expression of an essential self, then EPs may need to be prepared to give up our perceived sense of control over our identities and let them unfold in our everyday interactions. The dynamic, complex nature of identity mobilisation may prove challenging for trainees and EPs, given the profession's obsession in defining itself (Gillham, 1978; Love, 2009). Given this study implies that there is no fixed point of reference for an identity (C. Watson, 2006), then this obsession is somewhat futile. Perhaps training providers could prepare trainees for the discursive nature of identity work out in the field rather than an inward reflection on what kind of EP they want to be. Similarly, this implication is relevant for educational psychology services where fully qualified practitioners may experience an identity crisis in their work with clients. Here, a basic understanding of the linguistic features and discursive strategies and the psychological outcomes these within discourse would be a valuable resource within an EP's toolkit.

Professional identity can lead to both tension and cohesion in our practice. On one hand, EPs who attempt to maintain control of their perceived sense of identity steadfastly will experience dissonance as they make sense of their social world (Hogg et al., 1995). For example, mobilising a pejorative identity position of a neighbouring profession can lead to contests of symbolic capital or prestige (Wackerhausen, 2009). Furthermore, a strong investment in certain identity positions can lead to marginalising, devaluation and decreased well-being (Haslam & Ellemers, 2011). Contrastingly, it would appear that social identity processes are part-and-parcel of our everyday discursive practices that can bring about coherence and collective action (Hogg & Terry, 2014; Hornsey, 2008). Thus, according to (Winslade, 2005), discursive positioning of identities can facilitate change (i.e., taking

a stance on an issue, protesting injustices etc). Arguably, these two perspectives on professional identity are not mutually exclusive, but they do imply that EPs must cautiously embrace the discursive link between professional identity and work behaviour. A cautious embrace might be achieved more formally in inter-agency teams as part of an interprofessional education programme (Doll et al., 2014), inter-agency shadowing (Woltenberg et al., 2019) and/or inter-agency reflection (Wackerhausen, 2009).

Furthermore, this case study implies EPs ought to pay attention to their agendas and motivations for communication, given that language is performative (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006, 2010; Mercieca, Mercieca, & Bugeja, 2018). The idea that EPs use language to meet their professional agenda is not new. By using similar methods to the present study, Nolan and Moreland (2014), illustrate how EPs draw on discursive strategies (i.e., questioning, wondering, challenging etc) to facilitate change. Building on their findings, I further imply that professional identities are also mobilised alongside this change. A final tentative musing may be to what extent EPs, and other professionals, say and do things to mobilise specific identity positions under the guise of change. After all, if we cannot recognise the discursive actions that underly our day-to-day discourse, then we cannot truly appreciate how we relate to each other professionally and challenge our practice to achieve better outcomes for service users.

3.4.2 Strengths

This study has contributed an original perspective to the literature by explicitly focusing on professionals working across organisational boundaries (Best & Williams, 2019) using a discursive psychology approach. By working with naturalistic materials (O'Reilly et al., 2021), I was able to stay faithful to the phenomena by exploring it in situ as opposed to a researcher generated context (Wiggins & Potter, 2007). An acceptable level of validity was achieved as the analysis contained only what was observable in the transcripts and the turn-by-turn sequence of the participants' talk (O'Reilly et al., 2021). By presenting the analysis alongside the transcribed extracts, readers can make their own judgements about the plausibility of

the analysis (Wiggins & Potter, 2007). Additionally, the study's two-phased design provided at least some data triangulation by viewing the same phenomenon from different angles (Willig, 2013).

3.4.3 Limitations

Three theoretical assumptions limit this study. First, the assumption that an individual's professional identity may be more pervasive than ascribed categories in organisational contexts (Hogg & Terry, 2014) omits the intersectionality of professional identities with age, race, ethnicity, nationality and gender. Thus, we need to explore the intersectionality of professional identity with other identities both in terms of their historical and institutional production through a *critical* discursive psychology lens (Wetherell, 1998).

A second assumption that limits this study is its narrow focus on spoken language to the detriment of non-verbal communication. Goodwin (2000, 2003), for example, examines how social action in talk is accomplished not only via language but also via body language. Further research that can incorporate the use of video as opposed to purely audio recordings could be a potential avenue to explore.

Third, the parameters set by the discursive psychology approach limits analysis to focus only what is directly referenced by participants within their discourse (Wiggins, 2016; Wiggins & Potter, 2007). This focus presents a 'blind spot' for researchers when analysing data only in the here and now. Indeed, some identity studies consider how past interactions and experiences shape people's identities (Ibarra, 1999; Slay & Smith, 2010). Research interest in this area might be better explored through the use of narrative inquiry as it focuses not only on individuals' experiences "but also on the social, cultural, and institutional narratives within which individuals' experiences are constituted, shaped, expressed, and enacted" (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, p. 35). Equally, research that takes a more ethnographic view might entail more of a thick description about the research context (i.e., further detailed exploration of how well individual members knew each other, the length of time in the team, etc.) than the present study, and therefore, yield findings with greater transferability (Shenton, 2004).

3.4.4 Conclusion

In this study I have provided an original contribution to current understanding by exploring how professionals in an inter-agency team working across organisational boundaries mobilised their professional identities discursively and to what psychological ends. The findings highlight the salient discursive strategies used by the participants in this specific context to mobilise professional identities of “I”, “us”, and “they”. Whilst the specific linguistic features, discursive devices, and social actions detailed in this study are context-dependent, the findings of this case study support the broader literature in suggesting that professional identities are discursive, dialogic, and social. For EPs, it is perhaps time to relinquish our search for a fixed professional identity and let them unfold in our everyday interactions. Furthermore, this study implies that EPs ought to pay attention to their agendas and motivations for communication. We cannot truly appreciate how we work in partnership with others to achieve better outcomes for the communities we serve if we cannot recognise the discursive actions that underly our day-to-day discourse.

Chapter 4: Critical synthesis and what this research means for me next

This chapter aims to provide a critical synthesis of the thesis. I begin by outlining my interaction with certain aspects of the research and how I think this has impacted on the knowledge produced. Next, I consider what this knowledge means for me as a trainee educational psychologist (TEP) and explore the implications of both the empirical knowledge and acquired research skills for my practice. Finally, I reflect on what I will do next with the findings by discussing how I plan to disseminate the thesis and what direction I might take for future research.

4.1 My interaction with the research

Reflexivity requires a critical awareness of the researcher's influence on the construction of knowledge throughout the research process (Barrett, Kajamaa, & Johnston, 2020; Willig, 2013). Thus, reflexivity has been an active, ongoing process throughout my research journey permeating every stage and phase (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). The meanings we generate from research shift according to our motivations, experiences and histories (Suzuki, Ahluwalia, Arora, & Mattis, 2007). Throughout my research journey, I reflected on this shift as different influences will yield different sets of data, different analytical procedures and different interpretations of results (Barrett et al., 2020). As Suzuki et al. (2007) argue, the pond you fish in determines what you catch. Therefore, I kept a research journal throughout my thesis journey to understand how I influenced the research. Table 16 presents some key points from the journal in how I think I have influenced certain aspects of the research, and how this impacted the knowledge produced.

Table 16: Key points from my research journal

Aspect of the research	My Influence	How this impacted the knowledge produced
Agenda and expectations	Initially, I set out on this research journey with an agenda of "uncovering the truth" about professional identity with a view to contributing something useful to evidence-based practice. Following the findings and discussion of my SLR, my position swung to a more constructionist epistemological stance which appreciated the dynamic, complex, and context-dependent nature of identity	I became concerned initially with the barriers and facilitators of inter-agency work, which placed a value judgement on whether professional identity was a "good" or "bad" thing. As my agenda shifted from uncovering the truth to simply appreciating more subjective, open-ended knowledge. This shift steered me towards a constructionist epistemology, which led to a qualitative methodology.
Research aims	The research aim was certainly shaped by my experiences as a trainee educational psychologist (TEP) and an interest in understanding my own professional identity. In my practice, I noticed that professionals would spend a great deal of time during inter-agency activity orientating to identity	I narrowed to research aim to focus on "identity in action" to explore *how* individuals go about mobilising their identities in their day-to-day interactions as opposed to their lived experiences.

Aspect of the research	My Influence	How this impacted the knowledge produced
	positions and using these to justify their thoughts and actions.	
Position	I adopted 'quasi-outsider' research position, but with a deeper understanding of the research context (i.e., my empirical project conducted with professionals from Children's Services, and I am a trainee professional with an emerging professional identity working within a service as part of a Local Authority's Children Services)	From this quasi-outsider position, a subject–object distinction existed as I was an expert observer looking in studying how *other* people socially construct *their* realities (Cunliffe, 2003). So, my findings were only ever partial and subject to my interpretations and constructions of meaning, which is significantly influenced by my personal experiences of being a trainee professional within Children's Services and my Critical Realist ontological stance.
Theoretical lens	I held a strong theoretical lens (i.e., discursive psychology) throughout my empirical project due to my interest in how language can construct different	Discursive Psychology (DP) proposes that cognitive constructs, such as thoughts, beliefs or feelings, are beyond the remit of any research method (Billig, 2006).

Aspect of the research	My Influence	How this impacted the knowledge produced
	meanings. For example, in my practice I invest a lot of time re-framing language to reflect a child's strengths as opposed to problems or pose specific questions to externalise problems to the environment as opposed to within-child.	So, this meant that I only focused on what was directly referenced by participants within their discourse.
Associated methods	The theoretical lens I took heavily influenced my reliance on the observation method as DP views naturalistic data as the gold standard (Lester, 2014). I recognise that using this method meant that I adopted an observer role in my encounters with participants. Although this felt somewhat uneasy to my usually collaborative way of working, I reflected that I also value autonomy highly in my practice (e.g., I often use observations as a source of information in my EP work)	My reflections on autonomy as an axiological value enabled me to become somewhat comfortable in making formulations based on my observation and this ease steered me in selecting this method of data collection. However, this above point meant validity became extremely important, so I ensured presented a few heavily analysed examples presenting turn-by-turn analysis as opposed to a breadth of examples with less analytical points

Aspect of the research	My Influence	How this impacted the knowledge produced
Ethics	As well as autonomy, I also value relationships in my professional practice. As participants were allowing me to observe them, I was extremely sensitive to their professional time and contributions Throughout the empirical project, I was extremely conscious of minimising my impact on participants' work activities that I observed. I did not want to "get in the way" of their duties as this could cause unintended harm to them (i.e., through stress of me observing and not fulfilling their duties) and service users (i.e., by my presence disrupting professionals' service delivery).	I took the decision not to make observational notes because of the sense of intrusion and the impact I thought notetaking might have on participants' day to day work. This decision meant that I lost the opportunity to note any non-verbal interaction, which is just as important as spoken language in constructing realities Goodwin (2000); (Goodwin, 2003).

4.2. Implications for my future practice as an Educational Psychologist

4.2.1 Empirical Knowledge

Overall, I have become increasingly aware of my emerging professional identities as I work across different inter-agency contexts. Before completing the SLR and empirical study, I considered my professional identity as a single fixed entity, but now I am becoming more comfortable with the idea that my professional identity is multi-faceted, dynamic, and complex. I am noticing more how my sense of professional identity changes depending on the context especially during inter-agency activities such as Team Around the Family meetings or Child Protection conferences.

Specifically, the findings from this empirical study are highly relevant for my immediate practice and EPs in general for one main reason: it seems that Educational Psychology has become preoccupied with the concern of *what* we are as EPs rather than *how* we be in our encounters with others. Indeed, the profession has routinely experienced an identity crisis (Love, 2009; McCaslin & Hickey, 2001) and the professional readership has consistently attempted to define and re-define Educational Psychology through a host of identities: an advocate for the child (Buck, 2015), specialists to effect change (Stobie, 2002) scientist-practitioners (Fallon, Woods, & Rooney, 2010) and pragmatists (Burnham, 2013). Unsurprisingly then, one of the main aims of the EP training providers is to enable trainees to become the psychologists that they want to be (Mahdi, 2020). Indeed, I am often asked in my practice to reflect on what kind of EP I am.

However, I can now appreciate how I have become preoccupied with aligning myself to one of the above identities, and how this might lead to intended outcomes (i.e., prompting a collective action) and unintended consequences (i.e., alienating others or prompting defensive reactions). We may like to think we are one or all of the macro-level identities listed above, but, for me at least, what matters more is how we mobilise our micro-level identities discursively within our dialogue with others.

Arguably, how we co-construct aspects of our social reality is a key interpersonal skill for EPs, especially within our consultation work (Nolan & Moreland, 2014) and supervision (Nolan, 1999).

Consequently, I am more attuned to the performative nature of language in my interactions. More pertinently, what I say, when I say things and how I choose to say things can position people into less or more powerful identities. For example, I was horrified recently to discover upon reflection that in a consultation I had said the following to a parent after they had told me about their child's complex history:

"*So, was it <u>just</u> ASD he was diagnosed with*?"

As I am now more familiar with discursive strategies, I was able to reflect in supervision how this minimised what the parent had told me. In a more positive example, during an individual therapeutic session with a girl who has experienced significant neglect and sexual abuse, I used pronoun footing shifts to enhance the inter-subjectivity of the encounter:

"*I am sorry <u>you</u> are going through this, I wonder where <u>we</u> start?"*

This strategy seemed to minimise the power imbalance and the girl was able to share her experiences in a safer and contained way. In a more macro-level example, I was cautious of the way the discipline positioned adolescents as "*troublesome and turbulent*" during a narrative literature review I undertook to inform an evidence-based group intervention. So, as I was aware of discursive positioning, I re-framed this identity in my delivery as "*curious and adventurous*". Thus, my contribution was more accessible and equitable to its intended beneficiaries of young people who received the intervention.

The above examples demonstrate how attuning to the performative nature of language entails a power dynamic in our co-construction of realities (e.g., identities being one example) that pertains to all EP work. An awareness of discursive devices (e.g., pronoun footing shifts, stake inoculations etc.), linguistic features (e.g., pause, elongation etc.) and social actions (e.g., equalising, re/defining etc.) is a social justice issue but one that is bound up in our everyday, mundane discourses.

Therefore, the power dynamics we construct through language at the micro level has the potential to be overlooked. Thus, I will endeavour to add a DP dimension to my practice frameworks, especially within supervisions, given the emphasis on reflexivity and ethical nuances in everyday practice that educational psychology demands (Mahdi, 2020).

4.2.2 Acquired Research Skills

Given this was my first time undertaking qualitative research, I have become more comfortable with open-endedness and iterative processes (Wiggins, 2016). This ease has served me well when undertaking casework or research projects within my EP service, where the product or outcome is dependent on what emerges throughout the process. So far, I have applied this to practice during my person-centred therapeutic work where the intervention outcomes are contingent on what unfolds during the interaction, as well as complex casework where there is no immediate solution or direction (e.g., cases where the young person is experiencing emotionally based school avoidance).

At the other end of the spectrum, I have also acquired useful research skills by following the more structured systematic literature review process. These skills include organisation, using frameworks, critical appraisal, and synthesising findings from multiple sources. Thus far, I have used these skills explicitly (e.g., I recently undertook a narrative literature review for the EP service on current therapeutic frameworks) and in more nuanced ways (e.g., organisational skills for diary management and delivery of services during high demand, synthesising findings from multiple sources during assessment casework using different tools etc.) throughout my practice.

Furthermore, by writing Chapter 1 and 3 up for two publications (i.e., *Journal of Children's Services* and *Educational and Child Psychology*), I have become more efficient at writing for different audiences. Not only has this writing exercise helped me nurture my academic voice, but it has also supported me in my practice during the dissemination of sometimes sensitive (i.e., where there is trauma, Child Protection or safeguarding issues etc.) or complex (i.e., medical diagnoses,

backgrounds, complications etc.) information to a range of audiences including parents and/or carers, professionals and children and young people. Currently, I am exploring how I make my report writing more accessible for young people who are Post 16 without over-simplifying the content, formulations, and reasoning.

4.3 What does this mean next?

I intend to disseminate this thesis to three key audiences: EPs and other professionals working within Children's Services, the participants who took part in the empirical study, and my EP service and/or the wider LA workforce. As mentioned, I submitted Chapter 1 and 3 to publishers with the intention of reaching an audience who are either EPs, professionals working within Children's services or individuals who have an interest in psychology and inter-agency work. As well as providing the participants a full write up of the empirical project, I am also planning to disseminate a shorter artifact (i.e., an academic poster) for the inter-agency team who granted me access and present the findings at a future team away-day. Additionally, I am planning to lead a study day for my EP service, which focuses on professional identity from a discursive perspective, and how we can become more attuned to our constructions within day-to-day practice. Within the LA, there is also some scope to present this workshop to the wider workforce in Children's Services via a Microsoft Teams presentation.

In addition to the future directions for research proposed in Chapter 3, I am also interested in engaging in more DP research as I have found the exercise to be fascinating. I would certainly be open to supporting future TEPs should they wish to pursue this approach. I have submitted the abstract of the empirical research project to be considered for presentation at a research conference held by the University's Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. Here, I would intend to, in a critical and cautious way, explore the contribution that DP has to offer to discourse analysis and the study of psychological constructs within organisational contexts.

Outside of DP, as reiterated in both Chapter 2 and 3, I would explore other qualitative approaches in future research on this topic, as these approaches may permit data collection methods which explore the meaning that individuals attribute

to past experiences. As I value relationships in my practice and apply a lot of Dyadic Developmental Practice (Bombèr, Golding, & Phillips, 2020), I found my use of the observation method, considered to be gold standard in discursive psychology, to be intrusive; I felt like “Big Brother” who was always watching and monitoring the participants. So, whilst I take on board discursive psychologists’ critique of other qualitative approaches (J. W. Potter, S., 2008; Wiggins, 2016), I would like to explore professional identity through a narrative perspective and work more collaboratively with participants’ in constructing the findings and interpretations.

4.4 Final thought

In conclusion, I believe DP to be integral to every part of my practice now as I cannot accept language as a neutral route to cognition. Therefore, I must pay attention to its performative nature in constructing social realities, such as identities, and the power dynamic this can create. For practice, it is less about what my findings are or what is written in my physical reports, and more about how I go about constructing what this means with the intended audience. Going forward, and building on my final musing of Sampson (2008) in Chapter 3, the power for change in EP practice lies not within individual professionals but in what transpires between them.

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6. Appendices

Appendix 1: Terminology to describe inter-agency activity

Inter-agency activity does not have one definition but a range of terms denoting a variety of prefixes and root words, as seen in Table 16, to denote a variety of activities, as seen in Table 17, at plethora of degrees, as seen in Table 18, which can take place within an organisational model, as seen in Table 19. Such subtle differences across a large spectrum of possible combinations adds warrant to Weiss' (1981) observation and reflects Lloyd et al.'s description of the topic as a "terminological quagmire" (2001, p. 3).

Table 17: Adjectives used to describe professional activity

Term	Definition
'Inter-agency'-	More than one agency working together in a planned and formal way, rather through informal networking (Cheminais, 2009; Duggan et al., 2009; Lloyd et al., 2001; Warmington et al., 2004)
'Inter-disciplinary'-	Individual professionals from different agencies separately assess the needs of child or family and meet together to discuss findings and set goals (Sloper, 2004).
'Inter-professional'-	Refers to the working relationships between different groups of professionals where each professional group will bring its own perspective (Daniels et al., 2007; A. Edwards, Daniels, Gallagher, Leadbetter, & Warmington, 2009; Warmington et al., 2004)
'Integrated'	Practitioners work together adopting common processes to deliver front-line services, coordinated and built around the needs of children and young people (Cheminais, 2009)

Term	Definition
'Joined-up '-	Explicitly conceptualised and coordinated planning, considering multiple policies and varying agency practices (Duggan et al., 2009; Lloyd et al., 2001; Warmington et al., 2004; Weiss, 1981);
'Multi-agency'-	Often interchangeable with 'multi-professional'; Where more than one agency works with a client but not necessarily jointly as is the case with 'inter-agency' (Duggan et al., 2009; Warmington et al., 2004); It may be concurrent, sometimes as result of joint planning or it may be sequential (Lloyd et al., 2001)
'Multi-disciplinary'-	Individuals working within a single agency focussing on the priorities of that agency (Sloper, 2004)
'Trans-disciplinary'-	Members of different agencies work together jointly sharing aims, information, tasks and responsibilities at the organisational level in an effort to adopt a holistic approach (Sloper, 2004)

Table 18: Nouns denoting professional activity

Noun	Definition
'working'	the working together of staff with different professional backgrounds and training (Atkinson et al., 2007; Atkinson, Wilkin, Stott, Doherty, & Kinder, 2001; Lloyd et al., 2001)
'communication'	information sharing between agencies – formal and informal, written or oral (Lloyd et al., 2001)

Noun	Definition
'partnerships'	With a focus on relationships, agencies work together within a single, often new, organisational structure (Atkinson et al., 2007; Cheminais, 2009; Percy-Smith, 2006)
'teams'	Professionals from different agencies work together on a day-to-day basis as a multi-agency team (Sloper, 2004)
'service delivery'	Professionals from different organisations come together to manage and deliver services (Atkinson et al., 2007).

Table 19: Cheminais' (2009) degrees of multi-agency activity

Degree	Definition
Co-existence	Clarity between practitioners from different agencies as to roles, responsibilities, and clientele
Co-operation	Practitioners from different agencies sharing information and recognizing the mutual benefits and value of partnership working, that is, pooling the collective knowledge, skills, and achievements available.
Co-ordination	Joint planning and sharing of roles and responsibilities, resources and risk-taking; accepting the need to adjust and make some changes to improve services, thus avoiding overlap.
Collaboration	Partners from different agencies from long term commitments and agree to work together on strategies or projects, each contributing to achieving shared goals.

Co-ownership	Practitioners from different agencies commit themselves to achieving a common vision, making significant changes in what they do and how they do it.

Table 20: Atkinson's (2002) typology of organisational models

Model	Definition
Decision-making groups	Professionals from different agencies meet to discuss issues and to make decisions
Consultation and training	Professionals from one agency aim to enhance the expertise of those of another by providing consultation and training
Centre-based delivery	Locating professionals from different agencies in a central base to gather a range of expertise together in one place to deliver a more coordinated and comprehensive service
Coordinated delivery	Like centre-based delivery but achieved operationally under a lead co-ordinator)
Operational-team delivery	Professionals from different agencies to work together on a day-to-day basis and to form a cohesive multi-agency team that delivered services directly to clients

Appendix 2: Project Information Sheet for Individual Participants (Phase 1)

Introduction

My name is Hannah Richardson, and I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist from Newcastle University, currently working with [REDACTED] Educational Psychology Service. As part of my on-going work within Children's Services, I am completing a research project and hope some of you may be interested in participating. As a trainee educational psychologist, I have enhanced DBS status. I have undertaken safeguarding induction training with the LA, as well as receiving sessions as part of the University Programme. I am currently on a 2-year placement in a Local Authority and will use their safeguarding policies as well as those delivered in Newcastle University sessions, to influence the way I undertake my research. I frequently work with individuals considered to be vulnerable, and I am supervised by my placement supervisor, an experienced Educational Psychologist, my research supervisor, and placement tutor at Newcastle University.

What is the purpose of this project?

This research project aims to explore how individual professional identities interact to establish group identity to pursue shared goals or outcomes of a strategic project. The concept of multi-agency activity in Children's Services is, and has been, central to the government's philosophy. Multi-agency collaboration offers the promise of combining professional expertise holistically to increase the depth and breadth of responsiveness to difficulties that children and families face. Despite political endorsement, research findings suggest multi-agency collaboration is not without its challenges and confusion over role identity can constitute a barrier. By participating in this project, insights over how professional identity is constructed in multi-agency collaboration could support organisational change by applying theory to strategic development in Children's Services.

What will the project look like?

Following informed consent from all attendees, this project will involve an audio recording of a strategic multi-agency meeting, and the frequency of recordings is negotiable (e.g., perhaps three meetings – one at the start, one at a mid-point of a strategic development and one at the end). Under current restrictions made for COVID-19, it is likely that audio recordings will be of Teams or Zoom meetings rather than face-to-face. I will be taking a purely observational role (the only data collected will be the audio recording). Therefore, you will not be asked any direct questions from myself, and I will not be participating in the meeting. The audio data will be coded and transcribed anonymously for analysis.

Consent to participate in the project is ongoing and will be sought in advance (participants may wish to provide an e-signature under current restrictions) of every meeting and verbally at beginning of each meeting. Participants may express their wishes for the researcher to stop the audio recording at any time. The project aims to explore strategic, multi-agency projects and therefore, discussions about individual or specific cases about a child or a family or a named professional cannot be included in the observation. This is because consent will not be sought from these individuals' even if they are discussed on an anonymous basis, I am not permitted to record discussion of individual cases of named children, families, or other clients. If you wish to discuss individual cases, then you can ask me to stop the recording and resume once discussion of an individual case has ceased.

It is not anticipated that sensitive issues will arise outside of the participants' professional task. However, by taking part in the study, you may have reflected on issues that you were previously unaware of, and this may be uncomfortable for them. Therefore, you will have an opportunity to contact myself as the researcher and have had all your questions answered. In addition to this form, a debrief information sheet will be provided with contact details of myself.

Why have I been asked to participate?

You have been asked to participate in this study because you are a professional working on a multi-agency, strategic project. Your normal professional contribution within this context will provide valuable insight to a theoretical framework, which will

inform and support organisational change within Children's Service. Preliminary permission to record a multi-agency meeting has been sought from your employer, and your contact details were also passed on by them. However, it is your choice whether you would like to participate.

What will happen to the information?

This project is being run, in part, to contribute towards my doctoral thesis. As a result, I will need to produce a written report of the research that will be submitted to my university. All data collected will be stored electronically as two copies. One copy will be stored on USB memory stick kept in a secure location (i.e., lock and key filing draw and one copy will be stored as a password protected file on a secure, backed-up University IT system, which only I (the researcher) will have access to. Participants maybe identified by their voice, so audio recordings will be securely destroyed once the data has been transcribed (i.e., up to seven days after recording). Any personal identifiers will be removed and all information in the transcription will remain entirely confidential. All transcribed data not appended to the final written report will be deleted after in 3 years.

You are under no obligation to take part in the project and if you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any point up until the point of data-analysis and for any reason. There will be no adverse consequences for withdrawing and you do to need to provide an explanation. If you wish to withdraw before the audio files are transcribed, you may contact the researcher on the email address provided and the audio file will be destroyed. If you wish to withdraw once the data has been transcribed, then your anonymised contributions will be omitted from the transcription. You will not be able to withdraw your data once analysis has begun as the audio recordings will be destroyed once transcription is complete along with the link between the anonymised codes and your voice. It is anticipated that the final write-up of the project will begin in August 2021.This means it is impossible to identify your data from the anonymised, coded transcription to remove it. Contact details to withdraw up until the point of analysis are available below.

Whilst coded and anonymous, transcribed data will be analysed and inform a thesis study, which will be written up for accreditation and potentially published. The results of this research will be made accessible to the Local Authority and the Educational Psychology Service, as gatekeepers, by providing a succinct summary of the final project, as well as a presentation if requested (this can be negotiated during the recruitment process). Equally, results of this research will be made accessible to participants as requested.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any further questions about the project or about professional identity and multi-agency working in general. My email address is: h.richardson2@ncl.ac.uk.

Alternatively, if you have any questions that you would prefer to direct to my research supervisor at Newcastle University, Professor Simon Gibbs, he can be reached via email at simon.gibbs@newcastle.ac.uk or by post at the following address:

School of Education, Communication & Language Sciences, Newcastle University,

King George VI Building,

Queen Victoria Road,

Newcastle, NE1 7RU

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this information.

Appendix 3: Participant Consent Form (Phase 1)

Please circle where applicable.

I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet provided.

YES / NO

I am aware that at any time, up until the point of analysis, you can withdraw from this study.

YES / NO

I am aware of the researchers contact details to request withdrawal.

YES / NO

I give my permission for this meeting to be recorded (audio recording only) on INSERT DATE and be transcribed for the purpose of this study only.

YES / NO

I have been made aware of how data will be collected and stored.

YES / NO

I have had an opportunity to ask questions and been given satisfactory responses.

YES / NO

I am happy to take part in this study and give my informed consent.

YES / NO

Name: Date:

Professional status (e.g., lecturer, teaching assistant):

Signature (or e-signature to be sent back in a PDF document):

Appendix 4: Participant debrief sheet (Phase 1)

Thank you for your participation in this study.

What happens if I want to withdraw?

You are under no obligation to take part in the project and if you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any point up until the point of analysis and for any reason. If you wish to withdraw before the audio files are transcribed, you may contact the researcher on the email address provided and the audio file will be destroyed. If you wish to withdraw once the data has been transcribed, then your anonymised contributions will be omitted from the transcription. You will not be able to withdraw your data once analysis has begun as the audio recordings will be destroyed once transcription is complete along with the link between the anonymised codes and your voice. This means it is impossible to identify your data from the anonymised, coded transcription to remove it. Contact details to withdraw up until the point of analysis are available below. It is anticipated the write-up of the project will be completed by December 2022.

What happens next?

The audio data will be transcribed and destroyed once this has taken place. Participants will be coded, and all contributions will remain anonymous. Transcribed data will be analysed and written up in a final report. All audio recordings and transcribed data will be stored on a USB memory stick kept in a secure location (i.e., lock and key filing draw). Whilst coded and anonymous, transcribed data will be analysed and inform a thesis study, which will be written up for accreditation and potentially published.

Will I get to see the final report?

The results of this research will be made accessible to the Local Authority and the Educational Psychology Service, as gatekeepers, by providing a succinct summary of the final project, as well as a presentation if requested (this can be negotiated

during the recruitment process). Equally, results of this research will be made accessible to participants if requested.

Who can I contact?

Please feel free to contact me if you have any further questions about the project or about professional identity and multi-agency working in general. My email address is: h.richardson2@ncl.ac.uk.

Alternatively, if you have any questions that you would prefer to direct to my research supervisor at Newcastle University, Professor Simon Gibbs, he can be reached via email at simon.gibbs@newcastle.ac.uk or by post at the following address: School of Education, Communication & Language Sciences, Newcastle University,
King George VI Building,
Queen Victoria Road,
Newcastle, NE1 7RU

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this information.

Appendix 5: Project Information Sheet for Gatekeepers

Introduction

My name is Hannah Richardson, and I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist from Newcastle University, currently working with [REDACTED] Educational Psychology Service. As part of my on-going work within Children's Services, I am completing a research project and hope you may be able to identify and grant access to professionals interested in participating. As a trainee educational psychologist, I have enhanced DBS status. I have undertaken safeguarding induction training with the LA, as well as receiving sessions as part of the University Programme. I am currently on a 2-year placement in a Local Authority and will use their safeguarding policies as well as those delivered in Newcastle University sessions, to influence the way I undertake my research. I frequently work with individuals considered to be vulnerable, and I am supervised by my placement supervisor, an experienced Educational Psychologist, my research supervisor, and placement tutor at Newcastle University.

What is the purpose of this project?

This research project aims to explore how individual professional identities interact to establish group identity to pursue shared goals or outcomes of a strategic project. The concept of multi-agency activity in Children's Services is, and has been, central to the government's philosophy. Multi-agency collaboration offers the promise of combining professional expertise holistically to increase the depth and breadth of responsiveness to difficulties that children and families face. Despite political endorsement, research findings suggest multi-agency collaboration is not without its challenges and confusion over role identity can constitute a barrier. By participating in this project, insights over how professional identity is constructed in multi-agency collaboration could support organisational change by applying theory to strategic development in Children's Services. The findings of this project will be disseminated in a short research report available to yourself as a gatekeeper, though other formats maybe negotiated (e.g., a PowerPoint presentation).

What will the project look like?

Following informed consent from all attendees, this project will involve an audio recording of a strategic multi-agency meeting, and the frequency of recordings is negotiable (e.g., perhaps three meetings – one at the start, one at a mid-point of a strategic development and one at the end). Under current restrictions made for COVID-19, it is likely that audio recordings will be of Teams or Zoom meetings rather than face-to-face.

I will be taking a purely observational role (the only data collected will be the audio recording). Therefore, participants will not be asked any direct questions from myself, and I will not be participating in the meeting. The audio data will be coded and transcribed anonymously for analysis.

Consent to participate in the project is ongoing and will be sought in advance (participants may wish to provide an e-signature under current restrictions) of every meeting and verbally at beginning of each meeting. Participants may express their wishes for the researcher to stop the audio recording at any time. The name of the local authority or strategic project will not be collected or included in the research project write-up.

The project aims to explore strategic, multi-agency projects and therefore, discussions about individual or specific cases about a child or a family or a named professional cannot be included in the observation. This is because consent will not be sought from these individuals' even if they are discussed on an anonymous basis. Therefore, I am not permitted to record discussion of individual cases of named children, families, or other clients. I will make this clear to participants. If participants wish to discuss individual cases, then they can ask me to stop the recording and resume once discussion of an individual case has ceased.

It is not anticipated that sensitive issues will arise outside of the participants' professional task. However, by taking part in the study, participants may have reflected on issues that they were previously unaware of, and this may be

uncomfortable for them. Therefore, both yourself as an employer and participants will have an opportunity to contact myself as the researcher and have had all potential questions answered.

All participants will be given a Participant Information Sheet, Consent Form and Debrief Sheet.

Why have I been asked to participate?

You have been contacted because you can identify and authorise access to potential participants and a multi-agency, strategic project. Professional contributions observed within this context will provide valuable insight to a theoretical framework, which will inform and support organisational change within Children's Service. Although I am seeking preliminary permission, it is ultimately the choice of individual participants whether they would like to participate.

What will happen to the information?

This project is being run, in part, to contribute towards my doctoral thesis. As a result, I will need to produce a written report of the research that will be submitted to my university. All data collected will be stored electronically as two copies. One copy will be stored on USB memory stick kept in a secure location (i.e., lock and key filing draw and one copy will be stored as a password protected file on a secure, backed-up University IT system, which only I (the researcher) will have access to. Participants maybe identified by their voice, so audio recordings will be securely destroyed once the data has been transcribed. Any personal identifiers will be removed and all information in the transcription will remain entirely confidential. All transcribed data not appended to the final written report will be deleted after 3 years.

You are under no obligation to grant access to potential participants. If access is granted and all individuals on an identified project decide to participate, then they may withdraw at any point up until the point of data-analysis and for any reason. There will be no adverse consequences for withdrawing and participants will not need to provide an explanation. If participants wish to withdraw before the audio files are transcribed, then they may contact the researcher on the email address provided

and the audio file will be destroyed. If participants wish to withdraw once the data has been transcribed, then their anonymised contributions will be omitted from the transcription. Participants will not be able to withdraw their data once analysis has begun as the audio recordings will be destroyed once transcription is complete along with the link between the anonymised codes and their voice. This means it is impossible to identify their data from the anonymised, coded transcription to remove it. Contact details to withdraw up until the point of analysis are available below.

Whilst coded and anonymous, transcribed data will be analysed and inform a thesis study, which will be written up for accreditation and potentially published. The results of this research will be made accessible to the Local Authority and the Educational Psychology Service, as gatekeepers, by providing a succinct summary of the final project, as well as a presentation if requested (this can be negotiated during the recruitment process). Equally, results of this research will be made accessible to participants as requested.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any further questions about the project or about professional identity and multi-agency working in general. My email address is: h.richardson2@ncl.ac.uk.

Alternatively, if you have any questions that you would prefer to direct to my research supervisor at Newcastle University, Professor Simon Gibbs, he can be reached via email at simon.gibbs@newcastle.ac.uk or by post at the following address:

School of Education, Communication & Language Sciences, Newcastle University,

King George VI Building,

Queen Victoria Road,

Newcastle, NE1 7RU

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this information.

Appendix 6: Project Information Sheet for Individual Participants (Phase 2)

Introduction

My name is Hannah Richardson and undertook data collection with you as part of my research. I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist from Newcastle University, currently working with [REDACTED] Educational Psychology Service. As part of my on-going work within Children's Services, I am completing a research project and hope some of you may be interested in participating. As a trainee educational psychologist, I have enhanced DBS status. I have undertaken safeguarding induction training with the LA, as well as receiving sessions as part of the University Programme. I am currently on a 2-year placement in a Local Authority and will use their safeguarding policies as well as those delivered in Newcastle University sessions, to influence the way I undertake my research. I frequently work with individuals considered to be vulnerable, and I am supervised by my placement supervisor, an experienced Educational Psychologist, my research supervisor, and placement tutor at Newcastle University.

What is the purpose of this project?

This research project aims to explore how individual professional identities interact to establish group identity to pursue shared goals or outcomes of a strategic project. Multi-agency collaboration offers the promise of combining professional expertise holistically to increase the depth and breadth of responsiveness to difficulties that children and families face. By participating in this project, insights over how professional identity is constructed in multi-agency collaboration could support organisational change by applying theory to strategic development in Children's Services.

Why have I been asked to participate in the 2nd Phase?

You have been asked to participate in a further interview to revisit your group's original audio recording in the 1st Phase of the project. Revisiting the audio

recordings or a transcript of the audio recordings in the 1st Phase of the project could add further meaning and provide you with an opportunity to share your perspective within the research. However, it is your choice whether you would like to participate.

What will the 2nd Phase of project look like?

The 2nd Phase of the project will involve an open structured interview which will revisit a transcript and audio recording of the discussion you were part of in Phase 1. You will be given your transcript of the Phase 1 discussion at the beginning of the interview and what areas you would like to explore. You will not be exploring a transcript of a discussion you were not part of. There will be a few open-ended questions to help structure this exploration. The interview should last no longer than one hour. There will be an opportunity to check the transcript of the interview and make amendments to ensure its validity. The interview transcripts will be anonymised and analysed alongside the transcripts from Phase 1.

It is not anticipated that sensitive issues will arise, and you will have an opportunity to contact myself as the researcher and have had all your questions answered. In addition to this form, a debrief information sheet will be provided with contact details of myself.

What will happen to the information?

This project is being run, in part, to contribute towards my doctoral thesis. As a result, I will need to produce a written report of the research that will be submitted to my university. All data collected will be stored electronically as two copies. One copy will be stored on USB memory stick kept in a secure location (i.e., lock and key filing draw and one copy will be stored as a password protected file on a secure, backed-up University IT system, which only I (the researcher) will have access to. Participants maybe identified by their voice, so audio recordings will be securely destroyed once the data has been transcribed. Any personal identifiers will be removed and all information in the transcription will remain entirely confidential. All transcribed data not appended to the final written report will be deleted after 3 years.

You are under no obligation to take part in the project and if you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any point up until the point of data-analysis and for any reason. There will be no adverse consequences for withdrawing and you do to need to provide an explanation. If you wish to withdraw before the audio files are transcribed, you may contact the researcher on the email address provided and the audio file will be destroyed. You will not be able to withdraw your data once analysis has begun as the audio recordings will be destroyed once transcription is complete along with the link between the anonymised codes and your voice. This means it is impossible to identify your data from the anonymised, coded transcription to remove it. Contact details to withdraw up until the point of analysis are available below.

Whilst coded and anonymous, transcribed data will be analysed and inform a thesis study, which will be written up for accreditation and potentially published. The results of this research will be made accessible to the Local Authority and the Educational Psychology Service, as gatekeepers, by providing a succinct summary of the final project, as well as a presentation if requested. Equally, results of this research will be made accessible to participants as requested.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any further questions about the project or about professional identity and multi-agency working in general. My email address is: h.richardson2@ncl.ac.uk. Alternatively, if you have any questions that you would prefer to direct to my research supervisor at Newcastle University, Professor Simon Gibbs, he can be reached via email at simon.gibbs@newcastle.ac.uk or by post at the following address:

School of Education, Communication & Language Sciences, Newcastle University,
King George VI Building,
Queen Victoria Road,
Newcastle, NE1 7RU

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this information.

Appendix 7: Participant Consent Form (Phase 2)

Please circle where applicable.

I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet provided.

YES / NO

I am aware that at any time, up until the point of analysis, you can withdraw from this study.

YES / NO

I am aware of the researchers contact details to request withdrawal.

YES / NO

I give my permission for this interview to be recorded (audio recording only) on INSERT DATE and be transcribed for the purpose of this study only.

YES / NO

I have been made aware of how data will be collected and stored.

YES / NO

I have had an opportunity to ask questions and been given satisfactory responses.

YES / NO

I am happy to take part in this study and give my informed consent.

YES / NO

Name: Date:

Professional status (e.g., lecturer, teaching assistant):

Signature (or e-signature to be sent back in a PDF document):

Appendix 8: Participant Debrief Sheet (Phase 2)

Thank you for your participation in Phase 2 of this project.

What happens if I want to withdraw?

You are under no obligation to take part in the project and if you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any point up until the point of analysis and for any reason. If you wish to withdraw before the audio files are transcribed, you may contact the researcher on the email address provided and the audio file will be destroyed. You will not be able to withdraw your data once analysis has begun as the audio recordings will be destroyed once transcription is complete along with the link between the anonymised codes and your voice. This means it is impossible to identify your data from the anonymised, coded transcription to remove it. Contact details to withdraw up until the point of analysis are available below. It is anticipated the write-up of the project will be completed by May 2022.

What happens next?

The audio data will be transcribed and destroyed once this has taken place. Participants will be coded, and all contributions will remain anonymous. Transcribed data will be analysed and written up in a final report. All audio recordings and transcribed data will be stored on a USB memory stick kept in a secure location (i.e., lock and key filing draw). Whilst coded and anonymous, transcribed data will be analysed and inform a thesis study, which will be written up for accreditation and potentially published.

Will I get to see the final report?

The results of this research will be made accessible to the Local Authority and the Educational Psychology Service, as gatekeepers, by providing a succinct summary of the final project, as well as a presentation if requested (this can be negotiated during the recruitment process). Equally, results of this research will be made accessible to participants if requested.

Who can I contact?

Please feel free to contact me if you have any further questions about the project or about professional identity and multi-agency working in general. My email address is: h.richardson2@ncl.ac.uk.

Alternatively, if you have any questions that you would prefer to direct to my research supervisor at Newcastle University, Professor Simon Gibbs, he can be reached via email at simon.gibbs@newcastle.ac.uk or by post at the following address: School of Education, Communication & Language Sciences, Newcastle University,
King George VI Building,
Queen Victoria Road,
Newcastle, NE1 7RU

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this information.

Appendix 9: Open Interview Schedule (Phase 2)

I gave participants their transcript from Phase 1 approximately two weeks before their interview.

I began the interview with an introduction by reviewing the Phase 2 Participant Information Sheet and consent form. I explained that the interview should approximately one hour.

I asked each participant where there was a/are section/s of the transcript that they would like to revisit. I then played the relevant audio clip as per the 'Stimulated Recall Method'.

Next, I asked the following open questions:

"Can you tell me about what you were trying to achieve here…"

"Can you tell me about your motivations here…"

Finally, I debriefed the participants and explained that they will have an opportunity to check their transcripts once they are available in the interests of validity.

Appendix 10: Jefferson (2004) Transcription Key

[ ]	Square brackets denote a point where overlapping speech occurs.
↑ or ↓	An upward arrow means there is a rise in intonation. A downward arrow means there is a drop in intonation
(.)	A full stop inside brackets denotes a micro pause, a notable pause but of no significant length.
(1.0)	A number inside brackets denotes a timed pause in seconds. This is a pause long enough to time and subsequently show in transcription.
< >	Arrows in this direction show that the pace of the speech has slowed down
> <	Arrows surrounding talk like these show that the pace of the speech has quickened
( )	Brackets denote that the words spoken here were too unclear to transcribe
(( ))	Double brackets with a description inserted denotes some contextual information where no symbol of representation was available.
Underline	Any text underlined denotes a raise in volume or emphasis
CAPITALS	Capital letters denote that something was said loudly or even shouted
Hum(h)our	When a bracketed ‘h’ appears, it means that there was laughter within the talk
=	The equal sign represents latched speech, a continuation of talk
:::	Colons appear represent elongated speech; the more colons, the more stretched the sound
Hhh.	Aspiration or out-breaths; proportionally as for colons
.hhh	Inspiration or in-breaths; proportionally as for colons