WHAT'S IN A NAME? NAMES, NATIONAL IDENTITY, ASSIMILATION, AND THE NEW RACIST DISCOURSE OF MARINE LE PEN

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Abstract

Despite the fact that the link between names, national identity, and the (non)assimilation of immigrants into a host country's culture is often assumed, little research investigates how this link is discursively achieved as an in situ members' accomplishment, nor does this research describe what the link between assimilation and naming achieves as social practice. Using membership categorisation analysis (MCA) as a research methodology and transcripts of a televised news interview and subsequent news forum comments as data, this paper investigates how national identity is discursively negotiated in political debate in the public sphere. It thus points out how boundaries are drawn around national identity so as to either exclude or include immigrants with 'foreign-sounding' names and so investigates how new racism is achieved, or resisted, in political debate. Findings indicate that new racism is achieved through the functioning of adversarial standard relational pairs (SRPs) which make relevant difference rather than similarity.

Keywords: New racism; First names; Membership categorisation analysis; National identity; Marine Le Pen; Le Front National; Interactional onomastics.

1. Introduction

The study of naming practices has been central to many disciplines within the social sciences and, as Geertz (1973: 363) puts it, naming is an act that converts 'anybodies' into 'somebodies': Crucially, to become 'a somebody' is to have a place in society. Levi-Strauss (1966: 192) points out that the Penan of Borneo may have three names: A personal name; a teknonym (the father of so and so, mother of so and so); and a necronym which expresses a kinship relationship to a dead relative of the subject. These names thus all indicate kinship relationships and consequently naming is one way in which the subject becomes a part of Penan society. Other naming practices reveal other forms of information about the subject and their place in society. Levi-Strauss (*ibid*) also discusses a range of naming practices that convey information about the subject such as: The state of mind of the mother at birth of the child (Lugbara of Uganda); the totem of the individual (Aranda of Australia); and the subject's place of residence (Yurok of California). Furthermore, names stay with us or change to mark rites of passage and changing relationships. For example, during the colonisation of Africa, the Christian churches often required their converts to adopt Christian names as a symbol of

their spiritual transformation. Conversely, in the period of African decolonisation, western Christian names were banned and traditional naming patterns were enforced. In Zaire, for example, Joseph Désiré Mobutu thus became Mobutu Sese Seko Kuku Ngbendu Wa Za Banga (Yanga 1978). Thus names do not simply have a referential or denotive function (cf. Mill 1964), rather they have strong connotations that reveal information about such things as the personal, cultural, social, ethnic, historical, and spiritual worlds of the subjects (and the list goes on).

More specifically, as regards the focus of this paper, names are also seen as a badge of cultural and national identity, so that, as Hanks, Hardcastle and Hodges (2006: *xi*) state: "A woman called Niamh can be presumed to be Irish: At the very least, her parents, in choosing this name for her, were announcing some kind of cultural identification with Ireland and Irish culture". Further, it is assumed that the choice of personal names displays an a priori link between the names adopted by members of an immigrant community and a desire to assimilate into the host country (see, for example, Bahloul 1985; Hasson 1995; Offroy 2001; and Streiff-Fenart 1990). And, as Sue and Telles (2007: 1386), quoting Park and Burgess (1921) and Gordon (1964), point out, the classic theory of assimilation is that the more the immigrant population adopts names associated with the host country, the more they are perceived to be assimilated into the culture of the host country. Whilst not wishing to take up arms against this intuitive assumption which seems to be borne out if one considers that foreign names might be stumbling blocks on the job market and therefore index exclusion from the host country (Bertrand and Mullainathan 2004; and Duguet *et al.* 2010), this paper seeks to provide an explication of the way in which members display their emic understandings of the world and more particularly the link between nation, culture, names and assimilation through the negotiation of the way in which identities, and characteristics associated with these identities, are organised in talk. This paper is thus more concerned with how the 'meaning' of names is negotiated as in situ practice and how this is used as a resource to do things (namely: New racism). More specifically, considering the assumption of much of the previously cited research that naming can be a powerful indicator of cultural assimilation, names carry with them the capacity either to delineate or to bridge the boundaries of social status: To do inclusion or exclusion. Inclusion and exclusion allow boundaries to be drawn up between 'us' and 'them' based on difference which leads to the dichotomisation of the others as strangers (Barth 1969: 15). However, this drawing up of boundaries is not a recognition of the world as it is in some kind of Aristotelian sense that language simply reflects prediscursive 'facts', rather the drawing up of boundaries between national, ethnic, racial, or cultural entities is a discursive achievement and in this sense language constructs the reality in which we live. As Bonilla-Silva (1997: 472) points out, people are not X or Y race, rather they have been *socially defined* as belonging to X or Y race. Following Hall (1996: 3 ff.), identity therefore cannot be seen as some kind of essentialist true self which exists as an unchanging and prediscursive entity that is shared with others who have the same history or ancestry and which delineates the boundaries between 'us' and 'them'. Rather, identity is always in a process of discursive construction, the corollary of which is that:

> Precisely because identities are constructed within, not outside, discourse, we need to understand them as produced in specific historic and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices, by specific enunciative strategies. Moreover, they emerge within the play of specific modalities of power, and thus are more the product of

marking of difference and exclusion, than they are the sign of an identical naturally constituted unity – an identity in its traditional meaning. (Hall 1996: 4)

Taking such a discursive and non-essentialist approach to the study of identity, this paper has two research questions. First, the purpose of this paper is to analyse members' identity work in which identities are associated with naming practices. And, second, the paper analyses how such categorising is used to do inclusion or exclusion and draw the boundaries around discursively constructed ethno-national communities (cf. Anderson 1983). Further, it is argued that the doing of inclusion and exclusion through the attribution of meaning to naming practices is an example of new racism in action. As Krzyżanowski and Wodak (2009) define it, the distinctive feature of new racism is xenophobia. Thus overt racism based on pseudo-biological notions of racial superiority is replaced by a form of covert racism based on the notion of cultural incompatibility which feeds on the fear of 'other' antagonistic cultures. This perceived threat to indigenous cultures can lead to a coalescence of nationalism, racism, and cultural relativism which feeds off new racist theories of human nature whereby it is natural to form a bounded community, often defined in terms of nationhood, which is aware of its differences with other nations and cultures and has its own geographically defined space (Barker 1981: 21). Moreover, new racism with its emphasis on cultural, rather than racial, difference allows for the denial of racism (Van Dijk 1992: 87) and this has been one of the key reasons for the success of the (far) right in recent years.

This paper thus uses data drawn from a web-TV interview with Marine Le Pen, president of the *Front National*, and the subsequent comments on this interview posted on a news forum to analyse the doing and resisting of cultural racism as in situ social practice. More specifically, this paper considers how the linking of characteristics associated with immigrants, namely the ability to assimilate or not, and naming practices is achieved in talk. Unlike other research (*op cit.*), this paper does not assume that certain naming practices necessarily lead to more assimilation (and vice versa), but it investigates how naming practices and the identity work that this entails is mobilised in political debate to construct a version of the world in which names are considered to be markers of assimilation. Thus, far from assuming an a priori relation between names and assimilation as an already accomplished fact that is simply noticed and then articulated, this paper explicates how the 'meaning' of naming practices is located in a process of discursive representation. The process is constructed "across different, often intersecting and antagonistic discourse practices and positions" (Hall 1996: 4) so that naming practices can either be constructed to expel the 'other' symbolically and draw boundaries around ethno-nationally defined communities and so do cultural racism; or naming practices can be constructed as irrelevant to assimilation and national identity. Naming practices are thus *constructed* as being a key factor in assimilation and this leads to the doing of new racism by a member of the political elite within the public sphere. The importance of this is that such discourse allows the dissemination of a world view that favours the symbolic reproduction of (cultural) racism (Van Dijk 1995).

2. Method

As previously stated, the purpose of this paper is to not to assume the link between cultural identity and names but to investigate how members articulate the issue to

discursively create the link. Thus, following the linguistic turn in social sciences, identities are considered to be incrementally constructed as the interaction unfolds and they are made discursively available in and by the talk of members. Therefore, taking an interactional approach to onomastics (De Stefani and Pepin 2006), any analysis of the relationship between a name and an identity should focus on the way that they are locally and discursively constructed within a particular social practice. From this non-essentialist perspective:

> [I]dentity emerges, not so much from the inner core of our 'one true self' alone but in dialogue between meanings and definitions which are *represented to us* by the discourse of a culture, and our willingness (consciously or unconsciously) to respond to the summons of those meanings. (Hall 1997: 219 [italics in original])

In order to access the doing of identity, membership categorisation analysis (MCA) is used as a methodological tool which, following its ethnomethodological roots, seeks to reveal members' practical sociological reasoning as they make sense of their social world and so talk it into being. As Fitzgerald, Housley and Butler (2009: 47) succinctly put it, MCA analyses "members' methodical practices in describing the world, and displaying their understanding of the world and of the commonsense routine workings of society". Whilst it is beyond the scope of this paper to give a detailed description of MCA, suffice it to say that MCA traces its roots back to Sacks' early work on membership (Sacks 1972, 1986, 1992). In his seminal article known as, '*The baby cried. The mommy picked it up*', Sacks (1986) explicates how it is that we understand that it is *the* mother of *the* baby who picked it up. This is because we understand the world through the operation of membership category devices (MCDs), such as family, which are collections of categories that go together (e.g. baby, child, mother, and father). Sacks then specified the rules of application by which we understand that it is *the* mother of *the* crying baby who picked it up. In this case, it is because the mother and the baby come from the same MCD (family) and the mother has a category-bound right and obligation to pick up the crying baby. Further, Sacks (1972) noted that categories often exist in standard relational pairs (e.g. cop-robber, teacher-student, mother-baby) and these pairs are defined by a series of moral rights and obligations linked to each other. Moreover, incumbents of these categories are ascribed, or claim, predicates (i.e., clusters of expectable features, actions, character traits, ways of thinking etc) so that, for example, babies cry, mothers pick up crying babies and so on.

Despite criticism of Sacks' early work on categorisation (e.g. Schegloff 2007), some researchers (e.g., Housley and Fitzgerald 2002; Jayyusi 1984; Lepper 2000; and Stokoe 2012) developed Sacks' work to stress the doing of category work on a turn by turn basis. From this perspective categories-in-talk are always indexical and occasioned discursive constructions that, therefore, can be constructed otherwise. Moreover, as Hester and Eglin (1997: 162) note, categorisation and the ascription of predicates to categories allows members to show their emic understandings of who is who in relation to whom and so display their understandings of the world, history, and society. And as Sacks (1979) demonstrates, by using the category hotrodder, rather than teenage-driver, teenagers are doing category work that is revolutionary to the extent that it challenges the place allotted to them in the 'adult world'. Categorising is thus a way of analysing social practices whereby the taken-for-granted social world is accomplished and in which exclusion is (re)produced, acquiesced to, or resisted, during political debate in the public sphere. As Nilan (1995: 71) sums it up: "at least one function of categorization

work in mundane conversation appears to be the maintenance of existing social/cultural categories, in part by constantly defining and affirming the conditions for assigning membership."

3. Data

On the 30th June 2011, Marine Le Pen, president of the *Front National*, appeared on the web-TV channel, *Election 2012*. The site was set up by *le Centre de Formation des Journalistes* (CFJ), *l'Agence France-Presse* (AFP) and *Twitter* as a space for debate and online dialogue concerning the 2012 French presidential elections. Part of the hub involves interviews with politicians by trainee journalists at the CFJ who draw on questions from the public as a way of structuring the interaction. The interview analysed here lasted over one hour, but the paper deals with one specific question: "Are you in favour of a return to a choice of French first names from the *calendrier*[1] for children born in France?" which was asked by Hélène from Paris[2]. The interview was transcribed following the Jeffersonian transcription conventions (see appendix one for a list of symbols used). Moreover, this paper also analyses the discussion on an online news forum which followed the interview and which appeared on the webpages of *Le Point* online, a serious French news magazine[3]. The webpage has the title, "*Marine Le Pen veut des prénoms "français" pour les enfants nés en France*" (Marine Le Pen wants 'French' first names for children born in France). It is followed by a picture of Le Pen from the interview and under the picture there is a brief text:

> *La présidente du Front National, Marine Le Pen, a indiqué jeudi être favorable à un retour à des choix de prénoms "français" issus du calendrier pour les enfants nés en France afin de faciliter leur "assimilation", lors de l'émission Elections 2012* (YouTube/CFJ/AFP).

> On Thursday, during the TV show Elections 2012, the President of the Front National, Marine Le Pen, indicated that, in order to make "assimilation" easier, she was in favour of a return to a choice of "French" first names taken from the *calendrier* for children born in France.

This is followed by the web link to the original interview which is followed by an almost verbatim transcript of Le Pen's response. Scrolling down the page there is a space for comments, of which there are 12. The webpage from *Le Point* was chosen because it had relatively few responses which rendered it more analysable, whereas on other sites there were many more comments. For example, on Yahoo's news page there were almost 1,000 comments. I used this page as data because, treating the question

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[1] The "*calendrier*" refers to a law from the revolutionary period that restricted first names to those of saints or figures from ancient history. This law was applied with various degrees of diligence until it was repealed in 1993. Now parents of children born in France have almost total liberty in naming their children.
[2] The full interview is available at:http://www.youtube.com/user/elections. The reply to the specific question about names is available at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NOQrMyB2gZ4
[3] Available at: http://www.lepoint.fr/politique/marine-le-Pen-veut-des-prenoms-francais-pour-les-enfants-nes-en-france-30-06-2011-1347955_20.php

from Hélène from Paris as a sequential first (question) and Le Pen's reply as a second (answer), the comments are hearable as third turns in a sequence which perform various actions such as assessing, returning a question, opposing Le Pen's extended turn, and so on. This sets up what Nekvapil and Leudar (2006) call a dialogic network which are sequences of talk or text that, despite being mediated by media technology and being temporally and spatially distributed, are nevertheless sequentially akin to conversation. Therefore, despite the fact that these various interactions are separated temporally and spatially, they can be analysed sequentially because "participants *actively construct* turn-taking units through particular practices and these practices act to *construe textual interaction as conversation-like*" (Reed 2001: 2 [italics in original]).

Further, the sequences of talk/text examined in this dialogic network constitute an argument. As Hutchby (2006: 89) states, "the principal sequential unit in argumentation is the action-opposition sequence, in which actions that can be construed as arguable are opposed, with the opposition itself subsequently open to being construed as an arguable". Moreover, as will be explicated later, Le Pen's TV interview is interpreted as an extended turn in which she sets out an opinion in favor of a return to first names found in the *calendrier*. Sequentially speaking, the turns in the news forum are conditionally relevant next turns which either oppose or support Marine Le Pen's assessment and as such they are sequential resources that 'do' argument. Moreover, each action-opposition sequence makes relevant the adversarial topic-opinion categories which, following Fitzgerald and Housley (2002), are identities that are made relevant to the interaction whereby opinions locate participants in a debate as either for and against an opinion and thus incumbent of a topic-opinion category for or against an issue. As the participants sequentially orient to action-opposition sequences as a means of doing argument, this is reflexively linked with topic-opinion identities (for and against) which mobilise adversarial categorisations concerning which MCD is in operation and which predicates are associated with categories within those MCDs. In this way, categorisation becomes a resource for doing argument, the upshot of which indexes adversarial world views, in this case: One of assimilation and inclusion and the other of exclusion, otherness, and cultural racism.

4. Analysis

4.1. *Analysis one: The original interview*

The first analysis deals with the web-TV interview between the journalist (J) and Marine Le Pen (LP).

1. J   *une dernière question pour cl= pour clôturer ce=ce thème société .hh qui a été posée*
        a last question to cl=to close this=this theme society .hh which was asked
2.   *par <u>Hélène</u> (.) qui habite <u>Paris</u> (.) êtes vous >Marine Le Pen< en faveur d'un retour à*
        by <u>Hélène</u> (.) who lives in <u>Paris</u> (.) are you >Marine Le Pen< in favour of a return to
3.   *des choix de prénoms <u>français</u> (.) issus du calendrier pour les enfants nés en France*
        a choice of <u>French</u> first names (.) from the *calendrier* for children born in France
4.   *(.) <u>très</u> rapidement oui [ou] non*
        (.) <u>very</u> quickly yes   [or] no
5. LP   *[oui]*
                                [yes]
6. LP   *oui oui je suis favorable (.) parce-que er je= je crois que le fait de donner un prénom*

	yes yes I am favourable (.) because I=I think that the act of giving a French
7.	*français à ses enfants quand on est=quand on a obtenu la nationalité française ou*
	first name to one's children when one is=when one has obtained French nationality
8.	*quand on est d'origine étrangère (.) a été un des éléments qui a extrêmement bien*
	or when one has foreign origins (.) was one of the elements that worked extremely
9.	*fonctionné dans l'histoi :re de France euh pour que l'assimilation se fasse très*
	well in the hi :story of France euh so that assimilation happened very
10.	*rapidement cela a été le cas pour les italiens les portugais e:r les espagnols les*
	rapidly that was the case for the Italians the Portuguese e :r the Spanish the
11.	*polonais er (.) ils donnaient c'est vrai un prénom français à leurs enfants*
	Poles (.) they gave it's true a French first name to their children

In lines one to five, the journalist takes a turn which introduces the question from Hélène from Paris and asks whether Marine Le Pen is in favour of a return to the use of French names from the *calendrier*. The adjective French therefore displays an understanding that first names *can* be particularly French and that these are to be found in the *calendrier*. This sets up a 'for or against' discursive identity for Le Pen as opinion giver – either for or against the proposition that there should be a return to French first names from the *calendrier* for children born in France. In the following turn (line 6), Le Pen provides an answer which takes the form of an affirmative response (yes yes I am favourable) which positions her as regards the question. This is followed by an account which carries out a stepwise topic transition away from children born in France to children born in France by those who have obtained French nationality or who have foreign origins. Le Pen claims that giving children in this category French names leads to assimilation. She accounts for this assessment by stating that it worked well in the history of France and assimilation happened rapidly in the case of the Italians, Portuguese, Spanish and Poles. She thus links the giving of French first names to foreigners or non-indigenous French to assimilation. In terms of category work therefore, children of immigrants who have French first names have the predicate of being able to assimilate. However, interesting here is what is not said. As Van De Mieroop and Clifton (2011: 62) point out, members can make sense of the world through the functioning of standard relational pairs (SRPs) and even though one part of the pair remains implicit, commonsense cultural knowledge makes the second part of the SRP tacitly relevant and thus renders it understandable. Implicitly then, if assimilation worked because the Portuguese, Spanish, Italians and Poles took French first names, assimilation didn't work for others who did not take French first names. The second part of the SRP is developed in the next exchange.

12.	J	*un un moyen d'intègrer ?*
		a a way of integrating?
13.	LP	*c'est un moyen d'assimilation très très [efficace] et très très performant et ce*
		it's a way of assimilation very very [effective] and very very effectual and it
14.	J	*[(facile) erm]*
		[(easy) erm)]
15.	LP	*n'est plus le cas aujourd'hui .hh sous prétexte de conserver e:t presque de montrer*
		is no longer the case today .hh under the pretext of keeping a :nd almost of showing
16.		*le lien avec er l=la nationalité d'origine ou la culture d'origine (.) on donne er aux*
		the link with er the=the original nationality or the culture of origin (.) one gives er to
17.		*enfants français des prénoms qui er sont er à consonance étrangère et je pense que*
		French children first names that er are er foreign-sounding and I think that
18.		*ça leur rend la vie probablement plus compliquée et et .hh et (.) ça : (.2) cela freine à*
		makes their life probably more complicated and and .hh and (.) tha:t (.2) slows in
19.		*mon avis l'assimilation nécessaire (.) ça la retarde*

my opinion the necessary assimilation (.) it delays it

In line 12, the journalist offers a candidate gist of the talk so far that taking French names is "a way of integrating". In lines 13 following, Le Pen confirms the journalist's candidate understanding of her prior turn. Le Pen states that giving French first names is an effective means of assimilation but that this is no longer the case today. If one gives a French child a foreign-sounding first name this shows a link with their nationality and culture of origin and this makes life more difficult and puts the brake on assimilation. In terms of category work, the MCD in operation is French children born to immigrants and within this MCD there are two groups (children born in France who have French names and those who don't) that exist in an adversarial SRP whereby membership is mutually exclusive and predicates associated with them are oppositional (Jayyusi 1984: 127). The predicates of these categories are on the one hand assimilation and on the other hand maintenance of nationality and culture of origin. Those who have assimilated are Poles, Spaniards, Portuguese and Italians and those who haven't are unspecified, yet as will be seen later they are understandable as those of Maghrebin origin. Naming practices are therefore linked to national and cultural identities: Children from immigrant families who have French names assimilate and therefore have predicates associated with French national identity and those who do not have French names do not have a French cultural identity but keep predicates associated with their culture of origin. Significantly, Le Pen is careful not to make explicit the incumbents of this non-assimilated identity and this is left tacit and implied. Meaning, however, is not a monologic concept, rather it is the outcome of negotiating shared understandings which are, in this case, displayed in the adjacent, though spatially and temporally distributed, turns in the news group comments which make up, what Nekvapil and Leudar (2006) term, a dialogic network. As will be explicated in the next section, the 'unnamed' second pair part of the SRP is understood as immigrants of Maghrebin origin.

4.2. *Analysis two: The response to Le Pen in the news group*

Le Pen's extended turn in reply to Hélène's question constitutes a sequential first turn in which she has made an assessment. As Pomerantz (1984) points out, an assessment makes confirmation or disagreement a relevant next action. The journalist, retaining her neutrality, does not do this and one way of carrying out democratic debate in the public sphere is to pass the opportunity to make an assessment in the next turn to the spatially and temporally removed space of a news group. On the webpage of *le Point* there were 12 comments, most of which act as sequential seconds to Le Pen's assessment. The most pertinent responses have been analysed below.

pour le 30/06/2011 à 20:50
Marine
1. *a raison, pourquoi affubler ses enfants de prénoms imprononçables, à consonances*
2. *étrangères? Soyons fier[sic] de notre langue et de notre héritage… Que ceux qui choisissent*
3. *la France comme terre d'accueil montrent leur attachement à ce pays, sa langue, sa*
4. *culture...*

pour 30/06/2011 at 20:50
Marine

1. is right, why saddle one's children with unpronounceable foreign-sounding first names?
2. Let's be proud of our language and our heritage ... It's up to those who choose
3. France as a homeland to show their attachment to this country, its language and its
4. culture

Pour, as indicated by the pseudonym which translated can mean 'for', aligns with Marine's assessment and the MCD in operation is still immigrant children born in France as signalled by the phrase 'homeland' (line 3). Through the pronoun 'our', he/she identifies him/herself and the projected audience as French and argues that French first names display an attachment to this country (France), its language, heritage, and culture. Thus he/she supports Le Pen's identity work that argues that a predicate of having a French name is that one has a cultural identity that can be said to be French, and predicates associated with being French are being proud of France's heritage, language, and culture. This therefore builds a national identity based on the transmission of a national personality which has been handed down over centuries combined with a common language and a common culture. And, as with Le Pen's category work, Pour keeps the MCD 'children born in France of foreign origin' in operation and thus sustains the adversarial pair of those who have unpronounceable foreign-sounding names which are a burden and implicitly leads to less assimilation. Interestingly, using the pronoun 'those', Pour does not name 'those' in opposition to French identity which, as with Le Pen, allows him/her to set up an 'us' and 'them' dichotomy which, as will be explicated later, is understood to exclude Maghrebins but which does not 'do' overt racism. This is because the MCD in operation is 'immigrant children born in France', and, not race, and, as Berard (2005) points out, for the action of doing hate crime to be projected onto another person, the victim's identity has to be made relevant in terms of membership of a racial identity (not of having a foreign-sounding name). In short, if race is not the category in operation, the label racist is difficult to pin on anybody and this allows Le Pen and Pour to deny racism, whilst still doing exclusion, which, as Van Dijk (1992) argues, is an essential element of new racist discourse.

The following post is directly addressed to Pour (@ pour), rather than Le Pen, and can therefore be analysed as an explicit second to Pour's first turn. This is also indicated by the copying of part of Pour's message which makes it explicitly the second part of an adjacency pair which does opposition to Pour's action of supporting Le Pen and so does argument.

stfu *le 30/06/2011 à 22:07*
@ pour
1. *"pourquoi affubler ses enfants de prénoms imprononçables, à consonances étrangères ?*
2. *"Quelle condescendance ! "affubler" "imprononçable" ! La culture "française" n'est pas*
3. *au centre du monde, et aussi attaché que l'on soit à la France, la langue et le*
4. *patrimoine, on a parfaitement le droit de trouver un prénom "à consonance étrangère"*
5. *joli, cf tous les prénoms américains/espagnols/italiens... Portés par des français "de*
6. *souche".*
7. *Le choix d'un prénom n'a rien à faire avec le patriotisme ou le chauvinisme, et est*
8. *purement une affaire de goût. Marine fait de la démago pure et dure.*

stfu 30/06/2011 at 22:07
@ pour
1. "why saddle one's children with unpronounceable, foreign-sounding first names?
2. "What condescendence! "saddle" "unpronounceable"! "French" culture is not
3. at the centre of the world, and attached as one is to France, the language and the

4.   heritage, one perfectly has the right to find a "foreign-sounding" first name
5.   pretty, cf all the American/Spanish/Italian first names ... used by the "original"
6.   French
7.   The choice of a first name has nothing to do with patriotism or chauvinism, and it's
8.   purely a question of taste. Marine is quite simply being the demagogue

In line 5, countering Le Pen's and Pour's category work, stfu introduces the category 'children of 'original' French descent with foreign-sounding names' (i.e., American, Spanish, or Italian first names) into the debate. Significantly, whilst no predicates are attributed to this category, stfu points out that, because naming is "purely a question of taste" (line 8), attachment to France and its language and heritage is not a predicate that can be ascribed to this category. Therefore, in opposition to Le Pen's and Pour's category work, stfu argues that predicates of assimilation (patriotism, chauvinism, attachment to France and its language and heritage) cannot be attributed to naming practices and thus implicitly that children of immigrants who have foreign-sounding names are not less assimilated than children of 'original' French decent with foreign-sounding names. In this way, stfu dissolves the adversarial nature of the categories children with foreign-sounding and non-foreign-sounding first names and the predicates of assimilation/non-assimilation that can be attributed to them. Consequently, stfu challenges the 'othering' inherent in le Pen's and Pour's categorising and presents an alternative world-view based on sameness rather than difference.

So far the 'other' has not been defined and has been left implicit. In the next response by Seulelapaix, the 'other' is named and this displays an understanding that Le Pen's 'othering' is directed at Maghrebins. By not naming the second pair part of the SRP, Le Pen and Pour can do racism without breaching the taboo of making explicitly racist comments in the public sphere which would lead to great political embarrassment as her father's (Jean-Marie Le Pen – former president of the *Front National*) various explicitly racist 'slips of the tongue' indicate.

Seulelapaix le 30/06/2011 à 23:21
Faute de programme, le FN débite des débilités !
1.   *Voilà, nous y sommes. Ce n'est plus seulement " l'invasion "de la France mais on s'attaque*
2.   *aux libertés les plus élémentaires. Dans les listes officielles des prénoms de tous les pays y*
3.   *compris la France et les USA, on retrouve des dizaines de prénoms arabes filles et garçons.*
4.   *De l'autre, les Français de souche (s'il en reste) n'auraient plus le droit selon ce "porte*
5.   *flambeau " de la démocratie et des droits de l'Homme de choisir à leur guise et en toute*
6.   *liberté les prénoms à consonance anglo-saxonne de plus en plus à la mode.*
7.   *Je suggère à cette dame dont les idées débiles héritées toujours tenaces dans les gènes de*
8.   *choisir d'autres thèmes plus sérieux de campagne. Celui ci ne tient pas la route, c'est une*
9.   *atteinte inadmissible à la liberté, on n'est plus sous Vichy.*
10. *Seulement ce nouveau scandale met en évidence l'absence totale de programme du FN et ce*
11. *qui attend comme dictature les citoyens français si un jour il devait arriver au pouvoir !*

Seulelapaix 30/06/2011 at 23:21
As it has no programme, the FN spits out stupidities
1.   So, here we are. It's not only "the invasion" of France but one attacks
2.   the most basic liberties. In the official lists of first names in all countries
3.   including France and the USA, one finds dozens of Arab girls' and boys' first names.
4.   Further, the original French (if any still exist) would no longer have the right according to this
5.   "flag bearer" of democracy and of the rights of Man to choose as they please and in
6.   complete freedom Anglo-Saxon sounding first names which are increasingly in fashion.
7.   I suggest that this woman, whose stupid inherited ideas are ingrained in people,
8.   choose other more serious campaign themes. This doesn't hold water, it's an inadmissible

9. attack on liberty, we're no longer under Vichy.
10. It's just that this new scandal brings to the fore the total absence of a programme for the FN
11. and the dictatorship that awaits French citizens if one day they come into power!

As with stfu, in this text Seulelapaix breaks down the adversarial SRP that Le Pen has set up. In line 3, she/he claims that Arab names are in the *calendrier* and in lines 4-6 she/he claims that Le Pen will infringe on indigenous French people's right to choose Anglo-Saxon names. If French people have non-French names, then the SRP non-French names/French names and their associated predicates of Frenchness and non-Frenchness are dissolved. The upshot of this is that, according to Seulelapaix, naming practices do not reflect national identity. However, significantly, this category work displays an understanding of those incumbent of Le Pen's second pair part of the SRP as being Arabs. This is because Le Pen has already named those incumbent of the first pair part as Italians, Spanish, Portuguese, and Poles who have adopted French names and who have assimilated. The incumbents of the second pair part who have foreign-sounding names and links to their own nationality and culture were not named, yet here Seulelapaix shows his/her understanding of the incumbents of the second pair part as Arabs (line 3). Seulelapaix thus displays his/her understanding of Le Pen's category work as drawing the boundaries in terms of European and Arab identities. Immigrants of European origin can assimilate and become French, immigrants of Maghrebin origin cannot. This thus displays an emic understanding of the use of names to stigmatise otherness (cf. Balibar 1991a: 18) where the functioning of the category 'immigrant children born in France with foreign-sounding names' has substituted race as a means of doing exclusion. Consequently, the race is taken out of racism so that exclusion is achieved in terms of cultural identity, rather than pseudo-scientific notions of biological race.

The final analysis concerns Pépére's assessment which is a second that does opposition to Le Pen's prior turn. This is because not only is it is tied lexically by the explicit reference to Italians, Spanish and others, but through the term of address (*vous*) it is also hearable as being directly addressed to Le Pen.

Pépére le 01/07/2011 à 00:00
Les italiens, les espagnols et autres
1. *Matthias, Lucas et autres Enzo vous remercient de nier leur existences [sic], de même que les*
2. *Brandon, Steve et innombrable Killyan que l'on trouve dans les salles de classe aujourd'hui,*
3. *et j'en oublie.*
4. *Vivant dans le sud de la France et ayant vécu aussi bien à la frontière espagnole qu'italienne*
5. *je peux assurer que les Français d'origine de ses [sic] deux pays donnent toujours des prénoms*
6. *originaires de leurs [sic] pays.*
7. *Ce qui est beau en France, ce qui fait l'histoire de France c'est sa mixité. Nous aimons nos*
8. *identités bretonnes, basques, alsaciennes ou picardes tout en étant Français.*
9. *Pourquoi refusé [sic] aux immigrés la même chose? En soit, qu'elle [sic] est la différence entre*
10. *la double culture Franco-Bretonne et la double culture Franco-Algérienne ?*
11. *On s'est battus pour nos langues régionales, pour pouvoir garder nos racines. Pourquoi*
12. *l'interdire aux nouveaux français ?*

Pépére 01/07/2011 at 00:00
The Italians, Spanish and others
1. Matthias, Lucas and others Enzo thank you for denying their existence, the same goes for the
2. Brandons, Steves and innumerable Killyans that one finds in the classroom today,
3. and I've forgotten some.
4. Living in the south of France and having also lived on both the Italian and Spanish borders

5. I can confirm that French with origins in these two countries always give first names
6. from their countries.
7. What's lovely in France, what makes the history of France is its diversity. We love our
8. Breton, Basque, Alsatian or Picard identity whilst still being French.
9. Why refuse the same thing to immigrants? In itself, what is the difference between the
10. double culture Franco-Breton and the double culture Franco-Algerian?
11. One fought for our regional languages, to keep our roots. Why
12. forbid the new French from doing this?

In order to do opposition or agreement, the MCD immigrant children born in France still has to be relevant so that participants can position themselves in the debate with discursive identities of either for or against. In this case Pépére positions himself/herself in opposition to Le Pen. In line one, contradicting Le Pen's category work which attributes predicates of assimilation to Italians, Spanish, Poles and Portuguese with French names, he/she ironises the Lucases, Enzos, Brandons, Steves and Killyans who have 'foreign-sounding names' and who thus would not have the predicate 'assimilated into France'. Moreover, in line 4, Pépére continues to do opposition to Marine Le Pen's turn by pointing out that French people with Italian and Spanish origins keep Italian and Spanish names and so this is hearable as implying that these people (i.e., French of immigrant origin) are assimilated (because they are described as 'French') despite having foreign-sounding names. This identity work thus dissolves the SRP that Le Pen has set up of children with foreign-sounding names having predicates of non-assimilation and those with French names having predicates of assimilation. This analysis is confirmed in the next line (line 7) in which he/she claims that "what's lovely in France, what makes the history of France is its diversity". This sets up a MCD in operation 'French' of which Bretons, Basques, Alsatians and Picards can be incumbent, so why not immigrants? If Bretons can be French, why not Algerians? This category work projects that immigrants are presently excluded from the MCD France, but that this should not be the case. Moreover, the interrogative form throws down the gauntlet to the audience to challenge this in a next turn. Interestingly, even though Marine Le Pen had not explicitly named those excluded from the MCD 'French', Pépére has now displayed an understanding of those excluded as Algerians, who he describes as 'new French' (line 12) and thus having the potential at least to be incumbent of French identity even if they are presently excluded. Thus, as with Seulelapaix, Pépére displays an understanding of Le Pen's discourse as doing exclusion of Maghrebins and thus orients to her category work as a coded form of racism that allows for the doing covert racism since the object of the exclusion is implicit rather than explicit and is thus deniable.

5. Conclusions and observations

As Sue and Telles (2007: 1384) note, "for an immigrant and their descendents, first names can be a powerful sociological indicator of sociocultural assimilation". Whilst this assumption seems to be largely accepted in the literature, it overlooks the socially constructed nature of the symbolic difference between 'nationals' and 'foreigners', 'us' and 'them', inclusion and exclusion, which produces a fictive ethno-nationalist community imagined as the nation (Balibar 1991b). Further, this fictive ethnicity, as Balibar (1991b: 99) calls it, derives its effectiveness from everyday social practices. So, how are difference, exclusion and inclusion which accomplish national identity

constructed in everyday practice, and how is this related to the practice of naming? Categorisation is a way of producing common-sense knowledge of the 'way the word is', and by establishing an MCD 'children born in France to foreign parents', and establishing within this two adversarial categories (i.e., children with French names and children with foreign-sounding names) and attributing oppositional predicates to these categories (i.e., ability and inability to assimilate), Le Pen accomplishes a link between national identity, assimilation, and naming practices and thus presents this as an understanding of contemporary French society. There is no intrinsic and essential a priori link between names and assimilation which Le Pen just happens to be able to perceive and articulate, rather the link is constructed through discourse. As Brubaker (2002: 166) states,

> By *invoking* groups, they [members] seem to *evoke* them, summon them, call them into being. Their categories are *for doing* – designed to stir, summon, justify, mobilize, kindle and energize. By reifying groups, by treating them as substantial things-in-the-world ethnopolitical entrepreneurs may, as Bourdieu states "contribute to producing what they apparently describe or designate" (1991a: 220) (italics in original)

Therefore, as this paper demonstrates, the link between names and assimilation is discursively achieved, and the operation of adversarial SRPs within an MCD 'immigrant children born in France' is one way of achieving this. Significantly, this category work allows Le Pen to do new racism which can be defined as a racism without race because the dominant theme is not biological and heredity racial superiority/inferiority, rather it is the "insurmountability of cultural difference" (Balibar 1991a: 21) which, in this case, is seen as the inability to assimilate. New racism is achieved because race *per se* is not mentioned in Le Pen's discourse but it is coded and inferred. This is because the target of 'othering' is left implicit since the incumbents of the first part of the SRP (immigrant children who have French names and have the predicate of assimilating) are mentioned, whereas the incumbents of the second part of the pair are left implicit. The taboo of explicit racism is not broken, yet the category work is understandable as being directed at the Maghrebin population as the replies to Le Pen by Pépére (Franco-Algerian) and Seulelapaix (Arabs) indicate. As Bonilla-Silva (2000) argues, during the colonial period, in order to dominate the New World, the colonial powers developed the concept of the West which was based upon the notion of the white man's supremacy whose burden was to bring civilisation to others. This therefore set up the binary opposition between West/non-West, human/subhuman, civilised/uncivilised, white/non-white and so on and laid the foundations for colonial rule by powers such as France, Britain, Germany, and the USA. Moreover, in the post-colonial period of immigration to the West, it is still immigrants from the former colonies and other immigrants of colour who face the brunt of racism rather than white immigrants from other former colonial powers (Bonilla-Silva 2000: 192 ff.). Thus, it is interesting to note that while Le Pen is careful not to name the incumbents of the second pair part of the SRP, they are understood (by Pépére and Seulelapaix at least) to be Arabs and Algerians which is exactly the category of immigrants from the former colonies that Bonilla-Silva refers to as bearing the brunt of exclusion. What is even more significant is that Le Pen's category work has included Poles, Spaniards, Italians, and Portuguese as having adopted French names and having assimilated. These are all European, white, Christian, and, with the exception of the Poles, former colonial powers which underlines the binary opposition between the West and the rest that Bonilla-Silva

(2000) mentions. However, whilst such (covert) racist category work might be expected of Le Pen, it is also reproduced to some extent by some of the interaction in the news group. Pépére, for example, talks of unspecified Italian and Spanish names as well as other westernised names (e.g. Steve, Brandon, Lucas etc) being used by the French, stfu talks of American, Spanish and Italian first names being used by the "original French" and Seulelapaix (line 6) argues that the French should be allowed to use Anglo-Saxon names. Thus, whilst this does dissolve the adversarial pair that Le Pen has set up, it fudges the issue of assimilation of *all* immigrants because significantly the names that Pépére, stfu and Seulelapaix mention are all western. Implicitly then, westerners can assimilate, Maghrebins cannot.

Linking naming to incumbency of identity therefore does inclusion and exclusion and draws the boundaries around ethno-nationalities. As Bonilla-Silva (1997: 471) notes, "the invention of such categories entails a dialectical process of construction: That is the creation of a category 'other' involves the creation of category 'same'". Thus who can be French is defined in relation to who cannot. Consequently, it is only through a relation with the other, or in Hall's (1996: 4) terms 'the constitutive outside', that the meaning of a national identity can be constructed. As Hall (1989: 16) notes:

> [O]nly when there is another can you know who you are. To discover the fact is to discover and unlock the whole enormous history of nationalism and of racism. Racism is a structure of discourse and representation that tries to expel the other symbolically – blot it out, put it over there in the Third World, at the margin.

Significantly, this relies on the doing of difference: In order to know who they are, the French have to know who they are not. Following the category work analysed in this paper, the French are white, Christian, and have French names. Implicitly, they are not Arab or Algerian, and they do not have foreign/Arab-sounding names. White, Christian, immigrants from the former colonial powers who have French names may assimilate. Implicitly, Arabs with foreign-sounding names may not assimilate.

Finally, in order to fight against racist practices it is essential to know how such practices work and this paper also shows how the identity work of the racist discourse of Le Pen can be 'undone'. In this case, it can be undone by dissolving the antagonistic nature of the pair in the adversarial SRPs. This is done, for example, by Pépére, Seulelapaix and stfu who argue that the predicates associated with children born in France with foreign and French names are the same. This, therefore, dissolves the difference by which exclusion is done and redefines the borders around the ethno-nationally defined category 'the French' so as to include children of immigrants with foreign-sounding names who can assimilate and thus become incumbent of the category 'French'. In this way, similarity rather than difference is achieved and the covert racist discourse of the (far) right is challenged and can ultimately be defeated.

Appendix one: Transcription symbols used

(2.5)	approximate length of pause in seconds
(.)	micro pause
[word]	overlapping utterances
:	sound stretching
=	latched utterances
<u>word</u>	stressed word
>word<	faster than surrounding talk
?	rising intonation

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