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**LANGUAGE, IDENTITY, AND INVESTMENT IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE OF A
GROUP OF MEXICAN WOMEN LIVING IN SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA**

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation has two goals. First, it demonstrates how the participants, 14 Mexican women living in Southeastern Pennsylvania, use contextualization cues (Gumperz, 1982, 1989, 1992a, 1992b, 1997; Schiffrin, 1996) and subjectivity (Banfield, 1982; Benveniste, 1971) in narratives about their own lives to express different aspects of their identities. Secondly, it discusses these identities in relation to how they affect the participants' investment (Norton, 1997, 2000; Norton-Pierce, 1995) in the English language.

This study combines discourse analysis with ethnographically rich data collection methods. It focuses on structural aspects of the discourse of the participants that closely parallel those analyzed by De Fina in her (2004) study of "Identity in narrative." These are: the use of terms of reference to ethnic or nationality groups, the use of reported speech, and expressions of agency. However, in this dissertation, these structures are studied in relation to three different predominant identities that emerged in the participants' discourse: ethnic, gendered, and literate identities, respectively.

Analysis revealed that the participants' use of references to ethnic or nationality groups indexes their identification mainly with their own family, and with the people with whom they associate socially, rather than to their ethnic group as a whole. A certain degree of identification with people who are able to understand them and a simultaneous distancing from monolingual English speakers who are unable or unwilling to communicate with them was also found.

Within the analysis of the participants' gendered identity, it was found that they exhibited a marked preference for citing themselves rather than their spouses. This challenges traditional views of Hispanic women's gendered roles. The use of reported speech also appears to have the function of highlighting important sections of narrative, and of enhancing the affect in these sections.

The analysis of the participants' literate identity reveals that they present themselves as not having had full control over their past learning experiences, and that they feel they have little or no control over their future education. The participants exhibited a tendency to downplay their agency in events related to the learning or studying of language, literacy, and other skills. They also frequently presented themselves in non-agentive positions within these events.

It becomes apparent that of these three predominant identities, the participants' ethnic and literate identities have a clearly more detrimental effect on their investment in the English language. However, it was also found that obtaining a rewarding job in which they have to use English has highly motivated some of the participants to further their studies of the language.

In conclusion, a better understanding of the identities of the participants has yielded a clearer picture of why they have not become invested in the English language, in spite of the overt declaration of their intent.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1. Mexican immigration to the US and to Kennett Square, PA

Mexican people have been crossing the border between the US and Mexico since the beginning of the history of the United States. However, in the last two decades, the controversy over the number of Mexican immigrants has dramatically increased and this issue has become a topic for heated national debate.

Most studies of Mexican immigration take the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo as the starting point from which to count the number of Mexicans entering and remaining in the US. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, in 1848, was a major turning point in the history of Mexican migration to the US, as it guaranteed that the civil and property rights of all Mexicans who were already in the country and who chose to remain would be respected. Over 75,000 Mexicans took advantage of this treaty and became citizens of the US (McWilliams, 1976; Santamaria Gomez & Zackrison, 2003).

After 1848 and until 1924 the US government made little effort to curtail the flow of immigrants across the Rio Grande. In fact, there was no border patrol on the US border with Mexico until 1911, and after 1911 there were only four mounted guards to patrol the over 2000 mile frontier (Santamaria Gomez & Zackrison, 2003). During this time, Mexican workers crossed the border in both directions freely. By 1920, there were an estimated 486,408 Mexicans in the US (Shafer & Mabry, 1981).

In the 1920s, the flow of immigrants into the US multiplied. The reasons were mainly economic; the US West was increasing productivity and had need for a larger labor pool,

particularly in the agricultural sector (Shafer & Mabry, 1981). Many employers actively recruited workers for their land from the other side of the border with Mexico.

Since the 1920s, the number of Mexicans living in the US has continued to increase. In the year 2004 there were approximately 40,425 thousand Hispanic people living in the US. Of these, 26,630 thousand were of Mexican descent. Most Mexicans choose to go to California (approximately 42.8%) or to Texas (20.4%). The rest have been increasingly moving to the north of the US (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006). Currently, there are projected to be 49,726 thousand Hispanics in the US (US Census Bureau).

1.1. Immigration of Mexicans to Kennett Square, PA

The participants in this study are sixteen Mexican women living in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania. Kennett Square is located in southeastern Pennsylvania, about 37 miles from Philadelphia, within Chester County. It is a typical small town of the US northeast. The downtown area lies along State and Cypress streets, two parallel roads that join on both ends of the town to form the Baltimore Pike. It still contains a number of houses from the Victorian era and has a charming historic downtown area with numerous antique stores. On the west side of Kennett Square, where State and Cypress join, begin housing projects where Mexican immigrants live. The Mexican community stretches from the western end of Kennett Square to the neighboring towns of Toughkenamon, Avondale, West Grove, and beyond.

Pennsylvania has the second largest concentration of Hispanic people of the US northeast. In fact, in 1990, the Hispanic population in Pennsylvania was estimated at 232 thousand, almost 12% of the total population. The predominant group is that of people from Puerto Rico (65% of all Hispanic people in Pennsylvania) (Garcia & Gonzalez, 1995).

The Hispanic population in Kennett Square used to be of Puerto Rican origin. However,

especially after 1980, Mexican workers started to come to Pennsylvania, particularly to smaller townships and semi-rural areas like Kennett Square. Once the Mexicans started to arrive *en masse*, the Puerto Ricans began moving to larger urban areas, particularly, Allentown, Lancaster, Reading, and Philadelphia (Falcon, 1993, cf García and Gonzalez, 1995). Thus, between 1980 and 1990 there was a dramatic increase in the percentage of Mexicans living in Kennett Square. According to García and Gonzalez (1995), between 1980 and 1990:

The non-Hispanic white population in Kennett Square only increased from 3,847 to 3,918 people, but in relative terms, it decreased from 81.6 to 75.08 percent of the total population. Meanwhile, ... the Mexican population rose from 24 to 374 people during the same period, an increase of 1,450 percent. Currently, these figures have probably changed with the influx of even more Mexican people to the area. And these figures do not include migrant workers or illegal immigrants. (p.4)

Two major factors contributed to the dramatic increase of Mexicans to these areas. The first factor is the growth of the mushroom factories, and with them, the need for cheap labor. However, the main factor that allowed for the increase in the Mexican population was the SAW Program, which was a sub clause of the Immigration Reform Control Act (IRCA) in 1986. The SAW program allowed farm laborers, who could prove they had worked in the agricultural industry in the US for at least 90 days between 5/1/85 and 5/1/86, to obtain working visas and, later, legal residency in the US. Once the workers had obtained residency, they were able to sponsor the immigration of members of their immediate family. The mushroom factories themselves often assisted immigrants with their applications (Garcia, 1997; Garcia & Gonzalez, 1995).

In 1990 most of the Mexicans who lived in the Kennett Square area, however, were still the single male Mexican immigrants who came without their families to work in landscaping or with the mushroom factories (García and Gonzalez, 1995). This is still visibly true when visiting the communities where the Mexicans live. The women who live in this area have all come with male family members: husbands, fathers, or brothers.

1.2. Mexican migrants and English language use

In the year 2000, out of the 8,488,805 Mexicans over the age of five living in the US, 24% spoke English very well, and 53% spoke English not well or at all. 43% of Mexicans lived in linguistically isolated households, which is defined by the Census Bureau as a household in which no person 14 or older speaks English only or very well. Of the Mexicans who spoke English very well, 65% were younger than 12 on arrival to the US, 35% were between 13 and 34, and only 20% were older than 35 on arrival. Furthermore, 64% of the Mexicans who reported speaking English very well were college graduates. Of the Mexicans who had not completed 12 years of primary education, only 16% reported speaking English very well (Portes and Rimbaut, 2006).

Portes and Rimbaut (2006) analyzed the percentage of first, second, and third generation Hispanic immigrants and their use of English and Spanish in their daily lives. They found that 72% of first generation Hispanic immigrants are Spanish dominant, while 78% of third generation immigrants are English dominant and only 1% is Spanish dominant. Figure 1-1 illustrates the findings of Portes and Rimbaut (2006).

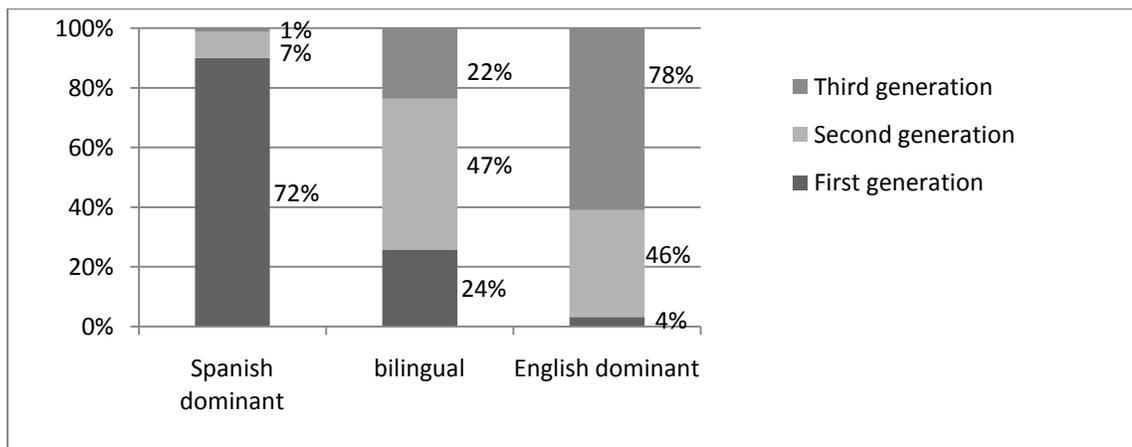


Figure 1-1: Language Shift (Spanish to English) from the first to the third generations among Hispanic adults in the United States in the year 2000. (Adapted from Portes and Rumbaut (2006), p. 231.)

Immigrants face huge social pressures to learn English. Many can function with their mother tongues only in some blue collar jobs where there are large numbers of immigrants working together (d'Anglejan, 1984). But if they want better paying jobs, immigrants need to, at the very least, speak and understand oral English. Literacy in English is essential for most better paying jobs. Furthermore, even though English has become official in 30 states, many other states, where English has not yet acquired official status, do not have enough interpreters to cover all the services, and there is a lack of interpreters for many languages. Thus, immigrants often face tremendous problems when trying to have their needs met at hospitals and in other public places (Flores, 2006). Even speaking to their children's teacher may prove impossible for many.

In the particular case of the Kennett Square area, García and Gonzalez (1995) report, concerning their study, that:

All of the immigrants and migrants in the ethnographic sample are monolingual Spanish speakers. This is also the case for migrants enrolled in English as a Second Language (ESL) courses. In spite of the courses and tutoring sessions, many migrants have difficulty learning English, mainly because many of them are illiterate in their native Spanish language. Those who have worked in the area for over five years or more spoke a little English, but their comprehension was very poor. In the immigrant population, children are bilingual, not their parents. (p. 8)

All of the participants in the current study are Spanish dominant, as well, and report having very little proficiency in English. Some of them have been in the US for many years – some for up to eleven years – yet they do not feel comfortable using their limited English skills. Some have attempted to learn English by attending courses, but many of the women in the study have not attended any ESL classes at all. The Comunidad Hispana, a local non-profit organization that strives to cater to the needs of Hispanic immigrants, offers various levels of English free of charge. The local library also connects students desirous of learning English to individual volunteers who teach in various locations throughout the community. The very housing project where the participants live organizes courses, including some ESL classes, for them. Yet they still

feel that they do not know enough English to communicate even at a very basic level. Something is evidently not working for them. This is the crux of my research for the current dissertation, in which I analyze the identities of the sixteen participants as a means of better understanding why they have not fully acquired English, and what could be done to improve this situation.

1.3. The Current Study

In 1999 I conducted a study for my MA thesis (Ross, 2001a), whose goal was to ascertain the needs for English of the members of the Mexican community in Kennett Square, in order to later organize ESL classes there. I originally made acquaintance with a group of Mexican students in one of my classes. They repeatedly told me of the problems their parents, and other Mexican immigrants, faced due to their limited English skills. My students subsequently introduced me to their parents and I developed my MA research around this group of adult immigrants. During this time I established a connection with the community, particularly with the female members with whom I could communicate more freely. This rapport continued until after the collection of data for this dissertation project.

In the summer of 2003 I returned to the same community and my original participants introduced me to other residents of the same housing complex they lived in. I especially established a connection with the women, whom I deemed to be at a disadvantage, compared to the men, given their gendered roles. They also introduced me to the manager of their complex who, in turn, introduced me to the management of another near-by housing complex. In this way I was able to extend my connections to a larger population. This also gave me the opportunity to offer ESL classes at both complexes.

All participants in this study were documented immigrants to the US by the time they were interviewed.

During the course of data collection for the Ross (2001a) study and for the current dissertation project, I spoke to members of the Hispanic (non-Mexican) community and to mainstream English-speaking Americans, as well as to members of the Mexican community. Speaking to these non-Mexican local people, I was told that the women in the Mexican community simply did not take advantage of all the courses offered to them to learn English. Some opined that the Mexicans were lazy, others that it was too easy to maintain Spanish as the Spanish-speaking community was so close and maintained a very strong link. Yet others thought the main culprit was the patriarchal characteristic of this community; women were reportedly not allowed to attend classes by their spouses (according to fieldnotes made in Nov. 2000). These are all characteristics commonly ascribed to Mexicans in general.

However, these stereotypes fail to explain why the participants have not learned English, in view of their vehement declaration of their interest in studying it. There may be some aspect of their identity or subjectivity (Norton, 1997, 2000; Norton & Pavlenko, 2004; Norton-Pierce, 1995; Weedon, 1987; Williams, 1996) that is inhibiting them from attending available classes and taking advantage of the myriad opportunities for acquiring the language.

In this dissertation I study the identity of a group of Mexican women living in southeastern PA with the purpose of better understanding the aspects of their identity that have impeded them from acquiring full proficiency in the English language. This study combines ethnographic and discourse analytical methods. I use the linguistic conceptualization of subjectivity (Banfield, 1982; Benveniste, 1971; Iwasaki, 1993; Li & Zubin, 1995; Maynard, 1993) as a lens through which to view identity. Subjective sections of text have the speaker as the narrative subject, bring the events being described to the current time and place, and highlight the emotions of the speaker. I also analyze the use of contextualization cues (Gumperz, 1977, 1980, 1982, 1989, 1992a, 1992b; Schiffrin, 1987b) by the participants, in particular as indices of the

attitudes that the speakers have towards their interlocutors and other members of their community, and towards events in which they have participated.

In order to complete this study I first analyze the concept of identity in relation to the shifting realities of the participants, and I look into how the identity of Hispanic and, particularly, Mexican immigrants has been described. The conceptualization of identity I use is one that takes into account the shifting needs and ideologies of the individual and of the groups with which he/she has contact. It is highly influenced by De Fina's (2000, 2003) conceptualization of identity, and the post-structuralist feminists' view of subjectivity (Weedon, 1987; Williams, 1996). In particular, I look at how the participants express their identities through their use of discursive devices. This is a study of how identity can be expressed through language in narratives. My first research questions are, thus:

- What are the discursive elements that emerge in the participants' narratives that reflect or index aspects of their identity?
- What aspects of their identity do these discursive elements function as contextualization cues for?

However, I also take into account the stereotypes that exist concerning Hispanic communities, and focus on these issues as a means of explaining why the participants have not become fully invested (Norton, 1997, 2000; Norton-Pierce, 1995) in learning English. Thus, the other questions that inform my research are:

- What aspects of their identity, in terms of nationality and ethnic membership, curb the participant's investment in the English language?
- What roles does gendered identity have, if any, in their investment in learning English?
- How does the participants' previous learning experience (their identity as literate or illiterate persons) affect their investment in learning English?

1.4. Organization of this study

Chapter 2 of this dissertation explores the concept of identity to which I appeal. As already noted, this conceptualization is highly influenced by the construct of subjectivity as developed by the post-structuralist feminists (Weedon, 1987; Williams, 1996). Subsequently, I discuss some of the more relevant studies of identity, particularly those that relate to Hispanic and Mexican peoples living in the US. I then present my theoretical framework, starting with the discussion of subjectivity from a linguistic standpoint (Banfield, 1982; Benveniste, 1971; Iwasaki, 1993; Li & Zubin, 1995; Maynard, 1993). The focus of studies of subjectivity is on how speakers position themselves as the subjects of events within their discourse. Speakers do so via the use of first person pronouns and conjugations, by projecting events to the current time and place (Banfield, 1982; Benveniste, 1971), and by investing these sections of discourse with greater affect (Kuroda, 1973; Maynard, 1993, 2002). The means by which I have chosen to study the subjectivities of the participants is by looking for the contextualization cues (Gumperz, 1977, 1980, 1982, 1989, 1992a, 1992b; Schiffrin, 1987b) that index these subjective sections of discourse. Contextualization cues are also used by the participants to index other aspects of their identities.

In Chapter 3, I discuss my data and how it was obtained, and I present my methodology for this study. My set of participants consists of sixteen Mexican women living in Kennett Square, PA. They were interviewed over a total of seven years. Eight of them also participated in a series of ESL classes I offered free of charge in two housing complexes in Kennett Square. As part of these classes, I held informal discussion sessions in which we talked about the main issues the participants had to contend with concerning the use of English. These discussions also form part of my data set. All interviews and discussion sessions were modeled after the ethnographic

format for interviews. I also use ethnographic field-notes to supplement and inform my analyses of the discourse of the participants.

In Chapter 4, I discuss how the participants express their relationship with their own Mexican community and the English-speaking society around them. I focus on the terms of reference used to refer to themselves and their Mexican community, and to other social and ethnic groups around them (English speaking US citizens in general, African Americans, and Cambodians), and on pronominal usage (or lack thereof), as a means of ascertaining how they express the “us” versus “them” in relation to the various groups.

Chapter 5 focuses on the gendered identity of the participants. In this chapter I examine how the participants use reported speech to highlight sections of their stories about gendered roles that are more important, and subjective, to them. In order to select the narratives about gendered roles, I use the traditional gendered roles outlined in the sociological frameworks of “machismo” and “marianismo” (Gutmann, 2007; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1992, 1994; Stevens, 1965, 1973). I then analyze the function of reported speech within these narratives, focusing on the role of this structural aspect of language in highlighting specific aspects of narratives (Koontz, 1977; Larson, 1978), and on its use as a means of expressing the (power) relationship between the narrator and the distal speaker (De Fina, 2003).

In chapter 6, I explore the role of education (ESL and literacy education, as well as the learning of skills) in the identities of the participants. I use the construct of agency (Ahearn, 2001b; Davidson, 1980), particularly as it has been studied and applied by Duranti (1985, 1990) and Ahearn (2001a), to discuss how the participants express their own volition with respect to their experiences with education and desire to learn.

Chapter 7 brings together all the analysis in the previous three chapters and answers the research questions that inform this project. Implications for the teaching of ESL to female immigrants from rural areas in Mexico will be presented.

Chapter 2

Identity and its linguistic representation

2. Introduction

In this dissertation I study the identities of a group of Mexican women living in southeastern Pennsylvania with the purpose of both analyzing how the women express their identities discursively and in order to ascertain how these identities affect their investment in English. The purpose of this chapter is to present and discuss studies of identity, in general, and of Hispanic groups living in the US, in particular. In this chapter I also present the conceptualization of identity to which I appeal, and introduce the conceptual framework used to analyze it in this study.

Section 2.1 of this chapter addresses the construct of identity, and how I conceptualize it. I draw mainly from the concept of social identity in applied linguistics, and from a poststructuralist view of subjectivity. In addition, in this section of the chapter I discuss studies of identity of Mexican immigrants to the US and of other peoples, from the perspectives of applied linguistics, and of sociology, cultural studies, and anthropology.

I use the linguistic conceptualization of subjectivity (Banfield, 1982; Benveniste, 1971; Iwasaki, 1993; Kuroda, 1973; Maynard, 1993, 2002) as a lens through which to view the different aspects of the identities of my participants. A discussion of subjectivity is presented in section 2.2.

In section 2.3, I introduce the use of contextualization cues (Gumperz, 1989, 1997; Gumperz, Aulakh, & Kaltman, 1982; Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz, 1982; Schiffrin, 1987b; Schiffrin, 1997) as the analytical framework for this dissertation.

2.1. Identity

Identity, in the traditional sense, is the collection of features that a person recognizes as characterizing him/herself as a unique individual. These characteristics include biological features, like height, eye color, age, and race or ethnicity (Le Page & Tabouret-Keller, 1985); psychological features, including personality; cognitive features, including memory, and the person's network of schemata (Di Maggio, 1997; Hogg & McGarty, 1990; Wiley & Alexander, 1987); cultural features, like social class, traditions, religious beliefs, language (Kramsch, 2002; Le Page & Tabouret-Keller, 1985; Rampton, 1995) and identification with different social groups (Abrams, 1999; Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, 1981; Turner & et al, 1987; Turner & Giles, 1981); and personal experiences, including those related to membership in communities of practice (Bucholtz, 1999; De Fina, 2007). The concept of identity has been the focus of studies in many fields of inquiry, including psychology, sociology, anthropology, and applied linguistics, generating more complex perspectives.

Within the field of applied linguistics, identity is studied in relation to language and interaction. This conceptualization of identity, social identity, is defined by Ochs (1993) as follows:

[It is] a cover term for a range of social personae, including social statuses, roles, positions, relationships, and institutional and other relevant community identities one may attempt to claim or assign in the course of a social life (p. 288).

Social identity includes all the features of an individual's identity, but also adds the effect of social interaction. The enactment of social identity entails the development of differential relationships between and among individuals in terms of power and closeness, and in terms of the roles and positions that each person assumes at any given point in time.

The concept of social identity takes into account the importance of language as a means of expressing identity, because, as Gumperz (1982) notes, "talk itself is constitutive of social

reality” (p. 3). According to Voloshinov (1994), our individual consciousness, our conception of ourselves, is made up of the words or signs we use to describe it. Signs are, in turn, not only the words with which we describe ourselves and the world around us, but also what these words mean to us and to the society(ies) within which we interact. For this reason, words and signs can only have meaning in so far as they are understood between two or more participants in an interactional context; i.e., they are dialogic in nature (Bakhtin, 1981). Identity, being expressed through language, thus becomes a social phenomenon, and is affected by social interaction between individuals.

De Fina (2003), whose work has greatly influenced the current study, in turn defines social identity as “a process shaped and at the same time shaping collective social and discursive practices” (p. 18). De Fina highlights the importance of narratives, particularly conversational narratives, for the study of identity because it is through personal narratives, the author argues, that speakers represent their views of the world. Due to the social and dialogic nature of identity, a person’s conceptualization of him/herself changes on a moment-by-moment basis, and is affected by the input of his/her interlocutors. A person’s identity is always in a state of flux and development (Bruner, 1990). For this reason identity is, according to De Fina, a process; it is not static or unitary.

In her study, De Fina draws from the perspectives of psychology and philosophy, especially from the writings of Bruner (1990) and Kerby (1991), respectively. Bruner (1990) considers identity to be a social phenomenon, a result of social interaction and the construction of shared meanings. Bruner’s conceptualization of identity highlights the role of discourse and of narratives, in particular, in the expression of identity. He posits that through narratives, a person views and makes sense of events that have happened in his/her life and his/her role within them. Similarly, Kerby (1991) notes that narratives are the ideal means for a person to express his/her identity. According to Kerby:

Narrative emplotment appears to yield a form of understanding of human experience, both individual and collective, that is not directly amenable to other forms of exposition or analysis. (p.3)

Kerby conceptualizes emplotment as the conversion of events that occurred in a specific place and time into a narrative account. Self-narratives, in particular, are a way in which people tell their life and make sense of it.

Identities are not only expressed, but are transformed by means of narratives, according to Wortham (2001). In his study, Wortham analyzes how tellers of autobiographical narratives and their interlocutors position themselves interactionally throughout the narrative. The author follows the life story of Jane. Jane starts out as a weak young woman who is a victim of circumstances. She is put in a series of boarding schools by her mother, and there suffers greatly at the hands of the other boarders. Later, as an adult, she realizes that she is about to act with her child the same way as her mother had acted towards her. At this point in her narrative, Jane shifts her position and begins to express herself as a strong woman, capable of overcoming obstacles and of succeeding in life. Her attitude towards the interviewer also shifts and she no longer positions herself as needing empathy. Wortham argues that because Jane reconstructed herself as a strong woman in her own description of herself, she was able to become a stronger woman in real life. According to Wortham, “the simultaneous representation and enactment of parallel events is a powerful mechanism through which autobiographical narration can partly construct the self” (p.157).

The influence of the poststructuralist line of thinking, and its conceptualization of subjectivity, are apparent in how De Fina (2003), Bruner (1990, 1996), and Wortham (2001) view the construct of social identity. Weedon (1987), who writes from within a feminist poststructuralist framework, posits that “ ‘Subjectivity’ is used to refer to the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her sense of herself and her ways of understanding her relation to the world” (p. 32). Weedon’s conceptualization encompasses the

different relationships of the individual with the people and groups around him/her, and with the different institutions with which he/she deals on a daily basis.

Weedon (1987) and Williams (1996) posit that the individual is the locus of multiple identities, and that these identities shift over time and from context to context. Moreover, Weedon (1987) notes that, because of the very multiplicity of identities, “the individual is always the site of conflicting forms of subjectivity” (p. 33). Weedon further posits that language is what shapes a person’s subjectivity because it is the means by which social relationships are negotiated and expressed.

The conceptualization of identity that I use in this dissertation is, like De Fina’s (2000, 2003), an adaptation of the poststructuralist construct of subjectivity. I consider social identity to be multiple and fluid as a result of the different discourses to which the speaker is subjected throughout his/her social interactions. I add to the poststructuralist view a focus on discourse and on spontaneous oral narratives as mediums for the expression and shaping of identity. In order to avoid confusion with the linguistic conceptualization of subjectivity, which forms part of my analytical framework (I discuss this concept in section 2.2 of this chapter), I use the term social identity, as the applied linguists discussed in this section have done.

In the current study, the identities highlighted by the participants are those that relate to their nationality, their difficulties using English, their identity as Mexican immigrants to the US, their gendered roles, and the inability of many of them to read or write, even in Spanish, or to speak English beyond a basic level.

In the following subsections of the chapter I discuss some of the main literature on identity, and present studies from the field of applied linguistics. In section 2.1.1, I focus on ethnic identity, and I also introduce studies on the identity of Hispanic peoples, representing the perspectives of anthropology and sociology. Section 2.1.2 is concerned with gendered identities. Within the field of applied linguistics, much research on gender and identity has focused on the

relationship between these two constructs and the study of a second language. Studies in this line of research are presented. In 2.1.3 I discuss studies on literacy and education related to the construct of identity.

2.1.1. Identity and ethnicity

Fought (2006) introduces a sociolinguistic perspective on ethnicity, bringing together lines of thought from linguistics, anthropology, sociology, and ethnic studies. Fought notes that included within the concept are issues of race and skin tone, as well as other physical markers; cultural markers like dress, food, and music; religion; nationality; and language. However, ethnic identity represents a group identity rather than being a quality of a single individual. Fought (2006) posits that membership in one ethnic group implies friction with other groups. The author notes that the limits between different groups are blurry and that there is, in fact, a continuum between them. What is more, individuals can plausibly identify with more than one group, simultaneously.

The lack of concrete limits to a group can be construed, using a poststructuralist framework, as a product of the influence of other groups and their discourses –the set of ideologies associated with a group and the language and signs used to express these ideologies. As already noted, Weedon (1987) posits that as women speak with members of other groups, they are influenced by different discourses and ways of acting. As a result of this influence, the subjectivities or identities of the women are in flux and they are continuously re-creating their conceptualizations of themselves and of their position in society. The aggregate shifting identities of individuals can produce shifts in the conceptualization of the group itself, causing the limits between groups to shift, as well. Fought (2006) points out that, in spite of this, members of an ethnic group are able to distinguish themselves from members of other groups of the same order.

In the following section, I discuss studies on ethnicity from the field of applied linguistics that were selected because they address issues concerning the characteristics of ethnicity that were highlighted by participants in the current study, including nationality, language, religion, race, and cultural artifacts. Whenever possible I focus on studies of the ethnic identity of Hispanic peoples. Studies on other cultures are also included to complement those of Hispanic immigrants. I also present a brief overview of the literature on Hispanic people, from the fields of sociology and anthropology, which is most relevant to this study.

2.1.1.1. Studies of identity and ethnicity

The analysis of nationality as the main defining characteristic of members of an ethnic group has been a productive line of research within the field of applied linguistics. The studies by Baquedano-Lopez (1997), Shenk (2007), and De Fina (2003, 2007), belong to this line of research. Baquedano-Lopez, Shenk, and De Fina (2003) focus on Mexican identity, while the later study by De Fina (2007) discusses the construct of Italian identity by Italian-Americans living in Washington DC.

Baquedano-Lopez (1997) studies how students and teachers discursively construct their social identities. Baquedano-Lopez analyzes two sets of data: one from a "*doctrina*" class (a religion class in Spanish for children), and one from a catechism class in English, both of which discuss the apparition of the *Virgen de Guadalupe*. The author finds that in the English catechism class, the appearance of the *Virgen de Guadalupe* was connected with the appearance of the Virgin Mary in other parts of the World. The Virgin was, thus, construed as belonging to various cultures and ethnicities. In contrast, Mexican nationality, ethnicity, and suffering appeared as key characteristics of the *Virgen* in the *doctrina* discussions. The author posits that the Spanish-speaking Mexican teacher in the *doctrina* group focuses on these characteristics of the *Virgen de*

Guadalupe because they are traits with which her students could identify. By capitalizing on these particular traits, the teacher of the *doctrina* class is also socializing her students to recognize them as characteristics of Mexican identity.

Shenk (2007), in turn, analyzes how a group of Mexican-American college students “authenticate” their identity as Mexicans within their conversations. Shenk conceptualizes authentication as follows: “Authentication is . . . a dialogic process linking social action and ideology with interactionally negotiated identity stances.” (p. 195). The author finds that her participants use the constructs of ‘place of birth,’ ‘Spanish language proficiency,’ and ‘purity of blood line’ as means by which to authenticate their identity as Mexican-Americans. The author also notes that they frequently attempt to position their interlocutors as less authentic as a means of delegitimizing them and of confirming their own superiority of authenticity.

De Fina (2003) constructs a detailed framework of the identities of Mexican immigrants and of their use of discourse to cue a preferred collective identity as members of the Mexican community in the US. De Fina analyzes narrative discourse by her participants and how the focus of their narratives shifts from one character to another in the construction of their own point of view of what happened during the event they are narrating. In particular, the author focuses on the identification of individual speakers with their social group and ethnicity. She notes that her participants tend to use the first person plural pronoun “*nosotros*” considerably, thus indexing a preference for membership within their own community. The use of the first person plural pronoun cues a subject that is multiple and composed of the entire Mexican community, even if the protagonist of the event is the speaker alone. Thus the subjects foreground their ethnicity through their talk.

De Fina (2003) also conducts an analysis of the use of reported speech, as a means of representing the agency of the speaker, in the narratives of her participants. De Fina notes that direct reported speech is used mainly to present the distal speech of figures of authority or of

power, like members of the border patrol or the police, and “coyotes.”¹ The participants also use direct reported speech to cue their membership in the group of Mexican immigrants. The equation of the use of reported speech for both figures of authority and for the representation of collective ideas or opinions once again indexes the importance of the community for the participants in De Fina’s study.

In a later study, De Fina (2007) studies a group of Italian and Italian-American men who play *Briscola* (an Italian card game) in Washington DC and analyzes how they display their ethnic identity. De Fina highlights the importance of putting forth symbols of their Italianness by the players. These include the use of Italian artifacts as decorations in the place where they meet and the serving of Italian food. In particular, De Fina notes that her participants, even those who were English-dominant or knew very little Italian, used the Italian language and/or words or expressions from various dialects as a means of expressing their national identity and membership in the group of players of *Briscola*. That is, the use of Italian indexed their Italian identity.

The studies presented in this section (except De Fina 2007) focus on different means by which the Mexican immigrants display their membership in the Mexican community in the US. The Last study, i.e., De Fina 2007, focuses on Italian-American rather than Mexican immigrants. However, its discussion of the use of artifacts and language to represent the Italian Culture is particularly relevant to this study as it closely mirrors the environments found in Mexican communities throughout the US. There are few parallel studies of Mexican culture in the field of Applied Linguistics.

Another aspect of ethnicity that has been researched within applied linguistics is its relation to language choice, multilingualism, and second language acquisition. An individual’s

¹ People who guide illegal immigrants across the US-Mexico border, usually taking them through the desert areas in southern Texas, New Mexico and California.

ethnic identity can affect his/her motivation to learn a second language. Conversely, learning the second language can effect a change in the individual's identity. Many of the studies discussed in this section relate to gender, as well as to language acquisition; they were selected because of the feminist interests of this dissertation. The main issue in the studies reviewed in this section, however, is the relationship between an individual's *social identity* and his/her second language acquisition and use.

Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) note the complexity of the relationship between identity and what language an individual chooses. Pavlenko and Blackledge posit that "language choice and attitudes are inseparable from political arrangements, relations of power, language ideologies, and interlocutors' views of their own and others' identities" (p. 1). That is, given the relative status of a person within a communicative act or within a social group, the person may chose to use one or another of the languages he/she speaks.

Blackledge (2001), conducts a study of the interrelation of language, identity, and power in a group of Bangladeshi women immigrants to the UK. Blackledge analyzes the attitude of the Bangladeshi women towards their children's literacy skills (in both English and Bengali) and comments on the adoption of the English language at home by his participants. Blackledge notes that the participants found it necessary to use English as a means of fulfilling their roles as mothers within an English speaking society. This use of English improved their standing with other mothers in the schools their children attended. However, the women also struggled with the recognition that together with the English language, they had adopted white middle-class values. The author posits that the choice to use English effected a change in his participants' identity.

Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) note that preference for or avoidance of a certain identity affects immigrants' choice of language. Pavlenko and Blackledge state that:

Some identity options are more valued than others, and ... individuals and minority groups may appeal to – or resist – particular languages, language

varieties, or linguistic forms in the struggle to claim the rights to particular identities and resist others that are imposed on them. (p. 3)

That is, an individual's identities may affect to what extent he/she is willing to learn and/or to use a language in different contexts. In Blackledge's (2001) study, his participants' identity as mothers was more valued than their Bangladeshi identity, and the values inherent to it, and thus the willingness of the women to use the English language.

Norton (Norton, 2000; Norton-Pierce, 1995), has conducted much research on immigrants to Canada and how their identities affect their investment in learning English. Norton's conceptualization of investment in learning is closely akin to that of investment in business; a person typically only vests capital on an enterprise if he/she believes that investment will bring profit. In the case of language, a person will invest more in learning a language (cultural capital -- see Bourdieu, 1977) if he/she feels that he/she will profit from the effort in terms of access to privileges that are typically reserved for native speakers of the language.

Norton (Norton, 2000; Norton-Pierce, 1995) finds that certain participant identities invested her participants more in the leaning of English. Martina, one of the main participants in Norton-Pierce's (1995) study, was initially very timid and self-conscious when she had to use English because she felt that she was framed by her English-speaking interlocutors as an immigrant and non-native speaker of English. However, Norton posits that her dominant role as a mother and primary caregiver invested her in persevering and creating opportunities to practice, even in her workplace, and Martina thus improved on her English skills. That is, Martina's identity as a mother made it worth making the effort to learn English.

None of the studies in this section is about Mexican or Hispanic immigrants. Little research on discourse and identity, in fact, has focused on Hispanic identity and its relationship to language choice and use. Blackledge's (2001) study of Bengali mothers highlights how the use of the second language can change immigrants' discourses and identities. Norton's (1995) study, on

the contrary, shows how identity can effect an increase in second language usage. These two outcomes are not necessarily contradictory. They illustrate the complex interplay between different power relations, discourses, and identity.

Race is another important defining characteristic of an ethnic group. In one study on race and identity, De Fina (2000) explores Mexican immigrants' perceptions of their own racial identity, and that of members of other racial groups, as a result of the racial stereotypes with which they are in contact since their arrival to the United States. De Fina finds that the racial labels that the immigrants use within their narratives, and the beliefs and values inherent to these labels, are a confirmation of the stereotypes in which the immigrants have come to believe since their arrival. Conversely, the labels have shaped the immigrants' perceptions of different ethnicities in the US, in particular their own.

2.1.1.2. Hispanic Identity in the fields of anthropology and sociology

There are more studies of the identity of Hispanic immigrants in the fields of sociology and anthropology than in applied linguistics. Although these studies do not focus on language, or on the dialogic nature of identity from which this study draws, the observations made by the scholars in anthropology and sociology complement those of linguists and help explain issues brought up in the study of language in relation to social identity.

A great number of studies in cultural studies, anthropology, and sociology focus on the phenomenon of "border crossing," the belonging to the home culture, the host culture, and to neither, at the same time (Anzaldúa, 1999; Rosaldo, 1993a). Anzaldúa (1999), in her autoethnography, discusses her perceptions of being a lesbian Mexican American with indigenous heritage who feels alienated from her three cultures. Anzaldúa notes:

Alienated from her mother culture, "alien" in the dominant culture, the woman of color does not feel safe within the inner life of her Self. Petrified, she can't

respond, her face caught between *los intersticios*, the spaces between the different worlds she inhabits (p. 42).

Anzaldúa's position is that women on the borderlands should rebel against the mainstream and create a niche of their own. The author later discusses the fact that many "*mestizas*"² like herself, have in fact learned to create their own spaces, which combine aspects of the Anglo, the Mexican, and indigenous worlds.

Rosaldo (1993a) writes about the new "spaces" created by immigrants when they come to the US. These "spaces" are, as opposed to the niches Anzaldúa calls for women to create for themselves, indistinguishable from the middle class American culture. Because of this the author calls them "transparent" cultures. Rosaldo insists that in spite of creating these Americanized masks, many immigrants still struggle because they feel they are losing their culture and their own selves.

Anzaldúa (1999) and Rosaldo's (1993a) views of how immigrants adapt are only two of the possibilities available to them. In an earlier study, Rosaldo (1993b) analyzes literary narratives as the foundation for the description of the evolving Chicano identity. Rosaldo analyzes three (auto)biographical narratives: "The Chicano warrior hero" (Paredes, 1958), "The mocking of the warrior hero" (Galarza, 1972), and "House on Mango Street" (Cisneros, 1986). According to Rosaldo, "The three narratives tell of the Chicano warrior hero. The first portrays him in a positive light, the second mocks him, and the third displaces him" (p. 148). Looking at the warrior hero as a representative of Chicano identity, Rosaldo finds that from the 1950s to the late 1980s, Chicano identity has changed considerably, and together with their identity, the ways in which Chicanos have adapted to life in the US. Paredes' (1958) account of Chicano identity was that of a proud people who felt the need to retain their cultural identity separate from that of the majority governing class of white English-speaking Americans. In contrast, Galarza (1972)

² A person of mixed Native American (from any part of North, Central, or South America) and European ancestry.

depicts the need for Chicanos to actively confront the American English speaking hegemony. Finally, Cisneros (1986) writes about herself as a representative of Chicano culture. She writes of herself as a woman suffering from being different and always wishing for that which is unattainable to her: her own house—her own version of the American Dream.

Between the writings of Anzaldúa (1999) and Rosaldo (1993a, 1993b), it is possible to visualize a continuum of how immigrants reconcile the various discourses surrounding them. The immigrant can adopt the discourses of the host community and become transparent within it (Rosaldo, 1993a); the immigrant can carve him/herself a new niche which combines the discourses of both his/her culture and that of the mainstream community (Anzaldúa, 1999); or he/she can create a space for him/herself in which to continue with his/her own cultural practices (Perdedes, 1958, cf Rosaldo, 1993b). The selected mode of adaptation to or adoption of the host culture affects the identities of immigrants and how invested they are in the acquisition of the second language. Conversely, the immigrants' identities affect which mode of adaptation they select.

Of particular interest to this dissertation are studies of the identity of Hispanic women. Within the field of anthropology, a large number of studies on this topic have been (auto)biographical in nature, including those by Anzaldúa (1999) and Behar (1990, 2003), and tell of different issues confronted by Hispanic women. For instance, Anzaldúa (1999), as already noted, tells of her experience as a "*mestiza*" and how she used her culture and her language to carve a niche for herself within a border society. In turn, Behar (1990, 2003) tells her readers about "Esperanza," a Mexican Indian, and her struggles with her gendered identity, her religion, and her culture.

There have been few studies analyzing how female Hispanic immigrants express their identities through the language they use. And even though there have been extensive studies on different individual aspects of identity within other fields, there is still a need for further studies,

especially of female Hispanic populations in the US. As Garcia (1994) points out, it is impossible to think of a unitary Mexican-American identity:

There is not one Mexican-American world but many. Heteroglossia implies the presence of a multiplicity of voices in literary text. I use the concept here to suggest that in the actual social relationships lived by Mexican-Americans there exists a multiplicity of voices and subjects rather than one voice and one subject... constructed at the intersection of ethnicity, race, gender, class, and sexuality. (García, 1994, p. 153)

2.1.2. Identity and gender

A second identity displayed by the participants in this study was gendered identity. Much research has been conducted, as mentioned in the previous subsection, concerning the relationship between identity, gender, and the study of a second language, particularly concerning language acquisition by women. The studies in section 2.1.1, focused mainly on the relationship between identity (in general) and language learning and use. The studies in this section focus on *gendered* identity, particularly within the context of patriarchal societies, and how it affects the use and acquisition of the second language.

Norton and Pavlenko (2004) posit that discourses concerning gendered roles affect to what extent female students are able or willing to study a second language. In many patriarchal societies women are relegated to tasks in the home. This traditional role may hinder the possibilities – and willingness – of women to learn a second language. Studies by Buttaro (Buttaro, 2004; Buttaro & King, 2001) and Rockhill (1987, 1990) confirm this. These studies comment on gendered roles of women and their particular need for English, and find that Hispanic women are not invested in learning ESL. Moreover, their gendered roles inhibit their ability to attend classes. Ideally, classes should be planned to meet the specific needs of women in order to encourage and enable them to attend (Cumming & Gill, 1992; McKay & Weinstein-Shr, 1993).

In contrast to the studies by Buttaro (2004) and Rockhill (1987, 1990), Menard-Warwick (2004) concludes that gendered roles do invest female students in learning and practicing the second language. Menard-Warwick finds that the students in her study were motivated for the very purpose of fulfilling their roles more effectively. In traditional patriarchal societies the main role of women is that of overseeing the home and bringing up children. The author conducts a study of Latina immigrants to California and analyzes how their gendered roles affect their decision to learn English. Menard-Warwick posits that the main motivation of her participants to study ESL was their need to fulfill their roles as mothers so they could help their children in their educational process. The author notes that the main difference between the two participants she reports on was how they decided to learn English due to their different attitudes towards gendered roles. One of her participants initially opted to use the media to instruct herself in order to avoid the extra expense for classes. The other participant attended classes so she could serve as a role model for her children, who were also struggling through school.

Menard-Warwick's (2004) study seems to contradict the findings of the studies reported previously in this section (i.e., Buttaro, 2004; Rockhill, 1987, 1990). However, this is not the case. Both of Menard-Warwick's participants initially were unable or unwilling to attend ESL classes. They did not begin studying their second language until after their children began school and they became increasingly aware that they were not able to effectively fulfill their roles as mothers. Menard-Warwick also highlights the fact that their trajectories – family and social histories – encouraged them to further their studies.

However, in some patriarchal societies traditional roles are contested by women, who find that they can become more equal to men by learning a second language. Kobayashi (2002) examines why female students in a Japanese high school exhibit a more positive attitude towards learning the English language than their male counterparts. Kobayashi finds that learning English enables women to obtain jobs and escape the clutches of the traditional patriarchal norms.

Gordon's (2004b) study is geared towards investigating the relationship between gendered identity and socialization in the second language in a group of Laotian immigrants to the US. Gordon notes that female Laotian immigrants to the US often invest more in English than the men because learning English gives them access to American society and to possibilities not accessible to them if they did not know English. Many of Gordon's participants had found jobs in the US, and some had taken lovers, thus cementing their equality with the Laotian men. Meanwhile, the Laotian men had fewer opportunities for displaying their traditional gendered roles in the US because they had lost their traditional means of maintaining their *status quo*.

Within the fields of sociology and anthropology, much research on Hispanic societies discusses the importance of patriarchy in their social constitution (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1992, 1994), or frame these societies from the perspective of male hegemony (Gutierrez, 1993; Martinez Garcia, Zapata Martelo, Alberti Manzanares, & Diaz Cervantes, 2005). These researchers consider patriarchy, often called "machismo," to be an integral part of Hispanic societies (Stevens, 1965, 1973). Stevens (1973) defines machismo as follows:

[It is] a way of orientation which can be most succinctly described as the cult of virility. The chief characteristics of this cult are exaggerated aggressiveness and intransigence in male-to-male interpersonal relationships and arrogance and sexual aggression in male-to-female relationships. (p. 91)

In a "machista" society, men are the hegemonic father figures. They are aggressive and controlling of their families. Also, men necessarily have to boast about their virility. The way in which Hispanic men achieve this is by having many children, particularly male children, and/or by visibly consorting with many women (Gutmann, 2007; Stevens, 1965, 1973).

However, "machismo" is not the sole social factor shaping Hispanic society. "Marianismo" (Stevens, 1965, 1973) "is a complementary concept which compares a "good" woman to the Virgin Mary. A good woman is virtuous like the Mother of God. She does not enjoy sexual intercourse, and she participates in it for the sake of procreation and to appease her

man. Men are viewed as being fickle, infantile, and impulsive. Thus she is superior to them emotionally and intellectually. Another characteristic of a good woman is that she is strong and able to withstand much pain. Stevens thus describes her as the “*mater dolorosa*” (the mother in pain). A virtuous woman, in fact, is one who is able to put up with all the injustices inflicted on her by her husband; the more she suffers, the more virtuous she is.

These two conceptualizations of the roles of men and women complement research within applied linguistics. In spite of the fact that they center on Hispanic society, they can be extended to other patriarchal societies around the world. Thus they can help explain the attitudes of women towards language acquisition as a means of upholding male hegemony (as in the study by Menard-Warwick, 2004), or as a means of going against it (as in Kobayashi, 2002; and Gordon, 2004).

2.1.3. Identity and education

The third main identity displayed by the participants in this study was related to their level of education (or lack thereof), both in terms of literacy and of English language skills. Within the field of applied linguistics there has been relatively little research into this line of inquiry. Following I discuss three studies that focus on the relationship between level education (particularly literacy) and identity—i.e., those by Egbo (2004), Klassen and Burnaby (1993), and Rockhill (1987).

An identity as an uneducated or illiterate person can affect the social life of women within their own community, even while speaking their own language, as demonstrated by Egbo (2004). Egbo, in a study of literacy and the construction of social identities of women in Nigeria, finds that illiterate women mostly worked at home while literate women held jobs, especially in the service sector. Because of the fact that literate women were participating in the financial

maintenance of their households, they acquired a greater sense of independence. Moreover, literacy practices enabled the women to increase their knowledge and they were thus sought after by the community for advice on a variety of matters. On the other hand, illiterate women felt increasingly alienated by their own communities and became more and more insecure.

Klassen and Burnaby (1993) assess the importance of literacy for learning a second language. In their study, Klassen and Burnaby first conduct a quantitative analysis and find that a larger proportion of adult female Latino immigrants to Canada, compared to male immigrants, have only grade school education or less. The female immigrants are also the most likely to have not acquired either of the two official Canadian languages. The authors then conduct a qualitative study and analyze the case of nine Latino immigrants to Canada. They find that their participants had very limited literacy skills: one of their female participants could only copy her own name and address off a small piece of paper. In spite of this, the participants were all able to function within the English speaking community around them, albeit at a very basic level. Most had developed coping skills which involved getting friends to read and write letters for them, identifying products and forms by logos or drawings, by befriending clerks and other employees, by imitating others, and through trial and error.

However, the participants in Klassen and Burnaby's (1993) study had developed an identity as illiterate people and were ashamed to participate in ESL classes. This also made them hopeless of obtaining better jobs since they lacked the skills necessary to participate in the training offered to those aspiring to better positions. The participants also felt their identity was further diminished since their lack of literacy skills made them feel more akin to the illiterate indigenous populations of their countries, and farther from the Spanish colonial authorities. Klassen and Burnaby conclude that for this group of participants it was, thus, equally important to become literate in Spanish as in English.

Rockhill (1994), in turn, discusses the difficulties in learning English as a second

language faced by Mexican working class women in Los Angeles due to their limited literacy skills and their gendered identities. In her study, Rockhill interviewed fifty Mexican working class adults living in West LA, in order to ascertain their social roles, levels of literacy and of proficiency in English. As a result, the author finds that there is a complex interrelation between level of literacy and acquisition of English as a second language. This cycle was exacerbated by the differential power dynamics between the Mexican men and women in West LA. That is, women who had lower levels of literacy had to depend on informal social interactions as their main source of input in order to acquire English. However, because of their traditional roles in the home and limited access to the general public, the women found their sources of input highly limited and, thus, were frequently unable to acquire the language.

Though only one of the three previous studies focuses on Mexican immigrants, all three are very similar in the general outcomes for their participants. The participants in all three studies found their possibilities, in terms of jobs and access to classes, limited by their literacy skills – no matter the context and environment in which they lived. These studies also suggest that lack of literacy also leads to the development of an identity of helplessness and hopelessness.

2.2. Subjectivity

Thus far I have presented a review of the concept of social identity from applied linguistics and of the poststructuralist conceptualization of subjectivity, and of how they have been studied. It becomes apparent that there are many perspectives from which to view these constructs. For the purpose of this study, I focus on aspects of identity that are linked with the use of language. I thus appeal to the linguistic concept of subjectivity, which relates to the personal view the speaker has concerning the events and the people around him/her, and how this view is expressed via the choice of language. The study of subjectivity also involves the analysis of affect

and of deictic references to the current time and place. I use this conceptualization of subjectivity as a window or lens through which to view and analyze the manifestations of identity in the discourse of my participants.

According to the linguist and philosopher, Benveniste (1971), subjectivity is the “capacity of the speaker to posit himself as “subject”” (p.224). That is, the concept of subjectivity relates to how speakers position themselves within their discourse. It also includes the way speakers express their identities and their ideologies through the language they produce, in written and, especially, in every day speech. As described by Suzuki (1979, in Maynard, 1993, p.30), it also represents the “voices from the heart.” Overall, subjectivity, in linguistics as in sociology, represents the speaker’s personal views and ideas about the world, and about him/herself within it (Banfield, 1982; Benveniste, 1971; Finegan, 1995; Iwasaki, 1993; Lyons, 1982; Maynard, 1993).

Benveniste (1971) further explains that:

“Language [*langage*] is thus used here as the act of speech [*parole*], converted into that expression of instantaneous and elusive subjectivity which forms the condition of dialogue. The subject’s language [*langage*] provides the instrument of a discourse in which his personality is released and creates itself, reaches out to the other and makes itself be recognized by him.” (p. 67) (italics by author)

This quote by Benveniste brings forward the main aspect of subjectivity within the field of linguistics: subjectivity is the expression of the self through the medium of language. Furthermore, similar as with the concept of social identity, subjectivity too is co-constructed by the speaker and his/her interlocutor through the dialogic relationship that is developed between them during a social act.

Not all language, according to Benveniste (1971), is subjective. Subjective stretches of language relate to the current time and place. One cue of subjectivity is the use of first person pronouns. All events posited by the “I” are personal and the subject is the center of these actions

in a way that “you” or “he” could never be. Benveniste adds that any verb tense can belong to the realm of the subjective so long as the actions they represent can be deictically traced back to the present time. However, the present is the most clearly subjective as it represents how the speaker feels at the moment and is not colored by other perceptions.

Banfield (1982) notes that other structures of language that index subjectivity within discourse are exclamations, insults, and deictics that refer back to the “here” and “now,” and directly reported speech. Banfield, as part of a study of the language of narratives, analyzes the deep and surface structures of direct and indirect reported speech and their relation to subjectivity. The author concludes that only directly reported speech can have an expressive (or subjective) function. Indirectly reported speech can represent more than one deep structure – that is, it can deviate from the deep structure inherent in an equivalent directly reported phrase. Moreover, deictics in indirectly reported speech refer to a time and place other than the “here” and “now,” whereas directly reported utterances shift the time reference to the time when they were produced. They are in the “here” and “now” of when they were produced.

By including affect in a proposition, the speaker may also make sections of discourse subjective. Maynard (1993) discusses the traditional Japanese modes of looking at languages and their division of language into two different aspects: a referential and a non-referential aspect. The referential aspect of language is that which describes an event with no expression of feelings attached to the description. The non-referential aspect incorporates a person’s “voice from the heart”.

Lyons (1982) uses the terms “objective observing self” and “subjective experiencing self” to designate non-subjective and subjective stretches of discourse respectively. Lyons gives two sentences as examples for these terms:

- 0) I remember switching off the light.
- 1) I remember myself switching off the light. (p. 107)

These two sentences show how a speaker can bring him/herself closer to or further away from an action. In the first sentence the speaker is taking part in the action and reliving the experience. In the second example, on the other hand, the speaker is involved as an observer of the action.

Banfield (1982) has a similar division of narrative into “reportive” and “non-reportive” styles which she borrows from Kuroda (1973). The reportive style is used to tell facts; the non-reportive style, which in Japanese involves the use of the first person singular, also contains the speaker’s feelings concerning the events being described.

Similarly, according to Li and Zubin (1995), there are two types of perspective frames: reportive and expressive frames. According to Li and Zubin, the expressive frame “consists of an experiencer and an experience field containing objects of experience and their relations (mental model of here-and-now experience)” (p.293). That is, the expressive frame is a stretch of narrative, oral or written, which contains subjective accounts of an experience or event. The event effectively takes on the quality of belonging to the present because of its subjectivity and immediacy to the speaker. Reportive frames, on the other hand, are literally everything else that does not stand out as belonging to the “here-and-now”. Although they cannot be separated from the identity of the speaker they do express a distancing of the speaker from the frame being represented by that pattern of discourse.

Much research on subjectivity in the field of applied linguistics is informed by this linguistic conceptualization of subjectivity (Banfield, 1982; Benveniste, 1971; Iwasaki, 1993; Kuroda, 1973; Li & Zubin, 1995; Lyons, 1982; Maynard, 1993; Scheibman, 2002). These studies focus on the structural aspects of language in the performance of micro level analyses of discourse.

In the current study I analyze the discourse of the Mexican women living in Kennett Square and assess which sections of text are subjective and non-subjective. I then analyze the participants’ use of linguistic and paralinguistic markers in order to discover how such markers

serve as contextualization cues for the roles, identities, and attitudes underlying the context of the particular stretch of discourse within which they are found.

2.3. Contextualization cues

In oral texts words and phrases do not always carry their literal meaning. Gumperz (1992a, 1992b, 1997) posits that speakers engaged in spontaneous conversations use a variety of responses to each other's queries or comments. Very often these responses do not even seem to address what has been said by their interlocutor(s). Nonetheless, speakers are able to comprehend each other and engage effectively in communication. This, Gumperz notes, seems to defy traditional linguistics and grammar systems. The meaning of an utterance has to be extracted from any number of its individual structural or prosodic features.

Gumperz (1997) posits that there is a set of possibilities that speakers can choose from in order to construct an utterance or response. These choices are grammatical, lexical and "potentially applicable norms" –gestural or prosodic features of language, and knowledge of what is culturally appropriate in the given context (Gumperz, 1997), and they are largely culturally specific. The interlocutors in a conversation, based on their knowledge of language and culture, are able to construct and *infer* meaning from the context. Thus, Gumperz (1982, 1997) posits, communication and comprehension in a spontaneous conversation are largely a question of negotiation of meaning between the interlocutors.

Contextualization cues are the elements that help signal these other meanings (Gumperz, 1989; Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz, 1982; Gunthner, 1997; Schiffrin, 1997). As noted by Schiffrin (1997), contextualization cues, or cues to context, "provide an interpretative framework for the referential content of a message" (p. 28).

Gumperz (1992a) posits:

I use the term “contextualization” to refer to speaker’s and listener’s use of verbal and nonverbal signs to relate what is said at any one time and in any one place to knowledge acquired through past experience, in order to retrieve the presuppositions they must rely on to maintain conversational involvement and assess what is intended. (p. 230)

These signs, which Gumperz calls *contextualization cues*, involve the selection of a code (register, genre, or mode of text), and they assist in situated interpretation of an utterance. They also index the type of response needed, or what type of activity frame is being engaged in. Contextualization cues can index other sections of discourse, or can index contexts outside of the use of language, for instance, identity and social roles of the interlocutors (Schiffrin, 1987b). Comprehension of the cues depends on a shared comprehension between interlocutors of the language and of its norms, and on shared experiences and cultural expectations.

Gumperz (1997) notes that also inherent in a conversation is the creation and maintenance of *involvement* between the interlocutors. That is, the interlocutors strive to maintain interest in what they are saying by making their utterances and responses meaningful and comprehensible. If they do not cue their meanings appropriately, or if they are unable to infer meaning from their interlocutor(s)’ utterances, involvement cannot be maintained. Gumperz (1982, 1992b, 1997) points out that belonging to a same social or relationship network aids speakers in inferring each other’s meanings as they possess more shared interpretive frames.

Interpretive frames are the different frames of reference from which the listener/interlocutor interprets a speaker’s utterances (Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz, 1982). These frames depend on the person’s interactive experiences. Through his/her communicative experiences, and through interaction in various relationship networks, a person acquires a broad range of cultural expectations and makes assumptions concerning the ways information can be structured and presented. That is, they acquire a range of expectations for contextualization of their utterances in a conversation. Gumperz (1982) posits that these expectations or conventions are systematic and frequently governed by tradition. However, they are also, often, subconscious.

Speakers use their interactive experiences to construct their sets of contextualization cues, and to interpret those of other speakers.

Studies of contextualization cues have focused on different forms and functions of the cues. In her study of reason-for-call turns on radio, Couper-Kuhlen (2001) notes how callers to a radio talk-show use pitch in the expression of the reason for their call. Callers were first introduced by the host. They then typically launched into their discussion, introducing it with an expression like “I just want to say that....” However, Couper-Kuhlen notes that the host only treated this introduction as a “large package” introduction (that is, the onset of a full discussion) if the callers cued their discussion with the use of high pitch somewhere near the beginning of their turn. Failure to use high pitch prompted the host to ask questions or further encourage the caller to develop his/her topic. Thus, the use of the high pitch indexed the beginning of the discussion *per se*. A sequence of “greeting by host – reason for calling (with high pitch) – discussion of topic” was, thus, established on the talk-shows analyzed by the author.

Gumperz, Aulakh, and Kaltman (1982), who also analyze prosodic features of South Asians speaking in English that function as contextualization cues, note that inflection of the voice can be used to index the attitude of the speaker towards a proposition or towards the interlocutor(s). The authors use the example of a native English-speaker saying “You left the door open” (p. 36). If this utterance is produced with a high inflection on the first two words, then it has the function of expressing displeasure with the actions of the person to which the statement is addressed. On the other hand, if high inflection is not used, there is no fault implied. However, these contextual cues may be missed by non-native speakers of English. For instance, Gumperz, Aulakh and Kaltman note that Indian speakers of English use verb choice in addition to inflection for this same contextualizing function.

Archakis and Papazachariou (2008) study the prosodic features (particularly intensity in the production of directly reported speech) of conversational narratives of young women in

Greece, and how they are used as contextualization cues for the level of authority of distal speakers, and in the construction of identity of the speaker. By intensity the authors mean “the average loudness of each intonation phrase, which is measured in dBs” (p. 631). Archakis and Papazachariou note that their participants used higher intensity when reporting the distal speech of people of equal status to their own, but they used lower intensity to cue the speech of a person of higher status talking to them at the distal time. However, they used high intensity to report the speech of a person with more authority speaking to someone other than themselves. The authors posit that this differential use of intensity indexes identification of the speaker with their group of peers, and an attempt of delegitimization of the authority figures.

The studies by Schiffrin (1987b) and Lytra (2007) focus on in-text functions of contextualization cues. Schiffrin (1987) analyzes the deictic function of discourse markers in English (like “oh,” “well,” “and,” “now,” and “Y’know”) as internal contextualizing cues within oral texts. Schiffrin notes that “oh” is used to point back to prior text, and to index an utterance to the speaker, whereas “well” indexes an utterance to both speaker and hearer, as “its user is defining him/herself as a respondent to a prior interlocutor” (p. 26). “Well” can either point to text further ahead to the use of this discourse marker, or to text produced prior to its use. That is, these discourse markers are used to relate different parts of the text to each other, and to index the deictic relationship between distal and proximal speakers and interlocutors in the current conversation.

Lytra (2007) conducted a study of teasing between members of a mixed group of girls and boys, majority Greek and minority Turkish immigrants to Greece. Lytra finds that many of the participants chose to tease another individual, but often group teasing also occurred. The author also analyzed types of responses: continuing with the teasing, responding with silence, or responding seriously to move away from the teasing frame. Lytra finds that the contextualization cues used by her participants to introduce teasing include the use of nicknames; mock orders;

threats and challenges; repetition; prosodic features like laughter, loudness, and sing-song intonation; and extra-linguistic cues like clapping.

Ostermann's (2003) study focuses on how aspects of discourse cue contexts outside the text: the attitude of two sets of interviewers towards their interviewees. In her study, Ostermann analyzes how pronoun choice by two different sets of public service employees in Brazil indexes their attitudes towards their interviewees, all women victims of domestic violence. Starting from Auer's (1995) "code alternation" theory, Ostermann analyzes the alternation of different forms of second person address ("*você*," "*a senhora*," and null pronoun) in conversations between female police officers or employees in crisis intervention centers for women (CIV), and women who have been victims of violence in their homes. The author notes that the CIV interviewers tended to use the more informal second person address "*você*" more frequently than the female police interviewers. However, both sets of interviewers switched between the informal "*você*" and the more formal "*a senhora*" in order change frames and to cue their sympathy for their interviewees.

Matoesian (1999), in turn, analyzes how sequences of questions and styles of talk are used by a defendant in a US court during his trial to cue shifts to and from the identities of "defendant" and "expert." Matoesian notes that the defendant is able to use questions by the prosecutor to insert his view, as a doctor, of the testimony of other witnesses in the trial. By doing so, he is able to simultaneously answer the prosecutor's questions while also adding alternative reasons for the issues he is being cross-examined about, namely the contusion of the alleged victim. However, he can also step back to his footing as a defendant when he is pressed to answer beyond his scope of direct knowledge. In the case of this study, the questions asked allow for the contextualization of different footing by the defendant.

Overall, the studies discussed serve to demonstrate the wide range of possibilities for the study of contextualization cues in conversational texts. In the current study, I analyze how

subjective sections of the discourse of the participants function as contextualization cues for different aspects of their identities. In particular, I focus on the contexts outside of the text that are cued by linguistic structures, that is, the social identities and roles of the speakers, and their attitudes towards what they are discussing. Very frequently, these external contexts are cued by a multitude of structures, many of which simultaneously cue other contexts within the texts, for example, reactions by the interlocutors. Thus it becomes necessary to conduct a macro-level analysis together with the micro-analysis of discourse, in order to view the context as a whole.

2.4. Summary

In this chapter I have presented the concept of identity and how it has been studied within the field of applied linguistics, and in cultural studies, sociology and anthropology. These views have been greatly influenced by the poststructuralist conceptualization of subjectivity. Most studies have focused on single component elements within identity. Within the field of applied linguistics, the unifying element is the use of language. This will be the focus of the current study, as well.

I focus on the linguistic construct of subjectivity as the lens through which to view identity. By subjectivity I mean the expression of the self by the speakers and how they relate to the world around them through language. By using subjectivity I can focus on those aspects of the participants' identity that are more central to them, as they are brought to the current time and place. These subjective sections of language are also those that cue stronger emotional stances. As noted by Banfield (1982), these sections are indexed by the use of the present tense, of exclamations, insults, first person subject pronouns, and by deictics that refer back to the "here" and "now." I use these structural features of the language of my participants as contextualization

cues to index subjective sections of discourse as a means of analyzing the identities of the Mexican women living in Kennett Square.

In this chapter I also discussed contextualization cues and how they have been used in various studies to analyze textual features of conversations as well as contexts outside of the oral texts, for instance, identity and attitude towards interlocutors. In this study, I identify subjective and non-subjective sections of discourse and analyze them with the purpose of assessing how they serve as cues for different features of the identity of the participants. This micro-level analysis of contextualization cues is designed to complement the macro-analysis by determining how the participants present themselves, consciously or unconsciously, to their interlocutors, and how they express their attitudes towards the world around them. Conversely, the macro-analysis allows the researcher to view the larger context within which cues co-occur, in order to analyze the relationships between contextual cues.

In the following chapter I will present the methodology used in this study, the participants and how they were selected, and how the data were collected and organized for analysis. In Chapter 3, I also discuss in detail how my analytical framework is used for the analysis of the identity of the Mexican women living in Kennett Square.

Chapter 3

Participants, Data and Methodology

3. Introduction

In this chapter I present the participants in this study, and the methods used for the collection, organization, and analysis of the data.

Fourteen Mexican women, between the ages of eighteen and sixty were interviewed. They live in two housing complexes on the western end of Kennett Square in southeastern Pennsylvania.

A total of eleven and a half hours of recordings were collected for this study. Slightly less than two hours of this time is composed of discussions that were carried out by the students in two ESL classes that I offered in the summer of 2003. The classes were offered primarily as a means of recruiting participants. I also used them for the purpose of data collection. Over nine and a half hours of the recordings are interviews with eight of the participants. Eight hours of these interviews were recorded in the summer of 2003. A short series of follow-up interviews, totaling approximately an hour and a half of recordings, was conducted in July of 2007. All the discussions and interviews were conducted in Spanish.

Both the discussions and the interviews were designed using ethnographic interviewing techniques. Ethnographic techniques were also used for the observation of the community and for the purpose of triangulation.

Macro and micro level analyses were carried out on the data. The data were first transcribed according to a modified set of conventions of conversation analysis (Atkinson &

Heritage, 1984) and then tagged for themes that relate to the identity of the participants: ethnic identity, gendered identity, and identity as it relates to literacy. The tagged sections were analyzed for the contextualization cues (Gumperz, 1989; Gumperz et al., 1982; Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz, 1982; Schiffrin, 1987b) that index the different identities, social roles, and attitudes of the participants towards the events and people in their narratives.

This chapter is organized as follows. In section 3.1, I introduce the community of Mexican mushroom workers living in Kennett Square and provide a brief background to why they came to Chester County, Pennsylvania. In 3.2 I focus on the participants and present general demographic information about them. In section 3.3, I explain the methods used for data collection. In section 3.4, I explain the methodology used, and in 3.5, I discuss how I use the framework of contextualization cues to analyze different aspects of the identity of the Mexican women living in Kennett Square. In 3.6, I outline the content of the three analysis chapters in this dissertation.

3.1. The community of mushroom workers in Kennett Square

The participants in this study were recruited from two housing projects on the west end of Kennett Square. Kennett Square is a small town in the southeastern corner of Pennsylvania, about 37 miles from Philadelphia and 15 miles north of Wilmington, Delaware. It is largely a satellite to Philadelphia. According to the year 2000³ census, Kennett Square had a population of 5,273. Over 9% of the population is Hispanic; however if we take into account the areas immediately surrounding Kennett Square, the total population grows to 6,451, over 27% of which is Hispanic.

³ The Census information was obtained in July of 2009 from the official Kennett Square Borough web page which links directly to the US Census Bureau. (http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/SAFFPeople?_event=Search&geo_id=16000US4239352&_geoContext=01000US|04000US42|16000US4239352&_street=&_county=&_cityTown=kennett+Square+Borough&_state=04000US42&_zip=&_lang=en&_sse=on)

García and Gonzalez (1995)⁴ note that in the 1990s almost three quarters of the Hispanic population of Chester County, where Kennett Square is located, was of Mexican origin. In Kennett Square, Mexicans composed over 50% of the Hispanic population (Garcia, 1997). From my observations of the town and its surrounding communities between the fall of 1999 and the summer of 2007, the percentage of Mexicans in Chester County appears to have grown considerably.

Kennett Square's main economic activity is mushroom growing and processing. In fact, Kennett Square is nicknamed the "Mushroom Capital of the World." García and Gonzalez (1995) note that in 1992, Pennsylvania produced over 47% of the table mushrooms consumed in the US. The mushroom factories in and around Kennett Square produced approximately 51% of the mushrooms in Pennsylvania. Phillips, the biggest mushroom factory in the US, is only one mile from downtown Kennett Square, and there are multiple factories throughout the borough. These mushroom factories have attracted many migrant workers. According to García (Garcia, 1997; Garcia & Gonzalez, 1995), the Mexican workers began to arrive in the 1960's and their numbers peaked in the mid 1990's.

Observations and informal conversations that I participated in with Mexican immigrants in various neighborhoods suggest that most of the Mexicans living in Kennett Square originally came from the area between Moroleón and Morelia in the states of Guanajuato and Michoacán, respectively. García and Gonzalez (1995) note, however, that in the late 1990s, while they were conducting their study, most of the Mexican immigrants came from Guanajuato. According to García and Gonzalez, the men came first, in the 1960s, looking for work. Once they had secured working visas through the revised SAW Program (Special Agricultural Workers' Program, 1986), they were able to begin paving the way for their wives and children to come to the US. The

⁴ García (1997) and García and Gonzalez (1995) conducted research for the U.S. Bureau of Census concerning the number and nationality of Hispanic immigrants to southeastern Pennsylvania.

revised SAW program (of 1986) gave legal working papers to immigrants who could prove that they had worked at least 90 days each year during the previous three years. Once the migrant workers had been legalized they were able to secure immigrant status for the rest of their families.

The Mexicans in Kennett Square live in housing projects built by the local government in the downtown areas as well as in the southern and, particularly, western side of the borough. There is also a large community of Mexican workers, both immigrant and seasonal, living outside of the housing projects. They live mostly on the western side of Kennett Square and in the towns of Toughkenamon, Avondale, West Grove, and other towns west of West Grove on Old Route 1. Many of the single young men live in dorms provided by the mushroom factories.

Most of the Mexican immigrants who live in Kennett Square work in the many mushroom factories in the area, though increasingly there are other opportunities for jobs. Many immigrants are now working in landscaping, in a few local stores, or cater to the needs of the affluent people who live in the area: cleaning houses or doing handy work.

The participants in this study live, or have lived, in two housing complexes, which I will call Complex "A" and Complex "B" for the sake of convenience, in the western end of Kennett Square. The first complex, Complex "A," is the older of the two. It is composed of six sets of four townhouses. In the summer of 2003, one house was owned by a family of African Americans, and two by families from El Salvador. The remaining houses were owned by Mexican families.

Usually more than one generation lives in the houses owned by the participants in this study who resided in Complex "A:" parents, children with their spouses, and grandchildren. However, being an older community (the oldest generation is currently in its late 40s and early 50s), there are few young children. Most of the second generation is still in their teens or are young adults, and the third generation is now beginning.

The second complex, Complex "B," is quite different, even though it is less than a mile

away from Complex “A.” The residents of these apartments are all renters. It is a community for low-income families and there are Mexican, Anglo, and African-American residents. Complex “B” is also much larger than Complex “A.” However, the main difference is in the fact that there are fewer teenagers, and many more young children, because this is also a younger community. Most of the Mexicans who reside in this complex arrived five years prior to the summer of 2003. At the time of data collection, most were in their mid to late 20s. They came with their young children. There are also a considerable number of young babies.

From observations of the community and conversations with the residents, I found that the group at Complex “B” is very socially active. They participate in social activities together, and have created a network for the purpose of assistance and socialization, which seems to be lacking in Complex “A.” Most of the women in Complex “B” were not able to work during their first year in the apartments due to rules established by the complex management. Since the apartments were built to house low-income families, if the women had worked, the family income would have gone above the maximum allowed, and the family would not have been permitted to remain in the apartment complex. Thus the women in Complex “B” had more time to socialize. The residents in Complex “A” rarely got together outside community celebrations like birthdays and marriages.

3.2. The participants

Fourteen Mexican women participated in this study. Eleven took part in the discussion sessions held during the ESL classes that I offered in the summer of 2003. Eight participants volunteered to be interviewed, of which five also participated in the discussions, and three only in the interviews.

All the participants were recruited in the two housing complexes on the west end of

Kennett Square. The three participants who only took part in the interviews had been involved in an earlier research project I conducted in Kennett Square (Ross, 2001a). They assisted me in establishing the ESL classes. The remaining eleven participants were recruited from the classes.

The ESL classes were offered free of charge in both Complexes “A” and “B.” In order to avoid conflict, classes were offered to any adult who wished to learn English. However, because of the time and locale of the classes – in the housing complex common rooms during the afternoon and early evening – the groups were almost exclusively composed of women. In Complex “B” there were at least 14 women in the class; in Complex “A” there were five women who came regularly, and one man, the brother-in-law of one of the regular students, occasionally joined the group during the final three weeks⁵. In order to encourage more women to attend, children were allowed to sit in with their mothers.

The classes took place over a two-month period (June and July) in the summer of 2003. The students in complex “A” met twice a week for an hour and a half. The students in complex “B” met three times a week for a little over an hour. The discussions, which were always conducted in Spanish, took place at the end of each teaching unit.

Seven of the participants lived in Complex “A,” or visited the complex due to family ties with one of the residents. Seven lived in Complex “B.” Table 3-1 provides a list of the participants by the complex with which they were associated and the activity in which they participated.⁶

⁵ Not all students in the ESL classes agreed to participate in this study. The male student was not invited to participate since the focus of this study was on women. He also declined to take part in the discussions because he did not wish to be recorded.

⁶ All names used are pseudonyms.

Table 3-1: List of participants by housing complex and data collection activity.

	Participant	Complex	Activity (I= Interview/ D=ESL discussion)
1.	Celina	A	I
2.	Madelón	A	D
3.	María	A	D
4.	Mariana	A	I
5.	Marta	A	I
6.	Rosina	A	I/D
7.	Valeria	A	D
8.	Carolina	B	I/D
9.	Graciela	B	I/D
10.	Magdalena	B	I/D
11.	María Victoria	B	D
12.	Mónica	B	D
13.	Paula	B	D
14.	Pilar	B	I/D

All participants were over the age of eighteen. The youngest participants were Marta and Mónica, who were in their early 20s in the summer of 2003. The oldest was Doña Paula, who was in her 60s, followed by Mariana and Magdalena, who were both in their early 50s.

Most of the participants came from the areas in Mexico between Moroleón and Morelia, except Madelón and María, who came from Puebla. Many of the participants from the Moroleón - Morelia area had lived in “ranchos.” Ranchos are small groups of houses in rural areas of Mexico where extended family groups live and work together. Rosina talked very fondly of life in her “rancho,” as did Celina, Mariana, and Marta. Graciela, Pilar, and Carolina came from the city of Moroleón.

In the summer of 2003, Marta was the only participant who did not have a child – though

she had a little girl of her own the following year. Mónica had had her first baby that summer. Magdalena, Mariana, Celina, and Paula all had older children who were married. In fact, Marta was Mariana's second youngest daughter, and Mónica was Magdalena's second youngest daughter. Magdalena had four other children, one of whom was only five years old.

Marta was also the only participant who did not currently live in the housing complexes. However, she visited her mother, Mariana, in Complex "A" almost on a daily basis.

The participants who held full-time jobs during the summer of 2003 were Rosina, Celina, Marta, Madelón, and María. These participants were from Complex "A." Very few women living in complex "B" held jobs during the summer of 2003. Carolina, however, worked part-time cleaning houses. By the summer of 2007, however, most of the participants in Complex "B," except Magdalena and Paula, held full-time jobs. Most of the participants had opted for employment in the service area, cleaning houses. Only Marta, Celina and, after the summer of 2003, Graciela, worked in mushroom factories. Valeria was not working because she was trying to further her education in the hopes of becoming a Teaching Aide at her children's school.

All the participants, except Valeria, had completed only some grade school in Mexico. Six years of elementary education are compulsory in Mexico. Those who came from rural areas had not completed more than two years of schooling. Celina reported having gone to school for only one day in her life. Rosina, Magdalena, and Mariana reported finishing second grade, but not having learned how to read or write in Spanish. However, Rosina and Magdalena reported taking adult classes to learn basic literacy skills before coming to the US. It is probably not a coincidence that the four youngest participants are the ones who completed all six years of grade school. Valeria had completed a degree in law in Mexico.

Celina, Mariana, and Marta only participated in the interviews. All the other participants were recruited from the ESL classes offered at both housing complexes. None of the participants reported being able to communicate at more than a basic level in English. Celina and Rosina, who

had worked for over ten years in the US, informed me that they had a good enough grasp of “work English” to allow them to complete their tasks efficiently. They both indicated that they needed interpreters to communicate beyond basic work language.

Overall, most of the women who participated in this study form a relatively homogeneous group. Valeria is the participant who differs the most from the others due to her educational background. However, in the summer of 2003 she had the same life-style as all the rest of the members of her community. Her husband was a mushroom worker, and Valeria had immigrated to the US in the same circumstances as the other participants. All of them had come to Kennett Square at least four years after their husbands or fathers had come to work in the US.

In the following section I discuss the data collection for this study.

3.3. Data collection

As already noted, the data set for this study, totaling eleven and a half hours, is composed of fifteen interviews with eight participants, and nine ESL discussion sessions. Ethnographically rich methods were used for the collection of data in order to better bring out the voices of the participants. In particular, ethnographic interviewing techniques were used for both the interviews and discussion data.

Scholars in sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology recommend the use of ethnographically dense methods for the collection of data (Duranti, 1985, 1997; Gumperz, 1989; Hymes, 1995; Moerman, 1988; Ochs & Schieffelin, 1994; Schiffrin, 1987b). Data collected by means of ethnographic interviews exhibit more and more varied conversation strategies and roles. The discourse thus collected also appears within a natural social context (Gumperz, 1989; Hymes, 1995; Schiffrin, 1987b).

Ethnography is the long-term study of a community of people. It is informed by the

observation of a group of peoples over an extended period of time, and by the use of semi-structured or non-structured ethnographic interviews. Its purpose is to reveal traditions and beliefs of the peoples being studied. Triangulation is achieved by using multiple sources of information, and, whenever possible, by consulting with interviewees and discussing observations with them (Agar, 1986; P. Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994; Hymes, 1995; Spradley, 1979).

3.3.1. Ethnographic interviews

The data were collected using ethnographic interviewing techniques. The traditional ethnographic interview is topic-centered. The researcher may have a list of open-ended questions to ask, but encourages the participants to explore the topics as freely and spontaneously as possible. Spradley (1979), whose discussion of the ethnographic interview has informed many modern ethnographers, notes: “when we examine the ethnographic interview as a speech event, we see that it shares many features with the friendly conversation” (p. 58). Since Spradley, ethnographers have ratified the need for interviews to be non-threatening and spontaneous, and for the ethnographer to be as neutral and objective as possible during the interviews (Fontana, 2003; Madison, 2005).

Neutrality is, however, difficult to attain in an ethnographic interview. In fact, Hymes (1995) acknowledges that it is impossible for the interviewer to be entirely impartial in his/her collection and analysis of data. Nevertheless, Hymes notes that “the point is to stress the necessity of knowledge that comes from participation and observation” (p.11). That is, participating with the community being studied and reporting on the experience of this participation allows the ethnographer to better comprehend and present the participants’ views and ideologies.

For instance, Rosaldo (1993c), in his account of Illingot headhunters, discusses his experiences with their community and presents, at length, his conversations with them concerning

the head-hunting rituals. An account of the cannibalistic rites of the hunters would simply impress Western readers for their barbarianism and savagery—whereas including the Illingots' conversations and stories about their hunts turns the headhunting rituals into logical acts of bereavement and is more true to the participants' identities. By presenting the actual words of the interviewee, the researcher is able to remain objective, and the reader receives the information directly from its source.

The questions for both the interviews and the discussions in the current data set were designed based on ethnographic methods of interviewing. The interviews conducted during the summer of 2003 were unstructured. That is, they were not based on a pre-set list of questions. Instead, the participants were encouraged to freely explore the topics of life in the US and in Mexico. When an event was mentioned I asked them to “tell me more about it.” I frequently introduced topics of conversation that other participants had explored in their interviews. In this way I obtained data on the topics of family and friends in the US and in Mexico, dating rituals, leisure time, and housing in the US from the perspective of multiple participants. I also used the interviews as a forum to explore my observations on and interpretation of issues brought up by the participants.

Each interview lasted a minimum of thirty minutes and up to one hour. The interviews were conducted in Spanish, the language in which the participants were most confident. Participants were interviewed individually or in small groups of up to three. Most of the interviews recorded for the dissertation study were both audio and video-taped, with the exception of those involving Graciela. Graciela preferred to be audio-taped only.

A set of follow-up interviews in July of 2007 was designed to discuss findings with the participants and confirm or clarify them for the sake of triangulation. Celina, Rosina, Mariana, Marta, Graciela, and Pilar were the only participants available for interviews at this time. Many of these follow-up interviews were shorter, lasting only twenty minutes. These interviews, which

were only audio-taped, were semi-structured as they were based on a short list of questions. However, all the questions were open-ended, and I allowed and encouraged participants to discuss different perspectives.

The ESL discussions were the second type of data collected. They lasted from 10 to 20 minutes each, and occurred at the end of every unit of instruction in the ESL classes at both housing complexes. In these discussions I asked the students to talk about issues that were representative of their difficulties in using English and with which they were currently struggling. This could be a specific problem at work (e.g., asking for equipment or a day off) or within their community (asking for directions, or difficulty communicating in English at the doctor's, etc). I then requested that they describe specific events related to those issues. The students often spontaneously diverged into topics of their own choice. These included the narrating of events in which they had been successful using the English language, and the discussion of their opinion concerning members of the mainstream English-speaking community and their relationship with them.

The format of the discussions was designed to follow that of an ethnographic interview. I introduced the topic and then encouraged the students to develop it on their own. Because the discussions took place in a classroom atmosphere, the participants often looked to me to direct them and indicate how I wanted the discussions to progress. Once a conversation was initiated by one of the participants, however, spontaneous discussions quickly emerged in which most of the students took part.

Overall, the importance of the use of ethnographic interviews in this study is twofold. On one hand, it allowed me to collect spontaneous conversation data, which includes a greater variety of frame types. It also allowed me to acquire a richer range of information about what is important to the participants, from their own point of view.

3.3.2. Triangulation: Observation and ratification

Triangulation in ethnography involves the use of multiple types of data as a means of viewing and presenting information from different perspectives. In this study I utilize two modes of triangulation to complement the analysis of the participant's discourse. The first and main mode is participant observation. During the periods that I participated in the community of Mexican immigrants in Kennett Square (six weekend periods between Fall of 2000 to the end of Spring 2001, two months during the summer of 2003, and a week in July of 2007), I observed the community, its traditions and day-to-day routines, and took field notes. According to Schiffrin (1987b), by participating in the community for a time, the interviewer acquires better insight into the participant knowledge that shapes their discourses. Hymes (1995) posits: "The existence of comprehensive knowledge about a community makes more precise hypothesis-testing possible" (p. 11).

I also discussed my interpretations with the participants as a means of confirming these interpretations, or of obtaining further information and/or clarification.

Throughout the analysis, additional information from fieldnotes concerning observations in the community and from conversations with the participants that were not recorded will be integrated with the discussions of structural aspects of language.

3.4. Methodology

The analysis of contextualization cues (Gumperz, 1989; Gumperz et al., 1982; Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz, 1982; Schiffrin, 1987b) comprises the analytical framework for this study⁷. In the current study, I look at how structural elements of the discourse of the participants cue

⁷ For further discussion of contextualization cues, see chapter 2, section 2.3)

different aspects of their identities. The participants in this study were not asked at any point to overtly discuss their identities. There are very few instances in their discourse where they go to any length in discussing how they define themselves. Therefore, there is a need to analyze the data in terms of the identity the participants display (Goffman, 1959) via the use of language.

Goffman (1959) notes that there are two types of performances that people give. These performances include the expressions that the speaker *gives* of him/her self (i.e., the verbal expressions the speaker uses to overtly describe him/her self) and the expressions that the speaker *gives off* (i.e., the actions which are carried out and which are symbolic of the role taken on by the speaker/actor within the given context) (p. 3). Since the participants do not overtly discuss their identities, it becomes necessary to analyze their discourse to see how they represent their identities via their choice of language and/or of prosodic features of language.

This dissertation is modeled after De Fina's (2003) study. In her study, De Fina analyzes how her participants, through narratives, construct their collective identities within the world of their stories, and also in terms of their relationships with their interlocutors in the current time. The aspects of identity De Fina focuses on are how her participants express social orientation and agency. The author also identifies the identification strategies of her participants in terms of racial labels, and how, using those racial labels, they negotiate their ethnic affiliations. I examine the identities of the participants in terms of ethnicity, gender, and education. These topics were selected because of the frequency with which the participants brought them up in their interviews and discussions.

The interviews consist of spontaneous conversations and include multiple conversational narratives. According to Ochs and Capps (2001), a conversational narrative is a set of events which is put forward during the course of a conversation. The purpose of these narratives is to discuss the events in order to better understand them. Because of their dialogic nature, a main characteristic of these narratives is that they contain frequent interruptions by conversation

partners who make evaluations, or ask questions, as a means comprehending the events. Also, in conversational narratives, according to Ochs (2001 with Capps, and 1995 with Tyler), the interlocutors can sometimes also have participated in the events or may have knowledge of them, so frequently interlocutors (co-)participate in the developing of the story, itself. It is mainly within these narratives that the participants manifest their identities. As noted by Kerby (1991): “Narrative emplotment⁸ appears to yield a form of understanding of human experience, both individual and collective, that is not directly amenable to other forms of exposition or analysis” (p. 3).

The interview and discussion data were first transcribed in their entirety according to a modified set of conventions for conversation analysis (Atkinson & Heritage, 1984). The data were then entered in NVivo for analysis. NVivo is a program that facilitates the qualitative analysis of texts by allowing the researcher to tag them for any number of aspects and then cross-reference tags to see how they interact.

The data were subsequently analyzed at a macro level in order to identify the main identities displayed by the participants. These main identities were ethnic identity, gendered identity, and what I call “literate” identity, which relates to the participant’s view of themselves in light of their education. These sections were identified, and tagged using NVivo.

Narrative sections were then identified. I used Labov and Waletzky’s (1966) definition of a narrative in order to identify these narrative sections. According to Labov and Waletzky (Labov, 1972; Labov & Waletzky, 1966), minimally, a narrative includes a temporal disjunction between (at least) two narrative clauses. Narrative clauses carry the main events of a narrative and their order cannot be interchanged without affecting the interpretation of the narrative. This sequencing of events is the temporal sequence of the narrative.

Overall, a total of 136 narrative sections were identified, ranging from short two-clause

⁸ This term is used by Kerby to signify the organization of thoughts and experiences in the narrative form.

narratives to two narratives that lasted approximately twenty minutes each. The topics covered were family and relationship with spouses, work, need for English, learning different skills and information, and discussions of own traditions and of ethnic stereotypes. The participants also narrated circumstances surrounding their coming to the US and, occasionally, items that appeared in the news.

Once sections of discourse were distinguished in which the participants discuss the main three aspects of identity selected for research (ethnicity, gendered roles, and education), these sections were analyzed at a micro level. All sections of discourse presented for analysis were translated by the researcher.

For the micro analysis, I use the analytical framework of contextualization cues (Gumperz, 1989; Gumperz et al., 1982; Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz, 1982; Schiffrin, 1987b) to ascertain how the participants use language to cue different aspects of themselves that they wish to emphasize for their interlocutors, including subjectivity, social roles and identities, and the attitudes of the participants towards different people and events in their lives. I also use the construct of subjectivity (Banfield, 1982; Benveniste, 1971; Iwasaki, 1993; Maynard, 1993) as a lens through which to view the contexts indexed by the cues identified.

In the following section, I explicate my analysis of the three aspects of identity that comprise the focus of this study.

3.4.1. Ethnic identity

The issue of ethnic identity, and how it is expressed by the participants, is discussed in Chapter 4. The focus in this chapter is on how the participants make reference to their own group and to the different groups with which they have contact in the US: English-speaking US citizens and the sub-group of African Americans, Hispanics (speakers of Spanish but not Mexicans), and

Cambodians. This analysis allows for an understanding of how the participants express the “us” versus “them.”

The data were tagged, using NVivo, for different ways in which the participants make reference to their own and other nationality or ethnic groups. These modes of reference could be explicit or implicit. All the data were used as references to ethnicity and nationality were made regardless of the topic of the narrative.

3.4.1.1. Explicit references

Explicit reference to ethnic or nationality groups is made via the use of terms of reference. De Fina (2000) notes that “the ways others are presented not only leads to the analysis of images that immigrants have about outgroup members, but also to the general categories that they employ to identify themselves” (p. 133). Labels or terms of reference are the main means by which speakers identify different ethnic and national groups (Baker, 1998; De Fina, 2000).

The most commonly used terms, that relate to ethnic category names found in the data set are: “*mexicano*” (‘Mexican’), “*hispano*” (‘Hispanic’), “*americano*” (‘American’), and “*camboyano*” (‘Cambodian’). African Americans were referred to as “*la raza de color*” (‘the colored race’). These terms of reference could be used as nouns or as adjectives, and in singular, plural, masculine, or feminine forms. Example 3-1 illustrates the use of “*mexicana*” and “*Americano(s)*” by one of the participants.

Example 3-1: Use of terms of reference (from interview with Magdalena; 7/1/2003)

- 1 *Sí*. (.) *sí*. (.) *es mas fá^cil* (.) *no^ pues*. (.) *sí* (.) *cuida^ba para America^nos*
- 2 *pues qué^ les entendía?* (.3) *un seño^r sí me decí^a* (.) ***una seño^ra mexica^na***
- 3 *me decí^a* (.) *que la seño^ra lavaba blu^sas* (.) *>que era<* (.2) *pos para:* (.)
- 4 *para una seño^ra America^na*, (.) *y le deje que no^* (.) *que pues yo^ como les*
- 5 *entie^ndo*, (.2) *có^mo les di^go* (.2) *que si quié^re come^r*, (.) *o que si va^n al*

6 *ba^ño, (.2) qué^ les ha^go (.) qué^ les digo a los ni^ños,*

- 1 Yeah, yeah. It's easier, isn't it? Well. If I took care [of children] for **Americans**, well,
- 2 how would I understand them? A gentleman – a **Mexican** lady
- 3 said to me that – the lady washed blouses – that it was, well for for an
- 4 **American** lady, and I said to her, well “how would I understand them?
- 5 How would I say to them if they wanted to eat, or if they went to the bathroom?
What do I do?
- 6 What do I say to the children?

In this example, the participant uses the masculine plural noun “*Americanos*” to refer to Americans of both genders (line 1). In line 2, she refers to a Mexican lady as “*una señora mexicana*” using the feminine singular adjective “*mexicana*.” Finally, in line 4, she refers to an American lady using the feminine singular adjective “*americana*.”

3.4.1.2. Implicit references

Implicit references are those in which the ethnic or nationality groups are not directly named, and must be inferred by the interlocutor. The participants implied membership in groups in various ways, for instance, via the use of expressions with “*gente*” and “*personas*,” which also indexed differential attitude towards members of their own and other groups. Both words in Spanish can be translated as ‘people’ in English, however “*gente*” is a collective noun. Example 3-2 contains an instance of the use of both these terms by another participant.

Example 3-2: Use of “*personas*” and “*gente*” (from interview with Rosina; 7/9/07)

=*bua* (.) *como como quiera* (.) *o sea tuve dos: dos este: (.2) dos cursos que dan así* (.) *personas* (.) *que ayudan a la gente* (2) *a:: a repasar las preguntas*

Well, You could say so. That is, I had two courses that were given by **people** who help **us** to review the questions

In this example it can be seen how “*personas*” (used in the plural) and “*gente*” are being used differentially. I have translated them as ‘people’ and ‘us,’ respectively, to show this difference.

Another means by which the participants made implicit reference to members of different groups was via the use of null-noun phrases in the subject and object positions. In Example 3-3, the object position is null. The participant tells of speaking to someone but not being able to make herself understood. It is possible to infer that the person she is speaking to is a single individual given the conjugation of the verb “*entender*” (‘to understand’) for third person singular. However, there is no way of knowing who this person is, except the fact that he or she is a speaker of English, member of the mainstream English speaking community.

Example 3-3: Use of implicit reference (From ESL discussion at Complex A; 6/9/03).

*para mí a veces como: (.2) no e[^]s como gracioso si no como: (.3) penoso
porque: (.2) quie[^]ro hablar e:n (2.) en inglés y (.) **no me entiende***

For me sometimes like – it isn’t funny but like embarrassing –
be cause I want to speak in English and **[he/she] doesn’t understand me.**

These means of referring to different groups cue the attitude of the participants towards them, and are instrumental in understanding how the Mexican women associate (or not) with the people living around them.

3.4.2. Gendered identity

The gendered identity of the participants is discussed in Chapter 5. For this chapter, the

contextualization cue selected for analysis was use of reported speech and thought as cues for the attitude of the participants towards the events being narrated, and the characters in these events. Because of traditional gendered roles of Mexican and Hispanic women, it becomes interesting to see whose words the participants choose to support their own opinions and ideologies. Moreover, reported speech has also been found to highlight sections of narrative that are more important to speakers (Koontz, 1977; and Larson, 1978).

In order to complete this analysis, first narratives were identified that relate to the topics of the relationship of the participants with their husbands and their children, and their roles at home concerning housework. These topics were selected based on the traditional gendered roles of women outlined by the sociological models of machismo and marianismo (see discussion of machismo and marianismo as posited by Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1992; 1994; and Stevens, 1965; 1973 in Chapter 2). Subsequently, all instances of use of direct and indirect reported speech (Coulmas, 1986) and of distal thought (Chafe, 1994) were tagged.

The tokens of reported speech and thought were subsequently sub-tagged for who the distal speaker was. Examples 3-4 and 3-5 illustrate the use by the participants of direct and indirect speech, and distal thought, respectively.

Example 3-4: Use of direct and indirect speech (From interview with María; 7/3/03)

- 1 Mariana: *Y le digo eh a^y hi^ja pero vienes cada sá^bado (.5) y ya^ mejo^r te*
 2 *va^s antá la madrina = quieres esta^rte un rati^to conmi^go?*
 3
 4 Interviewer: *Hmhmm*
 5 Mariana: *Dice **quiero si voy** (.) dice porque:: ella: me dice que:: (.5) que **ella***
fue la que nos nos invita ,

- 1 Mariana: And I say to her (hhh) **“Oh daughter, but you come every Saturday and then you**

- 2 **go to your Godmother’s. Won’t you stay a while with me?”**
- 3 Interviewer: Hmhhh.
- 4 Mariana: And she says **“I want to. I will go,”** she says because she says that she [the
aunt] was
- 5 the one who **invited us.**

Example 3-5: Use of distal thought (Chafe, 1994) (From ESL discussion in Complex A; 6/11/03).

Yo^ pa mí decí^a, (.2) que no sé^, (.) Para mí^ que no iba a aprender inglés^

I said to myself, **“I don’t know.”** I didn’t think I would learn English.

In Example 3-4 the speaker quotes herself directly (lines 1 and 2) and then reports what her daughter answered her (using both direct speech – line 4 – and indirect speech – lines 4-5). In the instance of indirect speech (line 4-5) the daughter is reporting what the aunt had said (extending an invitation for them to go to her house). In Example 3-5, another participant reports her thoughts at the point in time when she arrived to the US.

3.4.3. Literate identity

Finally, in Chapter 6, I discuss the “literate” identities of the participants. I conceptualize “literate” identity as the attitude that the participants have concerning their own educational experiences (in literacy, ESL, and learning skills like driving) and how it defines them as educated (or uneducated) people.

In order to complete this analysis, I focused on the narratives concerning the learning and studying of information by the participants. I first identified narratives and sections of narratives

in which the participants overtly make reference to learning or studying of information (English, or information for their citizenship or drivers' license tests) or skills (driving).

The concept of agency in discourse, in terms of how the participants express their own active volition in the events or actions they describe (Ahearn, 2001a, 2001b; Davidson, 1980; Duranti, 1990), is the focus of this chapter. After narrative sections about learning and studying had been identified, the grammatical subjects in these sections were then sub-tagged, using NVivo, to identify the actor or agent of each educational event. These grammatical subjects were then analyzed to ascertain whom the participants positioned as the agents of their educational experiences, and how they expressed their own role within these events. Examples 3-2 and 3-6 illustrate different ways in which the participants express their roles with respect to their own education.

Example 3-2 (used in section 3.4.1.1) was used to illustrate the uses of “*personas*” and “*gente*” (= ‘people’). However, it also shows how Rosina positions herself in a non-agentive position with respect to her citizenship classes. In this excerpt she says “*tuve dos: dos este: (.2) dos cursos que dan así (.) personas (.) que ayudan a la gente*” (‘I had two courses that were given by people who help us’). The agents of this event are the people who gave the course even though Rosina is the grammatical subject. However, the verb she associates with the experience is “*tener*” (‘to have’). She did not actively ‘take’ a class but, rather, she ‘had’ it, making her participation in this class a passive one.

Frequently the participants also mitigate their agency. They do so by presenting the educational events in the negative, as events that did not occur or which are not likely to take place, or by expressing the educational event as a hope for the future, which is not certain to occur, as in example 3-6.

Example 3-6: Semantic roles (1) (From discussion in Complex A; 6/11/03).

*Yo^ pa mi decí^a, (.2) que no sé^, (.) Para mí^ que no iba a aprender inglés^, (.) no sé,
 (.2) bueno (.) para mí^ hija^ (.) quie^ro aprender el inglés^, (.) porque (.) la verda^d
 sea (.3) tengo mucha^s dificulta^d, (.3) que lo entie^nda un po^co, (.) pero: (.2) no
 lo^ sé: hhh (.2) pronu^ncia:r (.) habla:r, (.) y eso^, (.) khmmm.*

Translation

I would say to myself that “I don’t know.” **I thought I would not learn English.**

I don’t know. Well for the sake of my daughter **I want to learn English** because, to tell the truth **I have a lot of difficulty. I may understand it a bit**

but **I don’t know how to (hhh) pronounce it, speak it, and all that.** Hhhhhh.

In Example 3-6, the speaker says “*Para mí^ que no iba a aprender inglés^,*” (‘I thought I would not learn English’). She has not experienced the learning of the language, which would help her in her daily communications. In lines 3 and 4, she does positions herself as the actor. However, she associates the English language with mental verbs that describe events of which she is not the agent. That is, the act of knowing or understanding occurs without the intervention of her own active volition. In line 2 she is also the agent of wanting to learn English. Yet, once again, she is mitigating her agency by expressing her learning of English as a future hope. Moreover, she also expresses her doubt that she will ever really be able to learn it, thus further mitigating her agency.

The analysis of how the participants express their agency within events related to learning and studying allows for a better understanding of how they view the role of education in their lives.

3.5. Summary and outline of analysis chapters

In this chapter I have presented the participants in this study, and the characteristics of the Mexican community in Kennett Square within which they live. They are 14 Mexican women, between the ages of 20 and early 60s, who came to Kennett Square, mostly from the regions surrounding Moroleón and Morelia in central Mexico. They currently live in two housing projects on the West side of Kennett Square.

I then discussed the methods used for the collection and organization of the data. This study combines discourse analysis with ethnographic methods of data collection. Ethnographic information is also utilized to complement and support the findings of the analysis of the discourse of the participants. The data are composed of interviews and discussions that contain lengthy stretches of conversational narratives. Conversational narratives are highly productive mediums for the analysis of identity.

Finally, I discussed the use contextualization cues as the means to study how the participants index different aspects of their identities. I also presented the focus of the three main analytical chapters.

In Chapter 4 of this dissertation, I will discuss how the participants use contextualization cues to index their ethnic identities. In particular I will focus on how they make a distinction between “us” and “them.” That is, I analyze how the participants refer to the Mexican community as opposed to the white English-speaking majority and other minority groups living in Kennett Square, and how these forms of reference cue their involvement in the Mexican community. I also examine how they display affect when referring to aspects of their ‘Mexicanness’ that are central to their identities.

In Chapter 5, I will focus on the gendered identities and roles of the speakers. The constructs of “machismo” and “marianismo” will be developed in this chapter. Then I will

analyze how the participants justify their roles by quoting others as a means of support or verification of their opinions and ideologies. I will also analyze how the use of reported speech serves as a cue for affect and for the attitude of the participants towards different people and events in their lives.

Chapter 6 is concerned with the “literate” identity of the participants. In this chapter I, focus on how the participants cue their agency (or lack thereof) in their discussions of their experiences with education. An analysis of these discussions will yield an understanding of the attitudes towards education held by the participants. It will also allow me to ascertain how they view the role of education in their future.

Overall, these analyses will further the understanding of how structural aspects of discourse can be used for the study of identity. However, as a result of the cumulative findings in the three analytical chapters (4, 5, and 6), I will also be able to put together a picture of the various shifting identities of the participants and how these identities affect their investment (Norton, 1997, 2000; Norton-Pierce, 1995) in learning English.

Chapter 4

Ethnic identity and discourses of ethnic difference

4. Introduction

This chapter is dedicated to the discussion of the ethnic identities of the participants. Fought (2007) defines ethnic identity in terms of a group of people who share a set of characteristics including, but not limited to, religion, race, language, and/or nationality. A measure of conflict with other groups is also a characteristic and defining element of an ethnic group (Fought, 2006; Keefe, 1992).

The participants in this study form part of the community of Mexican immigrants living in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania, with whom they share a national identity, dialect, religion, and immigration status in the US. During data collection, it became apparent that there is a cultural barrier separating the Mexican community from the mainstream English-speakers of Kennett Square. The participants mainly highlight the difference in languages. Some of the younger members of the community also comment on differences in religion and race. It also became apparent that, even though members of the Mexican community live in close contact within semi-enclosed neighborhoods, there is relatively little regular social interaction between members of the community.

It thus becomes interesting to analyze how the participants express their relation with their own community and with the other communities with which they are in contact. In particular, this chapter focuses on whether their ethnic group is an integral part of the participants' identity, and on what aspects of Mexican identity are the most important to them.

In order to study the ethnic identities of the participants, I examine their relationship with

the community of Mexican immigrants of which they are a part, and with other groups in the Kennett Square area, including mainstream white English-speaking society, African Americans, and the Cambodians who have also immigrated to southeastern PA. In section 4.1, I discuss research on the different ways in which Hispanic immigrants have been seen to relate to communities of their nationals in the host country, and to other ethnic groups, including the host society. In section 4.2, I analyze how the participants express the differences between themselves and other groups in the US. I examine how they use contextualization cues to index their attitudes towards their own group and towards other groups. In 4.3, I present the conclusions, and implications for the studying of English will be briefly presented.

4.1. Ethnic identity of Mexican immigrants to the US

In Chapter 2, I presented different ways in which ethnic identity has been conceptualized and studied within the field of applied linguistics. The studies discussed have diverse foci, which makes it apparent that ethnicity can be seen from various perspectives. In this chapter I discuss literature on the ethnic identity of Mexican and Hispanic immigrants to the US in more detail, incorporating the perspectives of other fields of inquiry, including sociology, anthropology, and psychology. In particular I focus on how identification with their group affects the relationship of Mexican immigrants with other ethnic and/or nationality groups in the US.

With the increasing number of Hispanic and, particularly, Mexican immigrants to the US, and the growing influence of these cultures on US mainstream society, more and more studies are conducted to analyze the ethnic identity of these people. Studies of the ethnic identity of Mexican and Hispanic immigrants to the US within the fields of applied linguistics, sociolinguistics, anthropology, and sociology (Baquedano-López, 1997; Behar, 1990, 2003; De Fina, 2000, 2003; García, 1994; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994; Menard-Warwick, 2004; Niemann, Romero, Arredondo,

& Rodriguez, 1999; Portes, Parker, & Cobas, 1980; Shenk, 2007) have focused on various aspects of the identities of these peoples.

In these studies, multiple cultural values are associated with Mexican ethnic identity. Artifacts such as food and festivities appear frequently as representations of Mexican identity (Niemann et al., 1999). Also common factors in Mexican ethnicity are the value of family and of children as a source of pride, the endurance of marriages, and work ethic (Behar, 1990, 2003; Niemann et al., 1999). These last factors are closely related to the religious beliefs of these peoples and their assignment of gendered roles.

Ethnicity, in terms of national and racial heritage, is also an important identifying characteristic of Mexican immigrants (Niemann et al., 1999; Shenk, 2007). Nieman, Romero, Arredondo, and Rodriguez (1999), however, note that cultural artifacts rank higher than heritage in the factors that determine the ethnic identity of their participants. Nieman, Romero, Arredondo, and Rodriguez conduct a study of how 49 Mexicans living in Texas explain their ethnic identity. They find that the following were the most cited elements of Mexican identity: culture, ethnicity, and a feeling of being discriminated against by other groups, especially white US citizens. This last issue has been at the heart of a number of other studies of Mexican ethnicity (De Fina, 2000, 2003; Portes et al., 1980).

Porte, Parker, and Cobas (1980), conduct a study of accommodation patterns of Hispanic immigrants to life in the US. Porte, Parker, and Cobas analyze the discourse of 590 Cuban and 882 Mexican immigrants in order to gauge their perceptions of mainstream US society and the opinion of the immigrants concerning how US society perceives them. In general, the authors find that, upon entry, the immigrants have a positive opinion of US society. Over time, however, the immigrants increasingly express their perception that they are being discriminated against by US society.

In their study, Nieman, Romero, Arredondo, and Rodriguez (1999), also find a large

number of their participants reported feeling negatively about the US and US society. They also reported conflicts with other ethnic groups: White Americans, African Americans, and even Chicanos who had been in the US for a longer time.

Conflict with US society, and with other groups – ethnic and national—is an important characteristic of the ethnic identity of Mexican immigrants to the US, confirming the observations by Fought (2006) and Keefe (1992) that membership in one ethnic group implies differences with other groups. De Fina (2000, 2003) also finds that conflict forms an important part of the life of her participants, Mexican immigrants to the US. I highlight De Fina’s studies, in particular, as the current chapter is highly influenced by them.

De Fina (2000, 2003) examines how Mexican immigrants use reference terms (referring to ethnicity, nationality, and race) as a means of attributing characters in their narratives with characteristics of the ethnic group they represent. The groups represented were the speakers’ own Mexican community, the mainstream white English-speaking community, and other minority ethnic groups in the US. In particular, De Fina focuses on the use of references to “*mexicanos*” (‘Mexicans’) and “*hispanos*” (‘Hispanics’) versus other ethnic groups. “*Mexicanos*” and “*hispanos*” are usually set up as being helpful and positive characters. In contrast, other groups, including Anglo Americans and African Americans, are presented as being prejudiced, negative, and even aggressive against Mexicans and other minorities. These characteristics of both sets of groups are more readily apparent in abstract and orientation sections of narratives.

De Fina (2003) also notes that in narratives of events that took place after the immigrants’ came to the US, “*hispanos*” were seen in an ambivalent light, but “*mexicanos*” were always adjudicated positive characteristics. The author argues this is evidence of the close affinity of her participants with their ethnic group. De Fina posits that the fact that different groups are being stereotyped by her participants indicates that they are learning and accepting the value of

ethnic identification in the US – this type of identification is not a major source of difference of society in Mexico.

In the current study I analyze how, via the use of different contextualization cues (Gumperz, 1977, 1980, 1982, 1989, 1992a, 1992b; Gumperz et al., 1982; Schiffrin, 1987b), the participants express their relationship with other ethnic groups. That is, I study how they express the “us” versus “them.” In order to do so I first look at their use of reference terms of ethnicity and/or nationality to label their own and other groups. I then analyze other means by which the participants refer to their group and examine which of these modes of reference are subjective and, thus, more central to their identities.

4.2. Analysis of ethnic identity

The participants were not asked at any point to explicitly discuss their ethnic identity, and they seldom overtly broached this topic. However, I did discuss identity informally with younger members of the community, and they highlighted issues of religion, race, and language more prominently than those related to nationality (Ross, 2001b). Nevertheless, mentions of different ethnic groups, including their own Mexican community, occur abundantly throughout the data. The ethnic/nationality labels that appear in the data set, which are similar to those found by De Fina (2000, 2003) in her study, are “*mexicanos*” (‘Mexicans’), “*americanos*” (‘Americans’), “*hispanos*” (‘Hispanic people’), and “*cambodianos*” (‘Cambodians’)⁹.

The use of the nationality or ethnicity labels is considered to be, in the current study, an *overt* reference to members of the different groups. The participants make overt reference to the Mexican and US societies, and to members of the African American and Cambodian communities in very similar ways. The use of plural terms of reference as nouns or adjectives

⁹ The category of “*Cambodianos*” did not form part of De Fina’s (2000, 2003) studies

indexes a group at large. Thus, “*mexicanos*” (‘Mexicans’) designates the Mexican community, without distinguishing any individuals. However, the use of the reference term as a singular adjective together with a definite article indicates a specific individual member of the community. “*La señora americana*” (‘the American lady’) is used to refer to a female American individual. Meanwhile, an indefinite article preceding the term used as a noun implies a generic individual, or is used to present a specific individual from that ethnic group for the first time (e.g.: “*un cambodiano*” is ‘a Cambodian’).

Often, though, participants did not refer to members of groups via the use of the labels. Instead, membership in a specific ethnic or nationality group was hinted at, *implicitly*, via the description of the person(s) or the activities in which the person(s) participated.

Table 4-1 contains information about the number of instances each participant made overt and implicit reference to their own or other ethnic groups. Only the first mention of a group or individual was tabulated. Further references to a person or group of people within a same or subsequent turns were considered to be deictic in nature.

Table 4-1: Implicit and Explicit reference to different ethnic groups.

	Mexicans		Hispanics		Americans		African Americans		Cambodians		Totals
	Overt	Implicit	Overt	Implicit	Overt	Implicit	Overt	Implicit	Overt	Implicit	
Celina	6	7	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	1	8
Madelón	1	5	1	3	3	2	0	0	0	0	15
María	1	1	0	0	3	6	0	0	0	0	11
Mariana	0	4	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	5
Marta	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Mercedes	2	7	1	8	2	11	0	0	0	0	31
Valeria	1	2	0	0	1	6	0	0	0	0	10
Carolina	0	14	1	4	0	4	3	2	0	0	28
Graciela	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
Magdalena	7	26	0	3	6	4	1	0	0	0	47
María	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mónica	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	4
Paula	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pilar	1	23	1	3	0	10	1	0	0	0	39
Totals:	20	90	5	22	16	46	5	2	4	1	212

As noted in Table 4-1, most of the participants made reference to their own or other ethnic groups in their discourse. Overall, the participants refer to members of their own Mexican community much more frequently than to members of other communities (110 tokens – almost 52% of all the references). References to Americans compose almost 30% of all mentions of nationality or ethnic groups (62 tokens). Cambodians were only mentioned five times by Celina and Mónica, who work with members of this community in the mushroom factories. African Americans were made reference to few times (only seven tokens, overall). The number of references to each group seems to correlate with the frequency of contact of the participants with them. Analysis of the discourse of the participants also suggests that they have a higher degree of affinity with the members of their own group, who are included more often in the accounts of their own experiences.

Overt reference to Mexicans composes only 17% of all references to this group (20 out of 90 tokens), which is the same percentage of overt references to Hispanics. The category “Hispanics” includes reference to people who speak Spanish but who are not Mexican. Americans were mentioned overtly, using the nationality label, only 25% of times. On the other hand African Americans and Cambodians were made reference to overtly more frequently, 75% and 80% respectively. These findings suggest that the participants have more contact with Mexicans, Hispanics, and Americans, and reference can be made to members of these groups implicitly and can be understood easily through the context. However, contact with African Americans and with Cambodians is infrequent. Thus, reference to these groups needs to be much more explicit.

4.2.1. “Gente” and “personas”

The participants use the same modes of reference in their discussions of members of all

the ethnic groups with which they are in contact. However, a closer examination reveals variations in the proportion of tokens of the different modes of reference used. One example of this is the use of the expressions with “*personas*” (‘people’) and “*gente*” (also ‘people,’ in English) by the participants (see Table 4-2).

Table 4-2: Use of expressions with “*gente*” and “*personas*”

	Mexican(s)	Hispanic(s)	American(s)	Cambodian(s)	Totals
<i>Persona(s)</i>	7	6	5	0	18
<i>Gente</i>	21	5	1	1	28
Totals	28	11	6	1	46

As noted in Table 4-2, the ratio of tokens of “*gente*” to “*personas*” is much higher in reference to members of the Mexican community (21-7), but decreases in references to Hispanics (5-6) and to Americans (1-5). “*Gente*” is also used once to refer to Cambodians. It is interesting to note that, overall, “*gente*” is used 26 out of 28 times when describing Hispanic and Mexican people, that is, people who speak Spanish.

In most dialects of Spanish, the expressions “*gente*” and “*personas*” have very similar meanings. Both can be translated to ‘people’ in English. However, “*gente*” is used to refer to a collective of people, or different sub-classes within a society, for example: “*gente de pueblo*” (‘country people’) or “*gente rica*” (‘rich people’). Often, these groups are linked by affective or professional ties, like an ethnic group, family or work cohort. “*Gente*,” being a collective noun, is almost exclusively used in the singular. However, it appears in plural in non-standard dialects of Spanish. It can also be used in reference to a discrete individual (as in “*Juan es buena gente*” -- ‘Juan is good people’) when using the individual as a representative of a group of people with similar characteristics. On the other hand, “*personas*,” in the plural, connotes a set of individual

members of the human species, each with his/her own volition, rights, and obligations. In the singular, “*persona*” means ‘person’ (“Diccionario de la lengua española, Vigésima segunda edición,”).

The fact that “*gente*” is used more in reference to members of the Mexican community seems to indicate that the participants think of their own group as being unified and distinct from mainstream US society. Meanwhile, the higher proportion of uses of “*personas*” in reference to other groups, particularly US society, seems to suggest that the Mexicans think of non-Mexicans in terms of the individuals that they are acquainted with rather than as unified groups. It thus becomes interesting to analyze how the uses of “*gente*” and “*personas*” by the participants serve as contextualization cues for their differential relationships with their own and with other groups. Analysis suggests that the use of “*gente*” cues a certain degree of affinity with the group it is being used to describe, whereas “*personas*” is used to express a lack of affinity or of association with the other groups.

Example 4-1 illustrates the use of both “*personas*” and “*gente*” by María in reference to the Mexican community in Kennett Square. This excerpt comes from a section of an ESL discussion in Complex A. In it, members of the ESL class discuss their relationships with members of the Mexican community. The discussion was triggered by my observation that the presence of the Latino community in Kennett Square must be a great help to them.

Example 4-1: Talking about the neighbors (From discussion in Complex A; 6/16/03).

- 1 Interviewer: Pero acá[^] tienen la comunidad lati[^]na. (.2) No? (.3) salen mu[^]cho con la
 2 gente de acá[^] de (.) de: (.2) de Buena Vi[~]sta? (.5) o no.
 3 Rosina: Cómo fá[^]cil en realidad no e[^]s, (.2) aquí[^], (.4) O sea to[^]dos nos llevamos bie[^]n
 4 con todos. (.) Sí: (.) buena ge[^]nte buena ge[^]nte, (.) >no tenemos
 5 proble[^]mas con na[^]die< (.2) >o sea to[^]dos nos llevamos muy bie[^]n,< no[^]s
 6 hablamos con todas las veci[^]nas, (.) cualquie[^]r cosa si: (.3) peque[^]ñas que
 7 se necesi[^]tan así, (.2) nos da[^]mos la ma[^]no igual, (.) Yo mi[^]sma por mi

- 8 *parte que si hay algo importa^nte,*
- 9 *Interviewer: Hmhhh, (.5) Te han ayuda^do mucho a ti^ (.) desde que llega^ste?*
- 10 *(.5)*
- 11 *Madelón: pues yo^ la verdad que ca^si no. (.2) las: (.) perso^nas todas de aquí^ (.) no*
- 12 *las cono^zco, (.) pero si me pregu^nta si las conozco de no^mbre, (.) sí^ (.)*
- 13 *Pero hasta la veci^na: (.) y otras de mira^da pero: (.2) a una seño^ra que*
- 14 *nos cuidaba el ni^ño, (.)*
- 15 *María: Noso^tros llevamos unos cuantos a^ños aquí, (.) aparte nos conocí^amos*
- 16 *algunas de a^ntes,*
- 17 *Madelón: Es lo que yo ve^o que algunos se conocían de a^ntes,*
- 18 *Rosina: Nos conocí^amos de a^ntes porque por casualidad tuvi^mos la condició^n de*
- 19 *que (.) nos conoci^mos en algun otro luga^r,*
- 20 *Interviewer: Y se se conocí^an de (.) de (.) de=*
- 21 *Rosina: =en el traba^jo.*
- 22 *María: casi siem[pre,*

Translation

- 1 Interviewer: But here you have the Latino community, don't you? Do you go out a lot
with the people [who are]
- 2 here, here, in Buena Vista? Or don't you?
- 3 Rosina: Well it really isn't easy, here. I mean **we all**
- 4 get along well with **everyone**. Yeah. **Good people, good people.**
- 5 We don't have problems with **anyone**. I mean, **we all** get along
- 6 very well. We talk with all the neighbors[fem.]. Anything,
- 7 yeah, any little thing we need, we give each other a hand any way.
- 8 Me too, on my part, if there is something important.
- 9 Interviewer: Hmhhh. Have they helped you a lot since you arrived?
- 10 (.5)
- 11 Madelón: Well to tell the truth, hardly. **All the people here,**
- 12 I don't know them. But if you ask me I know them by name,
- 13 yeah. But only the neighbor[fem] and a few others in passing but...one
- 14 lady who took care of our kids.
- 15 María: We've been here for quite a few years. Besides

- 16 some of us knew each other from before.
- 17 Madelón: It's what I noticed that some knew each other from before.
- 18 Rosina: We knew each other from before because by chance we had the
- 19 opportunity to meet each other in some other place.
- 20 Interviewer: And they knew each other from from...?
- 21 Rosina: at work.
- 22 María: Almost always.

In Example 4-1, Rosina, Madelón, and María are discussing their own personal relationship with people from their housing complex and from other neighborhoods in Kennett Square. Rosina and María, who have been in the US for a longer time (over ten years, compared to three years for Madelón), have many Mexican acquaintances. In this excerpt, Rosina discusses the fact that the members of the community all help each other out whenever necessary, and that they all have a good relationship. However, Madelón comments that she really does not know anyone besides her neighbor and a lady who babysat for her. Rosina and María appease her by telling her that they met most of the people they know at work. At a macro level, this excerpt confirms the tendency of Hispanic immigrants to associate closely with their group and to live and to share activities together (Rosaldo & Flores, 2004).

When discussing the fact that the people in the community get along well, Rosina uses the expression "*buena gente*" ('good people'). This is an idiomatic expression used to describe a group of people who are morally good. Rosina is indicating the moral value of her group, as a whole. The fact that Rosina repeats the expression further enhances her positive attitude towards the Mexican community of Kennett Square. Moreover, she had pointed out that 'they all' ("*todos*") got on well with 'everyone' ("*todos*") (lines 1 and 2, and later, in line 3). In line 3, Rosina adds that they have problems with 'nobody' ("*nadie*"). This indicates that no single individual is excluded from the category of the 'good people.' All these devices used together

emphasize the fact that the Mexican community associates as a whole, as a single unit, and highlights the positive affect felt by Rosina for the community at large.

In contrast, Madelón says that she does not know “*las personas todas de aquí*” (‘all the people here’). By using this expression with “*personas*,” the group of people she describes is presented as a set of discrete individuals within a larger group. The use of “*personas*” becomes clear when she subsequently explains which individuals she knows well and which others she knows in passing.

Madelón is, within the ESL group, and also within the entire set of participants from Complex A, the newest arrival to Kennett Square, and she does not yet know many members of the community. For her, the Mexican community is the group of individuals with whom she has had contact. For Rosina, on the other hand, the Mexican community is a group characterized by the quality of being “good.” This is a view shared by all the other participants, who have been in the US for a longer period of time.

The views of the participants concerning mainstream US society are quite different, as can be seen in the following excerpt (Example 4-2), which illustrates the use of “*gente*” and “*personas*” to index the relationship of the participants with members of the mainstream English-speaking community. This excerpt comes from an ESL discussion in Complex A during July of 2003.

Example 4-2: ‘People who try to understand us’ (From discussion in Complex A; 6/11/03).

- 1 Rosina: >E[^]so también es lo que pa[^]sa que:< (.) lo recha[^]zan también a u[^]no porque el
2 (.) ace[^]nto de noso[^]tros es muy, (.3) el ingl[^]és n[o:?:
3 María: [Aho[^]ra que
4 di[^]ces (.) cuando yo[^] trabaja[^]ba en (.) las pla[^]ntas (.) había una: (.2)
5 >entraba una norteamericana así a trabajar< (.) hh y la seño[^]ra tenía
6 predilecció[^]n por mí[^] (.) porque dice que los mexicanos son mas
7 trabaja[^]dores que los (.2) de aquí[^] (.2) y ella se empezó a molesta[^]r (.3)

- 8 y me decía “ve^n a senta^rte un rato a (.) tomar agua” o así^ (.) y yo le
 9 decí^a (.) “no^ es que estoy en mis horas de traba^jo.” (.2) Y e^lla se
 10 empezó a molesta^r (.) porque ella trabajaba = ella se la quería pasar en
 11 la:
 12 Rosina: descan=
 13 María: =en la so^mbra: (.) y tomando a^gua, (.3) y: despué^s ella me
 14 preguntaba co^sas y yo le respondi^a y me decía “a^y no. (.2) Yo^ no
 15 sé^ tu que estas habla^ndo. (.3) es un inglés (.) pero e^s un inglés, (.5)
 16 mu^y ra^ro [que yo no te entiendo na^da,”
 17 Interviewer: [Oo:h hh.
 18 María: Y yo le digo “bueno. Yo trato” le digo “yo trato de entenderte tu
 19 español también,” porque ella también trataba de hablar en español, y
 20 es, “tú crees que lo hablas bien,” le dije. “pero no, yo hago lo imposible
 21 por entenderte.”
 22 Valeria: Si. Pero=
 23 María: =Pero así^ (.) **hay mucha ge^nte que (.2) que nos compre^nde** y: (.)
 24 trata de ayudarlo a u^no y otros que
 25 Rosina: porque yo^ dí^go que **perso^nas sie^mpre hay (.2) pues para mí muy buenas**
 26 **que son de aquí de: (.) pues (.) de: Amé^rica, (.3) y: (.2) para mí han**
 27 **sido (.) bastante bien,**
 28 María: >hay un montón así.<

Translation

- 1 Rosina: That also is what happens, that they reject you
 2 Because our accent is very, the English, right?
 3 María: Now that you
 4 say it, when I used to work with plants, there was a,
 5 a North American[fem] came to work and the lady [boss]
 6 liked me a lot because she said that the Mexicans are harder
 7 workers than the people from here. And she began getting irritated
 8 and she would tell me “come and sit with me for a while to drink water”
 9 or something like that. And I would
 say to her “No, I am on duty.” And she

- 10 started to get irritated because she worked, she wanted to spend her time
 11 in the
- 12 Rosina: Resting
- 13 María: In the shade and drinking water. And then she would
 14 ask me things and I would answer and she would say “oh no. I don’t
 15 know what you are saying. It’s English but It’s an English that is
 16 very strange and I can’t understand you at all.”
- 17 Interviewer: Oh!
- 18 María: And I say to her, “Well, I try” I say to her “ I try to understand your
 19 Spanish, too” – because she also tried to speak Spanish and
 20 it is.... “You think you speak it well,” I said to her, “But no. I do the
 impossible
 21 to understand you.”
- 22 Valeria: Yeah but=
- 23 María: = But even so **there are many people who understand us** and
 24 try to help you, and others who...
- 25 Rosina: Because I say that **there are always people** who, I think, are
 26 very good **who are from here, well, from America**, and I think
 27 have been quite good.
- 28 María: There are many like that.

The narrative in Example 4-2 comes in response to Rosina’s observation of how many members of US society reject them because of their accent. María then tells the ESL class a story of when she had difficulty communicating with an American. The American woman criticized her for her accent in English, and María retorts that the American’s accent in Spanish was just as bad. After the narrative, the ESL class discusses the fact that, nevertheless, there are Americans who do understand them and try their best to communicate with them. It is in this last section that the uses of “*gente*” and of “*personas*” appear.

After her narrative, María clarifies that there are many people (“*gente*”) who understand them (line 20). By using the noun “*gente*,” María is creating a general category of those

Americans who make an effort to understand them. The use of “*gente*” also cues a positive attitude towards this category of people. This statement is introduced with the conjunction “*pero*” (‘but’) which expresses a contrast between María’s American co-worker and the people who do try to comprehend their accent. In contrast, Rosina then states that there are people (“*personas*”) from America who are quite good. By using “*personas*,” Rosina turns the group of good Americans into a set of discrete individuals, thus highlighting the fact that it is a limited number of people who actually try to understand the Mexicans’ Spanish.

María also indicates a contrast between American and Mexican workers in the plant nursery (lines 3-5); Mexican workers are better than their American counterparts. This confirms the value of work ethics as a characteristic of Mexican ethnic identity (Niemann et al., 1999). María also uses her lazy co-worker as an example of both the inefficiency of American workers and to index a negative attitude towards members of mainstream society who cannot communicate with the Mexicans.

It is apparent from this excerpt that language is an important factor that facilitates the relationship between the participants and members of other groups. Within the discussion of Hispanic people, three of the four instances in which the participants used “*gente*” were in reference to people who speak Spanish. In fact, of the five overt mentions of Hispanics, four were in relation to language. It thus becomes apparent that for the participants, the label “Hispanic” means “person who speaks Spanish.” Example 4-3 exemplifies this use of “*gente*.” This excerpt comes from the first interview with Pilar during June of 2003.

Example 4-3: ‘People who speak like you’ (From ESL discussion in Complex B; 6/23/03).

- 1 Interviewer: >Sí[^] (.2) la cosa es no queda:[^]rse tampo[^]co por tener miedo.<
- 2 Pilar: Hmm. (.4) No:[^] es miedo, (.3) es pe[^]na (.) que le da[^] a uno,
- 3 Interviewer: Sí:[^] (hh) ya[^] sé (.4) pero tampo[^]co hay que tener pe[^]na
- 4 Pilar: jajajajajaja
- 5 Interviewer: Porque estoy segu[^]ra (.) que mu:[^]chas de las señoras que están acá

- 6 (.) *ya han pasa^do por lo mismo.*
 7 (.8)
 8 *Pilar: Sí: ? (.2) Yo^: (.) yo cuando llegué me decía mi esposo.*
 9 (.6)
 10 *Que: (.2) si había seño^ras en la calle, (.2) que por qué no les hago*
 11 *dedo <“Ah, yo no,> (.3) Yo no se si me vayan a contestar en español*
 12 *o en inglés (.) Jajaja*
 13 *Y le decía “Ay no sin sabe^r”(.) y dice “no:” dice, (.2) luego se ve*
 14 ***la gente que es Mexicana** (.) que habla como tú <que es **Hispana**>*
 15 (.8)
 16 ***la gente que es hispa^na que habla cómo tú,***
 17 (.6)
 18 *Y ya:,(.3) yo ahorita estoy empeza^ndo a conoce^r, (.2) y ya con*
 19 *más confianza (.3) le puedo hablar **a aquellas personas,***

Translation

- 1 Interviewer: Yeah. The problem is not to stay in because you are afraid.
 2 Pilar: Hmmmm. It's not fear but embarrassment that one feels.
 3 Interviewer: Yeah, I know, but you shouldn't feel embarrassed either.
 4 Pilar: Hahahahahaha.
 5 Interviewer: Because I am sure that many ladies who are here
 6 have already passed through the same situation.
 7 (.8)
 8 Pilar: Yes? When I got here my husband would tell me
 9 (.6)
 10 that if there were women on the street and why didn't I
 11 thumb a ride with them? “Oh not me.” I don't know if they are going to
 12 respond to me in Spanish
 13 or in English. Hehehe
 14 And I said to him “oh not without knowing.” And I says “no” he says.
 15 And then you can see
 16 **the people who are Mexican, who speak like you, who are Hispanic,**
 17 (.8)

16 **The people who are Hispanic and speak like you.**
 17 (.6)
 18 And already, I am now beginning to know more and with
 19 more confidence I can speak **to those people.**

This account comes as a result of my admonition to Pilar that she should not stay at home because she is afraid of speaking in English. Pilar explains that she does not feel fear but, rather, embarrassment, and then tells me about her husband's suggestion that she hitch rides with ladies. Pilar does not accept his proposition because she is afraid she will not be able to communicate with a driver who speaks only English. She then adds that she would feel more confident with someone who speaks Spanish, who is Mexican or Hispanic.

In this excerpt, Pilar puts Mexicans, Hispanics, and myself – her interlocutor, who is not Mexican, but who speaks Spanish – in a same category, the category of people who speak in Spanish. She indicates this when, in line 14, she lists “*la gente que es Mexicana (.) que habla como tú <que es Hispana>*” (‘the people who are Mexican, who speak like you, who are Hispanic’). She further clarifies that Hispanic people (“*gente*”) speak like I do. The use of the expressions with “*gente*” unifies the category of all those who speak Spanish, including Hispanic people, thus indexing an association by Pilar with other Hispanics, speakers of Spanish. It also indexes a positive affect towards Spanish speakers.

However, in line 19, Pilar then says that she is beginning to ‘have more confidence to speak to those people.’ She switches to “*personas*” to refer to Hispanics. Pilar in this way differentiates between Mexicans and Hispanics; the Hispanics are discrete individuals, who live in close proximity to the Mexican community, and who speak Spanish, but they do not form part of the unified Mexican community. Her use of the demonstrative adjective “*aquellas*” (‘those-fem’) further indicates the distance, both physical and emotional, between both groups. This

excerpt confirms, once again, the close association of the participants with the Mexican community, but less so with other groups.

Cambodians are rarely referred to by the participants due to the limited contact the participants have with this group of immigrants. However, Celina once refers to the group of Cambodians who work with her in the mushroom factory via the use of an expression with “*gente*” (see Example 4-7). While discussing the fact that Mexican workers are being laid off and replaced with Cambodians, she says: “*pues dicen no hay que darle trabajo a la gente mexicana, (.3) y queda la gente de esa.*” (‘well they say that they shouldn’t give jobs to the Mexican people and those other people are left’).

The use of “*gente*” in reference to the Cambodians is quite interesting. In other parts of the conversation with Celina, and in conversations with other participants who worked in mushroom factories (Graciela and Marta, principally) it becomes apparent that the Mexicans have a closer connection to the Cambodians than to other US workers. In fact, Graciela commented on the fact that she is learning more Cambodian than English at work (fieldnotes; July 2007). I can thus conjecture that the use of “*gente*” in reference to the Cambodians cues this affinity with them, given their similar immigrant status.

However, this affinity is offset by the pejorative use of the determiner “*esa*” (‘that/those’) that indicates a distancing between both groups. This expression with “*gente*” cues affect, but in this case, the affect is negative, further confirming the distance existing between both groups.

African Americans are never referenced in the data set via the use of “*personas*” or “*gente*.” In Example 4-4, below, it becomes apparent that this is due to the lack of association between Mexicans and African Americans.

Example 4-4: The colored race (From interview with Carolina; 7/1/03).

1 Interviewer: A::yy (.2) *Y uste^des no se pueden quejar?*

2 (.8)

- 3 *Carolina:* *Sí (.2) sí pode^mos (.) pero (.2) yo le digo a la señora encargada (.3)*
 4 *pues yo^ ya platicué (.) verda^d (.) y me dijo que: (.2) que vaya (.)a*
 5 *la ofici^na^ (.3) pero mi esposo no quie^re (.2) porque di^ce que*
 6 *no^ (.5) ca^si por lo: regular (.2) la: hh (.) **la ra^za de colo:^r (.3)***
 7 ***tie^ne un cará^cter como muy fue^rte.***
- 8 *Interviewer:* *De^pende.*
 9 *(.3)*
- 10 *Carolina:* *Y dice a:^y nos vamos a echar de enemi^gos (.2) ahora (.3) él dice (.)*
 11 *él >que tienen muchos amigos que están vivie^ndo en todos los*
 12 *blo^ques< (.2) dice no:^ pero si les platican que: noso^tros vamos a*
 13 *queja^rnos >pues que no nos van a dejar dormir nunca.<*

Translation

- 1 Interviewer: Oh, and can't you complain?
 2 (.8)
- 3 Carolina: Yes we can. But I say to the lady in charge,
 4 Because I spoke to her, right? And she said that I had to go to the
 5 office. But my husband doesn't want to because he says that
 6 no, almost always the colored race
 7 has a character, like very strong.
- 8 Interviewer: It depends.
 9 (.3)
- 10 Carolina: And he says that we are going to make them our enemies now, he
 says
 11 that they have many friends who are living in all the
 12 blocks. He says no. But if they tell them that we are
 13 complaining, well they won't let us sleep ever.

Example 4-4 comes from the very beginning of the second interview with Carolina. At the onset of the interview I had commented on the loud banging from the apartment above and Carolina explains that those sounds are a regular part of her life. I ask Carolina if she has

complained about it and she responds that she is afraid to because she believes that African Americans can be aggressive and she fears antagonizing her neighbors.

In this excerpt, Carolina uses neither “*gente*” nor “*personas*” to describe her African American neighbors. Instead she describes them as belonging to the ‘colored race,’ and she explains her stereotypical view of this group of people: they are aggressive and have a ‘strong character.’ This confirms De Fina’s (2000, 2003) observation that Mexican immigrants have come to accept stereotypes of different ethnic groups in the US. Moreover, it indexes a distancing of the Mexican community from African Americans and a lack of affinity with this other ethnic group. In fact, in another account during an ESL discussion in Complex B, Magdalena refers to an African American co-worker of Carolina’s as ‘a demon,’ because of his lack of ability (or willingness) to communicate with her (ESL discussion in Complex B; 6/10/03).

Overall, the use of “*gente*” cues a certain degree of affinity of the participants with members of different groups – their own and others. By using this noun, they are expressing that the person being described belongs to a collective, of which the participants themselves are, in some way, part, due to shared experiences. Membership in the Mexican collective is clear: the members of the Mexican community have the shared experience of immigration, they speak the same language, and they frequently live in close proximity to each other in semi-enclosed neighborhoods. It is because of this close association with the Mexican community that the participants use “*gente*” much more frequently to describe members of this group. With Hispanic people the participants share a language, which is also true of the few Americans who speak Spanish or, at the very least, try to communicate with the Mexicans. With the Cambodian immigrants some of the participants share a job and similar problems at work. They also share a same or similar understanding of immigration. The fact that the participants can associate with more than one group results from their shifting roles and relations with different communities.

However, in spite of the fact that the participants express affinity with groups other than

their own, they simultaneously cue a distancing from these groups via the use of other linguistic devices in conjunction with “*gente*.”

The use of the noun phrases with “*personas*,” on the other hand, cues a lack of affinity with the group of individuals being described. It indicates that the people being described are seen as individuals who share little, if anything, with the speaker.

Finally, because of their very personal nature, the use of expressions with “*gente*” and “*personas*” is inherently associated with affect and the expressions are subjective in nature. The relations expressed can, thus, be considered to be central to the identity of the participants. Not surprisingly, Spanish language speakers are frequently described via the use of expressions with “*gente*,” as it is through the medium of language that the participants associate with their own and other groups.

4.2.2. Null subjects

Members of different ethnic or nationality groups were often mentioned, implicitly, via the description of their characteristics or of characteristics of activities in which they were involved. In many of these cases, individuals were introduced with a third person pronoun (explicit or null). Americans were introduced in this way 21 times (almost 46% of all implicit references to Americans), members of the Mexican community nine times, and Cambodians, once. If membership in a specific group was not readily identifiable given the context, then the use of the third person was not tabulated for analysis.

Most of the third person references were made explicitly via a subject pronoun. However, there were nine instances of null or 0-pronouns (one third of the tokens within this category). Null pronouns (subject and object), which are grammatically possible in Spanish, contain no explicit noun phrase. Usually, the noun can be understood deictically through anaphoric or, occasionally,

cataphoric reference. Members of the Mexican community were introduced in this way in only one section of text. The Mexicans made reference to in this way were members of the medical community mentioned during a discussion of the Mexican health system. This constitutes an insignificant number for the purpose of analysis. However, Americans were introduced with a null pronoun in eight instances. Analysis suggests that this is the result of the limited contact the participants have with the American community, and that it indicates a lack of affinity with this group at large.

In Spanish, null subjects (and objects) are seen as tools for anaphoric reference, and function from a stylistic point of view to avoid the repetition of the subject noun and/or subject pronoun (Bello, 1954; Blackwell, 1998). The null subject can replace the noun or pronoun in places where the context makes the subject unambiguous. Often it takes the place of background knowledge of cultural events and of the world (Cameron, 1992). In conversations between interlocutors who have intimate knowledge of each other's experiences, it can also replace people who are close to the speaker. The null subject is considered to be unacceptable to represent new information (Brucart, 1987), and extremely marked if there is no mention of the reference it replaces within ten clauses of the use of the null subject (Cameron, 1992).

Cameron (1992) notes that there are some cases where a plural third person null reference can be used in place of a generic subject. He uses the following example to illustrate this phenomenon: "*Q Comen a las diez.*" According to Cameron, the null pronoun replaces a generic group of people who eat at ten. By adding the pronoun "*ellos,*" the reference would change to a specific group of people. Alarcos Llorach (1994) considers this to be one of the impersonal uses of the null subject. Null pronouns used in this way do not always have a clear number or gender, and are coreferential in nature. This phenomenon is not exclusive to Spanish, but is also quite common in English. While not acceptable in prescriptive grammars, the use of the indefinite and plural "they" is frequently used to refer to a singular subject representative of a group at large

(Mackay, 1980). Singular third person null pronouns are used in the same way, albeit, infrequently.

Example 4-5, below, illustrates the use of null pronouns in reference to members of the American community. This excerpt comes from the first ESL discussion session in Complex B.

Example 4-5: Pilar on shopping (From ESL discussion in Complex B; 6/18/03).

- 1 Interviewer: Mu^y bien. (.) Bueno (.) lo que les querí^a preguntar es
 2 ju^stamente (.) lo que les habí^a dicho a^ntes. (.3) Si uste^des me
 3 pueden conta^r de algú^n (.) de algú^n momento (.) en que tuviero^n (.)
 4 algu^na dificultad con el i^nglés. (.2) les ha^ pasado alguna ve^z?
 5 (.6)
- 6 Carolina: Sie^mpre,
 7 Pilar: A mí^ sí me ha pasado^: hace: (.) como unos ocho día^s (.) sí me ha
 8 pasado,=
 9 Interviewer: =Qué^ le paso.
 10 Pilar: En la tienda^, (.) e::h [Ø] me cobra^ron, (.5) salí^ mero y me cobra^ron
 11 y:: (.)[Ø] no^ me dio eh lo que yo compré^ que e^ra una crema, (.5)
 12 entonces despué^s me regresé^ ya mismo por la crema^ (.) y me
 13 regresé^ y luego no sabía cómo decirle^ [Ø] que [Ø] me die^ra la
 14 crema, (.4) y yo^: le [Ø] dije yo^: (.2) ps [Ø] no^ hablaba españo^l y yo
 15 decía que:^ (.) que la crema, (.2) Yo le decía "/kre^m kre^m/" (.2) [Ø]
 16 no me entendí^an, [(.) porque no,
 17 Magdalena: [jejejejejeje
 18 Pilar: y yo decí^a que (.) que la /kre^m/, y yo^ hasta con: [(.) con se^ñas,
 19 Magdalena: [si, (.3) como di^ga.
 20 Pilar: Y ella dijo 'o^:h. So^rry sorry' (.) y hasta ta^nto [Ø] me la dio^, (.2)
 21 pero [Ø] no^ me entendía y no^

Translation

- 1 Interviewer: Very well. Ok. What I wanted to ask is precisely what I had said to
 2 you before, if you could tell me about some, some,
 3 time when you had difficulty using English. Has

- 4 this happened to you any time?
 5 (.6)
 6 Carolina: Always
 7 Pilar: It has happened to me like some eight days ago. Yeah it has
 8 happened to me.
 9 Interviewer: What happened to you?
 10 Pilar: In the store [**they**] charged me, as soon as I left and they charged me
 11 and [**she**] didn't give me what I had bought, which was a lotion.
 12 So then I went back immediately for the lotion. And I
 13 went back and then I didn't know how to tell [**her**] to give me the lotion.
 14 And I, I said to [**her**], because [**she**] didn't speak Spanish, and I said that
 15 the lotion... I said to [**her**] “/krem krem/.” [**they**] couldn't understand
 16 me because [**they**] don't
 17 Magdalena: hahahahahahaha
 18 Pilar: And I said that the /krem/ and I even used gestures
 19 Magdalena: Yes, whichever way you could say [it].
 20 Pilar: And **she** said “Oh sorry, sorry.” And then finally [**she**] gave it to me.
 21 But [**she**] couldn't understand me, and no...

Example 4-5 is a narrative Pilar tells about an experience she had shopping. She bought a lotion but she did not take it with her when she left, and then had to return to retrieve it. She had great difficulty communicating her problem to an employee at the store, but after much repetition of an anglicized version of “*crema*” (‘lotion’) pronounced as /krem/, and gesturing, Pilar was able to make herself understood.

Most of the subjects in this excerpt are null, as well as many of the direct objects. Pilar begins using a third person plural conjugation to indicate a generic population of store clerks (‘they’) and says ‘In the store [**they**] charged me.’ In reality, the subject is not a collective of clerks, but a single individual cashier.

Next Pilar switches to a third person singular conjugation when she notes that “[**Ø**] no^

me dió eh lo que yo compré” ([someone] didn’t give me what I had bought’). In Spanish the conjugation for the third person singular masculine and feminine are the same, so no gender is ascribable to the person being made reference to. However, it is possible to infer cataphorically that the person Pilar is referring to is the female clerk mentioned later, in line 11. It is very likely that this individual is the same generic person referred to earlier (in line 1) by means of the third person plural reference. This is also probably the same person Pilar tries to communicate with when she returns to the store. In lines 4 through 6 this individual is made reference to via the use of null direct objects.

Finally, in line 11, Pilar refers to her interlocutor using a third person singular feminine subject pronoun (“*ella*”). This is the first instance in which we know something about the person Pilar is speaking to, beyond the fact that she works at the store where Pilar bought the lotion. Pilar uses a null subject again in the last two instances when she makes reference to this same person.

Throughout this excerpt, the identity of the clerk is never clarified. It is possible to infer that Pilar is speaking about the same store attendant throughout. If this is the case, then we know that the person is female, and presumably is a cashier. However, the identity of the clerk is not important. She is simply one more clerk with whom Pilar has had difficulty communicating. This is further confirmed in line 6 when Pilar switches to the generic ‘they’ (indicated in line 7 with a third person plural conjugation) and explains that [‘they’] could not understand her because [‘they’] do not [speak Spanish]. Pilar had been speaking about the clerk, so the switch to the third person plural indexes the fact that the clerk is one of a general group of store attendants who do not speak Spanish.

In this excerpt, Pilar’s use of a null subject does not necessarily counter Blackwell’s (1998) affirmation that the subject should be identifiable by all interlocutors in the conversation by virtue of sharing experiences or knowledge that makes identification of the subject possible. The actual person is not identifiable, but the category of people she belongs to is recognizable by

anyone who is familiar with self-serve stores in the US. In fact, as noted by Cameron (1992), the use of a subject pronoun by Pilar would have given the store clerk a specific identity.

In the following excerpt (Example 4-6), Rosina also uses null subjects and objects to refer to a member of the American community – in this case, her boss at the mushroom factory. This excerpt also serves to show the negative affect Rosina feels towards her boss.

Example 4-6: Rosina on asking for a raise (From ESL discussion in Complex A; 6/11/03).

- 1 Interviewer: *Me pue[^]de hacer un cuento de alguna ve[^]z (.2) de cuándo pasó e[^]so?*
 2 (.2)
- 3 Rosina: *Hmm. (.) Hace como un año[^]*
 4 (.2)
- 5 Interviewer: *Hm.hmm,*
 6 (.3)
- 7 Rosina: *Que (.) fui[^] y le dije (.2) o sea que quería pedi[^]r que me aumentaran el*
 8 *sue[^]ldo,*
 9 (.6)
- 10 *Y: (.2) pues se me queda vie[^]ndo y dice*
 11 (1.6)
- 12 *Se me quedó viendo como: así (.) que qué[^] le deci[^]a pero (.4) yo[^] (.3)*
 13 *eso si (.) era como un: (.) mome[^]nto bochorno[^]so (.) y pues,*
 14 (1.0)
- 15 *Así[^], (.) osea que no sabía como deci[^]rle: (.2) que yo querí[^]a un*
 16 *aumento de sue[^]ldo pero no sabí[^]a como deci[^]rle,*
 17 (2.0)
- 18 *Y ya[^] luego o sea que (.2) me quedé calla[^]da y:, (.3) y yo yo yo (.) yo*
 19 *le di[^]je, (.2) pe[^]ro (.) como no me entendió[^] dije,*
 20 (1.0)
- 21 *Hasta despué[^]s que: (.) busque[^] a una perso[^]na que me: de: (.2) me*
 22 *escribie[^]ra cómo se de pedi[^]a aumento de sue[^]ldo,*
- 23 Interviewer: *A::h,*
- 24 Rosina: *Porque no podía deci[^]rlo. (.2) Porque no[^] (.) se muy bien cómo*
 25 *deci[^]rlo.*

Translation

- 1 Interviewer: Can you tell me story of some time that that happened to you?
 2 (.2)
- 3 Rosina: Hmm. It was about a year ago
 4 (.2)
- 5 Interviewer: Hmhmmm.
 6 (.3)
- 7 Rosina: That I went and **I said to [her]**, that is, that I wanted to ask for a raise
 8 in my salary.
 9 (.6)
- 10 And well **[she] is looking at me and [she] says**
 11 (1.6)
- 12 **[She] looks at me** like..., like **what was I saying to [her]**, but I,
 13 that was like, like an embarrassing moment, and well...
 14 (1.0)
- 15 So, that is, **I didn't know how to say to [her]** that I wanted a
 16 raise in my salary, but **I didn't know how to say it to [her]**.
 17 (2.0)
- 18 And then later, that is, I remained silent and I
 19 **said to [her]**...., but since **[she] didn't understand** I said...
 20 (1.0)
- 21 So then I looked for a person who could
 22 write for me how to ask for a raise in salary.
- 23 Interviewer: Oh.
- 24 Rosina: Because I couldn't say it to [her]. Because I don't know well how
 25 say it.

In Example 4-6 Rosina is discussing an occasion during which she attempted to ask for a raise in pay. Unfortunately, she was not able to make herself understood by her boss, so she had to resort to a co-worker, who wrote out the message for Rosina to take to her.

This excerpt contains the complete account of Rosina's inability to communicate with her boss. As can be noted, Rosina does not once refer to her boss by name; rather, Rosina uses null subjects and objects throughout the account. In fact, Rosina talked extensively about her difficulties communicating at work, both in the ESL discussions and in her interviews with me, but she never referred to her boss by name or using a third person pronoun. I only know she is a woman because Rosina mentioned this fact to me during an informal conversation with her.

In this excerpt it is apparent that Rosina is highly uncomfortable with her inability to communicate in English with her superior. This is cued through the long pauses between turns, and through Rosina's silence and her insistence that she 'didn't know well how to say it' ("*no^ (.) se muy bien cómo deci^rlo.*") (lines 24-25). Rosina's affect throughout this account is quite negative. The very fact that she chooses to use the null subject and object also cues a further distancing of Rosina from the events, and from the person who made her feel so uncomfortable.

The use of the null subject suggests that it is not necessary to know the identity of the people who performed the actions described. The action is what matters and not the protagonist or agent. The fact that, in most cases, it is Americans whose identity is not revealed cues both that the participants do not know the Americans involved in the actions well, and that they are not important to them, regardless. This further creates a separation between Mexicans and Americans, confirming, once again that members of the Mexican community identify more with their peers and exhibit more positive attitudes towards them than towards members of other groups (De Fina, 2000, 2003).

These references to Americans appear within subjective accounts of the participants' lives. Thus, they represent issues that are important parts of the identities of the Mexican women.

4.2.3. “*Nosotros*” and the Mexican community

Thus far I have discussed how the participants cue their relationships with their own and other ethnic and nationality communities. These relationships were expressed via the use of the third person. Many linguists consider the use of this pronominal system to be non-subjective in nature (Banfield, 1982; Benveniste, 1971; Finegan, 1995). However, the participants also use the first person plural to cue their membership in the Mexican community. In this section of the chapter I focus on these uses of the clearly subjective first person pronouns. I also analyze the use of other pronouns that embody the “I.”

According to Benveniste (1971), the use of the first person pronoun “I” is subjective because it indicates that the speaker is positioning him/herself as the subject of the action and thus the events are being recounted from his/her point of view. The first person plural “we,” is also subjective because it embodies the “I + extension.” This extension, depending on the context, can be “they” or “you.” Since the “we” includes the “I,” it, too, represents the thoughts of the speaker and is, thus, subjective.

Mühlhäuser and Harré (1990) posit that the concept of identity stems from the ability of individuals to distinguish themselves from other people. According to Mühlhäuser and Harré, who see pronouns as having an indexical rather than a deictic function, speakers, throughout their life-time, build sets of experiences that they associate with different aspects of their own identities, and which enable them to distinguish themselves from others. The pronoun “I” is usually selected to represent this set of unique experiences. The authors posit, “Everything I say about myself must be grammatically assigned to *I*” (p 18). Speakers also have a battery of experiences that they have shared with other individuals, and may thus choose to use another pronoun (“we”, “one”, or “you”) to refer to him/herself, *and* to the interlocutor or other people who have shared in those events. Analysis of each pronoun in context becomes necessary to

ascertain whether a pronoun cues subjectivity.

In this section I focus on the use of the Spanish first person plural pronoun “*nosotros*” (‘we’) by the participants. “*Nosotros*” appears eight times in direct reference to Mexicans and members of the Mexican community in Kennett Square.

According to De Fina (2003), Mexican immigrants use first person plural references to index their identification with their ethnic group, even when telling narratives in which the speaker is the sole protagonist. This also seems to be the case, after a cursory look at the data in this study. However, a closer examination suggests that the first person plural is used by the participants to refer to sub-groups within the community of Mexican people in Kennett Square. In the eight cases where the first person plural is used, the subgroups referred to, as inferred from the context are: the set of Mexican women who walk together in Complex B (3 tokens), the set of Mexican mushroom factory workers (2 tokens), a group of neighbors (2 tokens), and the set of students taking part in the ESL classes (1 token).

Example 4-7 illustrates the use of the first person plural to represent the set of Mexicans working in the mushroom factories. This excerpt comes from an interview with Celina in August, 2003.

Example 4-7: Celina on Mexicans in the mushroom factories (From interview with Celina; 7/25/03).

- 1 *Celina: Ahora ya: (.) cambiaron la gente de mexicanos por cambodianos,*
 2 *(.4) Trabaja^mos sí (.) trabajamos, (.2) pero: muy pocas,*
 3 *Interviewer: Uyy, (.) así que van a seguir cambiando las cosas.*
 4 *Celina: Sí, (.4) Es que a ve^ces se sa^len do^s o tres personas y:: este: mexicanos (.)*
 5 *y nada más hhh (.2) va una mexicana y: ahora no más van metiendo (.2) dos*
 6 *o tres cambodes y:*
 7 *(.4)*
 8 *Interviewer: Y a dónde van a trabajar los mexicanos entonces?*
 9 *(.4)*

10 Celina: *E[^]s que di[^]cen que **los mexicanos somos medio briagosos**,*
 11 *(1.2)*
 12 *Porque: (.3) esa ehh (.) pues como: (.) e[^]llos mire. (.3) e[^]llos no piden:*
 13 *vacaciones,*
 14 *(.6)*
 15 *Se: golpeaba un: (.2) un cambodiano, (.3) y ya[^]: se traen uno nue[^]vo y deja*
 16 *de golpear,*
 17 *(.6)*
 18 *Y si se golpea uno mexicano, (.) pues a uno tienen que: **llevarlo al doctor**,*
 19 *(.3) por eso yo di[^]go que a lo mejor este.*
 20 *(.8) pues dicen no hay que darle trabajo a la gente mexicana, (.3) y queda la*
 21 *gente de esa.*

Translation:

1 Celina: Now they have exchanged Cambodians for people from Mexico.
 2 (.4)**We work, Yeah, we work**, but [we are] few[fem.].
 3 Interviewer: Ohh. So things are going to continue changing?
 4 Celina: Yeah. It's that sometimes two or three people stop working and, hmm,
 Mexicans
 5 and only one Mexican[fem.] goes and now they are putting in two
 6 or three Cambodians, and
 7 (.4)
 8 Interviewer: And where do Mexicans go to work then?
 9 (.4)
 10 Celina: It's that they say that **the Mexicans, we are sort of querulous**,
 11 (1.2)
 12 because that, well, like them, you see, well they don't ask for
 13 vacations.
 14 (.6)
 15 If one gets hit, a Cambodian, well they bring another new one and he
 doesn't
 16 hit himself any more.
 17 (.6)

18 And if I Mexican hits himself, **they have to take you to the doctor**,
 19 (.3) that's why I think that maybe,
 20 well they say that they shouldn't give jobs to the Mexican people and
 those other
 21 people are left.

Example 4-7 is a narrative told to me spontaneously by Celina. I had been asking her about a part time job that she held at the time, and this excerpt represents a change of subject by her. In it Celina tells me about the current conditions at her main job in the mushroom factory. Mexican employees are being replaced by Cambodians because the Cambodians do not get benefits (they do not work enough hours), and they do not get paid vacations, like the Mexicans do. Celina explains that the reason for this is because the Mexican employees are more “*briagosos*” (‘querulous’).

There are two instances of the use of the first person plural in this excerpt, in lines 2 and 10. In line 2 Celina says that ‘we work, yeah, we work.’ The people described by the third person plural, however, are not necessarily all the Mexicans in Kennett Square, but only the set of Mexicans who work at the mushroom factory with Celina. The same is the case later in line 10 when Celina says that Mexicans are ‘querulous.’ Once again, the querulous Mexicans are those that work at the factory and expect full-time jobs, benefits, and paid vacations.

Celina shifts from “*nosotros*,” representing the set of mushroom workers, to “*uno*” (indefinite singular pronoun) in line 18. With her use of “*uno*,” Celina indexes the group of mushroom workers that includes herself. However, the use of the singular “*uno*,” while representing a generic group, has the effect of centering the event around Celina, herself. A better translation for “*uno*” than ‘you,’ even though less common in English within this context, would be ‘one.’ The inclusion of the speaker as a protagonist in the actions, expressed via the use of “*nosotros*” and of “*uno*,” makes these actions subjective.

The switch from the first person plural to the indefinite also serves as a contextualization cue for the different attitudes towards the actions carried out by the “different” grammatical persons. The actions of working and of being ‘querulous’ are expressed via the use of “*nosotros*.” The attitude attached to these actions is positive. This is more noticeable in Celina’s explanation of being ‘querulous’: the Mexicans know enough to expect vacations and benefits for their work. She is also describing them in opposition to the Cambodians, who are taking jobs once held by Mexicans. On the other hand, “*uno*” is the patient and indirect object of being taken to the doctor. While also subjective in nature, the use of “*uno*” cues a more negative attitude towards the action of which it is the object.

This excerpt highlights the different attitudes towards other ethnic groups. The Mexicans are better workers than the Cambodians, even if they are querulous. The bosses, who represent the American community, are more preoccupied by expenses incurred by having to pay the Mexicans vacations and benefits, so they are exchanging Mexican workers for Cambodians. This indexes a negative attitude towards Americans, in general. And the Cambodian immigrants are taking jobs formerly held almost exclusively by Mexicans.

Overall, in this excerpt it becomes apparent that the use of the first person plural “*nosotros*” cues, not the entire community of Mexicans, but the group of Mexican mushroom workers who work with Celina. It also cues a positive attitude towards Mexicans in general, as represented by the group of Mexican mushroom workers.

In Example 4-8, I examine the use of “*nosotros*” in a different context. In this case, the group of people indexed by the use of the third person plural is the group of Mexican women who go on walks together. This excerpt comes from an interview with Magdalena.

Example 4-8: Magdalena on her “walking classes” (From interview with Magdalena; 7/1/03).

- 1 Interviewer: *No e^s imposible pero es dif^{ic}il. (.3) La co[^]sa es asocia[^]r (.) la*
 2 *pala[^]bra con (.) como se escri[^]be (.) y no[^] pensar (.) que tiene que ser*

- 3 *como se pronuncia. (.5) e[^]s muy difi[^]cil.*
 4 (.6)
 5 *Magdalena: >Muy difícil< (.2) E[^]se día nos reí[^]amos las mexicanas (.) ahora*
 6 *va[^]mos a ver yo creo que e[^]s má[^]s fá[^]cil que ustedes aprendan (.2)*
 7 *español jejejejeje (.) que a u[^]no aprender inglé[^]s*
 8 *Interviewer: jaja:*
 9 *Magdalena: No[^]: (.) a mí[^] me da hasta ri[^]sa (.) porque lue[^]go vie[^]nen las (.2) con la*
 10 *seño[^]ra que nos ense[^]ña a: (.) a camina[^]r (.) >bueno viene a camina[^]r,<*
 11 *(.2) una seño[^]ra Americana (.) y no[^] nos entiende na[^]da (.) no más que*
 12 *vie[^]ne una mucha[^]cha de la Hispa[^]na,*

Translation

- 1 Interviewer: It's not impossible, but it is hard. You just have to associate the word
 with
 2 how it is written and not think that it has to be the same as it is
 3 pronounced. It's very hard.
 4 (.6)
 5 Magdalena: Very difficult. That day **us Mexicans[fem.] laughed**. Now
 6 **we are going to see**, I think, that it is easier for **you[pl]** to learn
 7 Spanish, hahahahahah, than for **one to learn English**.
 8 Interviewer: Haha
 9 Magdalena: No. I think it is funny, because then they come with the
 10 lady who **teaches us** to walk, well she comes
 11 to walk, an American lady, and she **doesn't understand us**
 12 at all. Only that she comes with a girl from the "Hispana"

In Example 4-8, Magdalena is recounting an activity that was organized by the "Hispana," a non-profit organization that helps Hispanic people in the Kennett Square area. This activity is a bi-weekly walk with the ladies in Complex B led by one American lady and a Spanish-speaking assistant from the "Hispana." The American lady does not speak Spanish, so the assistant acts as an interpreter between her and the group of Mexican women.

Magdalena begins this account by telling me that her group of ‘walking class-mates’ laughed at the American lady who could not speak Spanish (Magdalena considers this activity to be a class). She uses the reflexive construction “*nos reíamos las mexicanas*” (‘us Mexicans[fem.] laughed’). The subject is not all Mexicans, but the group of Mexican ladies who took part in the walking activity. Thus, once again, the first person plural is not used to cue the entire Mexican community, but, rather, a smaller network of communication within it. It also positions the group of Mexican women in opposition to the American women.

“*Nosotros*” is also used as the indirect object in reflexive constructions in lines 6 and 7. The Mexican ladies are taught how to walk, and are not understood by the American lady. The affect attached to all these actions, the laughing, the learning, and the being understood, is very positive, and cause of hilarity. Magdalena thinks it is funny that the American lady cannot understand them and has to recourse to the interpreter from the “Hispana.” There is a clear indication in the pride of speaking Spanish.

Magdalena switches pronouns, in lines 2-3, and says that it is easier for Americans to learn Spanish “*que a uno aprender ingles*” (‘than for **one** to learn English’). In this case I have translated “*uno*” as ‘one’ to create a distinction with the ‘you’ used earlier on the same line, and also because this “*uno*,” in spite of being indefinite and potentially indexing a generic group of Mexicans, truly represents Magdalena and her own difficulty to learn English. As in the previous excerpt, negative affect is associated with the use of “*uno*.”

The cases of the first person pronoun tabulated are those in which the speakers unequivocally indexed their membership in the Mexican community together with the use of “*nosotros*.” That is, the third person plural pronouns appear in conjunction with the label of “Mexicans.” There are many other uses of “*nosotros*” in which membership in the Mexican community is not directly cued. Rather, the subject implied by the use of this pronoun was the immediate family of the speaker, or a small group of friends, or neighbors, including members of

other ethnic groups. It becomes apparent that the use of “*nosotros*” does not index a collective identity with the Mexican community. Rather, it cues membership in sub-groups of the Mexican community, or in networks of communication within it.

The use of “*nosotros*” and of “*uno*” cues subjective sections of discourse, and affect towards the events being recounted. “*Uno*” cues negative affect while “*nosotros*” cues positive feelings. In particular, the use of “*nosotros*” cues a positive attitude towards two topics in particular that relate to ethnic identity: pride in work ethics of Mexican people (3 tokens), and pride in being able to communicate in Spanish (5 tokens).

4.3. Conclusion

In this chapter I have focused on the use of modes of reference by the participants to express their affinity and association with their own and other ethnic and nationality groups. The most noteworthy of these modes of reference were the use of expressions with “*gente*” and “*personas*,” the use of null pronouns in the place of subjects and objects, and the use of the first person plural pronoun “*nosotros*.”

The use of “*gente*” and “*personas*” served as contextualization cues for affect in general, but more importantly, it cued affinity with certain groups or lack thereof. Via the use of “*gente*,” the participants cued affinity with the group being discussed and the sharing of experiences or understandings. However, this affinity could be offset by the parallel use of other linguistic devices that indicated a lack of identification with and a distancing from the group thus defined. The use of “*personas*” cued a lack of affinity with the group that was being described. It indicated relationships with individuals and not with the group at large.

The use of null or 0-pronouns indicated that the individuals being made reference to were not known well, and that they represented generic members of a type of community: store clerks,

doctors, American bosses, and co-workers. Their identification was not necessary to understand the events being recounted by the participants. The fact that members of the mainstream US society were cued in this way more frequently confirms that the participants have very little affinity with the community at large.

The use of the third person pronouns was found to cue a relationship with sub-groups within the Mexican community, rather than to represent an identification with the group at large. Thus, though the participants express a greater affinity with their own group via the use of the other linguistic devices, the use of “*nosotros*” cues a direct relationship only with sub-sections of it.

The analysis of the various modes of reference indicates that membership in the Mexican community of Kennett Square is a valued aspect of the identities of the participants. The participants express a strong affinity to their own group, and the affect associated to the expressions of this affinity make their accounts subjective and centered round themselves. The modes of reference also indicate a distancing from other groups, even when shared experiences or understandings exist. Thus, the participants express a strong identification with their own Mexican community. There is also evidence of a certain level of conflict with other groups as indicated by the use of different linguistic devices by the participants to distance themselves from members of these other groups.

However, the participants express a more direct association with sub-sets of their community via the subjective use of the first person plural pronoun “*nosotros*” used in conjunction with expressions of Mexicanness. Thus, I would posit that membership in these sub-sets takes preponderance over membership in the community at large. These sub-sets relate mainly to the family group and to work groups, thus establishing these two groups as central to the identification of the participants. Another important aspect of the participants’ identity is their use of the Spanish language.

The affinity of the participants with Spanish speakers and their distancing from speakers of other languages may very well explain why the participants have not become fully invested (Norton, 1997, 2000; Norton-Pierce, 1995) in learning English. Many of them have attended ESL classes, including the classes I offered at their housing complexes during the summer of 2003. However, they all report not feeling competent in English, even those who have lived in the US for over a decade. The fact that they feel distanced from the mainstream English-speaking US society may very well be creating a social distance (Schumann, 1986, 1991) which inhibits them from fully applying themselves to their studies and from investing time towards communicating with English speakers.

Chapter 5

Dialogue and gendered identity

5. Introduction

There is a considerable body of writing, especially within the fields of sociology, anthropology, and gender studies, on how Hispanic women conceptualize their gendered roles (as discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.1.2). Much of this writing discusses the importance of patriarchy in the social constitution of Hispanic societies (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1992, 1994) or frames these societies from the perspective of male hegemony (Gutierrez, 1993; Martinez Garcia et al., 2005). Patriarchy, often called “machismo,” is, in fact, an integral part of the Hispanic culture (Gutmann, 2007; Stevens, 1965, 1973). A model of gendered roles that complements that of machismo is marianismo (Stevens, 1965, 1973), which is an ideology of gendered relations that highlights the role of women as virtuous mother figures (see chapter 2).

There has, however, been little research, as yet, on how Hispanic women express their gendered roles and identities, and their relationship to men, within their discourse, which is a major motivator for this study. In particular, in this section of the dissertation, I analyze the use of reported speech as an indicator of important aspects of the identities of the participants.

Reported speech has been studied in relation to its role in indexing identity (Besnier, 1992; De Fina, 2003; Johnstone, 1990; Schiffrin, 2002). Much research also focuses on the fact that reported speech is used by narrators as evidence for their opinions, and to highlight aspects of narrative that are important to them (Koontz, 1977; Larson, 1978), or analyzes its affective function (Gunthner, 1997; Voloshinov, 1994).

Within the current data set, reported speech appears in all sections of narrative, but mainly within the introduction, evaluation, and coda sections (Labov, 1972; Labov & Waletzky, 1966). However, it also appears within the complicating action. In fact, many narratives are made up of a dialogue (a sequence of reported utterances), rather than of a sequence of events. It thus becomes interesting to look at who the participants report, and to analyze the power relationships between the narrators and the people they report.

Following the model of De Fina (2003), in this chapter I analyze if and how the participants use the speech of people who they highly respect, or who hold some authority over them, to support their own views of events and of the issues they are recounting. If the participants use the speech of their spouses predominantly, then they are upholding the power relationships typical of machista and marianistic societies.

I also analyze how the participants use reported speech as a contextualization cue (Gumperz, 1977, 1980, 1982, 1989, 1992a, 1992b, 1997; Schiffrin, 1987b) for subjective (Banfield, 1982; Benveniste, 1971; Iwasaki, 1993; Kuroda, 1973; Maynard, 1993) sections of text, to index aspects of their identity that are important to them, and as a means of portraying their relationship with the people that they quote. In particular I study how reported speech is used in narratives of gendered identity that revolve round three different topics. These three topics, identified based on the traditional gendered roles outlined in the literature on machismo and marianismo, are the roles of the women with respect to their husbands, to their children, and to their chores within their family homes (as housewives). This last topic concerns the maintenance of the physical environment for the entire family. By analyzing reported speech as a cue to affect and to subjectivity, it becomes possible to see which aspects of the participants' lives are more central to their identities.

This chapter is organized as follows. In section 5.1, I discuss the characteristics of reported speech, and how it has been studied in relation to affect, subjectivity, and to identity. In

5.2, I focus on the use of reported speech within the data set, and how it is used by the participants to support their narratives of gendered identity. In 5.3 I present my conclusions.

5.1. Reported Speech

Reported speech is a discursive feature commonly used throughout the narratives in the current data set, and is clearly present in those that revolve round the topic of the gendered roles of the participants. In fact, its use is practically a cue for the social act of narration for the participants; of the 40 narratives identified that discuss these topics, only three do not contain any instances of reported speech, and these are all generic narratives (Polanyi, 1989; Trinch & Berk-Seligson, 2002), i.e., accounts of daily routines.

In order to analyze the gendered identities of the participants in this study, I look at how the participants report their own discourse, and that of others, as a means of supporting their narratives about their roles as mothers, wives, and housewives. This discursive feature was selected because of its frequency of occurrence, and because through its analysis it is possible to study the relationships between the narrator and the distal speaker(s). It also became evident that reported sections were one of the principal means by which affect was expressed within the narratives. Reported sections, especially directly reported sections, are subjective in nature (Banfield, 1982), and are ideal for the analysis of the features of their identity that are more central to the participants.

According to Coulmas (1986), in his introduction to a compendium of articles about reported speech, direct reported speech is the reproduction, in a narrative, of words uttered at a past time by the distal speaker: the narrator him/herself, or a third person. The utterances reproduced in direct speech are purportedly the same or almost the same as those produced originally. Coulmas gives the following (Example 5-1) as an example of direct reported speech,

in which the narrator tells his/her interlocutors about what Othello, a character in the narrative, tells Desdemona, another character:

Example 5-1.

“Have you pray’d to-night, Desdemona?” asked Othello, and Desdemona answered: “Aye, my lord.” (p. 2)

According to Coulmas, the first set of reported speech represents the words uttered by Othello, and thus conveys his view of the event being recounted, rather than that of the narrator. The second set “Aye, my lord,” represents Desdemona’s actual words and thoughts.

On the other hand, in indirectly reported speech the reported utterance is produced from the perspective of the narrator, even if he/she is reporting what was said by someone else at the time when the event took place. The following (Example 5-2) is an example of indirect speech from Coulmas’ (1986) study:

Example 5-2

Othello asked his wife whether she had said her nightly prayers, which she affirmed. (p. 2)

In indirectly reported speech, the narrator is “free to introduce information about the [indirect] reported speech from his point of view and on the basis of his knowledge about the world, as he does not purport to give the actual words that were uttered by the original speaker(s)” (Coulmas, 1986, p. 3).

Another category of reported speech that I refer to in this study is that of distal thought (Chafe, 1994), in which the narrator alludes to a thought process rather than to actual speech, as seen in the following examples (Examples 5-3 and 5-4):

Example 5-3.

and I thought wèll,

...wórsè things could hàppen to the pòor gúy, (Chafe, 1994, p. 221)

Example 5-4.

I think I'll just mòve it back into the kitchen, (Chafe, 1994, p. 220)

These three types of reported speech: directly reported speech, indirectly reported speech, and distal thought, appear very frequently in the narratives of the participants, and form the basis of analysis for this chapter.

5.1.1. The discursive function of reported speech

According to Talmy (1995), when a speaker tells a narrative, he/she organizes the events and the characters who participate in them in such a way as to bring out the aspects of the event that are most relevant to him/her. Particularly when the narrator is also a character in the narrative, the narrative functions as a “replaying” of the his/her life (Goffman, 1974). Replayings are representative of what the narrator wants interlocutors to see about him/herself, and are orchestrated to elicit more empathy from them.

Moreover, according to Goffman (1981), dialogues with or between other characters represent the point of view of the narrator. In fact, the dialogue in replayings is one of the means by which a narrator presents him/herself via the narrative. The words uttered by the characters are selected and/or re-shaped to fit the narrator’s own opinions. These shifts in voice by the narrator comprise what Goffman refers to as “footing.”

Similarly, Bakhtin posits that within a reported utterance there are at least two different voices: the narrator’s and the character’s who is speaking, uttered then and now, and containing at

least two different intentions, the character's and the narrator's, but merged into the voice of the narrator. As a result, in reported speech the boundaries between the narrator and the people whose words he/she is representing are weakened, and the expressive values of the narrator are transposed onto the words of the character. Reported speech is, thus, truly heteroglossic in nature (Voloshinov, 1994). According to Bakhtin (1981):

The other's word should be transformed into [the narrator's] own/other (or other's/one's own). Distance (outsidedness) and respect. In the process of dialogic communication, the object is transformed into the subject (the other's I). (p. 145)

Overall, Talmy, Goffman and Bakhtin bring to the forefront a very important function of reported speech: that of highlighting different aspects of the narrator's identities.

Reported speech (and distal thought) is also frequently used by speakers to call attention to specific events or situations within stretches of narrative (Koontz, 1977; Larson, 1978). The sections of dialogue reported by narrators within their stories are carefully selected to enhance or support a point being made. The fact that a narrator chooses to report these specific stretches of conversation and not others implies a judgment by the narrator concerning their relevance within the current narrative (Chafe, 1994). The reported speech presented is used as evidence for the events being recounted, or, in particular, as evidence for the narrator's opinion. Since someone has already stated the same, or a similar opinion before, the proposition then becomes stronger and truer (Besnier, 1992; Gunthner, 1997; Schieffelin, 1996; Uchida, 1997). It thus becomes important to see *who* the narrator chooses to quote in support of his/her ideas. It is to be expected that the distal speaker quoted will be someone whose support is highly valued by the narrator due to the affective connection between them, or due to the power of the distal speaker.

De Fina (2000, 2003), in her study of Mexican immigrants, posits that the choice of who the narrator reports is highly significant. In her study of Mexican identity, De Fina finds that Mexican immigrants tend to report the words of figures of authority, primarily the police, within their narratives about crossing the border. This treatment of authority figures serves to illustrate

the Mexican immigrants' own feelings of inferiority and the respect that they have for the people who have power over their lives and their freedom.

De Fina (2003) further notes that her participants also use reported speech introduced with the reporting verb conjugated for the first person plural "*nosotros*" ('we') when they are representing the ideologies of their community, or as part of a chorus response to a figure of authority. She posits that this use of the reported speech further indicates the close relationship existent among the Mexican community at large.

Reported speech has also been studied as a cue to the relationship between the narrator and the distal speaker(s). Schiffrin's (2002) analyzes the use of reported speech by her participant as a means of ascertaining the emotional relationship between her and the people she reported. In her study, Schiffrin finds that the narrator's use of reported speech and of forms of reference serves to express distance from her own mother, and closeness with the group of friends with whom she lived in the Jewish camps during World War II. The narrator tends to use the reported dialogues with her friends within the complicating actions of her narrative, but reported dialogues with her mother in evaluative sections. This cues a greater closeness with her friends, as evidenced by their sharing of experiences. This is ratified by the greater use of first person plural pronouns when discussing events in which her group of "camp sisters" took part, expressing a collective identity ("us") that contrasts starkly with the "them" embodied by camp guards.

The narrator in Schiffrin's (2002) study also includes many sections of "unsaid" speech when discussing her interactions with her mother. In fact, 66% of her exchanges with her mother were never said. According to Schiffrin, this cues a distance between the narrator and her mother, since the narrator was not able to establish an open relationship with her. Overall, the author argues that these relationships, mainly expressed via the use of reference and of reported dialogue, are highly indicative of her narrator's identity as a survivor of the Holocaust.

Reported speech also has also been found to have an important function in indexing

subjectivity (Benveniste, 1971). Holt (1996) posits that direct reported speech, as a means of “recreating” the original conversation with the distal speaker, can bring the events/thoughts to the current time and place. This creates the effect of making issues that are reported stronger, more present, and subjective in nature (Banfield, 1982), particularly if the reported utterance uses the present tense (Chafe, 1994).

In this chapter I appeal to the studies by De Fina (2003) and Schiffrin (2002) as models for my own analysis. I take from De Fina the importance of finding who the participants quote as a means of supporting their own ideas, and in order to study the power relationships between them. From Schiffrin I take the analysis of relationships between narrator and speaker, not in terms of power, but in terms of closeness and affect. I also analyze how the use of reported speech by the participants cues sections of narrative that are subjective, and I examine whether the tenets of traditional literature on gendered identities (machismo and marianismo -- Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1992; Stevens, 1965, 1973) are upheld by this analysis.

5.2. Reported speech in the data set

The data were first analyzed with the purpose of identifying narratives related to gendered identity, that is, the narratives that had to do with the participants’ roles in relation to their husbands, their children, and their households. These topics embody the traditional roles of Hispanic women.

Overall, 40 narratives related to the topics of gendered identity were identified within the data set. Some narratives discuss more than one topic related to gender. They appeared within the interviews with the participants, and relate to the participants, themselves in all cases except one – one narrative is about a participant’s mother. None of these narratives appeared within the ESL discussions. Table 5-1 shows the division of the narratives by topic.

Table 5-1: Narratives of gendered identity by topic .

Role as mother	24
Role as wife	25
Role as maintainer of a household	10

Within the forty narratives, there are 191 tokens of reported speech (direct and indirect), and 14 of distal or reported thought. 117 of the total of reported statements are reports of past or current thought and/or utterances produced by the participants themselves, and 88 reproduce the distal speech of other people. The participants use directly reported (148 tokens) more than indirectly reported (57 tokens) speech, as seen in Table 5-2.

Table 5-2: Reporting the self and reporting others .

Reported Self (speech and thought)		Reported Other	
Direct	Indirect	Direct	Indirect
85	32	63	25
Total: 117		Total: 88	

A stronger affective stance (Ochs, 1990, 1992, 1996; Ochs & Schieffelin, 1994) is cued by directly reported utterances and distal thought, while indirectly reported speech usually has a reportive (Banfield, 1982; Li & Zubin, 1995) or referential (Maynard, 1993) function. Thus, I focus on the first two as a means of better understanding the identities of the participants.

I begin by analyzing who is reported directly most frequently, and why. As seen in Table 2, the participants report themselves 85 times, and others 63 times. When they report themselves, the participants stress their own opinion and bring it to the forefront much more prominently than

if they had stated it simply as a fact, as shown in Example 5-5. This excerpt comes from the first interview with Mariana in July of 2007.

Example 5-5: Mariana on working at home (From interview with Mariana; 7/22/03).

- 1 Mariana: Pues mi^{re} yo[^]: e[^]ste hombre (.) **di[^]go** es, (.3) é[^]l pues en su traba[^]jo, (.4) y: me
 2 da[^] para vivir bie[^]n, (.) aquí[^] yo todo ordeno la ca[^]sa, (.) >**di[^]go** no trabajo<
 3 pero má[^]s que mi traba[^]jo que hago aquí[^],
 4 (.6)
 5 Marta: Claro que es trabajo.
 6 Mariana: Así[^] **di[^]go** yo[^] verda[^]d? (.) jajaja Estoy trabajando sin sue[^]lido porque na[^]die me
 7 pa[^]ga (.) jajaja pero (.) hago u:::y[^] también, (.2) Pues hmm **di[^]go[^]:**,

Translation

- 1 Mariana: Well, you see, This man, **I say**, is... well he works and I
 2 can live well. Here I all put the house in order. **I say**, I don't work,
 3 but I do more than my job here.
 4 (.6)
 5 Marta: Of course that is work!
 6 Mariana: That's what **I say**, right? Hehehehe. I am working for no pay because nobody
 7 pays me, heheheheh. But oh I do [my job], too. Well, **I say**.

Example 5-5 is the introduction to a short generic narrative (Polanyi, 1989) by Mariana about her daily routine at home in Kennett Square. In this excerpt, she tells about the fact that she works a lot and is given little recognition for her toils. She uses the image of pay to illustrate this lack of recognition— she receives no pay for her work in her house.

In this excerpt, Mariana turns her current opinions into reported (or distal) thought via the use of the verbal clause 'I say' ("*di[^]go*"). This clause is frequently used as a discourse marker (Schiffrin, 1987a). Within this context Mariana uses it not only as a filler, and to index a shift in frames, but as a means to make her opinions stronger. She is making herself the speaker of these thoughts, not only by virtue of saying them, but by indicating that she is their author via the use

of the reporting verb.

Moreover, by highlighting herself as the author of these comments about her function at home, Mariana is making her utterances subjective. If Mariana had stated her work and her dissatisfaction with her life without using the reporting verb “ *digo,*” her utterances would simply be statements of fact. By adding the marker, she turns her statements into personal opinions, which further cues a high degree of conviction.

Within the set of narratives on the topic of gendered roles, the participants directly cite others 63 times. Of these instances, 23.8% (16) are tokens of reporting of their children. The participants cite their mothers five times, and ‘people’ in general (“ *gente*”) six times. Fourteen tokens (22%) are instances of the reporting of specific other people: friends or relatives, mainly. The participants, however, quote their own spouses the most: 36.5% of all the tokens of the direct reporting of others (23 tokens).

However, the fact that the participants quote themselves more frequently than other people (almost 60% of all tokens of directly reported speech), indicates that the participants do not need to cite others as a means of supporting their own opinions. This does not mean that it is not important *who* they cite; the participants show a preference for citing people who they hold in great esteem (their children and friends) or who hold some authority over them (their mother and their spouses). This preference is probably due to the nature of the relationship with the people cited, rather than to a need for security and support of their own ideas. It also becomes apparent that the main function of reported speech is to highlight certain sections of narrative that cue the greatest affect (as noted by Koontz, 1977; and Larson, 1978), and which are, thus, subjective in nature.

In the following section I focus on how the participants use directly reported speech as a means of highlighting their affect concerning their relationship with their husbands, their children, and with their work to maintain the physical environment of their home.

5.2.1. The participants as wives

The participants' use of reported speech in their narratives about their relationship with their husbands cues how they wish their interlocutors to see that relationship and also their gendered roles.

In her study, Schiffrin (2002) notes that her participant did not quote her mother frequently during the complicating action of her narratives. This, Schiffrin argued, was indicative of the less than close relationship between them. The same is true in the current data set, in which most of the participants do not directly quote their husbands during the main narrative clauses (see Table 5-3 for a list of participants who directly report the discourse of their spouses). In fact, they all tend to cite themselves much more frequently in all sections of narrative. Often the participants also recount conversations with their spouse in which they quote only their own words, and not their husband's. Or, they report hypothetical situation in which the husband's "discourse" is presented (Mariana and Magdalena). This indicates that the participants do not need the support of their husband's words to uphold their own opinions, and serves as evidence for the lack of closeness between most spouses. Moreover, it becomes apparent, from a macro-level analysis, that there is a stronger obligation by the participants to their children than to their men, and, a resulting emphasis on their need to maintain the physical environment of their homes.

Notably, there are three participants who do directly report their husbands' words frequently, even during the main temporal clauses of their narratives: Carolina, Rosina, and Magdalena (see Table 5-3). In fact, Carolina and Rosina both have narrative sequences that are made up entirely of dialogue between them and their husband. From a macro-level analysis of the data and observations from the field, I can conjecture that these are the participants, together with Celina, who have the closest relationship with their spouses. Notwithstanding, these participants do tend to quote themselves more frequently.

Pilar also reports her husband's discourse in main clauses, but she only reports him in narratives about their courtship and early in their marriage.

Table 5-3: Participants who directly report their husbands .

Mariana	2
Magdalena	4
Rosina	4
Pilar	4
Carolina	9
Total:	23

All in all, it becomes apparent from the narratives in which the participants directly report their husbands that there is a much less subservient and dependent relationship to their spouses than would be suggested by the two traditional descriptions of gendered relationships (machismo and marianismo, Stevens, 1965, 1973; Trinch & Berk-Seligson, 2002).

In this following section I analyze excerpts produced by participants describing events in which their husbands have participated or about their husbands. I focus on the use of reported speech by the participants as an indicator of how they relate to their spouses. In particular I focus on the reporting of speech directed *at* their husbands or *about* their husbands, as these sections of their discourse are also subjective.

Example 5-6 comes from an interview with Pilar and Graciela. In this section of the interview we are discussing the circumstances of Pilar's coming to the US, and how she argued with her husband for him to bring her to the US. This excerpt illustrates Pilar's strength of character and her perseverance, even against her husband's wishes.

Example 5-6: Pilar on being married in Mexico (From interview with Pilar and Graciela; 7/08/03).

1 Interviewer: *Así que estar acá^ es mucho mejo^r, (.) no?*

- 2 Graciela: Oh por supue[^]sto. (.) [Hhhhh
- 3 Pilar: [Porque estamos con ellos.
- 4 Graciela: (aside to a child .8)
- 5 Pilar: Y los hi[^]jos que se pasa uno toda la vi[^]da: (.2) yendo a despertar,
- 6 (.8)
- 7 Pilar: Se pasa u[^]no: (.) la vi[^]da (.) uno:: (.2) so[^]lo y yo como yo como con mis
- 8 embara[^]zos yo so[^]la, (.2) y nac[^]an los hi[^]jos y (.) y yo le decía a él, (.3) el
- 9 tambié[^]n desde: (.) los cato[^]rce o qui[^]nce empezó a veni[^]r a los Estados Unidos
- 10 >a dife[^]rentes pa[^]rtes< (.3)el fue a (.) a Florida, (.2) a California,
- 11 (.3)
- 12 Interviewer: Ahh.hha,
- 13 Pilar: Y ya despué[^]s de que se vino para acá[^] y ya: (.2) para acá para Pennsylvania,
- 14 (.2) dijo ya[^] ya[^], (.) y nos tra[^]jo para acá[^],
- 15 (.3)
- 16 Interviewer: Se ve que le gustó,
- 17 Pilar: Hmm,
- 18 (.6)
- 19 Pilar: Y despué[^]s como di[^]ce él nos nos trajo de: (.3) de ca[^]mping aquí[^]: (.) a lo que
- 20 habí[^]a,
- 21 (.6)
- 22 Pilar: Y por eso este: (.2) se asentó[^] (.) y: (.2) y ya se había puesto **cuando**: (.) **cuando**
- 23 **el ni[^]ño empieza**: (.2) **a camina[^]r, que no está[^]s**, (.) **cuando el niño empie[^]za**
- 24 **a habla[^]r que no está[^]s**, (.2) **cuando el ni[^]ño empieza a: deci[^]r sus**
- 25 **prime[^]ras pala[^]bras** (.) **ps no[^]: no está[^]s**, (.3) **To[^]do lo que realme[^]n te tu lo**
- 26 **quie[^]res**, (.5) **Lue[^]go el ni[^]ño cumple un a[^]ño y no estuviste y cumplió dos y**
- 27 **no estuviste y cumplió tres y no estuviste**, (xxx) , y ya[^] **cada fie[^]sta que**
- 28 **cumplió[^] no nunca estuvo, no**,
- 29 (.6)
- 30 Interviewer: Cla[^]ro. (.) es mucho más difi[^]cil.
- 31 Pilar: Si.

Translation

- 1 Interviewer: So it's much better to be here, right?

- 2 Graciela: Oh, of course! Hhhhhhh
- 3 Pilar: Because we are with them.
- 4 (Graciela speaks to a child out of range of the microphone)
- 5 Pilar: And the kids that one spends her entire life waking up...
- 6 (.8)
- 7 Pilar: One spends her life alone, and like me with my
- 8 pregnancies, me alone. And the kids were born and I would say to him...
- 9 And he also began coming when he was fourteen to the United States
- 10 -- to different parts – he went to Florida, to California...
- 11 (.3)
- 12 Interviewer: Ah ha.
- 13 Pilar: And then he came here and already. He came here to Pennsylvania.
- 14 He said “Ok, Ok,” and he brought us here.
- 15 (.3)
- 16 Interviewer: Looks like he liked it here.
- 17 Pilar: Hmm.
- 18 (.6)
- 19 Pilar: And then, you could say, he brought us here to camp, with what little
- 20 there was.
- 21 (.6)
- 22 Pilar; And that is why hmm he settled down. He had already started to... **“When**
- 23 **when the boy is starting to walk, you are not here. When the boy begins**
- 24 **to speak, you are not here. When the boy begins to say his**
- 25 **first words, well, you are not here. You say all that you really**
- 26 **love him. Then the boy is one year old and you weren’t there. And he**
turned two
- 27 **and you weren’t there. And he turned three and you weren’t there.”**
(xxx) And each party
- 28 **he had he was never there. No.**
- 29 (.6)
- 30 Interviewer: Of course. It is much more difficult.
- 31 Pilar: Yeah.

This excerpt is triggered by my question concerning whether Pilar and Graciela's life was better since they came to the US. Graciela promptly responds that it is much better for them, and Pilar follows up with the reason why it is so: they are with their husbands. She then begins a narrative concerning how she and her family came to join her husband in the US.

Pilar's narrative is rather disorganized, and she goes backwards and forwards in time from when her husband began coming to work in the US, to when he finally brought her 'camping' to Kennett Square (I had been told by Pilar in an earlier interview¹⁰ that they had no furniture in their new home, so they had had to sleep on the floor when she first arrived). The main body of the narrative (from lines 23 to 29) is in the form of a monologue by Pilar directed at her husband. This section of the narrative is produced at a higher volume. In it, Pilar lists the main milestones in their son's life and the fact that the husband was never there for them. Implicit in this section is an accusation that the husband has not been fulfilling his duty as a father. She sees her role as a wife as making sure that her family is functioning as a complete whole, and living together. Her role as a wife is very much connected to that as a mother. She says that she is better off living with her husband, but her children are the reason for this opinion. Her arguments are made for their sake and not for her own.

Pilar does not report any response by her husband to her tirade. The only words reported to have been said by him are in line 15 when he says "ya ya" ('ok, ok'), acquiescing to her requests for him to bring her and her children to the US. By not having her husband respond to her monologue, Pilar is cuing the fact that she is willing to confront him. She is also exerting her own power by defying her husband's wishes. She is not entirely subservient as would befit a wife in a machista or marianistic society. Her role as a mother demands that she ensure the wellbeing and happiness of her children.

The last section of this narrative is addressed to me, her current interlocutor, when she

¹⁰ On 7/01/03

says that “*ya^ cada fie^sta que cumpli^o^ no nunca estuvo*” (‘And each party he had he was never there’). This has the effect of linking those events to the current time and place, and of emphasizing the subjective aspect of this section of narrative.

Graciela’s view of her role as a wife is somewhat different from Pilar’s. She displays a more “traditional” (machista and marinaistic) view of being married, as can be seen in Example 5-7. Commenting on her husband she says:

Example 5-7: Graciela on her husband (From interview with Pilar and Graciela; 7/8/03).

- 1 *Pues para que le vamos a (.) este, (.3) no e^s agresi^vo, (.) no e^s: (.) muy enojón;*
 2 *(.5) si no^ a lo mejor^ (.) le digo a lo mejo^r después se me viene a queja^r, (.)*
 3 *porque despué^s (.2) chiqui^llo u^no y: (.2) y para busca^r un mari^do así^ pues, (.3)*
 4 *yo aun estoy vi^va*

Translation

- 1 Well what for are we going to... hmmm. He is not aggressive. He’s not prone to rages.
 2 Otherwise maybe, **I say to you, maybe later he will complain...**
 3 because, then one is very young, and to find a husband like that... well,
 4 I am still alive.

This short excerpt constitutes the introduction section to a narrative about Graciela’s moodiness. In it, she says she considers herself lucky to have found a husband who is not too aggressive and prone to rages. She actually comments on the fact that she is happy to still be alive. This comment does not speak of great happiness with her husband. Rather it speaks of tolerating him, and to the fact that she has been lucky to find a man who is not mean to her, and who tolerates her own moods.

In this excerpt Graciela uses the clause “*le digo*” (‘I say to you’) as both a reporting clause and a discourse marker. She uses it to make her statement more salient and also to cue subjectivity. By stating her opinion in this way, Graciela is stating authorship over her utterance.

She is also forestalling a possible future complaint of her husband to her. He is never directly reported by her in any of her narratives, further cuing the distance existing between them.

Overall, Pilar and Graciela's narratives suggest a lack of closeness with their husbands. Even when the husbands are participants in the events being recounted, they are rarely portrayed as active characters. Moreover, most of the narratives in which they are included are narratives of strife or of discord. It becomes apparent that Pilar and Graciela are with them for the sake of their children and, simply, because they are their husbands. On the other hand, Carolina describes a very different relationship with her husband in Example 5-8. Yet even while Carolina portrays a much closer relationship with her husband, she still exhibits a lack of deference, with respect to him, that would be appropriate of a "traditional" wife in a patriarchal society. This excerpt comes from the second interview with Carolina in August of 2007.

Example 5-8: Carolina and her husband (From interview with Carolina; 7/01/03).

- 1 Carolina: >Entonces vio[^] que era el baile de ga[^]la<, (.3) era el día cato[^]rce a la
 2 noche,(.) To[^]da la noche bailaban desdehh (.) hasta las seis de la mañana,
 3 Interviewer: Ahhhhh
 4 (.3)
 5 Carolina: Nu[^]nc[^]a me dejaban ir,
 6 Interviewer: No[^]o: (.2) Y después[^]s de casada sí?
 7 (.2)
 8 Carolina: Mi espo[^]so sí me sacaba adonde quie[^]ra (.) pero yo[^] no quería i[^]r porque
 9 estaba acostumbrada a no sali[^]r, (..)me saca[^]ba mu[^]cho y yo me cansa[^]ba,
 10 (.3) y le decía o[^]ye a qué hora voy a hacer la comi[^]da?(.2) no[^] te
 11 preocu[^]pes, (.2) nos va[^]mos a un restaura[^]nte (.) compramos he[^]cho (.2)
 12 y no estamos pues en e[^]sas, ((whiny, creaky voice))
 13 Interviewer: Jejejeje
 14 Carolina: Y me, (.) si:[^]i (.) y cuando me casé[^] él[^] pues me sacaba mucho,
 15 (.3)
 16 Interviewer: Hmhm,
 17 Carolina: Y: la gente[^] que me mira[^]ba le daba un cora[^]je >porque decía<,(.2)

- 18 *a^hh ya salió^ porque no le da de come^r a su espo^so, (.) porque so^lo*
 19 *(.2) se la pa^sa: con é^,l (.) no lo deja so^lo para nada, ((whiny, creaky*
 20 *voice))*
- 21 *Interviewer: Jjejejeje*
 22 *(.2)*
- 23 *Carolina: Y: es que:: (.) yo a ve^ces no quería i^:r (.) y le decí^a (.) pero é^l nada más*
 24 *quería estar conmi^go, (.3) Y a^:y que estoy cansa^da, (.) ya no tengo*
 25 *ga^nas de andar todo el día por la ca^lle, ((whiny, creaky voice))*
- 26 *Interviewer: Jejejeje[je*
 27 *Caolina: [Y en mi ca^sa e:ra mi papá muy estri^cto, (.) y no^ nos dejaba*
 28 *(.3)*
- 29 *Interviewer: salir?*
 30 *Carolina: sali^r ta^nto,*
 31 *...*
- 32 *Carolina: A mu^chas cosas no i^ba porque no me dejaba mi papá^, (.)*
 33 *Interviewer: No, ver[dad?*
- 34 *Carolina: [Hhhaa (.2) Y después^s cuando me casé^ mi espo^so me traía hasta*
 35 *de má^s en la calle,(.) y lue^go estaba en u[na pocilga.*
- 36 *Interviewer: [jejejejeje*
- 37 *Carolina: Ha^y yo no quiero ir (.) Yo^ no quiero ir. (.2) ((whiny, creaky voice))*
 38 *Interviewer: Haaa:y*
- 39 *Carolina: Y me decía la Anita >pero tampoco enojarte porque si está^s<. (.2) es*
 40 *má^s feo que de solte^ra sa^:lgas y quiere que te ca^:ses, (.) y que lue^go*
 41 *que te siente, (.2) y ya no nada. ((whiny, creaky voice))*
 42 *Interviewer: Sí es cierto.*

Translation

- 1 *Carolina: And then, you see, was the gala party. It was on the 14th in the*
 2 *evening. All the evening they danced from..., until six in the morning.*
- 3 *Interviewer: Oohhhh!*
 4 *(.3)*
- 5 *Carolina: They never let me go.*
- 6 *Interviewer: No? And after you were married yes?*

- 7 (.2)
- 8 Carolina: My husband would take me out everywhere. But I didn't want to go because I
- 9 was used to not going out. He would take me out a lot and I would get tired.
- 10 And I would say to him **“Hey, when am I going to make the food?” “Don't**
- 11 **worry, we'll go to a restaurant, we buy take-out, and**
- 12 **we don't have to worry.”** ((*whiny, creaky voice*))
- 13 Interviewer: Hahahahaha
- 14 Carolina: And he, yes, and when I got married he would take me out a lot.
- 15 (.3)
- 16 Interviewer: Hmhhh.
- 17 Carolina: And the people would look at me and they would get angry because they
- would say,
- 18 **“ She's already going out because she doesn't feed her husband, because**
- she's always**
- 19 **with him and doesn't let him be on his own at all.”** ((*whiny, creaky voice*))
- 20 Interviewer: Hahahahahaha
- 21 (.2)
- 22 Carolina: And it's that sometimes I didn't want to go out and I would tell him, but he
- only
- 23 wanted to be with me. And **“oh I am tired, I don't**
- 24 **want to be all day in the street.”** ((*whiny, creaky voice*))
- 25 Interviewer: Hahahahaha
- 26 Carolina: And at home my dad was very strict and he wouldn't let us ...
- 27 (.3)
- 28 Interviewer: Go out?
- 29 Carolina: Go out so much.
- 30 ...
- 31 Carolina: I didn't go to many things because my dad wouldn't let me.
- 32 Interviewer: No, right?
- 33 Carolina: Hhhhhh. And then when I got married my husband had me
- 34 in the street even too much, and then I was living in a sty.
- 35 Interviewer: Hahahahaha
- 36 Carolina: **“Oh I don't want to go out, I don't want to go out.”** ((*whiny, creaky*

37 *voice*))

Interviewer: Ohhh.

38 Carolina: And Anita would say to me, **“but don’t get angry because you are...“It is**
 39 **worse to go out [with your husband] when you are single and then he**
 wants to get married and after that
 40 **he sits you down, and no nothing.”**

41 Interviewer: Yeah, that’s true.

In Example 5-8, which begins as a reaction to our discussion of the Christmas and New Year’s parties in her hometown, Carolina tells of her life as a young wife, and draws a parallelism with her life as a single woman, when she was not allowed to go out by her father. In contrast, she believes she went out too much as a married woman. As a result, she felt she was neglecting her duties as a wife.

Carolina uses reported speech in two different ways in this narrative. She reports herself and her husband within the narrative, itself. However, she quotes other people and her friend, Anita, in evaluative sections. The sections in which Carolina reports herself and her husband form the main sequence of events of this narrative. They are a single dialogue in which she asks her husband when she is going to cook his meal and he responds that they can get take-out from a restaurant (lines 10 -12), and she then complains about going out so much (lines 23-24). The sections between these reported utterances serve as further explanations to and evaluations of the events that led to this dialogue.

The crux of this dialogue is Carolina’s complaint that she is going out too much, albeit with her husband, and that she is tired. Because of her outings she feels that she is neglecting her role as a wife, particularly because she is not feeding her husband or cleaning their home. However, she discusses her life as a single woman extensively in the middle of this account. This discussion has been omitted and is marked with an ellipsis (line 30), and in it she tells of her escapades to parties even after her father had forbidden her to go. It thus becomes apparent that

Carolina's comment that she is tired is merely an excuse; she was well accustomed to long nights out.

Carolina's main reason for not going out is, in fact, not her weariness, but her feeling that she is neglecting her role as a wife. As support for this she reports what others may have said about her (lines 18-20). This quote appears in the form of a directly reported speech. However, it is clearly not something that has been said to her but what she fears others *may* be saying about her. This reported utterance functions as a negative evaluation of her frequent outings and reflects Carolina's own opinion of them.

The narrative is concluded with Carolina's reporting of a comment by a friend: "*es más feo que de soltera salgas y quiere que te cases, (.) y que luego que te sienta, (.2) y ya no nada.*" ("It is worse to go out [with your husband] when you are single and then he wants to get married and after that he sits you down, and no nothing."). This comment functions as a coda, expressing the sentiment that going out with your husband is appropriate. It thus also serves as a justification, expressed by someone else, and explicating Carolina's breach of her own role as a wife, even in contrast to her own complaint about her omission of her responsibilities.

The relationship described in this narrative, between Carolina and her husband, is much more convivial than that described by Pilar or Graciela. The relationships of the other two women with their husbands is not characterized by a two-way dialogue. There are recriminations by the wife to the husband, but the husband rarely appears directly as an active character in Pilar's narratives, and never in the narratives by Graciela. However, in Carolina's case, her husband is very frequently an active, speaking character, thus indicating more closeness between them. Carolina describes a relationship of caring and sharing of events that is not present in the narratives of most of the other participants.

Carolina's use of the directly reported speech of her husband cues the great closeness between them. However, her reporting of her own words expresses her view of the role that is

really important to her: that of taking care of her family and of making sure that her home is in good order for them. These sections of narrative are also produced with a whining voice, emphasizing their subjective value.

It becomes apparent that, in this set of narratives, the distal speakers quoted directly are not chosen on the basis of their power over the narrator, but on the closeness of the relationship between them. It is also clear that the instances of reported speech serve to cue the more important sections of narrative, which carry the most affect.

5.2.2. The participants as housewives

In this study, I refer to the participants' role as housewives in terms of their responsibilities concerning the maintenance of the physical environment in which their families live. It is quite apparent that this is a major role in the lives of all the participants. In Example 5-8, just discussed, Carolina frames her objection to going out from the perspective of her duties at home: cleaning the house and preparing meals for her husband. Example 5-5 (earlier in section 5.2) illustrates Mariana's perception of her responsibilities at home.

As expressed by Mariana in Example 5-5, she considers her role to be a job in its own right, except that she does not earn any money for her work. As Mariana notes; "*na^die me pa^ga (.). jajaja pero (.). hago u:::y^ también, (.2) Pues hmm di^go^*" ('Nobody pays me, heheheh. But oh I do [my job], too. Well, I say.'). Her use of the filler "*u:::y*" ('oh!') serves to emphasize the amount of work she feels she has to do to fulfill her function at home. In another section of the same interview (not included in Example 5-5), Mariana explicated what her role entails: "*Hmhmhmm, (.3) Ya^ mis muchachas ya lle^gan y ya tienen su comi^da, (.). ya tienen (.2) su (.). su casa li^mpia, (.). su ropa li^mpia (.). y todo todo,*" ('When my girls come home they already have their food fixed for them, their house is clean, their clothes are clean, and everything,

everything.’).

Another way in which Mariana emphasizes the large scale of her role, as already noted, is via the use of the verbal clause “*digo*” (‘I say’), as both a discourse marker and a marker of distal thought. This reporting verb is used by Mariana both when opining that her role entails a lot of work, and earlier, in line 1 of this excerpt, when she tells of her relationship with her husband at home: “*Pues mi^re yo^: e^ste hombre (.) di^go es, (.3) e^l pues en su traba^jo, (.4) y: me da^ para vivir bie^n*” (‘Well, you see, This man, **I say**, is... well he works and I can live well.’). Mariana is satisfied with the fact that her husband works away from home all day and leaves her at home to fulfill her role as best she can. In this way her life is good. However, Mariana later reveals (Interview with Mariana in July, 2007) that there is little more than her role at home that she can fulfill, as her husband does not allow her to leave the family home even for the ESL classes in the same housing project that I was offering at the time. Thus, her work at home is Mariana’s life, beyond being her responsibility.

Example 5-9 illustrates of the role of another of the participants in her home. In this excerpt, which comes from my first interview with Rosina, she tells me about a conversation she had with her husband concerning the use of wireless phones as a means of multitasking at home. In this excerpt, the subjective use of reported speech highlights its centrality in the identity of the participant.

Example 5-9: Rosina on the advantages of wireless telephones (From interview with María; 7/22/03).

1 Interviewer: *Tienen telé^fonos por todos la^dos, jeje*

2 (.4)

3 Rosina: *Sí^ pero aquí^ nadie respo^nde,*

4 *(footsteps up and down stairs)*

5 Interviewer: *Yo^ todavia estoy acostumbrada al (.) ré^gimen en vi^vo. (.4) en Uruguay,*

6 *(.) yo les regalé^ el prime^r tele^fono inalá^mbrico a mis pa^dres. (.3)*

7 *Porque (.) sí^ usaban de cable la^rgo,*

- 8 *Rosina: Hm.hmm,*
- 9 *Interviewer: varias veces le hablo a mi mamá y me dice a^: y esto y en el teléfono*
10 *regando las plantas.*
- 11 *Rosina: Y mira (.) tienes este: (.) pues, (.3) esta bien así verdadera, (.) el inalámbrico*
12 *porque por ejemplo, (.3) yo estoy lavando (.) mis trastes (.2) y luego me*
13 *dice mi esposo. (.2) Y^ (.2) me convences dice. (.) por qué? (.3) porque*
14 *me dijiste todo lo que tienes que hacer, (.3) estoy lavando los trastes por*
15 *(.) y: (.) así (.) lavando los trastes*
- 16 *Interviewer: Jejejeje*
- 17 *Rosina: barriendo, (.) trapeando,*
- 18 *Interviewer: Hm.hmm,*
- 19 *Rosina: A ti dice pero ni te estorba el tele (.) te estorba el teléfono para decir que no^:*
20 *que estoy hablando por la boca y todavía no puedo salir,*
- 21 *Interviewer: Hm.hmm,*
- 22 *Rosina: Y mientras estoy con las manos en (.) la cuerda,*
- 23 *Interviewer: Hm.hmm,*
- 24 *(.5)*
- 25 *Rosina: Y sin embargo si fuera eh de: (.) de esos (.) con alambre (.) tengo que estar*
26 *sentado (.) no puedo moverme mucho: (.2) con: (.2) como que no me*
27 *puedo mover así (.) con más: seguridad para hacer cualquier cosa.*
- 28 *Interviewer: Sí (.) es cierto.*

Translation

- 1 Interviewer: You've got telephones everywhere. Hahaha
- 2 (4)
- 3 Rosina: Yeah, but nobody answers [them].
- 4 (footsteps up and down stairs)
- 5 Interviewer: I am still used to the live transmission. In Uruguay
- 6 I gave the first wireless telephone to my parents. Because
- 7 they did use a long cord.
- 8 Rosina: Hmhmm.
- 9 Interviewer: Many times I talk to my mom and she tells me "Oh I am on the phone
- 10 watering the plants."

- 11 Rosina: And, you see, you have to... Well, it is good like that, right? The
 12 wireless, because, for example, I am still washing my dishes and
 13 then my husband says, **“And you’ve convinced me” he says. “Why?”**
 14 **“Because you told me that you have to do.” “I am washing the dishes.”**
 15 **Because, and.. “Like that, washing the dishes.”**
- 16 Interviewer: Hahahaha.
- 17 Rosina: “sweeping, mopping...”
- 18 Interviewer: Hmhmm.
- 19 Rosina: **“To you,” he says, “it is not a problem, it is not a problem over the phone to**
 20 **say no,**
 21 **“I am speaking out of my mouth and I can’t leave yet.””**
- 21 Interviewer: Hmhmm.
- 22 Rosina: And meanwhile I have my hands on the clothes line.
- 23 Interviewer: Hmhmm.
- 24 (.5)
- 25 Rosina: But if it were one of those, with a cord, I have to be
 26 seated. I can’t move a lot with... Like I can’t
 27 move like with more confidence to do any [other] thing.
- 28 Interviewer: Yeah, that’s true.

The narrative in Example 5-9 is triggered by my comment, following the ringing of telephones in various parts of the house, that ‘You’ve got telephones everywhere.’ I tell Rosina about my own preference for wireless phones and about the fact that I had presented my family with one recently. Rosina then tells me about her own experience with her wireless phone. She believes they are the best type, and illustrates this with a conversation she had with her husband while she was on the phone.

The dialogue that Rosina presents is reported from the perspective of her husband. In it her husband is telling her about things she has told him at an earlier point in time. There is actually one instance of the husband directly reporting something said by his wife: “*A ti dice pero*

ni te esto^rba el tele (.) te estorba el teléfono para decir que no^: que estoy hablando por la boca y todavía no puedo salir,” (“To you,” he says, “it is not a problem, it is not a problem over the phone to say no, “I am speaking out of my mouth and I can’t leave yet.”” Rosina could have explained the same things to me without resorting to reporting her husband’s speech. By reporting his words, she has created a witness for her work, and made her role – and the work entailed by it – all the more compelling (Besnier, 1992; De Fina, 2003; Gunthner, 1997; Schieffelin, 1996; Uchida, 1997). Interestingly, Rosina brings the narrative back to the current time and place by adding that while her husband speaks she has her hands on the clothesline. This serves to emphasize the subjectivity of this narrative section.

Rosina, by reporting her husband directly, has also brought him directly into her narrative as a co-participant. This indexes the close relationship between herself and her spouse, which is confirmed by observations in their home during the time I spent in Kennett Square.

Notwithstanding the fact that Rosina has a closer relationship with her husband than other participants do, she is still primarily the person in her home whose role it is to care for the family house. She is sometimes helped by other female members of the family and female visiting relatives, but not by male residents of the house – Rosina always has at least seven people living in her house: herself, her husband, her daughter and her child and husband, a brother and his wife, and frequently other relatives and their families.

This type of routine is reproduced in the interviews with every one of the participants. It is quite apparent that a significant part of their role as women, wives, and mothers is that of maintaining their physical home environments, notwithstanding their relationships with their husbands. The fact that reported speech is used in these sections about household chores to bring them to the here and now further supports the importance of these activities within the women’s lives and identities.

5.2.3. The participants as mothers

Motherhood is viewed as another crucial role of all women, to the point that a woman who has no children is considered to be a failure. This view is confirmed by all the participants and is illustrated in Example 5-10, which is a description by Pilar of a conversation with her sister concerning the importance of children. The sections of reported speech in this excerpt highlight the immediacy and subjectivity of the discussion and bring out the importance of motherhood for Pilar.

Example 5-10: Pilar on being a mother (From interview with Pilar and Graciela; 7/08/03).

- 1 Graciela: Sí sí. (.2) Están bieⁿ li^{ndos} los hijos. ((looking at Pilar's daughter))
- 2 Interviewer: Sí?
- 3 (.2)
- 4 Graciela: Un po^{co} fastidio^{sos} a ve^{ces} pero (.). jejejejeje
- 5 Pilar: Es que son insoporta^{bles},
- 6 (.3)
- 7 Pero yo[^], (.). yo[^]: yo en mi caso di^{go}, (.). hh[^] si no[^] tuvie^{ra}, (.). mis hi^{jos},
- 8 (.). qué[^] sería de mí? (.2) Si no fuera por mis hijos. hhh (.2) la mayor de
- 9 e^{llos}, (.). que así se lla^{ma}, Jimena, (xxx)
- 10 (.2)
- 11 Pues yo ahora^{ta} tengo una herma^{na} que no (.). que no tiene hi^{jos} y ya tiene
- 12 cinco años de casa^{da}, y no tiene hijos, (.2) Y él también dese^a, (.2) y dice (.).
- 13 como no si^{rve} lo que le da de la ma^{dre} y el pa^{dre} y entonces como que, (.).
- 14 si, (.). no sea espo^{sa}, (.). dije yo, (.). así,
- 15 (.3)
- 16 traba^{ja} y traba^{ja} y traba^{ja} y para qué? (.2) o con qué[^]: entusia^{smo}
- 17 trabaja y para qué? (.3) Y yo le decía ay pues no[^]. (.2) el entusia^{smo} es
- 18 pa^{ra} los hi^{jos} o po^r los hi^{jos},

Translation

- 1 Graciela: Yeah, yeah. It's really nice to have children. ((looking at Pilar's daughter))

- 2 Interviewer; Yeah?
 3 (.2)
 4 Graciela; A bit bothersome, sometimes, but...Hahahahaha.
 5 Pilar: It's that they are unbearable.
 6 (.3)
 7 But me, **in my case, I say, if I didn't have my kids,**
 8 **what would be of me? If it weren't for my kids.** Hhhhh. The oldest of
 9 them, who is called Jimena...
 10 (.2)
 11 Well now I have a sister who doesn't have kids, and she's been
 12 married for five years, and doesn't have kids. And he also wants [them] and
 she says
 13 **"It's like what comes from the mother and the father is no good, and it's**
like..."
 14 **"Yeah, like she's not a wife," I said, so**
 15 **(.3)**
 16 **She works and works and works, and what for? And with what**
enthusiasm?
 17 **What does she work for? And I would say to her, "Oh, well no,**
the enthusiasm is
 18 **for the kids and because of the kids."**

The narrative in Example 5-10 is introduced by Graciela's comment that it is nice to have children – Graciela is gazing at Pilar's young daughter when she says this. Then Pilar observes that she would be nothing without her children, and embarks in the narrative about her sister who is currently childless.

Pilar is of the opinion that life is not worth it if a woman has no children. This implies that she believes the main role of a woman is, in fact, to have children. Pilar emphasizes her statement by putting it in the form of a reporting of her own speech, using the verb clause “*yo...digo*” (‘I say’), and also when she tells her sister, at the end of the narrative, that she can

only be enthusiastic for the sake of her children. She reiterates this opinion during the narrative in the form of a dialogue between her sister and her husband, and herself. Pilar reports her sister's complaint that it would seem that "*como no si^rve lo que le da de la ma^dre y el pa^dre...*" ('It's like what comes from the mother and the father is no good...'). The completing phrase: "*y entonces como que, (.) si, (.)no sea espo^sa*" ('Yeah, like she's not a wife') seems to have been said by both Pilar and her sister simultaneously. The use of the reported speech has the effect of bringing the events to the current time and place, making them subjective in nature.

It also becomes apparent that Pilar has a close relationship with her sister, since she includes her voice directly in the narrative. In fact, their voices seem to overlap, as in the statement about not being a wife.

This narrative also brings to the forefront the role of the woman in the home. In line 16, Pilar says: "*traba^ja y traba^ja y traba^ja y para qué?*" ('She works and works and works, and what for?'). I have translated the subject of this statement to be 'she,' however Pilar could very well have been speaking of her own self, since there is no overt subject in the original utterance. This is very possible if the subject of this event is the indefinite "uno" ('one/you'). The lack of a concrete subject extends the working, in fact, to any woman, especially those who do not have children and for whom there would be no real purpose to work, according to Pilar.

Another important aspect of motherhood that emerges in the data is the fact that the participants are willing to give up their own desires, and even their happiness, in favor of their children's. Example 5-11 is a short section of the interview with Pilar where she comments on the fact that she has decided to stay in the US because her son, David, likes it here. A large section of this narrative is in the form of the dialogue between Pilar and her son.

Example 5-11: Pilar on her son's preference to stay in the US (From interview with Pilar; 6/25/03).

1 David, (.2) nueve aⁿños, (.3) Nueve años le gaⁿna,

2 (.5)
 3 *Y sí^ le digo yo^, (.2) ñ:aa:h yo^ todavía me quiero como que regres^ar para (2.) para*
 4 *Mé^xico pe^ro (.3) le digo bue^no (.) ya me voy a aguantar por Davi^d, (.2) que le*
 5 *gusta la escue^la, (.) Porque sí^ le gu^sta. (.3) Y me dice Mamá^,(.) dice, y yo^ qué*
 6 *ha^go? (.2) Si tú^ te regresas y yo qué ha^go? (.3) Y luego digo bue^no (.) no voy a*
 7 *ser tan inju^sta, (.) porque si a é^l le gu^sta, (.2) tengo que estar yo^ por é^l,*

Translation:

1 David... Nine years, nine years older than [the girl].
 2 (.5)
 3 **And yeah, I tell you,** Naah. I still like I want to go back to to
 4 Mexico, but **I say to you,** well I will put up with it for David, who likes
 5 the school. Because he does like it. **He says: “Mom,” he says, “and what will I do?**
 6 **If you return and then what will I do?” And then I say,** well I am not going to be
 7 so unfair, because if he likes it I have to stay because of him.

In Example 5-11 Pilar tells about her decision to stay in the US even though she is not happy here. Her son, David, likes his school and does not wish to go back to Mexico. In this excerpt it is possible to once again see the use of the verbal clause “*digo [yo]*” as both a discourse marker and a reporting verb to present the speaker’s opinion in the form of distal or reported thought:

(lines 3-4) *Y sí^ le digo yo^, (.2) ñ:aa:h yo^ todavía me quiero como que regres^ar para (2.) para Mé^xico.*

And yeah, I tell you, Naah. I still like I want to go back to Mexico

(lines 6-7) *Y luego digo bue^no (.) no voy a ser tan inju^sta*

And then I say, well I am not going to be so unfair.

Pilar is describing her intimate feelings and desire to return to Mexico. However, in a near mirror (and opposite) image of the first utterance, she says she will not go back against her son’s wishes. To explicate this she reports that her son has said he would be hopeless if she were

to leave him alone in the US. The use of the reported thought makes this short narrative highly affective and emphasizes its subjectivity. If Pilar had not used the reported thought, it would simply have been a statement of fact.

This short narrative succinctly summarizes the attitude of all the participants concerning their role towards their children: they are willing to give up everything for them. The following narrative, in Example 5-12, even more poignantly presents this role. It is a very dramatic and somewhat disturbing account by Magdalena about her mother's relationship with her father. The reported speech in this account, between Magdalena and her mother, functions as the onset and final evaluation, and highlights the affective value of this account to the participant.

Example 5-12: Magdalena on her mother (From interview with Magdalena; 7/01/03).

- 1 Interviewer: *En Mé[^]xico es le[^]gal el divo[^]rcio, (.) sí[^] no[^]?:?*
- 2 Magdalena: *Sí[^]*
- 3 (.5)
- 4 Magdalena: *Sí[^] pero (.) no[^] no como quehh, (.3) la ge[^]nte tiene (.) cuando u[^]no tiene*
- 5 *concie[^]ncia y temor de Dio[^]s no[^] (.2) no lo ha[^]ce, (.2) Aunque yo[^]*
- 6 *prefiero estar sufrie[^]ndo con el mari[^]do, (.4) pero (.) porque yo[^] le le*
- 7 *di[^]go a mi mamá[^]*
- 8 Interviewer: *Clá[^]ro.*
- 9 Magdalena: *>porque yo[^] si yo ya me doy cue[^]nta< (.) porque yo[^] soy la que me*
- 10 *acue[^]rdo porque yo tengo memo[^]ria de lo que pasó mi mamá[^],*
- 11 Interviewer: *Hm.hmm,*
- 12 Magdalena: *Fuí[^] la primeri[^]ta, (.3) y le digo a[^]:h mami, (.) ado[^]ro a mi papá[^] (.)*
- 13 *pero qué[^] antipá[^]tico (.) porque le pega[^]ba (.) a[^]:y Dios mí[^]o (.)*
- 14 *demasi[^]ado le pega[^]ba.*
- 15 Interviewer: *Hm,m.*
- 16 Magdalena: *Le poní[^]a los ojos mora[^]dos,*
- 17 Interviewer: *Hm,m.*
- 18 Magdalena: *Y le (.) bue[^]no le golpea[^]ba con la ria[^]ta, (.3) le pega[^]ba con le[^]ños y le*
- 19 *voltea[^]ba los codos para un la[^]do,*

- 20 Interviewer: *fssssss [a^hhh*
 21 Magdalena: *[le: (.) a:h la ata^ba con un la^zo,*
 22 Interviewer: *A^hh*
 23 Magdalena: *Quien sa^be despue^s que hará^n (.) que (.) ria^ta o la^zo,*
 24 Interviewer: *Si^,*
 25 Magdalena: *A noso^tros (.) u^:f (.) a noso^tros nos pega^ba muchí^simo. (.3) mu^cho*
 26 *mucho u^:y*
 ...
 27 Magdalena: *Y le decí^a a mi mamá^ a^y ahh por qué^? (.) “Por qué^ usted le*
 28 *aguanta ta^nto a él (.) por qué^? (.2) Y dice por uste^des, (.4) por*
 29 *uste^des yo me deajo roba^r,*

Translation

- 1 Interviewer: Is divorce legal in Mexico?
 2 Magdalena: Yeah.
 3 (.5)
 4 Magdalena: Yeah, but not not like... The people, when you are
 5 aware of and fear God, don't do it. Though I prefer
 6 to be suffering with my husband. But...because I say to my
 7 mom
 8 Interviewer: Sure.
 9 Magdalena: Because I do... I am aware... because I am the one who
 10 remembers.... because I remember what happened to my mom.
 11 Interviewer: Hmhmm.
 12 Magdalena: I was the oldest, and I said to my mommy, **“I love my dad, but**
 13 **he is so mean.”** Because he used to beat her. Oh my God! Too much
 14 he beat her.
 15 Interviewer: Hmmm.
 16 Magdalena: he left her with black eyes.
 17 Interviewer: Hmmm.
 18 Magdalena: And he...he beat her with a lasso, he beat her with sticks and he
 19 would twist her elbows to the side.
 20 Interviewer: Fssssssssssssss. Oh!

- 21 Magdalena: He would tie her with a rope.
- 22 Interviewer: Oh!
- 23 Magdalena: And who knows what they did later with the lasso or the rope.
- 24 Interviewer: Yeah.
- 25 Magdalena: And we, he would beat us a lot. A lot,
- 26 a lot. Oh!
- ...
- 27 Magdalena: **And I would say to my mom, “Oh! Why? Why do you**
- 28 **put up with so much from him? Why? And she says, “For you**
- 29 **I would let anybody rob me.”**

This excerpt begins with my question concerning whether divorce is legal in Mexico. Magdalena responds that it is but adds that God fearing people do not divorce, and that she would rather suffer with her husband than divorce him. To justify her opinion, she tells of her own mother's experience with her own husband. He abused her and her children terribly. But Magdalena's mother decided to stay with him in spite of that for the sake of keeping her family together.

The main complicating action of the narrative is made up of three dialogue turns. The first turn consists of Magdalena commenting to her mother that she loves her father, but that he was really mean (lines 12-13). Then, near the end of the narrative, Magdalena asks her mother why she puts up with her husband (lines 27-28), and her mother responds that 'For you I would let anybody rob me' (lines 28-29). In between, Magdalena describes what her father used to do to her mother. Magdalena presents this narrative to explain her attitude towards marriage: it is something to be suffered no matter what the cost. What matters most is maintaining the family unity.

By displaying her opinion in the form of a directly quoted dialogue, Magdalena is bringing the events to the here-and-now (Banfield, 1982), making them subjective in nature. She

is also making the report highly affective. Her description is very dramatic and painful. By bringing her dialogue with her mother to the current time, she brings the pain felt at the time to the time of the telling of the narrative.

Overall, it becomes very apparent that children are the heart of the family and the main role of women is to raise their children, making sure this occurs within a family atmosphere.

5.3. Conclusion

In this chapter I have explored the gendered identities of the participants. In order to do so, I analyzed their use of reported speech, particularly directly reported speech, as it brings forward the more affective and meaningful sections of their narratives, is subjective in nature, and thus better allows for the study of the more central aspects of the participants' gendered identities. I first analyzed who the participants reported to see if they chose figures of authority to support their own opinions, as De Fina (2003) had found in her study. This was found not to occur; in fact, the participants showed a marked preference to quote themselves rather than others. Often the participants expressed their thoughts or opinions in the form of "distal" or reported thought (Chafe, 1994). I use quotation marks on "distal" because the thoughts portrayed were, more often than not, current, rather than representing the opinion of the narrator during the narrative time. The other people they did report were selected on the basis of closeness or of relevance given the current context, and not on power relative to the speaker.

However, the sections of reported speech were highly salient in the affect they cued, and the level of empathy that they elicited, since they appeared in crucial sections of narratives. They were instrumental in understanding the most important aspects of the participants' gendered identities. It became apparent, on analysis, that these aspects were the loyalty they felt they owed to their husbands, their commitment to maintaining family unity for the sake of their children, and

their role in keeping their physical environments safe and organized for their entire family.

Most of the participants did not demonstrate great closeness with their husbands. This was indexed by the fact that these participants did not report their husbands directly within their narratives; that is, their spouses were not included as active characters in their narratives. In some cases they reported hypothetical utterances, or reported speech that took place during times when their relationships had been the closest – during their courtship or early on in their marriage. Thus, the use of reported speech can be seen to cue the closeness of the relationship between the narrators and those they quote, rather than being indicative of the power of the distal speaker.

Overall, it became apparent that the participants' children were the most important aspect of their married lives, and they were the center around which their gendered roles revolved. Many participants directly indicated that the only reason for their marriage was their children. Pilar even indicated that her children were the driving force of her life. This was cued in the sections in which the participants reported themselves directly in their narratives. In this sense, they did exhibit roles commensurate with traditional views of *marianismo* (Stevens, 1965, 1973), and the importance of woman as the bearers of children. However, in his study of gendered roles in Mexico, Gutmann (2007) notes that some of his participants argue that woman's dominant role as primary care-taker of children actually ensures their cultural power within their society (p. 102).

In contrast, the views of *machismo* (Stevens, 1965, 1973; Trinch & Berk-Seligson, 2002) were not upheld by the participants, which was also the case of the traditional view of the woman as the *mater dolorosa* of *marianismo*. It would seem that the participants see their roles mainly in relation to motherhood. This is also noted by Gutmann (2007) who posits that "children and parenting do seem more central to more people in Mexico than has been my experience in the United States" (p. 5). Moreover, they frequently report arguments with their husbands, mostly on behalf of their children. This indicates that the women are not willing to take a subservient position to their men if it will negatively affect their children. Even in the case of Magdalena,

who tells of her mother putting up with abuse from her husband for the sake of family unity (and abuse to her children as well), reported attending marriage counseling sessions as a means of actively improving her marriage. It is not clear, though, if this is a change that has come about due to the move to the US, or if it is a result of generational change.

In terms of acquisition of the English language, some scholars have posited that women in chauvinistic societies have lesser access to language classes due to their gendered identities (Buttaro, 2004; Buttaro & King, 2001; Rockhill, 1987, 1990). Of the current participants, only one has acknowledged that her husband will not allow her to attend ESL classes (Mariana in her Interview in July 2007). If gendered roles limit the participation in English classes of the Mexican women living in Kennett Square, it is, in most cases, due to lack of time given their perceived role at home and with their children, and not due to subservience to their husbands.

Overall, this analysis, together with the study of terms of reference (Chapter 4), emphasizes the role of family in the identities of the participants. Family is the most important institution in their social lives, more than being a member of a Mexican community in the US, or of their home “ranchos” in Mexico.

Chapter 6

Identity, education, and agency

6. Introduction: education and agency

Much research in applied linguistics has focused on investment in learning, particularly in learning a second language (Norton, 1997, 2000; Norton-Pierce, 1995), as discussed in Chapter 2. There has also been considerable research on how gendered roles affect the motivation of women in acquiring a second language (Gordon, 2004a; Kobayashi, 2002). Research has also been conducted on the opportunities available to women to study their second language (Rockhill, 1987, 1990), and on what would make it possible for female Latina immigrants with a low level of literacy, in particular, to attend classes successfully (Klassen & Burnaby, 1993). Other studies focus on the function of literacy in establishing roles of more authority amongst women (Egbo, 2004). However, there has as yet not been enough research on how Hispanic women express their attitude towards learning and studying, and even less on how they communicate their agency in their own education.

In this chapter, my focus is on agency (Ahearn, 2001a, 2001b; Davidson, 1980; Duranti, 1990) and on how the participants express their own volition in relation to the learning and studying of languages, literacy, and other skills. In particular, I analyze the ways in which agency is expressed throughout their narratives about learning and studying.

A macro level analysis of the data reveals that the participants, in their discourse, express their desire to learn (English, how to read and write, and how to drive). However, during the interviews, I was left with the impression that the participants were not actively committed to learning, fact that prompted my interest in the issue of their literate identity. The micro level

analysis of how the participants express their agency in their own educational processes, past present, and future, confirms that there is, indeed, a contradiction between what they are outwardly saying, and what they are doing via the different manners in which they express their agency in reference to learning.

Thus, I analyze how the participants express themselves as actors (Davidson, 1980) of their actions in some of the events they describe— that is, as subjects with overt volition, and how they mitigate their agency within others, or present themselves in non-agentive positions. The way the participants express their agency narratively during their accounts of education, cues their attitude towards education and learning. Moreover, it allows for a better understanding of to what degree they were invested and had volition in their past learning experiences, and how committed they are to continuing with their learning, both in terms of literacy education and ESL, and the learning of other skills (like driving) or information (in order to obtain their US citizenship). This analysis further reveals aspects of the participants' identities concerning the role of education in their lives. That is, this is a study of how the participants express their agency in relation to what I am calling their literate identity. In this chapter I also address the aspects of the identity of the participants that lead to the apparent contradiction that exists between what they say about education and their interest in furthering it, and the fact that they do not often act on their words.

This chapter is organized as follows. In section 6.1, I discuss the concept of agency and how it is applied in this study. In section 6.2, I perform an analysis of the data. In section 6.3, I present my conclusions.

6.1. Agency

The concept of agency I use in this chapter is that as defined by Ahearn (2001b) in her

review and critique of recent traditions in its study, and in her (2001a) study of literacy and agency amongst people from a rural community in Nepal . The analysis in this chapter is also strongly influenced by Davidson's (1980) conceptualization of the role of language in expressing agency, and by Duranti's (1990) study of how and why Samoan tribesmen express agency in their discussions during their political and judicial tribunals.

Ahearn (2001b) defines agency as “[t]he the socioculturally mediated capacity to act” (p. 112). It is manifested – in both oral and written texts – through the ideologies and language used by a person to effect change (or not) to his/her reality. That is, by taking an agentive position in the events described in his/her texts, a person can take responsibility for these events and can express and enact a change in his/herself. A lack of agency would imply that any change resulting from the event was unavoidable and that the speaker/writer had no control over it. Expressions of agency appear in texts that form part of a social exchange or dialogue; that is, they are dialogic (Bakhtin, 1981) in nature.

This definition of agency, which is characterized by the expression of volition, during oral or written interactions, in the effecting of change, is linked to that of identity I use in the current study. The concept of identity I use is that of a process which is constantly affected by the interactions of the individual with the people around him/her (De Fina, 2003, 2007). It is multiple and in perpetual flux. Thus, agency can be related to the process of the changing of a person's identity. It also embodies the intentionality of this change, and how it is expressed by individuals via their discourse.

I will now backtrack to a brief history of the concept of agency that led to the current definition used in this study.

As noted by Ahearn (2001b) in her review of the concept of agency, it is an extremely complex construct, couched within the philosophical and sociological discussion of social groups, and if and how an individual can effect changes to his/her reality. Ahearn particularly appeals to

the writings of Bourdieu (1977, 1989) and Giddens (1979, 1984), amongst others (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1997; Karp, 1986; Wertsch, Tulviste, & Hagstrom, 1993), as critical for her conceptualization of agency.

Bourdieu (1989) notes that social groups are defined by the behaviors and cultural characteristics (“structures”) that are usually ascribed to the members of that group. Frequently, members of a group also mold their individual behavior to these structures that are used to define the group at large. Thus, this cycle, which Bourdieu calls the “making” of a group, is recursive in nature.

However, members of a social group each have their unique set of mental structures, the “*habitus*,” which determines how they perceive the world within which they inhabit. This *habitus* is flexible and is both affected by and affects the ideologies of the different individuals that integrate overlapping groups. In the process of interacting with members of other groups an individual’s ideologies may be altered, and through this individual, the ideologies of other members of the group. This may ultimately effect a change in the ideologies of the group at large. It is for this reason, Bourdieu (1989) argued, that social structures should not be seen as unchanging and unmoveable by society. It is this possibility of change that is at the heart of Ahearn’s (2001a, 2001b) conceptualization of agency.

Giddens (1984), discussing the fluid nature of social reality from the perspective of structuration theory (Levi-Strauss, 1963), posits that a vital characteristic of social action is the ability of human agents to reflect back on activities and events and to make sense of them discursively. During this process, narrators frequently re-create the events and re-explain them and the reasons behind them. This continuous process by human actors of reflecting on the events in their lives and of explaining and re-explaining them is what Giddens (1979) terms “action.” Moreover, the very concept of action implies that the actor intended to carry out the event being recounted for the purpose of effecting changes to his/her reality. The actor could have opted for a

different course of action, but did not. In his discussion of action, Giddens (1979) appeals to the possibility of an individual to actively and voluntarily effect changes in his/her life and social structures. More importantly, however, Giddens highlights the importance of language in expression of and reflection on these changes.

Another scholar whose writings are discussed by Ahearn (2001) in relation to the development of the concept of agency is Davidson (1980). Davidson also expounds on the intentionality inherent to social action and brings the expression of actions through discourse to the forefront of his discussion. In fact, according to Davidson, for an event to be an action, it has to have been intentional. “In every instance of action, the agent made happen or brought about or produced or authored the event of which he was the agent” (Davidson, 1980, p. 48). Davidson uses the example of ‘I spilled my coffee’ to illustrate this point. The spilling of the coffee was probably accidental; thus the event is not an action, and the syntactic subject is not an agent. Once again, as with Giddens (1979) the issue being highlighted is how speakers express changes in their world, which can be as simple as the spilling of coffee, and how these changes are expressed as being voluntary (or not).

Davidson (1980) further notes there is no single grammatical category of verbs that portrays actions (versus events). However, in syntactic studies using generative grammar, the agent appears as one possible Theta role, which is defined by the relationship between arguments in a sentence and the verbs used to describe actions. The agent is the subject of the sentence who carries out the action voluntarily and intentionally, as in example 6-1 (from Chierchia & McConnell-Ginet, 1990, p. 385).

Example 6-1.

“Lee kicked Kim”

Other main Theta-roles are those of *experiencer*, *patient*, and *beneficiary* (Fillmore, 1968;

Gruber, 1965; Jackendoff, 1972).

When discussing Bourdieu (1989), Giddens (1979), and Davidson (1980), Ahearn (2001b) presents a progression in thought that ranges from the possibility of change in a person's social reality to how these changes are expressed through the selection of language by the speaker/ writer. These language choices reflect different ideologies and structures (Bourdieu, 1989) and the changes being performed on them. By presenting this progression, Ahearn highlights the role of agency in effecting social change in the individual. This, in turn, according to the author, can ultimately lead to a change in behaviors of a social group as a whole, as she illustrates with her study of love letters in Nepal.

In her study of married men and women from a rural community in Nepal, Ahearn (2001a) analyzes how her participants use their developing literacy skills to express a changing view of agency in relation to their gendered identities, and to their marriages. In Ahearn's words, her study is a "picture of social change *as it is occurring*." (p. 245; italics are the author's).

Ahearn (2001a) analyzes the different terms used to express the concepts of "love," "consent," and "coercion" to describe how men and, particularly, women express themselves in relation to declarations of love, marriage proposals, and to being informed about arranged marriages by their parents. She finds that there is a fine line between the concepts of consent and coercion in terms of the social obligations imposed on the young women in her study at the time of marriage; that is, the women have to give their consent willingly in order for the marriage to take place, but social constraints leave them no other alternative but to acquiesce. Ahearn also notes that while young people are showing increased agency in their marriage choices – they are involved in courtships via letters and choose to elope rather than to let their parents arrange their marriages – they still express their love in terms of fate and destiny rather than as being their own decision. However, young people are also finding that these love marriages often give them access to better opportunities, which enhance their agency in more pragmatic realms of their

lives.

A relevant concept brought up by Ahearn (2001a) in her study is that of “to pretend not to want to do or to take what one really wants.” (p. 250). This is customary in the Junigau village where she conducted her study. It is socially not acceptable amongst these people to accept something immediately when offered; they first have to turn it down multiple times. Ahearn also finds that brides at first reject marriage proposals, or proposals to elope, so as not to seem too forward and easy, or as a means of offering a token resistance to a marriage they cannot avoid. This concept is interesting in relation to the current study because it implies an apparent contradiction between what is being said and what is desired by the speaker. It also explains why, at different stages in a text, opposite ideas may be expressed by the speaker.

Two other studies of how agency is expressed and can be interpreted through the use of different grammatical structures have greatly influenced the current project: Duranti (1990), and De Fina (2003).

Duranti (1990) conducts an analysis of how Samoan speakers narrate events during their “*fonos*” (a forum during which political and criminal events are presented and discussed by titled individuals). Duranti’s theoretical background is based on the premise that language is dialogic (Bakhtin, 1981) in nature. Because of this, all language has an effect on social interactions and relationships. In fact, the author defines agency as “the causal relationship between participants’ actions and certain states of affairs and processes” (p. 646). His study of Samoan *fonos* has the main purpose of analyzing how the informants use language to reflect their relationships with other participants in the *fonos* and in relation to the events being described.

Duranti (1990) uses an extensive database of recordings obtained during a stay of several months in Western Samoa, in addition to a corpus of household interactions collected and transcribed by Ochs and Platt for their own research (Ochs, 1988; Platt, 1982). Duranti finds that speakers in the *fonos* have devised complex ways of describing negative events for the purpose of

saving the face of the individuals who may have caused conflict in their society with their actions. Preferred methods were to downplay the actions, the importance of the individual involved, or by making a vague account of the events. Usually only higher ranking members of the fono will eventually describe events in more detail, outlining the role of the offending individual.

In this study, Duranti (1990) demonstrates how different grammatical structures can be used to accentuate or downplay the agency of individuals in events. As noted by the author, “language does not simply reflect the world, it also shapes it, fashions it” (p. 661).

De Fina (2003) also conducts an analysis of the agency of her participants. However, her focus is on how the participants use reported speech as a means of expressing the “who-does-what” in their narratives about crossing the border into the US. She finds that the participants tend to adopt more passive roles, instead presenting figures of power (border police and coyotes¹¹), via the reporting of their speech, as having more agency than they do. Thus, De Fina argues that her participants are expressing their lack of control and loss of power during their border crossing experiences.

In these studies, agency is used to comprehend different social aspects of the speaker(s). In the case of Duranti’s analysis of the ergative preposition and other mitigating means of expressing agency, the analysis uncovers social relationships between the speaker and the people being made reference to as having caused conflict to take place within the group. What ensues is a description of differential power, as evidenced by the different modalities of agency displayed; only more powerful figures directly express the culpability of their peers. De Fina’s study also highlights the relationships between characters in her participants’ narratives, as it focuses on the individual identity of her participants as exhibited by their removing agency from themselves in favor of figures of authority. In turn, Ahearn’s (2001a) study demonstrates how changes in literacy practice go hand in hand with the possibility of changes in gendered roles and marriages

¹¹ Coyotes are the people who help illegal immigrants cross the border to the US.

amongst young Nepalese individuals.

In the current study I focus on whom the participants position as agents in relation to their own education or learning processes. I look at both events in which the participants, themselves, are the agents, and in which they present others as the agent. That is, I focus on the relationship between my participants and other people involved in their narratives about learning. I then analyze the means by which they mitigate their agency, and how they present themselves with respect to events that have not occurred or are not likely to take place. All these expressions of agency, or lack thereof, serve as co-contextualization cues for the literate identity of the participants, and for their attitude towards education and learning. It is my intention to ultimately ascertain what role education and learning has in the lives of the participants, and to see whether the attitude towards education and learning is or has been changing within their community.

6.2. Analysis of the data

Education was a topic that preoccupied all the participants to at least some degree. Eighteen narratives were recorded that contain passages that make reference to experiences with the formal or informal learning or studying of information. These were produced primarily by eight of the participants (Carolina, Celina, Graciela, Magdalena, María, Mercedes, Pilar, and Valeria). Often, the sections of narratives about learning function as orientations to narratives, or they appear within evaluation sections (Labov & Waletzky, 1966). There are eight narratives exclusively about learning, as seen in Table 6-1.

Table 6-1: Narratives about learning by topic.

Literacy Skills	ESL	Info. For Citizenship Test	Driving	Computer Skills	Total
2	1	1	3	1	8

Most of the passages about learning and education, many of which were recorded in the context of the discussions during the ESL classes, are about learning English. There are also discussions about learning information for citizenship tests and for the obtaining of drivers' licenses. Graciela and Pilar also embarked in a lengthy discussion of an informal class they took at their housing project to learn how to use computers. These passages form part of conversational narratives (Ochs & Capps, 2001) and are thus dialogic in nature, having been produced by more than one speaker. However, during the interviews some participants, particularly those over the age of 40, also discussed their experiences concerning their literacy learning.

Children in Mexico are required to complete at least 6 years of grade school. The older participants had not completed their six years. In fact, most had not even completed a single year of grade school, and reported not knowing how to read or write. One woman could only write her name. Celina went by her middle name but could not write it so she signed with her first and last names. The participants younger than 40 years of age, in contrast, had all completed six years of primary education. This indicates a change in attitude in the Mexican community from which the participants came concerning the value of education for girls.

Valeria has had the most experience with education, having completed a degree in law in Mexico before coming to the US. However, she is the participant who spoke about this issue the least. Even if relatively few passages were recorded concerning the issue of education, the other participants spoke about it outside of the recordings much more frequently, particularly those who had had the least experience with formal education. In general the participants (except Valeria) expressed regret for not having studied enough when they were young. Almost without exception they felt that they were too old now to learn much.

Very frequently the participants would begin talking about their experiences learning English, however, they would shift to the topic of learning how to read and write almost

seamlessly. At other times learning English would merge with learning other skills. This suggests that the participants treat learning in general as a same skill, notwithstanding what they are learning.

Within these eighteen narratives, I focus mainly on whom the agent or actor is of the event being recounted. However, it is not possible to assign a single agent to each narrative; the agent often shifted, frequently within a same turn. Thus, I have tabulated the number of grammatical subjects and divided them with respect to whether the speaker or an “other” person was the subject (see Table 6-2).

Table 6-2: Grammatical subjects within the passages which make reference to learning

Participant	Number of passages	Number of tokens of participant as subject	Number of tokens of “other” as subject
Carolina	1	11	9
Celina	3	5	2
Graciela	1		2
Magdalena	4		1
María	1		
Mercedes	6	12	9
Pilar	1 (+1 with Graciela)	3	4
Valeria	1		
<i>Totals</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>31</i>	<i>27</i>

The participants express themselves in the subject position in 31 instances, and there are 27 occurrences of “others” (tutors or husbands) as the grammatical subject. There are also ten instances in which the subject was the obstacle faced by the participant during the event. In

addition, there are 14 instances of negative passages; these have negative particles and describe events which did not take place or which are expected not to occur.

All 31 turns that have, or include, the speakers as the subject are subjective (Benveniste, 1971). That is, the speaker includes herself in the subject of the sentence and the actions pertain to her. In most cases the participants use the first person singular “yo” (21 tokens). In two cases, the subject is the first person plural “nosotros,” in one it is “nadie” (no-body), and the remaining seven subjects are the indefinite pronoun “uno” (‘one/you’).

However, even while the subject of the events includes the speaker, she is not always the actor or agent (Davidson, 1980) of the events being described. Frequently the speaker is involved in the event, but it is apparent that the responsibility for it lies beyond her, as in Example 6-2.

Example 6-2.

“Llevamos inglés en la secundaria”

(‘We studied English in secondary school’)

The participant took English, but the decision to study this subject matter did not lie in her but in school officials who stipulated what courses were to be taken at each level. For this reason, she cannot be considered the agent of the event. This phrase clearly differs from Example 6-3, in which the speaker is stating her intention to make an action occur, and is thus the agent of the event.

Example 6-3.

“Le voy a poner más ganas a los estudios”

(‘[I] am going to be more enthusiastic with my studies’)

Throughout the data set, even though the participants situate themselves in the subject position more frequently than other people, it becomes apparent that they avoid expressing themselves as the agent of the events in their life concerning the learning or studying of skills

and/or information. For this reason there is no narrative or narrative section on the topic of education throughout which the participants are the agent of studying or learning. In some cases, other people, usually their spouse or a tutor, are given agentive roles. In other narrative sections, the participants mitigate their agency in a number of ways. In the following section I discuss *who* is presented by the participants as being the agents in their experiences with education and learning.

6.2.1. The Agents of learning

Agency for learning is not the sole prerogative of the participants. In fact, they seem to avoid being positioned as being entirely responsible for their experiences in learning or studying. One of the ways they do this is by presenting others as being the agents of these events, rather than themselves.

In Example 6-4, Carolina is describing an experience she had while learning to drive. She considers obtaining her drivers' license to be a high priority in her life, as her husband has no interest in obtaining his. In this excerpt, it is possible to see how she shifts agency between herself and a lady who is teaching her how to drive. In fact, she only indirectly attributes agency to herself and "the lady" is given the main responsibility in this event.

Example 6-4: Carolina on learning to drive (from first interview with Carolina on 7/1/2003)

- 1 Interviewer: *Pero aho[^]ra tie[^]ne no?*
- 2 Carolina: *Si te[^]ngo (.) pero aho[^]ra no puedo saca[^]rlo porque ya: (.) ya me: (.) ya[^]*
 3 *pasé[^] las pregu[^]ntas, (.6) y me di[^]:cen que ahora te[^]ngo que anda[^]r con*
 4 *una perso[^]na que te[^]nga la lice[^]ncia, (.) que vie[^]ne una se[^]ñora ha[^]sta*
 5 *ahora, (.3) me está[^] ayuda[^]ndo a (.) e[^]s que o sea que:[^], (.) a mi este (.) me*
 6 *falta no[^] más (.2) practica[^]r la reve[^]rsa, (.2) para i[^]r a pasa[^]r el te[^]st,*
 7 Interviewer: *Si?*

- 8 Carolina: *y aho[^]ra me traí[^]a, (.4) en la reve[^]rsa, (.) ba[^]:ja y su[^]:be y su[^]:be, (.4) y*
 9 *y y me: hací[^]a: (.) me: (.) me reversea[^]ba y me parquea[^]ba y me volví[^]a*
 10 *a sali[^]:r y me volví[^]a a mete[^]:r y ahí[^] a mete[^]rlo otra ve[^]z, (.2) hasta*
 11 *que lo ha[^]gas bie[^]n,*
 12 Interviewer: *jajaja,*
 13 Carolina: *Y o[^]tra vez, (.2) y yo lo hací[^]a y lo hací[^]a (.) porque yo[^] si: (.) si me u[^]rge*
 14 *tener ya: (.3) mi lice[^]ncia,*
 15 Interviewer: *Claro.*

Translation

- 1 Interviewer: But now you have [a license], don't you?
 2 Carolina: Yes, I have one, but now I can't get it because I already, I already
 3 passed the questions, and they say that now I have to go around with
 4 someone who has the license. So a lady comes, so
 5 far, who is helping me to... It's that, I mean, in my case,
 6 I only need to practice reverse so I can go pass the test.
 7 Interviewer: Yeah?
 8 Carolina: So now she had me in reverse, **go down and go up and go up and and**
 9 **and she made me....I reversed and I parked and I got out again**
 10 **and I got in[to the space] again and then got in again**¹², “until you do it
 11 right.”
 12 Interviewer: hahahaha.
 13 Carolina: And again. And I did it and I did it because I...it is really urgent for me
 14 to get my license already.
 15 Interviewer: Of course.

In this example, Carolina is describing a recent outing she took with “the lady” (actually her employer) to practice driving skills. Carolina has already passed the theoretical part of her license exam, and is preparing for the practice section.

¹² This section could also be translated as: ‘go down and go up and go up and and / and she made me....reverse and park and I get out again / and I get in[to the space] again and then get in again’

In this excerpt, Carolina initially presents herself as the agent of having passed the theory part of her test (lines 2-3) and of needing to practice reversing her car (lines 5-6). These are actions that have already occurred or are currently taking place, and which are not attributable to anyone else. In other parts of this same interview (not included in Example 6-4), Carolina expresses her pride in being able to drive and, thus, help her whole family. Thus, it is also natural for her to express herself in an agentive position in line 13 when she explains that she practiced and carried out all the actions in this short narrative in order to ensure that she will obtain her drivers' license.

However, the main complicating actions in this narrative are presented as not having been carried out *necessarily* by the participant herself. "The lady," who I later found out was her current employer, is presented as the leading agent behind most of the events in the narrative. Carolina cleans "the lady's" house, and has established a close enough relationship with her that her employer is helping her ("*me está^ayuda^ndo*") (line 5). Another actions directly attributable to the lady is: "*me traí^a, (.4) en la reve^rsa*" ('She had me in reverse;' line 8).

In lines 8 through 10, however, it is not at all clear who the agent of the events is. I have translated the actions as having been carried out by the participant, since she physically had to perform the events herself. However, they could equally as well have "the lady" as their agent, as it was Carolina's employer who 'had her' carry out the actions. In line 8, Carolina's use of a string of verbs in third person singular conjugation allows for an ambiguous interpretation of the events. This string of verbs could be interpreted as what Carolina actually did (in Spanish, tediously repetitive actions are frequently expressed using the third person singular), or as the orders given by the lady to Carolina using the informal second person imperative forms of the verbs. Immediately following this is a list of actions preceded by the first person pronoun "*me*." Given the context, this pronoun could be interpreted as being a reflexive pronoun, implying that Carolina completed the actions on her own, for her own benefit. On the other hand, "*me*" could be

the indirect object pronoun indicating that the lady was giving instructions on what Carolina should do, thus, effectively making the lady the agent of these events rather than Carolina.

Although, grammatically, the first interpretation of Carolina as agent is more likely, the possible ambiguity is highlighted by Carolina's seamless segueing into an instance of reported speech of which her employer is unequivocally the author: "*hasta que lo ha^gas bie^n*" ("until you do it right") (lines 10-11). The lady wishes Carolina to practice over and over again until she can park her car almost automatically. Finally, Carolina acknowledges that she repeated these procedures readily because of her urgent need to obtain her driver's license.

Overall, it is possible to see, throughout this narrative, that Carolina is not taking sole responsibility for this event. She shares the agency with her employer. This removing of agency from themselves by the participants is apparent throughout all the narratives which make reference to learning or studying of information and/or skills. It would seem that the participants are unwilling to highlight their own volition in their learning experiences. In addition, the fact that other characters are given co-agency or a greater responsibility concerning the educational processes of the participants, indexes a reticence to appear in a more dominant position with respect to these other characters. In the following excerpt, Example 6-5, Pilar also exhibits this tendency, though she does briefly take agency over the educational experience she is recounting.

Example 6-5: Pilar on learning how to use a computer (From interview with Pilar and Graciela; 7/17/03).

1 Interviewer: *Có^mo estuvo ayer la clase de computación,*

2 Pilar: *A mí^ no me gusto.*

3 Interviewer: *No?*

4 Graciela: *A ella (.) a mí sí*

5 (.4)

6 Interviewer: *Po^r qué (.) qué^ pasó.*

7 (.8)

8 Graciela: *Lo qué pasó^ dice. Je*

- 9 (4)
- 10 **Pilar:** *Y a^ a mí^ no me gustó^ porque: el mu (.) el mu:cha^cho que me tocó^*
- 11 *que me enseñaba a mí la computado^ra me (.2) lo único que este: (.3) Hmm*
- 12 *(.2) pie^nsó yo que cuando (.) va^n a^ a (.) darle una la clase a uno po^r*
- 13 *primera vez (.) para pode^r agarrar un: (.) una computado^ra, (.2) es que*
- 14 *tie^ne uno como que conocer primero la computado^ra, (.4) cómo apaga^rla,*
- 15 *(.3) cómo prende^rla, (.3) cómo saber maneja^r el: (.) el monito^r,*
- 16 **Interviewer:** *Hmhmm.*
- 17 **Pilar:** *El: [el el mouse (.2), el ratoncito.*
- 18 **Interviewer:** *[El mouse*
- 19 **Graciela:** *El ratón,*
- 20 **All:** *Jejejeje*
- 21 **Graciela:** *Sí (.) el gato y el [ratón,*
- 22 **Pilar:** *[Y y y (.3) no^: (.) yo el muchacho me la prendió: é^l, (.2)*
- 23 *la apagó^: él: (.3) y é^l le (2.) ps le meneaba los boto^nes (.) y: luego ya*
- 24 *me dijo (.) quie^re escribir a^lgo y le dije yo (.) a ver? (.3) y ya^: pone ya*
- 25 *para que escri^ba yo una ca^rta, (.2) Y le digo no^, (.4) no^ porque no me*
- 26 *dice esta tecla para qué e^:s, (.) esta (.2) y yo^ fui la que le estuve*
- 27 *pregunta^ndo, (.2) y bue^no y é^sta para qué e^s? (.3) y ya^ al apretar*
- 28 *é^sto es para que vaya subie^ndo para buscar lo que va:a hacer. (.3) Y é^sta?*
- 29 *(.3) es para que vaya baja^ndo (.) si ya^ se le pasó pasó^, (.) y si no tiene*
- 30 *algo (.) pues es para: (.3) Y é^sta o^tra? (.2) Y é^sta o^tra? (.2) Y yo^ se las*
- 31 *estuve pregunta^ndo (.) y él es que: (.2) Hmmm a^:y (.) a él le corresponde*
- 32 *decirle a uno co^mo (.2) como verse,*

Translation

- 1 Interviewer: How was yesterday's computer class?
- 2 Pilar: I didn't like it.
- 3 Interviewer: No?
- 4 Graciela: She didn't. I did.
- 5 (4)
- 6 Interviewer: Why? What happened?
- 7 (.8)

- 8 Graciela: What happened she asks. Ha.
- 9 (.4)
- 10 Pilar: **I didn't like it because the boy I got,**
- 11 **who was teaching me the computer,** it's just that, hmmm,
- 12 I think that when they are going to give a class to you for
- 13 the first time, so you can use a computer , it's that
- 14 you have to know first about the computer, how to turn it off,
- 15 how to turn it on, how to work the monitor...
- 16 Interviewer: Hmhmm.
- 17 Pilar: The the 'mouse,' the little mouse.
- 18 Interviewer: 'The mouse,'
- 19 Graciela: The 'mouse.'
- 20 All: Hahaha
- 21 Graciela: Yeah. The cat and the mouse.
- 22 Pilar: And no. I -- **the boy turned it on, he**
- 23 **turned it off, and he, well he pressed the buttons.** And then he
- 24 said to me "Do you want to write something?" And I said to him
- 25 "let's see." And he already puts it up so
- 26 I can write a letter. And I say, "no." No because he wasn't telling me what
- 27 this key is for, and this one, **and I was the one who was asking him**
- 28 "So, ok, what is this one for?" "And if you press this one it is for going
- 29 up to look for what you are going to do." "And this one?" "This one is for
- 30 moving down. If you already passed it, you passed it. And you don't have
- 31 something, well it's for..."
- 32 "And this other one? And this other one?" And I had to ask him. And he
- It's that, hmmm, **he should have told you how**
- to manage**

This excerpt comes from an interview with Pilar and Graciela during the summer of 2003. In this section of the interview we are discussing a class that was given to the residents of Complex B on how to use computers. High school students from the Mexican community came

to the housing complex and tutored the residents on basic computer skills. Pilar is explaining why she did not enjoy the class, and what she did to remedy this situation.

Throughout most of this excerpt Pilar, does not appear as the agent of the event; her young tutor is. According to Pilar, her tutor performed all the actions instead of teaching her how to do them; “*el muchacho me la prendió: él, (.2) la apagó: él: (.3) y él le (2.) ps le meneaba los boto^nes*” (‘the boy turned it [the computer] on, he turned it off, and he pressed the buttons.’) (lines 22-23). This highlights the fact that she is not in control of her learning of computer skills. She continues to list what she would have liked to know before trying to work on the computer herself. (lines 13-18)

However, Pilar takes control of the situation and asks her young instructor questions so she can obtain the information she feels she needs. Pilar notes: “*y yo^ fui la que le estuve pregunta^ndo,*” (‘and I was the one who was asking him’). She emphasizes the first person pronoun “yo” (‘I’) in this statement, thus creating a separation between herself and the young boy who was teaching her, and effectively reversing the power structure in the event – now Pilar is the agent and the young tutor the recipient of Pilar’s questions. Pilar then continues to exert her control by asking her tutor what she deemed important in order to come to understand the basic functions of the computer.

The narrative closes with Pilar stating that her tutor should have given her the information to begin with, without her having to ask him. This statement serves as a coda to her narrative, expressing her stance with respect to the event: she was not happy with the experience. It also serves as a justification and mitigation for her claim of agency over her education. If she had not taken control, she would not have benefited from the experience.

However, when Pilar was interviewed individually, she did not express herself in the same way concerning her education. She takes full ownership of the process and professes great enjoyment and pride in the process. Pilar is, however, one of the more ambitious participants and

has actively sought to find her own niche within US society. She is also highly invested in assisting her children with their own education.

The fact that the participants express themselves in non-agentive positions suggests that they do not wish to highlight their achievements in learning. By making others the agents of the events, the success falls on them rather than on the participants. Even when participants do take control of their educational experiences, they downplay their agency so as not to highlight their achievements, particularly when they are amongst their peers. Interestingly, most of the tutors are members of the dominant mainstream speaking society. Thus, the participants are indexing a lack of control and of volition with respect to these other people, who are also presented as their superiors – in knowledge if not in status.

In this excerpt, Example 6-5, Pilar mitigates her agency by contrasting it to the more dominant agency of her tutor. Carolina, in Example 6-4, also contrasts her agency to that of her employer, “the lady,” and creates a section where both their agencies seem to overlap as a way to mitigate her own agency in learning to drive. This cues a distancing by the participants from their own learning experiences. However, there are other means by which the participants mitigate their agency in their own education throughout the data-set. One of the more predominant modes of mitigation is via the use of verbs in the future; education is presented by the participants as being a future desire or hope – a hope for a change in their literate identities. The participants sometimes offset the future possible outcomes with current or past conditions which will not allow for these events to occur, or which will greatly hinder them.

6.2.2. Education as a future desire

In the previous section I discussed how the participants offset actions of which they are the agent with others which are performed by people other than themselves. Another way by

which they mitigate agency is by expressing themselves as the subject of future possible events.

In Example 6-6, Mercedes is describing the goals she has had since her arrival to the US. Her next goal is to improve on her English skills, as she reports not being able to communicate at more than a very basic level, and beyond work-related language. She declares that she wants to make English as commonplace to her a chewing and swallowing food.

Example 6-6: Rosina on learning English (From Interview with Rosina; 7/09/07).

- 1 Interviewer: *Pero(.) pero ento^nces sí^ e- entiende bastante. (.) porque (.2) igual(.)*
 2 *las preguntas sobre historia, (.3) es complicado=*
 3 Rosina: *=bua (.) como como quiera (.) o sea tuve dos: dos este: (.2) dos cursos*
 4 *que dan así (.) personas (.) que ayudan a la gente (2) a:: a repasar las*
 5 *preguntas (.3) o sea, (.2) y en eso me concentré: (.2) >pos sí como por*
 6 *unos dos años< o tres (.) concentrándome en e^so y: (.3) y cómo les*
 7 *digo (.) aquí en este país (.) en este país he estado por me^tas. (.2) O sea*
 8 *mi vi^da es como me^tas.*
 9 (2.0)
 10 *Cuando llegamos aquí >o sea yo quería tener dónde vivir.< (.4) mi*
 11 *espo^so no estaba muy de acue^rdo (.) que él se iba para México (.) que*
 12 *sí, (.2)le digo pero vamos a aplicar para una ca^sa. (.3)*
 13 *Pues ta^nto y ta^nto (.) aplica^mos. (.2) Tenemos esta (.2) casi^ta aquí.*
 14 (1.0)
 15 *Después (.2) siguió la lice^ncia (.) así (.2) yo quie^ro (.2) ahí^ voy.*
 16 (1.0)
 17 *Después dije (.3) ahora yo quie^ro la ciudadanía (.) ahí está, (.3) y*
 18 *aho^ra lo que^ quiero es aprender inglés, (.3) o sea mi siguiente*
 19 *me^ta es (.2) el inglés. (.2) O sea que yo quiero, (.3) co^mo dice uno*
 20 *vulgarmente. (.) quiero (.4) mastica^rlo y comerlo. (.) al inglés.*

Translation

- 1 Interviewer: But then you do understand quite a bit because anyway the
 2 questions about history... it's complicated.
 3 Rosina: Well, You could say so. That is, **I had two courses**
 4 that were given by people who help us to review the

5 questions, that is, **and that is what I concentrated on** well for
6 some two years or three ... concentrating on that and on... how can I
tell you
7 ... here in this country I have been focusing on goals. That is my
8 life is like goals.
9 (2.0)
10 When we arrived here, that is, I wanted to have a place to live. My
husband
11 didn't agree with me entirely because he was going to Mexico. And yes
12 ... I say to him "but let's apply for a house."
13 And so I insist and insist and we applied. We have this little house here.
14 (1.0)
15 After that came the license. So I want it and there I go.
16 (1.0)
17 Then I said "now I want citizenship." That's done and **now**
18 **what I want is to learn English. That is, my next goal is**
19 **English. That is, that I want ... like one says colloquially,**
20 **I want to chew it and eat up the English.**

In this excerpt Mercedes begins with a short narrative about how she prepared for her citizenship test. She then segues into a narrative about her evolving goals since she came to the US, culminating with her intention to focus on English now that her other goals have been met.

Two distinct learning experiences are made reference to in this excerpt: Mercedes' studying for her citizenship test, and her desire to study English. These two experiences are described in very different ways. Mercedes begins by stating that she 'had two courses' ("*tuve dos: dos este: (.2) dos cursos*") (line 3) to help her prepare for her citizenship test. The selection of the verb 'to have' is interesting in itself. Mercedes did not 'take' or 'attend' a course; she 'had' it. The use of this verb suggests a lack of active participation that would have been more evident if she had used either of the other possible verbs. Mercedes is thus not positioning herself as the

actor or agent of this event, even if she is the grammatical subject of the event. This is further emphasized by the fact that the courses were given by “*personas (.) que ayudan a la gente*” (‘by people who help us’). I have translated “*personas*” as ‘people’ and “*gente*” as ‘us.’ The use of “*personas*” to refer to the instructors indicates that there is only a discrete number of individuals who work in this capacity. Mercedes’ use of “*gente*,” when she is in reality referring to herself, indexes her identification with the Mexican community as a whole¹³. However, the volunteer instructors are presented as having a more active and dominant role in the class than Mercedes. This is interesting given that Mercedes literally learned a list of questions and their answers by heart, without truly comprehending what she was learning due to her limited English skills. Mercedes is thus greatly playing down her achievement in studying for and passing her citizenship test.

On the other hand, Mercedes is the agent of her desire to learn English. She three times uses the verb “*querer*” (‘to want’ or ‘to desire’) conjugated for the first person singular. By using this verb, which expresses emotion and is subjective in nature, she is making her statements more affective. Yet, the use of this verb implies that learning English is a future desire and not necessarily a future fact.

By subsequently saying she wants to chew and eat up the language, she is also creating a very vivid and active image of the process of learning. These images are highly pragmatic as they refer to actions that are part of the immigrants’ daily life. Mercedes thus expresses her desire to make using English part of this routine. However, as already noted, for Mercedes this learning process, the learning of ESL, is a future, yet unfulfilled action. Of the 31 tokens in which the participants position themselves in the subject position within narrative sections related to learning, fifteen of the subjects relate to future events; that is, almost 50%.

¹³ For a discussion of the differential use of “*gente*” and “*personas*” (both translatable as ‘people’) by the participants, see Chapter 4.

In the case of Example 6-6, Mercedes uses the verb “*querer*” (‘to want’) to imply that learning English is a hope for the future. In the following excerpt, Example 6-7, Celina uses the more definite future expression “*voy a*” (‘I’m going to’) to describe her future intention of learning English. However, she offsets it with other circumstances, which suggest that the intended future actions will most likely never take place.

Example 6-7: Celina on learning to read (From interview with Celina; 7/09/07).

- 1 Interviewer: *Ya conocía de antes?*
- 2 Celina: *Si ya había ido. (.5) Porque: este: (.8)*
- 3 Interviewer: *Y bueno.*
- 4 Celina: *Y aho^{ra} el primero me voy a i:r para:: Chicago,(.3) voy a i^r una*
 5 *semana,(.3) Y ahora no más el mes que viene, (.2) y por e^{so} el me^s que*
 6 *vie^{ne}, (.5) este: (.4) le vo^y a poner má^s ga^{nas} a los estudios, (.4)*
 7 *Porque voy a agarrara un mes de (.) >bue^{no} no estoy segura que sea un*
 8 *mes< o: (.2) u^{nas} dos semanas de vacacio^{nes},(.4) Y en ese me^s (.5)*
 9 *pue:s (.4) voy a estudiar unos días, (.4) Y só^{lo} cuando me leva^{nte} y*
 10 *que trai^{ga} la mente limpia (.) jejeje (.) para pone^{rle} un ra^{to}, (.5)*
 11 *Ya^{me} estuvo diciendo (.) mira ma^{mi} dice hoy no dice, (.) pero: (.)*
 12 *como en e^{stos} días dice (.) que si usted pueda,(.2) que no se sienta mal*
 13 *dice, (.2) dice la mae^{stra}:: que: (.) aunque se^{an} muy poqui^{tas} la:s*
 14 *(.2) las clases que me dé, (.2) dice que uste^d de todos mo^{dos} (.) este (.)*
 15 *igua^l sigue adelante porque yo^{le} voy a ayuda^r.*
 16 *(.4)*
- 17 Interviewer: *>Eso es muy bueno.< (.2) Y una vez que empie^{ce} a mirar e^{so}, (.2)se le*
 18 *va a [hacer mucho más fácil.*
- 19 Celina: *[No^{le} y yo le digo que (.) un po^{co} (.) >de a poquito< yo me vo:y a ir,(.)*
 20 *poder así, (.2) ir vie^{ndo} las letras (.2) y conocié^{ndolas}, (.5) Y: yo^{le}*
 21 *mi^{sma} me voy a poner a: (.) a practicar,*
- 22 Interviewer: *Hmhmm,=*
- 23 Celina: *=Y ya después^s (.) este así aprendo a lee^r. (.3) Porque:: (.) voy*
 24 *conocie^{ndo}.*
- 25 Interviewer: *Si.*

Translation

- 1 Interviewer: Did you already know [California] from before?
- 2 Celina: Yeah, I'd already been there. Because...
- 3 Interviewer: Oh, good.
- 4 Celina: And now, on the first, I'm going to Chicago. I'm going for a
5 week. And now next month. And that's why next month
6 **hmm, I'm going to dedicate more energy to my studies.**
7 Because I'm going to take a month – well I'm not sure if it will be a
8 month or two weeks of vacations. And during that month
9 well **I'm going to study a few days.** And only when I get up and
10 if I have a clear mind, Hehehehe, in order to dedicate myself for a while.
11 And she was telling me, "Look Mom," she says, "Not today," she says,
12 "but one of these days," she says, "if you can and you don't feel sick," she
13 says... "Says
14 the teacher that even if it's only a few lessons that she can give you,"
15 she says, "You can still improve anyway
16 because I'm going to help you."
17 (.4)
- 17 Interviewer: That's great. And once you start to look into this it will get
18 Much easier for you.
- 19 Celina: **No. And I say that a bit, a bit at a time I'm going to get...**
20 **I'll be able to, that way, begin to see the letters, begin to know them. And**
21 **I'm going to get to practice them myself.**
- 22 Interviewer: Hmhmm.
- 23 Celina: And then, hmm, I'll learn to read that way. Because I'm going to begin
24 to know.
- 25 Interviewer: Yeah.

In this excerpt, Celina has just told me about her latest trip to California to see her family.

This excerpt begins when she adds that now she intends to visit her relatives in Chicago.

However, she interrupts her account to tell me that once she gets back she intends to dedicate

herself to working on her literacy skills. Celina has never attended school and she has stated that her greatest ambition is to learn how to read and write. In her own words (from interview with Celina; 7/25/03): “*No me voy a quedar ignorante yo*” (‘I’m not going to remain ignorant’). This sudden change in topic is probably due to the fact that before the interview Celina has asked me to continue with her instruction of literacy skills, and she is trying to tell me that she will persevere and be more enthusiastic about her studies.

Most of the actions in this excerpt are presented with the modal verb with future intention “*voy a*” (‘I’m going to’). Celina says “*le voy a poner más ganas a los estudios*” (‘I’m going to be more enthusiastic with my studies’), and “*voy a estudiar unos días*” (‘I’m going to study a few days’). She also outlines her desired future outcome of recognizing letters and gradually learning to read. Yet she is talking of an, as yet, unrealized future event.

Like Mercedes in Example 6-6, Celina sees the process of learning to read as being a series of concrete steps that can be made part of her daily routine. Mercedes uses the simile of eating (chewing and swallowing) against which to compare the process of learning English; Celina compares learning to read and write with another activity of her day-to-day life: to seeing people or places and recognizing them. Celina says: “*>de a poquito< yo me voy a ir,(.) poder así, (.2) ir viendo las letras (.2) y conociéndolas,*” (‘a bit, a bit at a time I am going to get... I’m going to be able to, that way, begin to see the letters, begin to know them.’) (lines 19-20).

However, this future outcome is shown to be unrealistic by Celina’s daughter, whom she reports in lines 11-15. Through her daughter’s words, we find that Celina has been sick and that she may only be able to study during the brief moments when she is feeling a bit better and is able to get up. In fact, she has been plagued by severe gastro-intestinal problems for the last two years. Thus it would seem that learning to read will be a slow process, if it ever becomes a reality. In the case of Celina, learning literacy skills is not only a yet unrealized future event, but also probably an event she will not realistically attain.

Interestingly, Celina opts to inform me of her illness through the reported speech of her daughter. By using her daughter's words, she is introducing a witness to her state and lending more credibility to her problems (Besnier, 1992; Gunthner, 1997; Schieffelin, 1996; Uchida, 1997).¹⁴ She is also creating a justification for why she will actually probably be not working on her literacy skills in spite of her declaration of her intent. This phenomenon reminds me of Ahearn's (2001a) study, and the Nepalese tradition of pretending not to want something. In this case, however, the opposite seems to be true. Celina seems to feel that expressing her desire to learn is required given the current context and interlocutor, even though she knows it will probably not occur. As in Ahearn's study, the result is a contradiction between what she says and what she knows will probably happen. Thus, the use of the future together with the explanation of extenuating circumstances also functions as a form of mitigation of Celina's agency.

6.2.3. Education in the negative

Another means by which the participants mitigate their agency in their educational experiences is by presenting them in conjunction with other events that never took place or which had a negative outcome. These other negative events (which carry a negative particle) cannot be said to have an agent or actor. Example 6-8 illustrates an instance when Magdalena uses negative events to downplay her achievement of learning to read by going to adult literacy classes.

Example 6-8: Magdalena on learning to read and write (From interview with Magdalena; 7/01/03).

- 1 *Magdalena: A noso^tros (.) u^:f (.) a noso^tros nos pega^ba muchí^simo. (.3) mu^cho*
 2 *mucho u^:y (.2) a mí^ nunca me dio^ (.) este (.) estu^dio (.) pue^des decir que*
 3 *nu^nca me (.) fui^ a la escue^la (.) digamos (.) no^ fui nu^nca, (.) fui^ a la*
 4 *escuela no^.*

¹⁴ A more detailed discussion of the role of reported speech in making the participant's propositions stronger can be found in Chapter 5.

- 5 Interviewer: Ni siquie^{ra} primer a^{ño}?
- 6 Magdalena: no[^]: (.) na^{da},
- 7 Interviewer: Na^{da} nada na^{da}?
- 8 Magdalena: No[^] (.) yo o se^a (.) lo poqui^{to} que sé de lee^r aho^{ra}, (.2) pero escribi^r
- 9 casi no sé[^], (.3) e^{ste} es de (.) de casa^{da}, (.) que aprendí[^]
- 10 (1.0)
- 11 Interviewer: A^h usted fue (.) e (.) tú fui^{ste} (.) a: clases de=
- 12 Magdalena: =de alfabetizaci^{ón}, (.) que se lla^{ma}ba más a^{ntes},
- 13 Interviewer: [qué[^] bien.
- 14 Magdalena: que de alfabe (.) ah
- 15 Interviewer: alfabetizaci^{ón} [(.) sí[^],
- 16 Magdalena: [Sí[^], (.3) y su^{pe} qué e^s (.) e (.) fue que a^{lgo} le entendí
- 17 para (.) a las le^{tras},
- 18 Interviewer: Sí?
- 19 Magdalena: pero no[^] porque yo no sé así[^] (.) escribi^r (.) yo (.) yo no sé[^] escribi^r,
- 20 Interviewer: Hm.hmm,
- 21 Magdalena: Y de leer, (.) sí[^] (.) sé[^] estar cambia^{ndo} (.) deletrea^{ndo} así sie^{mpre}, (.4)
- 22 pero (.) sí[^] (.) yo antes no no había ido a la escuela nu^{nca} nu^{nca}
- 23 nu^{nca}, (.3) nu^{nca} nos tra^{jo} a ninguno de nosotros.
- 24 Interviewer: Hm,mm.

Translation

- 1 Magdalena: He used to beat us a lot, a lot
- 2 A lot. Oh. He never gave me, hmmm, an education. You could say
- 3 **I never went to school, so to say. I never went to**
- 4 **School, no.**
- 5 Interviewer: Not even first grade?
- 6 Magdalena: No. Nothing.
- 7 Interviewer: Nothing nothing?
- 8 Magdalena: No. I, **that is, what little I read now – but writing**
- 9 **I hardly know – hmm, I learned after being married.**
- 10 (1.0)
- 11 Interviewer: Oh, so you went to classes

- 12 Magdalena: Literacy classes, that's what they were called before.
- 13 Interviewer: That's great!
- 14 Magdalena: Litera.. ah
- 15 Interviewer: Literacy, yeah.
- 16 Magdalena: Yeah. **And it was then that I knew what it is....that I understood somewhat**
- 17 **about letters.**
- 18 Interviewer: Yeah?
- 19 Magdalena: But no, because **I don't really know how to write. I don't know how to write.**
- 20 Interviewer: Hmhmm.
- 21 Magdalena: And reading, I do know how to exchange...always sounding out...
- 22 But, yeah, before **I had never gone to school, ever, ever,**
- 23 **ever.** He never brought any of us.
- 24 Interviewer: Hmhmm.

This is part of a larger excerpt presented in Chapter 5 concerning Magdalena's mother and her relationship with her husband. In this section Magdalena performs an aside and discusses her father's transgression at not allowing his children to obtain even a basic education. However, Magdalena later rectifies this situation by attending adult literacy lessons.

Magdalena is one of the older participants in this study. She was in her early 50s at the time of this interview and had grown children, grandchildren, and also a young six-year-old daughter. As a child, she had not been allowed to go to school by her father, who was also a very aggressive man and beat her, her siblings, and her mother. In spite of this, after having married, Magdalena went to adult literacy classes to learn how to read (lines 8-17). As she notes (lines 8-9), "*lo poquito que sé de lee^r aho^{ra}, (.2) pero escribi^r casi no sé[^], (.3) e[^]ste es de (.) de casa[^]da, (.) que aprendi[^]*" ('what little I read now – but writing I hardly know – hmm, I learned after being married'). This is the one event in which she has full agency in this excerpt.

However, her achievement at learning how to read is counteracted by a series of other negative events she discusses in this excerpt. At the onset of the excerpt Magdalena states that her father never gave her an education (line 2): “*a mí^ nunca me dio^ (.) este (.) estu^dio*” (‘He never gave me, hmmm, an education’). In her next statement she changes the subject from her father to her own self. She never went to school (“*nu^unca me (.) fui^ a la escue^la*”). In this turn it is evident that she is not the actor even if she is the grammatical subject; the action of [not] going to school was not her choice as she was merely a child. However, by making this statement in the first person, it does become subjective (Benveniste, 1971), and highlights the affect inherent with not going to school.

Magdalena further downplays her achievement at going to literacy classes when she notes that even though she can read, she still cannot write (line 19). She declares her inability three times, twice in line 19, and again in lines 8 and 9. This is clearly something that irks her, as evidenced by the multiple repetitions. She seems to suggest that the fact that she cannot write negates her ability to read as she is not really fully literate.

Finally, Magdalena concludes her account by justifying her perceived lack of literacy skills when she once again states that “*yo antes no no había ido a la escuela nu^unca nu^unca nu^unca*,” (‘before I had never gone to school, never, never, never’). In fact, she uses the negative adverb “*nunca*” (‘never’) three times to stress her statement.

Thus, Magdalena uses two types of negative events to mitigate her agency in learning to read. First, she mentions the fact that she never went to school, for which she is not responsible, and thus not the agent. In this event, her father is responsible for her not having attended school and is expressed as having control over her lack of educational experience. Secondly, Magdalena presents the fact that she never learned how to write, which she does imply she is responsible for, but which she is not the agent of since it never occurred. These two unfulfilled events serve to counteract and mitigate the one event in which she is clearly the actor: her learning to read.

The following example is different in that Celina is explaining why she did not claim agency in events that could have benefited her and furthered her learning. In these events Celina was not the agent simply because she did not carry out the actions. Interestingly, she counteracts her own lack of agency with positive events in which others had agency.

Example 6-9: Celina on learning (English and how to drive) (From interview with Celina; 7/09/07).

- 1 Interviewer: *Usted a cla[^]se nunca fue[^] no?*
- 2 Celina: *No.*
- 3 (2.0)
- 4 Interviewer: *no?*
- 5 (1.0)
- 6 Celina: *No.*
- 7 (2.0)
- 8 Interviewer: *Por qué[^] no ha ido a clases?*
- 9 (1.6)
- 10 Celina: *Pue:s: (.2) No[^] he ido a clases porque: (.5) pues hay ve[^]ces que sí[^] me*
- 11 *hablan para: (.) para que:: va[^]ya a clases pero como (.3) cobran*
- 12 *mu[^]cho,*
- 13 Interviewer: *A[^]::h. (.) Pero: (.) pero ha[^]y clases gratui[^]tas también.*
- 14 (1.4)
- 15 Celina: *Oh sí también,*
- 16 (.8)
- 17 Interviewer: *La Comunidad Hispa[^]na está (.) está ofrecie[^]ndo clases (.3) clases*
- 18 *gratuitas.*
- 19 (2.0)
- 20 Celina: *Pues no[^]; (.2) a vece[^]s no[^] vo[^]y porque: también (.) este (.) para i:r (.3)*
- 21 *necesita uno como que (.) lo anden lleva[^]ndo (.) y todo eso,*
- 22 (.5)
- 23 Interviewer: *Uste[^]d no maneja?*
- 24 Celina: *No.*
- 25 (.5)

- 26 Interviewer: A::h ta (.3) entonces tiene que: (/2) tiene que llevarla (.3) alguie^n (.) su
27 mari^do (.) o un hijo,
- 28 Celina: Hmhmm,
29 (2.0) Pues sí^ (.) **ya no me enseñé^ a maneja^r** (.2) y eso es lo que (.8) si
30 (.) si yo supie^ra pues (.4) a lo mejo^r si,
- 31 Interviewer: No ha querido aprender?
32 (.5)
- 33 Celina: Hmmm (.3) Pues no^
34 (1.6)
- 35 Interviewer: No?
- 36 Celina: No: (.) Hmm (.) U^na ve^z me quiso enseñar mi mari^do,
- 37 Interviewer: Psi, (.3) Y no?
38 (.4)
- 39 Celina: Y no, (.5) e^s que él me lleva^ba a un ra^ncho, (.3) Hhh y luego (.3) A má::s (.)
40 súbele (.3) No usted déle, (.4) y le daba (.2) y era: este como de costa
41 aba^jo (.4) era como que se: (.3) y a veces le pisa^ba yo como muy fuerte
42 (.) y como que me da^ba miedo,
- 43 Interviewer: Jajaja. (.2) A:h pero no e^s tan difi^cil (.2) No no se animarí^a a aprender
44 ahora?
45 (1.8)
- 46 Celina: Pues a lo mejo^r un día que: (.4) como donde quie^ra me lleven pues (.3) y
47 llé^venmen acá, (.3) Ah (.) y me llevan.
- 48 Interviewer: Psi,
- 49 Celina: Y por eso también (.) **a lo mejor no he: (.) hecho el propósito,**

Translation

- 1 Interviewer: You never went to a class, did you?
2 Celina: No.
3 (2.0)
4 Interviewer: No?
5 (1.0)
6 Celina: No.
7 (2.0)

- 8 Interviewer: Why haven't you gone to classes?
9 (1.6)
- 10 Celina: **Well, I haven't gone to classes because well there are times when**
11 **they have told me so I can go to classes, but since they charge too**
12 **much...**
- 13 Interviewer: Oh, but there are free classes, too.
14 (1.4)
- 15 Celina: Oh, yeah, there are those too.
16 (.8)
- 17 Interviewer: The Comunidad Hispana is offering classes
18 for free.
19 (2.0)
- 20 Celina: **Well, no. Sometimes I don't go because in order to go**
21 **you need like someone to take you and all that.**
22 (.5)
- 23 Interviewer: You don't drive?
24 Celina: No.
25 (.5)
- 26 Interviewer: Oh, ok. Then you have to... someone has to take you – your
27 husband or a son.
- 28 Celina: Hmhm. (2.0) Well yeah. **I haven't taught myself to drive yet**, and that
29 is what...
30 If I knew, well then maybe yes.
- 31 Interviewer: You haven't wanted to learn?
32 (.5)
- 33 Celina: Hmmm. Well, no.
34 (1.6)
- 35 Interviewer: No?
36 Celina: No. Hmmm. Once my husband tried to teach me.
- 37 Interviewer: Yeah? And no luck?
38 (.4)
- 39 Celina: Well, no. It's that he would take me to a "rancho" and then, "Go faster,
40 step on it. No, go on." And I went faster. And it was like down

- 41 hill and it was like it... and sometimes I would step on it too hard
 42 and like it made me scared.
 43 Interviewer: Hahaha. Oh, but it's not that hard. Would you dare try again
 44 now?
 45 (1.8)
 46 Celina: Well, maybe some day,like they take me wherever I need to go. And
 47 “take me here.” And they take me.
 48 Interviewer: Yeah.
 49 Celina: And that's also why **I probably haven't made an effort.**

Example 6-9 is a dialogue with Celina in which we discuss her limited ability to communicate in English, and her lack of driving skills, which could help her attend ESL classes. The whole excerpt could be considered a single narrative unit in which Celina lists the main cause and effect relationship between different events in her life.

In this excerpt Celina uses negative phrases concerning her learning of information or skills four times. The first of these concerns the first reason why she has not attended ESL classes: they are too expensive (lines 10-12: “*No^ he ido a clases porque: (.5) pues hay ve^ces que sí^ me hablan para: (.) para que:: va^ya a clases pero como (.3) cobran mu^cho*” = I haven't gone to classes because well there are times when they have told me so I can go to classes, but since they charge too much). Her second negative relating to attending ESL classes is her lack of a ride to get to the venue (lines 20-21: “*Pues no^:, (.2) a vece^s no^ vo^y porque: también (.) este (.) para i:r (.3) necesita uno como que (.) lo anden lleva^ndo (.) y todo eso*” = ‘Sometimes I don't go because in order to go You need like someone to take you and all that.'). The third use of the negative relates to the fact that she has not taught herself to drive (line 29: “*ya no me enseñé^ a maneja^r*” = ‘I haven't taught myself to drive yet'). In the fourth and final negative statement (line 49: “*no he: (.) hecho el propósito*” = ‘I probably haven't made an effort'), Celina concedes that she has not really purposed to learn how to drive – or English. In each of these cases, Celina

is explaining events that would have benefited her if she had carried them out as an active agent or actor.

Moreover, because each of these negative statements is followed by an excuse (or is an excuse, itself), Celina is mitigating, not her agency, but her lack thereof. Particularly in the case of the first three negatives, she conveys to her interlocutor that she is not to blame for not having acted. In fact, in these three first negative statements Celina names others as being responsible for her lack of learning: the organizers of classes for making them too expensive, the members of her family for not being able to give her a ride, and her husband who has not taught her to drive.

In the final negative, however, she does concede that she has simply not purposed to learn. This is the only time she admits to any culpability in her lack of knowing. However, even though ‘making an effort’ is clearly a verb that can only involve personal volition, Celina uses it in such a way that it seems that the circumstances behind it are out of her reach. In this way, she reduces her agency to the point that she seems not to be responsible at all. This is further emphasized by the fact that she introduces the turn by saying “*Y por eso también*” (‘And that’s also why’) (line 49), adding this to her list of reasons why she has not learned ESL – or how to drive. In all these instances, Celina is, herself, the grammatical subject, which makes all these statements subjective in nature (Benveniste, 1971), and emotionally significant to her.

In these last two excerpts (Examples 6-8 and 6-9), it becomes apparent that the participants wish to cue that they have had no volition in the learning processes they are describing, or that other circumstances negate what volition they did have. They may or may not have been given opportunities to learn, but the fact that they were unable to do so is beyond their control. They are also cuing two opposite identities. On the one hand they express an identity that needs and desires to learn. On the other hand they explain why they have not been able to do so, and they set themselves up for possible future failures. I can only conjecture, based on my conversations with them, that for many of these older women, education has always been out of

their reach. It is apparent that they feel that education may still be beyond their control; it is not part of their current identity. However they express their desire because they feel it is expected of them since I have been acting as their ESL instructor throughout the course of the study.

6.3. Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed how the participants express their agency with respect to their educational experiences. When they position themselves as actors or agents, they frequently share the agency with other characters in their narratives. In this way they can detract attention away from themselves. This also creates the effect of making the relationship between the participant and the other character, agent of the events, unequal, with the participant having less responsibility and power over their educational event.

Frequently, the participants also present themselves as the agents of possible future events. In this case, the events are presented as hopes that may or may not occur. Often, however, it becomes evident that these hopes are quite unlikely to take place since they are presented together with other events that make the educational experience unlikely, if not impossible. The participants are thus cuing a hope for a change in their literate identities, while simultaneously expressing a lack of conviction that this will occur.

Even when the participants do express themselves as taking control of their education, as in the example of Pilar during her computer skills lesson, they seem to feel they need to justify themselves for taking over the responsibility. This suggests to me that the participants do not want to be seen in a controlling situation, particularly when they are with other members of their community. This is confirmed by the fact that Pilar, during an interview with me alone, had no problem expressing herself in a dominant position with respect to her learning, and actually stated that she was very proud of her achievements in English and intended to continue improving.

I then analyzed how the participants also mitigate their agency in their learning experiences by contrasting them with events that did not occur. These negative events are expressed in such a way that they negate the effect of the positive event of which the participant was an agent. Or they present the educational events in the negative; that is, as events that never took place because of circumstances over which the participant had no control. In this way, they are once again able to present themselves as not having full responsibility – or any – over their educational or learning experiences.

All these devices used by the participants to express lack of agency or to mitigate their agency in relation to their educational experiences together function as [co-]contextualization cues for an attitude of distancing from their education by the Mexican women interviewed. They also index an identity that lacks control over learning experiences. Education is thus expressed as being outside of their power.

All 14 participants, however, openly declare their hopes to study and/or learn: English, literacy skills, or driving, even if in the next turn they justify why they have not done so thus far. This is most likely due to the fact that they feel they need to state an apparently hopeful attitude towards learning because I have been acting as their English tutor. By stating their hopes they are saving face – my face – as they are expressing their approval for my role. However, this would then be further indicative of the fact that a change in their literate identities is seen as desirable but not yet practicable.

However, of the 14 participants, Pilar seems to be the only participant truly invested in learning (English and work skills). This is apparent in the way she speaks about her educational experiences and her hopes for future learning. She is also the only participant who ever openly took an agentive role in the discursive description of an educational event. But, for the most part, the other participants seem to be reluctant to express themselves as having an agentive role in their learning. It is true that some participants have become actively involved in learning.

Mercedes has studied for and passed her citizenship exam, and Carolina was actively pursuing her drivers' license. Yet they do not seem to be willing to express themselves in an actively responsible position within their narratives. This leads me to posit that most of the participants have developed an identity as uneducated people and cannot envision themselves changing this state, at least not drastically, and not yet.

Together with their perceived inability to effect a change to their level of learning, these participants also state that they do not feel, due to their lack of education, that they can aspire to better jobs. As noted by Mercedes in a conversation (from fieldnotes, 7/9/07), why bother to learn English if she cannot obtain a GED and will never be able to rise in status at her work. Only Pilar feels empowered to change her status in society by learning English. She says she is hopeful to obtain a managerial job at her work in the near future because of her English skills (from fieldnotes, 7/10/07)

As found by Egbo (2004) in her study of literacy and identity amongst women in Nigeria, it would seem that the perceived lack of literacy skills in the participants has made them feel that they do not have the power to alter their social status. In Egbo's study, the Nigerian women felt they were bound to their homes and were not able to be active parts of society because of their perceived lack of literacy skills. In this case, the Mexican women in Kennett Square feel they do not have the ability to obtain better paying and higher ranking jobs.

Notwithstanding, there is an apparent condition of "contradictory consciousness" (Gramsci, 1971); the participants are verbally performing a role which is expected of them and which represents cultural norms, but enacting another reality which is more in keeping with their current circumstances.

Concerning investment (Norton, 1997, 2000; Norton-Pierce, 1995) in the English language, if the participants feel they have little or no agency over their education and learning

experiences, and if they have developed an identity as uneducated women, they are not likely to be highly invested in learning the second language, at all.

This seems to be a condition more common amongst the female Mexican immigrants to Kennett Square. Most men have achieved a higher level of education before coming to the US. Moreover, most of the men reported having attended some ESL classes, as well. In any case, further research would be needed in order to better explain implications for the future of female Mexican immigrants in the US.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

7. Overview of the study

In this dissertation I purposed to do two things. First, I analyzed the structural features of the participants' discourse in order to ascertain how they reflect their different identities. In particular I focused on their ethnic, gendered and literate identities, since these were the aspects of themselves most discussed by the participants. I studied how structural elements of language cue these identities by indexing the affect, and the attitudes of the participants in relation to other people within and beyond their narratives, and towards the events they were recounting. This was the focus of the three analytical chapters: Chapters 4, 5, and 6. I discuss these findings in section 7.1 of this chapter. I then construct an outline of the participants' main identities, based on these analyses, in section 7.2.

My second goal in this study is to discuss how the participants' identities have affected their investment in learning English as their second language. This will be discussed in section 7.3.

In section 7.4 I discuss implications for future research.

This study was guided by a triad of theoretical conceptualizations. The first of these was that of social identity as developed by De Fina (De Fina, 2000, 2003), based on a feminist poststructural view of subjectivity (Weedon, 1987; Williams, 1996). According to this conceptualization, identity is multiple and fluid, as it is affected by social interactions over time, and by the changing realities of people. Since identity is expressed through language, particularly within narratives about the person's own life and experiences (Bruner, 1990; Harré & Van

Langenhove, 1999; Kerby, 1991; Talmy, 1995; Wortham, 2001) it becomes interesting to analyze how narrators express their roles within the events they are recounting, and with respect to the other participants in the events.

Analysis of narratives that have occurred over the lifetime of the narrator may give us glimpses of how his/her identities have developed over time, as well as a cross-section of the various identities of the speaker at the time of the re-telling. It also reveals a variety of different social groups with which the speaker has identified. Heteroglossia is a well documented characteristic of narrators, who express their own voices at different times in their lives, as well as the voices of other characters, simultaneously, within their narratives (Bakhtin, 1981). Taking this into account, I acknowledge that the identities found may not be the same across the board for all the participants, even though some important generalizations can be made concerning the group identity of the Mexican women who participated.

A second main theoretical conceptualization utilized in this study, which forms part of the analytical framework, is that of subjectivity (Banfield, 1982; Benveniste, 1971; Iwasaki, 1993; Kuroda, 1973; Maynard, 1993). This refers to how the speakers frame themselves and their roles within their narratives. Subjective accounts are told from the perspective of the speaker (in first person) and in relation to the here and now. They are also associated with heightened affect. Because of this, I see the subjective sections of discourse as indexing more central aspects of the participant's identities. The speaker is not only telling about facts, but about events that are more salient in his/her life. In this study I used subjectivity as a lens through which to view identity.

While subjectivity is an extremely fruitful means for the study of identity, within the data-set it frequently co-occurred with other structural aspects of language, and together they served as contextualization cues for identity and for the attitudes of the participants towards the events and other characters in them. Contextualization cues (Gumperz, 1989, 1997; Gumperz et al., 1982; Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz, 1982; Schiffrin, 1987b, 1996) are patterns of discourse

that index different contexts within the text (for example frames or required responses) or beyond the text (e.g., attitudes, social roles, and identities). In this study, the focus was primordially on the attitudes of the participants towards different people and events, and the roles assumed by them in their narratives, both contexts beyond the actual language used in the narratives.

In the following section I summarize the findings of the three analytical chapters, focusing on the aspects of language that more saliently serve as contextualization cues for affect, social roles, and identities of the participants.

7.1. Summary of the analytical chapters

Chapter 4 was concerned with the ethnic identity of the participants. In this chapter, the focus was on how they expressed the “us versus them;” that is, on how they expressed their attitude towards their own group of Mexican immigrants living in Kennett Square, PA, and other ethnic groups with which they are in contact.

I found that the participants used different terms of reference to identify their own and other ethnic or nationality groups. They used the term “*mexicano/a*,” as a noun or adjective, to refer to their own group. Members of the US mainstream society were identified with the term “*americanos/as*.” And the term “*hispanos*” was used to refer to Spanish speakers who were not of Mexican origin. Other terms used were “*personas de color/ de la raza de color*” (‘people of color/ of the colored race’) in reference to African Americans, and “*camboyanos*” to label the people from Cambodia who also worked in the mushroom factories. Use of these terms was mainly objective and did not cue any significant aspects of identity or attitudes towards members of these groups.

The use of these ethnic or nationality terms was considered an explicit reference to the different groups. However, other modes of reference were used by the participants as well, for

instance, expressions with the nouns “*gente*” or “*personas*.” Both words can be translated as ‘people’ in English, but “*gente*” is a collective noun, while the latter designates a group of discrete individuals. The use of “*gente*” was found to function as a contextualization cue for heightened affect, and usually denoted a group of people with whom the participants associated to some degree. It was used mostly in relation to the members of the Mexican community, or to people who spoke Spanish and with whom the Mexicans could communicate. “*Personas*,” on the other hand, was used to refer to individuals with whom the participants had some contact, but not a close relationship. US citizens were denoted with this term most frequently. That is, the use of this term did not cue any particular attachment or association to individuals thus denoted.

Often participants referred to members of other groups implicitly, by ascribing to them characteristics of the group to which they belong. For instance, members of the US mainstream society were often described as ‘people who don’t understand us.’ Frequently, too, when English speakers were discussed, no subject was assigned to them; i.e., they were presented using a null or 0-subject. This detracted attention from these characters and made the event itself the focus of the narrative and further cued the fact that the participants were not in any way close to the people thus denoted. In fact, it cued a distancing from them, and frequently negative affect was also associated with the use of null-subjects.

Finally, the use of the subjective first person plural pronoun “*nosotros*” (‘we’) was found to index a closer association of the participants with small subgroups, particularly family and groups associated with work or with social activities, than with the Mexican community at large.

In Chapter 5, I focused on the gendered identities of the participants, analyzing how the use of reported speech cued their association with other people, and how it indexed the more salient sections of narrative. Starting from the traditional view of gendered roles of women according to the social models of machismo and marianismo (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1992, 1994; Stevens, 1965, 1973), I selected narratives that related to these roles, from the data set. The three

categories selected were: role as wife, role as mother, and role as primary caregiver and maintainer of the home (as housewives). Of these three roles, it became apparent that the most salient was that of mother. The participants organized their lives around this role. Their relationship to their husbands was often determined by the needs of the children, and they viewed their role at home in light of the needs of their children, as well. The sections with reported speech functioned to highlight these aspects of their married lives. In this respect, the reported speech functioned as a contextualization cue for the more important sections of narrative.

Concerning their relationship with other people, the choice of who to cite via the use of reported speech suggested that the participants did not defer to the authority of others, not even their husbands. This tends to debunk the theory of both traditional models of gendered roles that the Mexican women are subservient to their men. In over half the instances of reported speech, the participants cited their own thoughts or opinions. Whenever they reported other people, it became apparent that they did not select them on the basis of their authority but, rather, based on their closeness to the narrator. In fact, most of the participants did not quote their husbands, particularly within the complicating actions (Labov & Waletzky, 1966) of the narrative. This suggested that the participants did not focus on shared experiences with their spouses within their narratives.

Finally, in Chapter 6, I focused on the literate identity of the participants. By literate identity I mean the role of learning and of studying (skills and information) in the identity of the participants. In order to analyze this I selected narratives, using NVivo, that centered round the experiences of the participants with learning and studying of English, literacy skills, information for the citizenship test and for the drivers' license exam, and on the learning of skills like driving and computer skills. In this chapter I focused on the participants' expressions of agency (Ahearn, 2001a, 2001b; Davidson, 1980; Duranti, 1990), and on whom they presented as the agents of their own experiences of learning and/or studying.

The participants, when discussing their experiences in learning and studying, tended not to position themselves as the actors or agents (Davidson, 1980) – i.e., as subjects of the sentence with active volition in their learning. Even when they did express themselves as the actors of studying, they often mitigated their own agency by offsetting the action with another, negative one, or with a more salient one in which they were not the actor. Often, too, the actions of learning and studying were presented as possible future events. These future events were often expressed as being unlikely to occur, being accompanied by explanations which made their improbability apparent.

Learning English and literacy skills were also compared to routine activities, by Rosina and Celina. The desire of these two participants was to make learning an aspect of their daily life in the same way as chewing and swallowing food, and seeing and recognizing people and places.

Overall, the cumulative presentation of themselves by the participants in non-agentive positions and the mitigation of agency performed by the participants cue the fact that they do not feel they have been responsible for their own learning and that they do not expect to greatly further their education. One participant, Pilar, did express the hope that she would continue to learn and improve her standing in US society, but she only expressed herself as an agent when she was in an interview with me alone. When with her peers, she tended to mitigate her agency as did all the other participants.

7.2. Discussion: the identity of the Mexican women living in Kennett Square

At this point I would like to briefly call attention to De Fina (2000, 2003) and some of the similarities and differences between her studies and the current project, since this study was influenced greatly by De Fina. Like she did, I analyzed how the participants expressed their identity via the structural aspects of their discourse and their choice of words within their

narratives about experiences in their lives. I chose, as did De Fina, to focus on terms of ethnic/national reference, pronominal usage (particularly the use of the first person plural “*nosotros*”), use of reported speech, and expressions of agency. However, due to the nature of the data and of the participants (in terms of gender, geographic location, and circumstances – legal vs undocumented), the findings of the current study diverged from De Fina’s in important ways.

When De Fina (2000, 2003) analyzed the use of terms of reference (relating to nationality and ethnicity) by her participants, she found that the use of these terms suggests a learned acquisition of stereotypes existent in the US concerning various ethnic/nationality groups. These stereotypes are not normally salient within Mexican society. Moreover, she found that the participants tend to use the first person plural pronoun “*nosotros*” as a way to express a heightened association with their own group, particularly during the complicating actions of their narratives (De Fina, 2003). This, De Fina argued, was further supported by how the participants used reported speech to express power relationship with others in and out of the group. Their tendency to use the directly reported speech of figures of authority and of the group as a whole, indicated an equality of saliency between both groups, as opposed to their own selves, as individuals, whom they reported far less frequently. The author used the reported speech produced by her participants as a way to analyze their agency, in terms of whom they used as support in their narratives of crossing the border.

In contrast, in the current study, the larger group of Mexican immigrants does not hold a salient position in the lives of the participants; rather, smaller groups, particularly the immediate family, have a much more important role in their identities. The Mexican community in Kennett Square is, after all, relatively small, and is also, historically, quite new. Many of the members of this community come from the same area in Mexico, and there are entire family groups currently living in Kennett Square and the surrounding townships. It is thus natural for them to gravitate

towards those people they do know. Organization at the community level has not yet been established beyond the limited work being done by the Comunidad Hispana.

While it is true that use of terms of ethnicity and the way in which members of the different groups are described does suggest an internalization of stereotypes acquired in the US, these stereotypes are not salient, for the most part, in subjective sections of text. They do, however, index the conflict naturally existent between members of different social groups. (Fought, 2006). The participants in this study mostly discuss members of other groups in terms of the differences between Mexicans and these other people, particularly in reference to language, work ethics, and family life.

In fact, racial stereotypes do form part of the participants' life. When I started recruiting students for my ESL classes, I went round the complexes, door-to-door. In most cases, young children opened the door, and I would ask to talk to their mothers. I would make this request in Spanish. At two homes, however, the children I spoke to turned around and yelled into their houses: "*Mamá, hay una señora que habla ingles.*" ('Mom, there's a woman [here] who talks in English.') (from field notes, July 2003). Because of my light skin coloring, the children did not hear the Spanish and immediately warned their parents that the person at the door belonged to the white-skinned community, which typically spoke only English. Thus, beyond the analysis of the participant's discourse, it becomes apparent that racial stereotypes are also associated with language use.

In my analysis of gendered identity I focused on the use of reported speech within narratives about gendered roles. I found that the participants cited themselves more than others. This suggests to me a greater reliance on their own opinions than on those of others. Moreover, those people who were cited were usually people close to the participant (mothers, husbands, or children) rather than figures of authority, thus ratifying the importance of family. Reported speech was mainly used to index salient sections of narrative.

Thus far, identification with the family emerges as an important element in the participants' identities. The participants also highlighted the importance of classmates (ESL and walking group mates, for example), and immediate family members. Each participant highlighted a different sub-group given her own particular circumstances.

These aspects of Mexican ethnicity tie in closely to the aspects of gendered identity made salient in the narratives of the participants. In contradiction to the traditional models of machismo and marianismo (Stevens, 1965, 1973), the participants did not particularly express a need to acquiesce to the desires of their husbands, except perhaps Mariana, who decided that peace at home was worth more than learning English, since her husband would not willingly allow her to leave the family home. However, all the participants expressed the fact that maintaining the well-being of their children was their most important role at home. In fact, Pilar went as far as to say that her life would not be worth anything if she did not have her children. In this sense, the participants do follow the tenets of marianismo, but not in relation to their husbands, but to their children.

These two general identities were the most outstanding within the accounts presented by the participants. However, the identity of being uneducated or "ignorant" (in the words of Celina) also emerged with much frequency. All the participants expressed this identity in relation to their inability to use English at more than a basic level. The older participants also expressed a keen regret at not having had a chance to learn literacy skills at school in Mexico. For the most part, they all cued, through expressions of agency (or lack thereof), a hopelessness to change this aspect of themselves. Interestingly, the younger generation also expressed this hopelessness, but some participants were able to present themselves in a more agentive role with respect to their education when they were not in the presence of any of their peers. This suggests that while the participants do not greatly associate with their group of Mexicans at large, they are highly influenced by their group of peers, particularly other Mexican women, who exert a strong amount

of “*que dirán*” (‘what will they say), or peer pressure, on them.

The description of the identity of the participants I have put together here seems to be quite static, as I am generalizing it to all of them. However, this could not be further from the truth. While some generalizations can be made, these represent the general characteristics of the major groups with which the participants identify: those of Mexicans, Mexican women, and Mexican women from the areas around Morelia and Moroleón. Each participant also had her own unique characteristics, and not all of them identified in the same way to the groups they associated with. For instance, not all the participants expressed the same type of relationship to their husband. While they all tended to present themselves as not depending on them, some of the participants described a much closer relationship with them (Celina, Rosina, and Carolina) than others. In terms of education, Pilar evidently expressed a much higher degree of agency than did other participants, even of her own age group. This tends to support the fact that identity is fluid across members of a same group, and that the boundaries between groups cannot possibly be fixed and perfectly delineated (Fought, 2006) given the different discourses to which the women are subjected (Weedon, 1987; Williams, 1996).

It could be argued that the participant identities that emerged may have been a result of their relationship with me. After all, my main role in their lives was as a researcher and ESL instructor. However I established a very friendly relationship with most of them, particularly the older women, who took on the roles of surrogate mothers while I was living in the Kennett Square area. We would often get together for meals or to converse, and they would sometimes argue over whose turn it was to invite me over. They would also fuss over me and make sure I was getting enough food and rest, and that I was not tiring myself too much. However, I could tell that some of the younger participants were not quite certain of how to treat me. They would often shift from a less formal “*tú*” (‘you-familiar’) to a more formal treatment of me via the use of

usted” (‘you-formal’). And they sometimes talked of me as being an “Americana,” while at other times they referred to me as an “hispana” who spoke Spanish like they did.

Overall, however, the very fact that the participants focused more on their ethnic, gendered, and literate identities indicates that these are important parts of themselves. That these topics often recurred spontaneously seems to indicate that the focus on them was not only due to my interests as a researcher, and to the nature of my relationship with the participants, but also to their own interest in these topics.

7.3. Identity of the participants and their investment in English

The concept of investment (Norton, 1997, 2000; Norton & Pavlenko, 2004; Norton-Pierce, 1995) is crucial in understanding why the participants have not necessarily committed themselves to the learning of English, and why they feel hopeless to change this situation. According to this conceptualization, which is based on the economic model of investment, learners will only invest in learning a language in so far as they feel they will obtain tangible advantages from their efforts. As soon as the effort outweighs the returns, the students will cease to advance in their learning of the second language. In the case of the participants in this study, the advantages of learning English are quite apparently not great enough to merit the effort.

In terms of their ethnic identity, the participants express a clear separation from other ethnic and/or national groups. They describe relationships with individual members of the English speaking society, but, for the most part, describe US citizens as being unable to comprehend them. Very often English speakers are described in terms of their function: they are tutors, store clerks, doctors, and teachers, but very little personal connection with them is evident in the narratives of the participants. From the point of view of this identity, there is very little reason for the participants to learn English.

Viewing the participants from the perspective of their gendered identity is more complex. According to research, one main reason why immigrant women are not able to invest in learning English is seen to be their gendered roles (Buttaro, 2004; Buttaro & King, 2001; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004; Rockhill, 1987, 1990). In the case of Mariana, her husband's prohibition of her leaving the home weighed heavily on her decision not to study English. She preferred to maintain peace at home even at the cost of not being able to further her education – which she confessed was one of the main aspirations in her life. In this case, more traditional gendered roles determined Mariana's lack of access to classes.

However, all the other participants expressed a willingness to confront their husbands in order to better fulfill their roles as mothers. Norton (Norton, 2000; Norton-Pierce, 1995) noted that an identity as mother invested one of her participants (Martina) in learning English. This should, in theory, be the case for most of the current participants, since most have children going to school, and have expressed their desire to confer with their children's teachers directly. At the time of data collection, they had to rely on interpreters, their husbands, or their own children to translate for them. However, I believe it is the very fact that interpreters can be found that the participants have not become invested enough in the acquisition of their second language. For the most part, children become quite fluent in English within a short time after arriving to the US. In fact, during my last visit to Kennett Square in July of 2007, María admitted that her then 6 year old daughter was becoming English-dominant, and that they frequently had difficulties communicating because of this. However, all the participants with young children expressed pride in their children's fluency in their second language. Pilar is the only participant who has actively continued improving on her own English. However, she is driven by the ambition to improve her own personal standing within US society.

I posit that probably the main reason why participants do not further their education – why they are not invested – has to do with their literate identity. They have apparently accepted

an identity as uneducated women, as the participants in Rockhill (1987) and Egbo's (2004) studies. They express a lack of agency in their learning experiences and even seem to avoid drawing attention to themselves as actively taking control over their education. Even Valeria does not call attention to the fact that she was a lawyer in Mexico when she is with the other women.

This identity as uneducated women would help explain why, while the participants express a desire to become educated, they have not been able to become invested in their own learning. However, as in the case of Pilar, an identity as a capable and hard worker has helped compensate for her insecurity as a non-speaker of English and has invested her, at a personal level, in the acquisition of English. The same is the case for María.

It would seem that an important factor that has invested some of the participants enough to further their studies in English is their ability to obtain a better and more satisfying job, thus creating a valued role within US society. It seems clear that the ability of the women to create their own niche in US society is the decisive factor in their acquisition of English as a second language.

I can also conjecture that there is a desire by the participants not to be conspicuous for being different from their peers. Only discrete individuals stand out as being singular in one aspect or another of their identities. Thus, stepping out, learning English, and finding a niche within mainstream US society would also imply stepping away from what it currently means to be a Mexican woman in Kennett Square. That is, it would mean being somewhat different from their peers in terms of achievements – and knowledge. This is bound to be a very gradual process, which might be painful to some.

7.4. Implications for future research

It is apparent, from how studies have seen Mexican identity in a myriad ways, that it is

not possible to draw a unitary picture of the identity of this group. There are too many variables, involving the people themselves and their experiences, as well as their current circumstances in the US. Moreover, the different discourses surrounding the groups of immigrants necessarily affect their identities.

Notwithstanding, given the variable and constantly shifting nature of identity, it is not appropriate to make generalizations over a whole community. Any given study can only hope to view a cross-section of the identities of the participants involved in it at the different points in which the researcher interacted with them. It is also apparent that the role of the researcher in the lives of the participants, and the discourses he/she brings, will affect the study as well. Thus, the description of the participants' identities that I have drawn is only one of a myriad of possibilities, and can only offer an incomplete view, at best. Much more research is needed, over a longer period of time, to put together a more faithful picture of the Mexican women living in Kennett Square, let alone in the whole of the US.

Nevertheless, the picture developed has helped me to understand the contradictions inherent in why the participants all express a desire to learn English, yet they all admit to not having done so, as yet. In fact, asking the participants focused questions about their studying of the second language, they all ultimately admit that they have simply not made the effort. It is clear that they are not really invested in the learning of the host language of their new country. I have concluded that given their circumstances: the gendered roles at home; their closeness to their community, particularly concerning language and being able to comprehend each other; and their identity as basically uneducated people, are all factors that have reduced the participants' investment in English, as well as a tendency to avoid being different from their peers. Further research should reveal other aspects of their identity that affect their investment in ESL.

I have also found that once the participants are able to develop an identity as a valued member of the mainstream community, they then find more reasons to become invested. In this

research I have found that obtaining a job and finding that they *can* be promoted is the key to the participants finding a niche for themselves within US society.

Also important would be the development of a critical pedagogy (Bartlett, 2010; Freire, 1970; Freire & Faundez, 1989) that would enable female Mexican immigrants to see their possibilities should they learn English. This pedagogy should focus on issues that the learners are currently facing within the mainstream society, and not merely on generic functions of English. More importantly, however, it should focus on the discussion of what learning English would allow them to do, and how this would affect their and their family's life. As noted by Bartlett (2010), it is important for learners to not only learn how to read words, but to learn how to read the world (p. 168). That is, in the case of Mexican students learning ESL, it is not only important for them to learn how to communicate in English, but it is equally or more important for them to understand the English speaking world and their own roles and/or possibilities within it.

Overall, the participants are involved in a vicious circle in which they do not feel valued due to their lack of English skills, yet they cannot invest themselves enough in learning English so that they can become valued members of society. Until they can find a niche for themselves and they can see themselves as members of the US community, they will find it hard to become invested. Thus, the question of learning English is not only one of offering as many classes as possible for the members of the community to learn, it is one of finding as many opportunities as possible to integrate these people so they have a reason to learn. However, another question remains: do Mexican immigrants in general, and Mexican women in particular, really want to become part of mainstream society? Most still dream of being able to return to their home in Mexico. Much more research needs to be conducted so that the identities of these people can be better understood, and so we can better comprehend how they see their own role within US society, and the role of English in their lives.

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Publications

Payne, Scott and Ross, Brenda. (2005). Synchronous CMC, Working memory, and L2 oral proficiency development. *Language learning & Technology* Vol. 9, Num. 3, Sept. 2005.

Conference Presentations

- Ross, Brenda, Payne, Scott. J., and Pajtek, Alina. Data-driven learning in ESL writing instruction. TESOL 2006; in Tampa, FL. (March, 2006)
- Ross, Brenda and McBurnett, Diana. Training teachers to use learner corpora. CALICO Symposium 2006; at the University of Hawaii, Honolulu, HI. (May, 2006)
- Ross, Brenda. Music and the teaching of pronunciation in an ESL classroom. SLRF 2004; at The Penn State University. (October, 2004).
- Payne, Scott J. and Ross, Brenda. Working memory, synchronous CMC, and L2 oral proficiency development. CALICO Symposium 2004; at Carnegie Melon University, Pittsburgh, PA. (June 2004).
- Ross, Brenda. Diminutives and subjectivity in the narratives of adult Mexican immigrants. AAAL 2004; at Portland, OR. (May, 2004). (Poster presentation)
- Ross, Brenda. Finding ways for Mexican immigrants to participate in their own learning of ESL. 25th Ethnography in Education Research Forum; University of Pennsylvania (Feb. 2004)
- Ross, Brenda. A needs analysis for ESL in Mexican women living in Kennett Square, PA. 24th Ethnography in Education Research Forum; University of Pennsylvania (Feb. 2003)