“Ay Ay Vienen Estos Juareños”:
On the Positioning of Selves through Code Switching by Second-Generation Immigrant College Students

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IN THIS CHAPTER we examine what appears to be a perfect storm related to identity work in social interaction: the use of language alternation in quoting others’ speech in the course of telling conversational, or “small,” stories. Central to language alternation is laying claim to, putting off, or otherwise constructing and negotiating social identities (Torras and Gafaranga 2002). Similarly, identity formation and construction are based in narrative forms and functions (Georgakopoulou 2006; Taylor 2006). Last, identity work is at the core of reported speech (Clift 2006; Stokoe and Edwards 2007). Here we analyze two conversational stories from group interview sessions with college students who are first- and second-generation immigrants from Mexico. In these stories participants switch from English to Spanish in the course of quoting others’ speech. Not only do participants quote others, but they also perform or enact (even “channel”) nonpresent persons and personas. In these stories language alternation permits participants to accomplish delicate identity work and also to engage societal/dominant discourses related to issues such as racial intolerance, border politics, and assimilation.

Discourse Materials and Analytic Methods
The discourse materials analyzed in this chapter were collected in February and March 2006.¹ We conducted five group interviews with students attending a university in South Texas. All students were first-generation college students, and first- or second-generation immigrants from Mexico. Each group interview consisted of two student facilitators and between four and six students. Four of the group interviews
lasted more than two hours, with a fifth lasting about eighty minutes. The data were transcribed, and extracts containing Spanish-language alternation in conversational stories were identified and analyzed over a period of several months.

Language alternation occurred mostly in two of the group interviews; here, we analyze extracts from the two interviews. The primary facilitator for both group interviews (female; F in the data extracts) was an undergraduate research assistant—also a second-generation immigrant from Mexico—who was trained in facilitation. In analyzing these data, we employed positioning analysis (PA) and membership categorization (MC).

PA in social interaction is rooted in the notion that selfhood is formed in relation to preexisting cultural, institutional, and societal/dominant discourses while also interactively formulated and accomplished in social interaction (Bamberg 2004; Harré and van Langenhove 1991). PA facilitates the analysis of conversational (small) stories (Moissinac 2007) by attending to three identity positioning levels faced by interactants. Level 1, story positioning, involves how the storyteller positions characters in a story realm; level 2, interactional positioning, involves how the participants position themselves in relation to one another in social interaction; and level 3, discursive positioning, involves participants’ positioning relative to cultural, institutional, and societal/dominant discourses, which participants talk into being in the course of doing identity work in social interaction.

Just as PA is ultimately concerned with how the multiplicity and complexity of the self (Davies and Harré 1990) play out in social interaction, MC is concerned with how people are categorized amid potentially salient descriptors (see Sacks 1995). Collections of categories are inference rich, meaning that a great deal of what “ordinary people” (Schegloff 2007, 469) know about society is stored up in reference to collections (Sacks 1995). Also, category-bound features (“actions and activities and forms of conduct”; Schegloff 2007, 470) are tied to collections of membership categories (Sacks 1995). Consequently, “one can allude to the category membership of a person by mentioning that person’s doing of an action that is category bound” and vice versa (Schegloff 2007, 470). Just as category membership (e.g., Mexican/Hispanic ethnicity) forms a basis for members from which to infer certain features associated with it (e.g., speaking Spanish), features bound to categories also form a basis from which members might infer category membership (Hansen 2005).

Language Alternation and Reported Speech

Although a comprehensive review of language alternation literature is outside of the scope of this chapter, a large body of literature (Auer 1998, 2005; Wei 2005) has been amassed that connects language alternation—which includes switching to Spanish as well as borrowing Spanish-language terms (Marian and Kaushanskaya 2007)—to the achievement and negotiation of identities in social interaction. Traditional, reason-based models of language alternation (e.g., Myers-Scotton 2000) have more recently been supplemented with models of language alternation more closely attuned to analysis designed to reveal the underlying apparatus through which participants themselves arrive at the interpretation of language choice (Wei 2005). Such analyses emphasize how participants utilize language alternation as an
interactional resource (Maryns and Blommaert 2001). This functional turn is relevant insofar as people use language alternation to assert, claim, and put off social identities (Torras and Gafaranga 2002; Williams 2005) and to index connections among language, ethnic identity, and community membership (Cashman 2005; Lo 1999). In this sense, language preference and alternation itself is a device for positioning oneself vis-à-vis others and categorizing oneself or self and others in social interaction (Auer 1984).

In our group interviews, participants alternated between English and Spanish, with alternation occurring mostly when they shaped their discourse as constituting the words of others. Recent analysis of talk-in-interaction has paid detailed attention to reported speech as a discursive phenomenon and resource (for a review, see Holt and Clift 2006) that is consequential in both function and form. The functions of reported speech include giving veracity or authenticity to claims or descriptive accounts (Stokoe and Edwards 2007), giving others so-called direct access to nonpresent events and circumstances (Holt 2000), embedding other contexts (Goodwin 2003), indirectly evaluating others (Günther 1999), and positioning oneself vis-à-vis others (Sacks 1995). The forms of reported speech identified are direct and indirect or summaries (Stokoe and Edwards 2007); the speech of individuals, aggregates, and typical group members (Buttny and Williams 2000); real and hypothetical reported speech (Irvine 1996); and attributed and unattributed reported speech (Goodwin 2003). Also included under the rubric of reported speech are reported thoughts (Barnes and Moss 2007) as well as subtexts or implications of speech or behavior that are articulated as reported speech (Buttny and Williams 2000). Reported speech thus includes not only citations of what an actual person did say in a particular circumstance but also citations of what any kind of person or group could have said or thought, in a real, typical, or hypothetical circumstance.

Reported speech often takes on a performance quality (Bauman and Briggs 1990), which serves as a resource for speakers to “show” and not just tell listeners what was said (Holt 2000) by means of prosody (i.e., the auditory aspects of speech, including loudness and pitch) and voice quality (production of whispery, breathy, falsetto voices) (Günther 1999). The layering of voices (Bakhtin 1981) permits speakers, in the staging of characters in stories, to embed evaluations of reported utterances as “appropriate, hysterical, unjustified, too aggressive, etc.” (Günther 1999, 691–92). Reported speech makes the narrator also the “animator,” who enacts multiple identities at once to produce an utterance that functions simultaneously as a quotation and something else, such as mockery (Bucholtz 1999). Performance is commonly utilized to mimic and parody others (Basso 1979). The layering or “evocation” (Bell 1999) of voices is a form of stylization or “styling” (Georgakopoulou 2005), in which speakers make present, or procedurally consequential, certain aspects of others’ identities and re-present or constitute story characters in some way (Deppermann 2007).

**Data Analysis**

Here we analyze extracts from group interviews in which participants utilize language alternation and reported speech as resources in positioning themselves and others in telling small stories.
Positioning the Self and Others in a Cluster of Oppositional Stories

In this subsection we analyze a small story that is the fourth of four small stories clustered together, as conversational stories commonly are (Ryave 1978), during a span of about six minutes of a group interview. The stories occur in an extended segment, in which R builds contrasts between El Cruce (a Texan city along the Mexican border, home town to R and another participant) and South Town (the city where all the participants now live). The participants then engage in a point-and-counterpoint discussion in what may be termed an extended “action-opposition sequence” (Hutchby 1996). Each of the four stories features quoted speech in Spanish; moreover, in each instance the quoted speech is performed with animated voice qualities.

To review, leading up to the talk shown in extract 1, R compares El Cruce and South Town, stating that she (as a Mexican) is not “talked down” to in South Town as she consistently was in El Cruce. R tells a story designed as a typical encounter with a saleswoman in a department store in which the woman offended R by speaking to her in Spanish (the first of four stories). R’s interpretation is contested by other participants, including by D, who tells a story in which elderly women innocently speak to her in Spanish (second story). In response, R tells a story designed to function as a model for how one should approach someone who looks like they might speak Spanish (third story). This leads to a brief sequence in which R and M align on one side of a disagreement about differences between El Cruce and South Town in how Mexicans are treated. The fourth story in the cluster of stories ensues following this disagreement. Consider:

Extract 1 (DG 3, at 1:55:03–1:57:22)

1 M: .hh I don— it’s— it’s really hard to explain, (.)
2 [like]
3 A: [But I know— I get what you saying, but
4 [(thes-)]
5 O: [Yeah I think it’s different there [(but) (.) ] it’s— [(0.2) yeah
6 R: [It’s different.] [
7 M: [Yeah it’s
→ 8 [<very very> different. ]
→ 9 R: [It’s different and you know ] what I’ve heard
10 comments, (0.2) °Ay: ay vienen estos juareños. Ay:°
11 >blah blah blah
12 [blala<
13 (M): [he: he ha ha ha ha ha [ha .hhh  ]
14 R: [I’ve ] heard it. =
15 F: =hmnhm
16 R: I’ve heard it and (0.5) .hh and I pretend like I don’t know English,
As this extract begins, M states that the difference between El Cruce and South Town, in how Mexicans are treated, is hard to explain (line 1). This conversational move projects the closing down of an argument (Hutchby 1996). At this point, A appears to effect a softened oppositional move (“I get what you’re saying, but,” line 3). O takes up a third-party role in ending the dispute (Vuchinich 1990) by stating that “it’s different there” (line 5). The referent to “there” could be Mexico (aligning with A’s recent example) or El Cruce (aligning with the contrast drawn by R and M). Both R (lines 6, 9) and M (lines 7–8) take up O’s construction of contrast. R appears to interpret “there” as El Cruce, as she reports having heard comments, representing them in the form of reported speech: “Ay ay vienen estos juareños” [“oh no, here come those Juareños”] (lines 9–10). R’s quoted Spanish indexes a recognizable “invasion” discourse associated with fear and prejudice related to border politics (positioning level 3). R’s quoted speech is performed in a way that the written transcript does not fully capture. By quoting the speech in a volume lower than her talk before this, it is as if she is relaying a secret. In this manner, R goes into character to re-present discourse in the voice of the unidentified person who uttered it. The switch to Spanish is consequential here, insofar as speaking Spanish is an activity bound to membership in a Mexican or Hispanic category. By giving a Spanish-language voice to the prejudiced discourse she reports, R implies that Hispanics living in El Cruce are prejudiced against “juareños” (residents of the Mexican border city Juarez).

This quoted speech follows R’s claim that, unlike in South Town, Hispanics in El Cruce act in prejudiced ways against Mexicans from Juarez, which places Hispanics in El Cruce in the path of prejudice from fellow Hispanics. Following the reported speech, R elaborates by telling of typical instances in which she has pretended not to be able to speak Spanish in order to hear what is said about her, in Spanish, apparently by El Cruce Hispanics (lines 16–19). R opens a slot for reporting this speech in Spanish, and then fills that slot with ceremonial gibberish (“blahblahwawawawa,” line 16), through which she enacts a dismissive stance toward her antagonists. R’s assessment—that “we don’t love each other over there” (line 25)—coupled with a formula-
tion (Pomerantz 1986), which treats El Cruce as populated by only Hispanics (line 27), implies that El Cruce Hispanics are the perpetrators of prejudice against Juareños.

**Quoted Speech and Language Alternation in Animating the “Other”**

Whereas the analysis presented above illustrates positioning through language alternation in a small story that is part of a cluster of stories, extract 2 leads to two small stories in which B positions herself vis-à-vis her own community and family. In extract 2, from a different group interview, B (a first-generation immigrant and returning student with grown children) animates typical “others” from her community and her mother-in-law. In the talk leading to the discourse presented in extract 2, S says that she has encountered difficulties in reentering her community once she has gone to college (not shown here). F asks other participants whether or not they agree with S’s observation; B’s complex response appears to both agree and disagree with S’s observation (which is not shown). Consider:

**Extract 2 (DG 4, at 55:42–57:20)**

1. B: But I hear what you’re saying. I—I get a lot of fingers pointed at me and say pues mira: She thinks she’s it cuz she’s going to college. (h) hehe I don’t feel that I act any different. hh=
2. S: =Exactly.=
3. B: =But, I— I see (0.7) jealousy
c: [\(\cdot\)] anger: ah, pointed toward me because .hh ah (h:) she
4. P: [hmhm
5. B: =thinks she’s ^ it.
6. P: Right
7. [and it— it’s— it’s perception of other people [thinking] that
8. [(ni: denih) [uh huh ]
9. P: ^ you think you’re better than— and you do:n’t you’re just-
10. B: And I— [right
11. P: ^ that’s j(h)ust the way you ^ we:nt.
12. (0.5)
13. (P): Yeah
14. B: Righ:t, [and— and— I tol— because my mother in la:w is my
15. (?): [well-
17. (0.2)
18. B: She’ll stand on the porch and I don’t know if ya’ll understand
19. Spanish.=
21. B: [  *  ]
F:  =[^ yeah::]
(.
B:  Ya te [vas:. Quedate a [qui:. Co [cina lava:.] (.) cuida tus
[hijos. ^
B:  [# [*** [***]
[*
B:  That’s what you should be doing. .hh
F:  W [o:w
B:  [And I tell her grandma, cuz she’s my mother in law but I
cahll her(h) gr(h)-
grahmda .hhh I’m gone a go
bring money grandma.=I’m
gone a make- .pt .h no
no no no what
[choo need to do you need to cook, wash clean and ] ]
[* * * * * * * * * * * * * *]
iron. That’s what women are supposed to do
so .hh she’s my
bi:ge:st ene:my; and eh,
well I was going to Palo Alto every morning she’d lock
the door behind me and
ahchehehehe .hh tah get
[ba(h)ck i:n(h)  ] ghhh She wouldn’t let me i:n.
[* * * *
B:  And even no:w, (.) she’s- pissed at me because (0.2) "I’m going to
^ college." Course that’s not going stop me.
B(h)(h)(h)ut [.hhh
F:  [Wo:w
P:  And that’s the men— eh right and I agree— you’re right that
is the ment— and that w::, and-
[is the mentality ] in so [:me, ] (0.2) in our s- in our society in
B:  [(it’s- hell ) ] [hm^hm ]
P:  some, ^ ages like you [said-
B:  [Or our cu:ture I [don’t know what ]
P:  [our culture ]
B:  it i:s but (.).hh and I still can’t tu- turn her arou:nd.
(0.2)
In this extract, B engages prior talk by way of telling of an experience—which she constructs as typical—in which she is the object of derision on the part of others, first by recounting: “I get a lot of fingers pointed at me and say pues ^ mira” [“well ^ look”] (lines 1–2). This vivid recounting is intricate, in that it appears to be metaphorical in part (“fingers pointed at me”), and it is unclear whether the quoted speech (“pues ^ mira. She thinks she’s it cuz she’s going to college,” line 2) is a report of direct speech or interpretation of the subtext (Buttny and Williams 2000) of these common episodes. In any event, B reports here what the unspecified set of actions she glosses as “fingers pointed at me” means to her; moreover, insofar as language is tied to ethnic categories, quoting Spanish is a resource for delineating just who is doing the proverbial finger-pointing: members of her own community, fellow Spanish speakers (Hispanics) who resent her because by enrolling as a college student “she thinks she’s it” (lines 6, 8). This vivid recounting of behavior constructed as typical allows B to suggest that she is experiencing resentment from members of her own ethnic/cultural community.

Similarly to the quoted Spanish in the cluster of stories in excerpt 1, B enacts “pues ^ mira:” and, to a lesser extent, the quoted speech following it. As partly apparent from the transcript, this quoted speech is animated through elongated prosody and a falsetto-like voice quality. The speech is performed; it is a performance that exists independently of whether or not B is quoting actual speech or its subtext.

P’s affiliative uptake following B’s story recasts the finger-pointing as others’ perception (“thinking that you think you’re better,” lines 10, 12) and, supportively of B, counters this perception (lines 12, 14). B apparently confirms P’s alignment move by agreeing (line 17). B then launches into dramatic narrative about her mother-in-law (lines 21–48). B displays speakership incipiency (Zimmerman 1993) both during (line 13) and following (line 17) P’s aligning move. Laying claim to the speaking floor, B appears to begin to report something she said before (“and— and— I tol—,” line 17), before self-correcting to label her mother-in-law as her “biggest enemy” (line 19). The use of “because” (line 17) marks what comes next as logically prior to whatever report she apparently abandoned, and it implicates the mother-in-law as the would-be object of the abandoned report. It is apparent that B wraps up the provision of background information (which began with her mother-in-law being her biggest enemy) when she reports what she tells her mother-in-law (line 33). In this sense, discourse in lines 13 (“And I—”), 16 (“and— and— I tol—”) and 33 (“And I tell . . .”) appear to be attempts at the same report. Insofar as the report B started to give (in lines 13, 17) is actually what she gives after providing background and orienting information (in line 33), then the part of the story leading up to this report is consequential not only for how B positions her mother-in-law in the story world (positioning level 1), but also for how she positions herself in this group interview (level 2).

B sets up her mother-in-law as an antagonist (line 17) before telling about her in narrative form. B then presents as “typical” (note the future tense in “she’ll,” line 21) the scene of her mother-in-law standing on the porch. Then, after projecting a switch to Spanish, which includes a disclaimer (line 21), B switches, and in so doing, she enacts her mother-in-law with (simplified): “Mendiga mala madre. Y a te vas. Quedate aqui. Cocina lava cuida tus hijos [Fucking stupid bad mother. You’re leav-
ing now. Stay here. Cook, clean, take care of your children].”

That’s what you should be doing.” B accentuates the enactment by pounding her hand and fist on the table (marked in the transcript). With this graphic enactment, B symbolically constructs a domestic antagonist in her mother-in-law, and she shows (not just tells) the others why her mother-in-law is her “biggest enemy.” Acknowledgment from the facilitator (in lines 32, 53) displays support of this apparent design.

By constructing her mother-in-law as antagonist, B positions herself as justified in pursuing a college degree while having children in the home (level 2). In fact, B reports that she has justified herself to her mother-in-law—that she will bring money into the family (line 36). In response, the mother-in-law reiterates her demand (unreasonable, by implication), that she should stay in the home (lines 37–41). This second enactment of the mother-in-law’s quoted speech in “That’s what women are supposed to do” (line 41) gives one to understand that B’s mother-in-law holds antiquated, traditional, and oppressive views of the woman’s role in the family. Thus not only is taking care of the home and family what B should be doing, according to (B’s construction of) the mother-in-law, it is also what women should be doing. In this manner, this second pass at quoting the mother-in-law indexes societal/dominant discourses related to the rights, roles, and obligations of women in society (level 3). This leads B and P to collaborate on a construction of the mother-in-law’s “mentality” as a feature bound up in a category constituting elderly Hispanic/Mexican people (lines 54–61).

Excerpt 2 illustrates identity work at the nexus of language alternation, reported speech, and narrative. Here, B constructs a persona of her mother-in-law as her biggest enemy (lines 19, 43), extremely disrespectful (line 23), sexist (line 41), inflexible (lines 37–40), petty (lines 43–48), and vindictive (line 50). Furthermore, similarly to B’s first story (“pues ^ mira:”), insofar as speaking Spanish is an activity bound to being Mexican/Hispanic, B’s quoting Spanish categorizes her mother-in-law as Mexican/Hispanic and implies that this membership is consequential. Thus, insofar as language alternation makes salient the indexical link between language, ethnic identity, and community membership (Lo 1999), this connection (though unstated) constructs the “other” as ethnically Mexican/Hispanic. This is evident particularly in the second story, where performance of the Spanish-language enactment plays a central part in permitting B (and P, and arguably F as well) to style the mother-in-law as a Mexican/Hispanic character who is ridiculous, dangerous, and incorrigible.

Discussion
In analyzing language alternation in reporting speech in the course of telling stories, we have utilized positioning analysis and membership categorization. We have utilized PA to show that participants in the group interviews positioned themselves, and were positioned, not only in relation to story characters and other participants but also vis-à-vis societal/dominant discourses. We have utilized MC to show that interactants utilized the category-bound nature of speaking Spanish to stylize “others” in the stories they told. These claims parallel in many respects well-documented clashes between procedural analysis (e.g., conversation analysis) and poststructural analysis.
(e.g., critical discourse analysis). Although “a complete and scholarly analysis (as opposed to a technical analysis) must range further than the limits set in procedural analysis (Wetherell 1998, 388), there is also analytic danger in taking “as given and as inescapably relevant” such things as “categories of race, class, and gender; the bearing of hierarchy, power, oppression, macro-structural oppression; etc.” (Schegloff 1999, 577).

The views above are largely treated as incommensurate, and they perhaps are. Nonetheless, in combining MC and PA, as we have here, we propose an integration (of sorts), in that MC contributes to grounding in the discourse data claims that participants are indexing (certain) societal/dominant discourses at (certain) moments in social interaction. This empirical grounding, facilitated by MC, makes PA more defensible; MC and PA thus can complement one another as analytic tools.

In this chapter we have analyzed discourse where language alternation, reported speech, and narrative meet. In the discourse analyzed here, emergent narratives (small stories) are a site for participants’ identity work. Accordingly, just as narrative connects otherwise disparate disciplines of scholarship (Smith 2007), in these data the narrative context itself—the act of telling—connects language alternation and reported speech. As the complex interdisciplinary field of narrative scholarship continues to turn toward analyzing the accomplishment of “fleeting, contingent, fragmented and multiple selves” in conversational storytelling (Georgakopoulou 2006, 128), narrative itself continues to facilitate connections between the field’s most enduring and useful concepts.

NOTES

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2. In excerpts the numeral symbol (#) represents B slapping the conference table at which the participants are sitting; the asterisk (*) represents B pounding the table with her fist.

3. “Mendiga” translates literally to English as “beggar.” In this context, “mendiga” serves as an intense and highly aggravated modifier to “mala madre” (“bad mother”), roughly equivalent to employment of “fucking stupid” as an intense and highly aggravated modifier in English—this is according to an informal translation from a native Spanish speaker who listened to the discourse in context.

4. Ideological disagreements of this sort, which surface in conferences and journals from time to time, are highly interesting and instructive. Prominent interchanges are found in Schegloff (1997, 1998, 1999), Wetherell (1998), and Billig (1999).

REFERENCES


