Introduction

The study of identity is perhaps one of the most important issues nowadays. It has aroused the interest of researchers in the field of Applied Linguistics, although this concern is not something new for other areas. Several other fields have been, for a long time, fostering research on different approaches to identity such as psychology, literary theory and cultural studies. As Applied Linguistics is an interdisciplinary field, its studies have been fed by all the literature produced by those and several other fields.

Globalization and cultural changes have shed light on the complexities of identity formation and the minorities have been brought onto the research stage. In this edition of the Revista Brasileira de Linguística Aplicada, we can find a portrait of the diverse approaches to identity. This special issue focuses on different minorities in articles which investigate the funk music found as a form of identity construction for youngsters in the slums of Rio de Janeiro; the resignified identities of imprisoned women; the identity construction of the landless in Brazil; and the identity dynamics of sex professional transvestites.

In addition to marginalized minorities, language users and language learners have also deserved a more humanized scientific lens and have attracted researchers' attention to issues related to the connection between social identity and language learning or language use. In this issue, we present studies on; on identity issues of Brazilians experience as Portuguese speakers in Portugal; on the discourse produced by the media about Brazilian schools and teachers; the complexity of identity reconstruction in second language acquisition; on the process of identification of a pre-service English teacher with her profession; on identity representations of undergraduate as English teacher assistants and as learners; on identity relations of bilingual Portuguese teachers; on identity representation in three Portuguese as a foreign language textbooks; and on the identity of the "Dutch" of Carambeí in what concerns the use of strong-R in the variety of Portuguese they speak.

A look at the bibliography used by the contributors reveal recurrent references to research in Brazil carried out by Moita Lopes and Coracini, the

latter being also one of the authors in this issue, offering us a study on intercultural relations and the effects of strangeness in narratives of some Brazilians reporting their experiences in Portugal. As far as foreign references are concerned, we can notice the repeated citation of Foucault, Lacan, and Derrida in the studies which privilege the French discourse theories and of Hall, Foulcault and Kramsch in the Anglo-American oriented studies.

The presence of Foulcault in both groups of studies indicates how powerful his ideas on identity as being discursively constructed are. In this edition, the authors will show that identity is not an inner and fixed essence and that it is constructed by the social experiences undergone by each person and by the discourses in the communities of practices he/she belongs to. Identities are seen as fragmented by some authors and as fractalized by Sade in a complex/chaotic perspective, but all of them recognize the power of discourse in shaping them.

As the chief editor of Revista Brasileira de Linguística Aplicada, I must acknowledge and thank the contribution of our referees in reviewing the manuscripts helping us choose the content of this issue. Some of them have refereed a large number of manuscripts and we are aware that their hard work and expertise are essential to maintain our quality standards, timeliness and the reputation of this journal.

Finally, I would like to give good news to our readers. Revista Brasileira de Linguística Aplicada will be ten years old next year and as a gift to our readers it will become a quarterly journal.

As a last remark, I would like to remind our readers that our next special issue will accept articles on "teaching and learning grammar".

Vera Lúcia Menezes de Oliveira e Paiva