This presentation will explore the construction of a bilingual professional identity in a bilingual creative writing graduate program in Southwest Texas by analyzing a classroom event and the participants’ interpretation of it. In bilingual classrooms the resources available to construct professional identities include a wide repertoire of linguistic practices and cultural frames. This context provides a space to explore how language, power and identity are negotiated in bilingual settings. The data were analyzed from a social constructivist perspective using tools from Systemic Functional Linguistics and theme patterns. The paper demonstrates how three types of positioning - attitudinal, dialogic and inter-textual - contribute to the construction of various bilingual professional identities in the community and that both languages are considered legitimate in the construction of disciplinary knowledge. The conclusions point to the importance of interpreting and explaining professional identity construction as dynamic practices set in socio-historical context.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER:
Mariana Achugar received her doctoral degree here in UC Davis. Her current research interests include the development of academic language in bilingual contexts. Her area of specialization is Spanish as a heritage language and English as a second language in the U.S. She is particularly interested in describing the lexico-grammatical and discursive features that signal membership in an academic community using the Systemic Functional Linguistics framework.

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