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The Interactional Negotiation of Individual and Collective Identities among Married Couples

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Report (Psychology)

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Masters

RESEARCH REPORT

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Research title: The Interactional Negotiation of Individual and Collective Identities among Married Couples

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Abstract

Literature on identities in marriage has suggested that there is a tension between the interpretation of marriage as a *unity* between two partners, and the importance of each partner within the marriage maintaining his/her *individuality*. By drawing on data from seven semi-structured qualitative interviews with married couples or couples involved in marriage-like relationships I examine some ways in which these boundaries between individual and collective identities and associated epistemic rights are drawn or become treated as blurred. Specifically, I use a conversation analytic approach to examine two sets of practices that reveal how this tension is made observable and is negotiated: 1) *the use of personal and collective pronouns* and 2) *shifts in gaze direction.* In contrast to previous research on this topic, I focus on the exploration of these phenomena in their *moment-by-moment* construction in talk-in-interaction. Based on my findings, I conclude that these practices serve to demonstrate the oriented-to ways in which marriage involves compromising one's own individual identity or epistemic rights while becoming a part of a unit and show *how* and *where* this is done in interaction.

Declaration Page

"I declare that this research project is my own, unaided work. It has not been submitted for any other degree or examination at this or any other university."

_____ _____

(Signature) (Date)

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Contents Page

1) Introduction…….1-3

2) Literature Review……...

2.1) Differing Views and Functions of Marriage……..…...4-7

2.2) Feminist Critiques of Marriage ……...7-10

2.3) Dilemmas of Identity…….10-13

2.4) Identity and Epistemic Authority in Interaction.……13-16

3) Research Questions……..17

4) Methodology……

4.1) Data……...18-20

4.2) Analytic Approach.…….21-23

5) Analysis……

5.1) The Use of Pronouns……24-46

5.2) Shifts in Gaze Direction.……...47-64

6) Discussion and Conclusions……65-69

Reference list……70-74

Appendices……..75-84

Appendix A: Interview Schedule

Appendix B: Participant Information Sheet

Appendix C: Consent Form

Appendix D: Ethics Clearance Certificate