Seeking Identity

Language in Society

Edited by
Nancy Mae Antrim

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Seeking Identity:
Language in Society

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CAMBRIDGE SCHOLARS PUBLISHING

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For my daughter

Megan Elizabeth Antrim

in appreciation

for her support and assistance

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SEEKING IDENTITY

NANCY MAE ANTRIM

Mendoza-Denton (2002:475) defines "identity to mean the active negotiation of an individual's relationship with larger social constructs." These social constructs have been understood as comprising gender, ethnicity, and class following Gumprez (1982) in some of the earliest work on language and identity. Subsequent researchers, such as Rickford (1986) and Gaudio (2001) have extended those categories to include age and sexuality. Early studies on linguistic identity were based on these sociological categories: ethnicity, age, gender, occupation, social class, and region. Most notable among these are the studies by Labov of New York City (1972). The assumption in these works has been one of identity stability. One's identity was understood as who you were, but one's identity is not necessarily stable. Myers-Scotten (1993) explored linguistic identity in a multilingual situation in her work on code-switching. She hypothesized that a shift in language could signify a shift in identity since the social rights and obligations would change to adapt to the different language.

Identity in these studies is very much the basis of who we are. But who we are or how we are seen by others may involve differing identities. Zimmerman (1998) identifies three types of identities:

1. Discourse identity which is determined by the particular discourse and applies to the roles within the discourse (i.e. speaker, hearer);
2. Situational identity which is determined by the specific situation and may involve a power differential; and
3. Transportable identity which applies across situations and discourse and includes such constructs as ethnic, gender, and age.

Identity involves our own self-identification. It is defined by our behavior, values and self-concepts. This is reflected in the language we use, our word choices in identifying ourselves as well as in the words we choose not to use. How we say these words; how we put them together grammatically; how we construct our discourse: all these reveal how we view ourselves linguistically. In identifying their own identity, an individual has both a private self and a public self. There is the identity one assumes in public, in relation to other peoples and

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in different situations, which may or may not reflect the identity one holds in private, which may involve choosing one language for private use with family and close friends and another language in public. This social identity is according to Rembo (2004) an interactive process. "A person's social identity comes from an individual's knowledge of himself as an individual in relationship to others." (2004: 33-34) In part we construct our identity by how we perceive ourselves in the eyes of others.

Our identity is not limited to our own self-identification, but entails that identity assigned to us by others. Bucholtz (2003) proposes a tactics of intersubjectivies model contending that that the formation of identity is determined by the context.

> Identities emerge from temporary and mutable interactional conditions, in negotiation and often contestation with other social actors and in relation to larger and often unwielding structures of power. (Bucholtz, 2003: 408)

It is through a set of relations (similarity and difference, authorization and illigitimation, authenication and denaturalization) that our identity and the identities of others are produced. In constructing the identities we assign to others, we determine what is salient to ourselves in accepting or rejecting the other. This may be reflected in the language we use with the other and the words we use to name or describe them. If one is assumed to speak a particular language because of their preceived ethnicity, then they may be addressed in that language. If they respond that they, in fact, do not speak the language, then they may be perceived as inauthentic, not being a member of that identity category. Gumprez (1982) cites the creation of in-group symbols to establish social identity and the most powerful of these symbols is language.

Our language choices reflect not only how we view ourselves, but how we are viewed by society. An individual's identity is reflected in various language constructed identities: ethnicity, gender, and cross-cultural/counter cultural. In turn these identities are projected by society on the individual/ethnic group by the language choices society makes in describing and addressing these individuals.

We are a multitude of identities: public, private, perceived and projected. While language is only one means of constructing these identities, it provides a foundation for those identities.

In the first section (Language and Identity), an ethnolinguistic approach is used to address the areas of language identity and language loyalty, gender, and ethnic pride.

The Spanish-language heritage community in the Southwestern United States is a highly hetereogeneous community in which negotiations of personal and group linguistic identities is strongly evidenced. To develop sociolinguistic,

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historical and political understanding of language policies and attitudes relating to Spanish and English, some educational institutions have instituted Spanish as a Heritage Language (SHL) programs within the K-16 levels as well as offered courses in Spanish sociolinguistics at the university level. Curtin's Differential Bilingualism: Vergüenza and Pride in a Spanish Sociolinguistics Class presents an ethnographic study of a Spanish sociolinguistics class in which undergraduate students expressed their views of personal and social identities in relation to Spanish and English. In addition to attending one half of the classes, she also conducted in-depth interviews with six students. The students' voices provide richly textured descriptions of highly situated dialectical tensions of pride and *vergüenza* (shame) which are in response to specific contexts as well as individuals' understanding of their cultural heritage, level of language proficiency and development of ethnolinguistic identity.

In The Mexican *Albur*: Examining Gender, Power and Solidarity, Houser explores these issues in the context of a singular gender-based speech event, the Mexican *albur*. The *albur* is both unique and interesting because it began as a code language used only between men in order to talk about taboo subjects, particularly, sex. She conducted interviews with four native Mexican Spanish speakers in order to define the *albur* and its use. She examines issues of power and solidarity that are expressed by the act of using the *albur*, and how this may be reflective of larger society.

Antrim in A Rose by any other name wouldn't be American: First name use among Spanish ESL students, investigates the relationship between first name use and language group identity. ESL students may choose to use their given name from their first language, anglicize the pronunciation of that name, or adopt a new English name. Student choices were compared to their use of both English and their first language Spanish to determine how they identified themselves linguistically.

Section two (Language and Advertising) looks at how society in turn uses language to relate to different groups by appealing to ethnic pride, language identity, and the power and prestige that using a particular language variety entails.

Language will always be a significant part of who we are and who we identify with culturally, ethnically and socially. It will always be a means of self-identification. In the bilingual's world, the significance of language and language choice takes on more complex dimensions as the speaker navigates his/her way through the choices and the sometimes subtle, sometimes obvious implications inherent in each choice. Shahrzad in Contact Media: Language choice and identity in the New World examines the use of mixed-code as a form of expression or assertion of identity in some bilingual communities and

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addresses some of the issues involved in language choice and the labels we choose for ourselves in multilingual, multicultural contexts.

Baumgardner (English in Mexican Product Branding) looks at the intersection of English and Spanish in creating an appeal to language power in the creation of a bilingual identity. The growing global presence of English as a *lingua franca* can be seen in the use of the language in product names in countries where English is not spoken as a native language, such as Mexico. The data in this chapter shows both the outright use of English (***dip***) as well as English/Spanish bilingual creativity in both U.S. (***Whatamigo***) and Mexican (***Breddy***) product names. The appeal of English in Mexican product names is shown to be very strong. A similar trend in product naming can now also be seen in the United States in the use of Spanish in U.S. branding. Again, we find the outright use of Spanish as well as U.S. product names that show Spanish/English bilingual creativity (***Cruncheros***).

Section three (Language and the Media) explores how the media contributes to our construction of identity.

Unger and Kingsley. (Signs, Thought, and Perception in Grand Theft Auto, Vice City and Grand Theft Auto, San Andreas) identified and examined some of the fundamental changes in thinking that occurred during digital game play as signs were used to complete game-related activity. This chapter presents data and findings from the first phase of a multi-phase study of two games from the popular Grand Theft Auto Series played on the Sony Play Station 2 (PS 2) Platform: Grand Theft Auto, Vice City (GTAVC) and Grand Theft Auto, San Andreas (GTASA). The study pinpoints salient moments of player/participant activity with GTAVC and GTASA when participants recognized and demonstrated that a specific sign was crucial for successfully completing a task or mission within the game(s). Following that is a brief discussion of how digital gaming is changing the way humans perceive and react to the world around them. This perception and reaction involves our construction of identity.

Adelman's chapter (Respek: Misunderstanding, Humor, and Ethnicity in Da Ali G Show) engages the connections between (perceived) ethnic identity, humor, and miscommunication in the controversial HBO comedy series *Da Ali G Show*, whose star, Sacha Baron Cohen, plays three different characters with distinctive linguistic attributes. Though many critics take issue with Cohen's racialized performances, Adelman argues instead that a sociolinguistic analysis of specific communication breakdowns reveal the show's potential as an anti-racist text. Under careful consideration, Adelman suggests, that the *Da Ali G Show* does something surprising: it dislocates the ethnic 'other' as the object of humor, and mocks instead those who are unable to communicate cross-culturally. This conclusion and this show thus suggest the possibility of rewriting the racist dimensions of much popular humor.

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Kelly's article, Code-switching in MC Solaar's French Music, explores the use of two languages. Code -switching refers to the movement back and forth between two languages or dialects within the same sentence or discourse. MC Solaar, a French rapper musician, code-switches in French and English for aesthetic effects. This lexical borrowing has syntactic as well as aesthetic effects in the recipient language (French). French words derived from English may appear to stand between the two languages. Some of these forms are doubly unconventional in that they are not only foreign elements but are non-standard within English usage. Sociolinguistic factors involved in the formation of French rap music are on one the hand, the influence of the American media in French popular culture. On the other hand, rap music represents a speech community of people of African descent bound by politics, culture, social conditions. Moreover, the use of both non-standard French and English constitutes a symbolic act of social and linguistic resistance and subversion.

In Cocks and Grrls: A Brief History from the Oxford English Dictionary, Shinabarger and Nelson. explore gender references. The second wave of feminism spurred more equality in gendered references; for instance, "I am woman hear me roar" came with an evolution from *girl* or *lady* to *woman* as the equivalent of *man*. Recent popular culture preference favors a lexically-expanded *girl* of some derivative. Variations include the most traditional, though more empowered, *girl* (Ani DiFranco sings that she's "not a pretty girl"), the feminist punk Riot *Grrrls* and the technologically-empowered cyber *gURLS* (Ruzycki-Shinabarger 2002). Likewise, *boy*, has also evolved from its original youthful meaning, so that it is becoming increasingly common to hear people refer to adult males as *boys*. This linguistic gender evolution has grown to encompass elements of gender identity and sexuality through the study of performativity (Butler 1999). A final example of this evolution appears in *Will and Grace* which indicates a connection between the language of straight women and gay men.

Section four (Language and Discourse) shows how written discourse can appropriate, construct, and parody identity.

Hallett and Kaplan-Weinger's analysis examines *America (the Book): A Citizen's Guide to Democracy Inaction*, a parodic American history text, incorporating written and visual modalities to create an intertext that functions to both inform a reader about and comment on political and social issues. This analysis leads the authors to question the relationship between pop culture and intertextuality: parody relies on intertextuality; intertexts rely on texts both current and historical; pop culture, then, may itself be defined as an intertext – drawing from content not yet old enough to have passed from the audience's

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experience, yet new enough to capture and construct a new audience – a new 'culture'.

Kontny's "I totally disagree with you and let me tell you why…": How Adolescent Girls Create Expert Knowledge in Disputes on Internet Forums focuses on the discursive strategies employed by adolescent girls when positing expert knowledge on a popular internet site. Many cultural studies theorists have argued that the power structures and means of creating and recreating identity through existent and emerging ideologies are features of online communities that are played out in a unique aspect, making these communities a profitable locus for critical discourse analyses. Of particular interest, then, is the speech of adolescent girls, a group typically thought of to have little social power as both young and feminine linguistic actors. In this particular virtual community, adolescent girls are in dialog with older men. They are put in positions, then, during virtual conversation, to offer advice, support, and share their knowledge; all activities that may not be performed in face-to-face interaction. It is argued that adolescent girls within this context employ strategies when positing expert knowledge, that although they may have been traditionally viewed as language strategies undercutting one's own power and authority or using language cooperatively, might indeed be performing quite the opposite role, giving these girls the virtual floor and an opportunity to gain, or at the very least, co-construct power and knowledge.

Having an identity places one into a category, whether one is the person speaking, or being spoken to, or being spoken about. This category, identity, involves being ascribed the characteristics and features understood by that category. (Antaki and Widdicombe, 1998) Language is one of these features.

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Part I:
Language and Identity

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Chapter One

Differential Bilingualism: Vergüenza & Pride in a Spanish Sociolinguistics Class

Melissa Curtin

The sociopolitical history of the territory known as the United States has always included linguistic diversity (e.g., Conklin & Lourie, 1983; Leeman, 2004); however, since colonization by speakers of English, the hegemonic position of the English language has frequently been invoked as a logical and natural challenge to the legitimacy of the use of non-standard English dialects as well as non-English languages (e.g., Crawford, 1992; Dueñas González & Melis, 2000; Lippi-Green, 1997; Schmid, 2001; Schmidt, 2000). Such ideologies of language are rarely about language alone, but are socially situated and tied to questions of identity and power (Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2002). Thus, not only has the *use* of "non-standard" Englishes and languages other than English been severely criticized, the *users* of these dialects and languages are themselves frequently disparaged (e.g., Anzaldúa, 1987; Arteaga, 1994; Moya, 2002). Within this context, specific speech communities (whether defined by language use, by race or ethnicity, social class, nationality or other social criteria) have developed widely divergent attitudes regarding which languages and which dialects are desirable or appropriate (e.g., Fasold, 1984; Hudson, 1980; Thomas, et al., 2004). These factors and others are powerful forces in individuals' ongoing negotiations of their personal and group linguistic identities (e.g., Aparicio, 1998; Galindo & Gonzales, 1999; Thornborrow, 2004).

The panethnic Spanish-speaking heritage community in the U.S. is one such highly heterogeneous community in which negotiations of ethnolinguistic identities are strongly evidenced (e.g., Anzaldúa, 1987; Rodriguez, 1983; Galindo & Gonzales, 1999). Linguistic concerns among U.S. Latinas/os involve a wide range of issues. Concerning language policies, for example, Schmid (2001) notes that struggles over bilingual education are not just about linguistic-

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based entitlements; they are also serving as a *proxy* for tensions over defining American identity in the face of demographic shifts and changing attitudes regarding assimilation. Similarly, Bretzer (1992) posits that, in the context of Miami, Florida, language has become a *metaphor* for everything from decline of schools to rapid urban growth. He cites Hayakawa in repeating that the issue is not English language vs. Spanish language, but English vs. [perceived] “Chaos.” Also of concern are governmental strategies in the national census. Leeman (2004) argues that the U.S. Census has historically used certain languages as an index of race, thus *constructing* speakers of certain languages such as Spanish as essentially different and threatening to US cultural and national identity. While the heavy use of numerical data in the census claims a discourse of objectivity, strategies in designing, executing and interpreting censuses actually play a key ideological role in defining national and group identities and in the assignation and legitimation of political power.

There are of course less official, but equally powerful, sociolinguistic attitudes regarding issues such as accent, dialect and language. *Inter*group language attitudes include concerns about “differential bilingualism” (e.g., Dueñas González & Melis, 2000; Mendoza-Denton, N., 1999) and the racialization of Spanish (Leeman, 2004; Urciuoli, 1996). Common perceptions of *differential bilingualism* result from the social stigmatization of Spanish-language heritage bilinguals (e.g., many Latinas/os) versus the valorization of non-Spanish-speaking heritage bilinguals (e.g., some Anglos). As for racialization of Spanish, Omi and Winant explain that the process of racialization is a historically situated, ideological process in which racial meaning is extended to a social practice or group which has previously *not* been racially classified (1994). Urciuoli (1996) notes that racializing discourse is exclusionary and supports myths of the purity of the nation-state by framing members of racialized groups as out of place, as dirty and dangerous, and as unwilling or unable to do their part for the nation-state.

*Intra*group language attitudes often involve perceptions of certain dialects of Spanish as being more “pure” or indexing authentic identities. For example, Anzaldúa (1987) writes of speakers of Chicano Spanish having notable differences in pronunciation and lexicon; as a result Chicanas/os are perceived by native Spanish-speaking Latinas/os as being *“deslenguadas, Somos los del español deficiente*” because they speak an “illegitimate, bastard language” (80). As a result, Chicanas often choose to speak English as a “neutral language” when speaking with *mexicanas y latinas*; at the same time they fear being perceived as *agringadadas* for not speaking Chicano Spanish (i.e., as representatives of U.S. culture and the “American way of life”). Regarding issues of language and authentic identity, Mendoza-Denton’s (1999) ethnographic study of Latina girls affiliated with two gangs in a school in

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California provides another example of the deeply situated negotiations of ethnolinguistic identities. At the heart of the conflict between the two groups are the questions of authenticity, representation, and linguistic competence. Of particular note is the belief that group membership is strongly affected by linguistic competence; a primary question is, must one know Spanish to be Mexican?

To increase sociolinguistic, sociohistorical and sociopolitical awareness of language policies and attitudes toward Spanish and Spanish-speaking heritage members of the U.S. population, some educational institutions have instituted Spanish as a Heritage Language (SHL) programs at various points within the K-16 levels (e.g., Gutiérrez, 1997; Valdés, 2002), as well as offered courses in Spanish sociolinguistics at the university level (e.g., Aparicio, 1998). To gain insights into ways in which undergraduate students in a Spanish sociolinguistics class at a university in the Southwest of the U.S. express their understanding of the process of negotiation of personal and social identities in relation to Spanish and English, I recently carried out an ethnographic study of a semester-long upper-level Spanish class. In addition to attending one half of the classes, I also conducted individual interviews with six students and with the professor. As I am also interested in approaches to teaching the complex issues of linguistic identity, I included observations in my field notes on course design and specific teaching strategies. Before I discuss my findings and reflections, I first present the metatheoretical positioning of this research project as well as some information on my own personal background.

1. Positioning of the Researcher and the Research Project

While discouraging investigators from using their research to "showcase ego-centric or confessional tales," Mason (2002) does encourage qualitative researchers to engage in active reflexivity throughout the research project. Such reflexivity should lead the researcher to think critically about her assumptions as well as to recognize how one's own "thoughts, actions and decisions shape how you research and what you see" (5). In a project investigating sociohistorical and sociopolitical aspects of linguistic identities and ideologies, it is also critical that the researcher be sensitive to (possible) ascribed as well as avowed identities, as these identities both shape what the researcher herself sees and what the co-researchers may see *in* the researcher. As these ways of seeing affect the generation of data used for analysis, it is important to mention my own ethnic, cultural and linguistic background, as well as to explain my metatheoretical position in conducting this research.

I am a somewhat small-framed, youngish-looking (late thirties? early forties?) fifty-one year old blonde native-English speaking Anglo with

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intermediate Spanish language skills. While my Spanish reading skills were more than sufficient for this course, my speaking and listening skills with native speakers are somewhat uneven. As far as my overall proficiency in Spanish, when tested in university placement tests, my skills are appropriate for this upper level undergraduate course. While my ethnicity and my limitations in Spanish language skills may lead one to question my qualifications for this project, the student composition of the class was quite varied (in terms of age, ethnicity, and language backgrounds) and therefore my presence as a fellow student was readily accepted. (Similarly, when conducting an ethnographic study of undergraduates at Northern Arizona University, Professor Cathy Small (a.k.a. Rebekah Nathan) found that, despite being in her fifties, undergraduates readily accepted her presence as a fellow student.) However, my limited language skills were a disadvantage when interacting with and listening to the many native Spanish speakers in the class. I was able to accommodate for these limitations to a fair degree by conducting individual interviews in English during the twelfth week of classes.

> Additionally, my professional training and experiences in research and teaching in sociolinguistics, language acquisition, and language ideologies were fitting for this project. I have a masters' degree in Applied Linguistics; I have designed and taught an undergraduate "Language & Identity" course in a large university in the Midwest; I have worked as an academic advisor in a Spanish department at another large university in the Midwest; and I have conducted research in language identities and ideologies in Taiwan. My professional background, therefore, prepared me to readily understand the readings and concepts discussed in class, as well as provided a comparative framework in which to consider the professor's approach to teaching the class. It also served to legitimize my work as a researcher when conducting the interviews (cf. Feldman, 2002: 29).

As stated in Feldman et. al (2003), "access is not just about being physically present but also about establishing trust and rapport with informants" (15). By attending the class for 11 weeks before conducting interviews, the students and I were able to develop a sufficient degree of trust and rapport in class and during interviews. I believe that this trust and rapport allowed the students and professor (co-researchers) to discuss their personal insights and feelings regarding their linguistic identities. The trust and rapport with the students was also greatly strengthened via the support of the (Chicana) professor who served as a key actor and intermediary (Fetterman, 1989) as she provided me information about the class and allowed me to actively participate in the class; she also announced her support for my project when it came time to solicit interviewees. In addition to attending the class, I was able to establish rapport and trust in a number of ways. When speaking with Anglo students for whom Spanish is a second language, I was able to establish rapport by drawing upon

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my own similar identities and experiences. In working with Spanish-speaking heritage students, I was able to benefit from the "halo effect" (Fetterman, 1989: 44) of having been introduced and supported by the professor with whom the students, as explicitly confirmed during the interviews, have a high degree of trust and rapport. Furthermore, with all student interviews, I explained my research interests and professional training (as well as my status as a student), thus establishing rapport via my professional qualifications and goals. Additionally, the students themselves were required to conduct personal interviews regarding negotiation of ethnolinguistic identities; their own experience in conducting interviews served to naturalize my interviews with them.

It is also important to acknowledge my ontological, epistemological and methodological positions when considering my role as a researcher in this project. As stated by Denzin and Lincoln (1998), "Every researcher speaks from within a distinct interpretive community, which configures, in its special way, the multicultural, gendered components of the research act" (23). In general, I am a *critical interpretivist*. I embrace relativist ontologies (there are multiple constructed realities) and interpretive epistemologies (the knower and known interact and shape one another). I thus apply interpretive, naturalistic methods; in this study these methods take the form of ethnographic participant observation and a combination of semistructured, informal, and retrospective interview strategies (Fetterman, 1989). However, while I have interpretivist leanings, I also embrace a poststructural feminist position of fronting reflexive, multivoiced texts as well as a cultural studies perspective that race, class, gender, *and* ethnolinguistic identities are "produced and enacted in historically specific situations" and that we should work to understand and produce "resistances to structures of domination" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998: 28). I believe that people are social actors in a power-based matrix in which language continually figures. Language attitudes are powerful forces in shaping concepts of self and others in ongoing negotiation of personal and social identities (e.g., Bucholtz & Hall, 2005).

2. Research Questions and Research Design

Qualitative research is a recursive process in which decisions about both research design and research strategy are "ongoing and are grounded in the practice, process and context of the research itself;" however, despite the "characteristically exploratory, fluid and flexible, data-driven and context-sensitive" nature of such research, it is important to approach the project with some specific research questions in mind (Mason, 2002: 24). The following outlined my initial research questions:

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Main RQ: How do undergraduate students in a Spanish sociolinguistics class in a university in the U.S. Southwest talk about negotiating their personal and social identities in relation to Spanish and English?

> RQ1a: What "extralinguistic" issues that do not explicitly relate to language are raised when students talk about the Spanish and English language issues?
>
> RQ1b: What distinctions arise between students with non-Spanish speaking heritage backgrounds and those with Spanish-speaking heritage backgrounds?
>
> RQ1c: What distinctions arise according to perceived levels of proficiency in Spanish and in English?
>
> RQ1d: As the semester progresses, do students appear to incorporate concepts from the course content in their discussions of personal and social identities?

Throughout the first twelve weeks of the semester, I took field notes during each class and later wrote commentary memos on these notes. I then analyzed these notes for emerging patterns in answer to the research questions listed, as well as for any additional points of interest. In the eighth week in the semester, I closely reviewed my field notes and noted that while I was hearing sustained narratives of the professor's experiences and perspectives, I was only catching "snatches" of the students' voices when individuals would offer brief comments in class. I also became concerned that students with lower levels of Spanish proficiency were not sharing many insights. Therefore, to allow a greater multivocality of perspectives of linguistic identities, I conducted interviews in English during the 12th week of classes. Six students with the following profiles were interviewed individually:

Two Spanish-speaking heritage U.S. American men: one native California Chicano (2nd generation) man for whom Spanish is a native language; one native New Mexican Hispanic (family history in NM predates statehood) man for whom Spanish is a second language; he has studied Spanish in mainstream Spanish courses in college (he studied German in high school). *Two Spanish-speaking heritage U.S. American women*: one native Floridian of Cuban heritage (2nd generation) who is completely bilingual; one native New Mexican Chicano (2nd generation) woman whose first language is Spanish and who is bilingual, but with stronger proficiency in Spanish. *Two English-speaking "Anglo" U.S. Americans*: one native Minnesotan woman (Norwegian heritage,

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4th generation?) who has a high degree of proficiency in all Spanish language skills (has lived in Spain for one semester and has spent substantial time in Mexico); one native New Mexican (mixed northern European heritage) man who also has a high proficiency in Spanish (studied abroad in Ecuador).

A word about sampling. While these co-researchers have a range of sociolinguistic backgrounds, I am not claiming that they are necessarily a *representative* sample (in the postpositivist sense of the term), but rather that they constitute a *strategic, theoretical sample* which is an *illustrative or evocative* one. As such, the insights shared by these co-researchers "provide a flavour" of what it may be like in the "wider universe" (Mason, 2002: 126) of college students who are speakers of Spanish (Spanish-speaking heritage and other) in the U.S. American Southwest. While some of the observations made in this study may be generalizable to other contexts, I recognize that, as with all qualitative studies, this study is investigating a phenomenon understood to be "complex, nuanced, situated and contextual" (Mason, 2002: 127). My goal therefore is to try and provide a richly textured description and analysis which is grounded in constructivist and critical theories and founded upon the co-researchers descriptions of their lived experiences. Some of this analysis will likely be relevant for other contexts; some will likely be most relevant to the specific study at hand (cf. Basso's (1984) discussion of multiple levels of theoretical findings in his ethnographic work on Western Apache moral narratives that are grounded in specific geographic features of the local landscape; not only are his findings relevant to the highly contextualized cultural setting of the Western Apache, they also serve as a heuristic frame for inquiring into other cultural constructions of the environment and into semiotic analysis of culturally situated metaphors in general).

The interviews were "semi-structured" and were conducted in English. I entered into the interview setting with a prepared list of interview questions progressing from more open-ended to more specific questions (Appendix I). While we discussed many of the same main points in each interview, I adjusted my questioning strategies somewhat as I worked to hold a *conversation* with each undergraduate while progressively working through the concepts laid out in the prepared questions ("conversations with a purpose," Burgess, 1984: 102 as cited in Mason, 2002: 62; flexible strategies, Fetterman, 1989; conducting interviews in an "organic manner," Mason, 2002: 64). Consistently, I felt that co-researchers were allowing me to hear insights into their lived experiences and their ongoing negotiation of their personal and social linguistic identities. And the fact that the students also had to conduct interviews on language attitudes (with both English-speaking and Spanish-speaking individuals; including across languages) likely added to their receptivity in participating in the interviews in this study.

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3. Coding and Data Analysis

Each interview was tape recorded and then transcribed. Data generated from the interviews and from the field notes of the course observation were then analyzed. One point to note is that having conducted both an observational study of the Spanish sociolinguistics classroom and individual interviews, the project involved different, but complementary, forms of units of analysis: the individual *and* a social setting (Mason, 2002). However, in considering my metatheoretical position, these units of analysis are ontologically and epistemologically consistent as both social settings (e.g., the classroom) and individual interviews regarding negotiation of personal and social linguistic identities as being co-constructed through social discourse ("knowledge is situated and contextual" and is co-produced in the interview process; Mason, 2002: 62).

The coding of data was done inductively and thematically (Mason, 2002; Ryan & Bernard, 2000), through a recursive process of looking for patterns of thought and behavior (Fetterman, 1989). Spradley's advice is particularly appropriate to the topic of this investigation; the researcher should look for evidence of "social conflict, cultural contradictions, informal methods of social control, things that people do in managing impersonal social relationships, methods by which people acquire and maintain achieved and ascribed status, and information about how people solve problems. Each of these is likely to yield major themes in cultures" (Spradley, 1979: 199-201, as cited in Ryan & Bernard, 2000). I return to this point later in my analysis of the data.

At times there were moments of "crystallization" in which a convergence of similarities clearly became important to the study (Fetterman, 1989: 101). However, analysis was guided by a practice of searching for the "particular in context" rather than the common or consistent and so was carried out in a holistic, non-cross-sectional, contextual manner (Mason, 2002, p. 165) with a recognition that there are likely multiple meanings of a situation or activity (Silverman, 2003). With individual narratives solicited in the interviews, the aim was also to understand ways that the *co-researchers'* used "cultural stories" to generate "plausible accounts of the world;" this included looking for categories and themes that they themselves presented (Silverman, 2003: 345). Furthermore, as "… *every way of seeing is also a way of not seeing,*" (Silverman, 2003: 348), I looked for things that were not said as well as themes that were more explicitly conveyed. Overall, data were read from a blend of perspectives: as literally, interpretively, and reflexively (Mason, 2002: 149).

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4. Thematic Findings

While the course covered a range of sociolinguistic material, one overarching dialectical theme, that of shame versus pride, can be readily discerned. Beginning in the first week, the professor spoke of the shame she experienced when growing up in a rural Hispanic village and then losing her Spanish speaking skills after being separated from her grandmother when five years old and attending all English-only medium schools. She was not able to develop her Spanish-language skills again until her mid-twenties when she attended college. For the professor, then, *vergüenza* is a very personal experience; as a young girl she first experienced shame when speaking Spanish and then she experienced shame when not knowing Spanish; at times she still experiences shame for not knowing the "right dialects" or not being as proficient as native speakers.

The power of *vergüenza* on young children today was repeatedly made during the course, such as when the professor related stories of friends or colleagues whose young children (bilingual) would come home from school and say they no longer wanted to speak Spanish. In one case, a three year old came home from Montessori school and proclaimed that he would not speak Spanish as another (presumably English-speaking) child had told him that "English is the language spoken by princes and princesses." Repeatedly the point was made in class that these are very powerful experiences that are continuing today and are threatening the psychological well-being, and cultural and linguistic identity of Spanish-speaking heritage children today. Most usually these negative experiences were attributed to linguistic and ethnic/racial prejudice, either imposed by the Anglo majority culture directly or by Spanish-speaking heritage individuals who had *internalizacion colonizada*.

Many students could identify with these experiences, as evidenced by comments in the classroom and during personal interviews. For example, the issue of *vergüenza* was poignantly discussed in the classroom when the professor carried out extended discussions of Anzaldúa's (1987) expressive descriptions of linguistic terrorism as well as of Aparicio's (2001) essay on students' writings about *vergüenza*. As one student wrote in an essay for Aparicio's class in a Midwestern university,

> I learned to be ashamed of speaking Spanish, which I thought of as a punishment; I was ashamed when my mother would speak to me in Spanish. It was a shame because my mother was a beautiful person in her own right but not within Anglo culture; I was ashamed because I was not like the other American kids. . . . Now I am ashamed of having been ashamed, but what can one do after such a great injustice? (Aparicio, 2001: 262).

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This student's perceptions are strongly echoed in those of the Hispanic/Latino students in the classroom I observed at this university in the Southwest. For example, one Chicano student reported on the experience of institutionally-imposed public shame when being told not to speak Spanish in school and when some of his fellow students' names were changed to "English" names by an elementary school teacher; another student reported (in highly proficient oral Spanish) on an example of intergenerational shame when her grandfather said he wouldn't speak to her in Spanish because "I don't speak Spanish."

Since I had noted the strong theme of *vergüenza* in the classroom, I included one question (Question 4) in the interviews which explicitly asked if the student or student's friends or family have had this experience. Resoundingly the Spanish-speaking students reported personal experiences of *vergüenza*. Two students spoke of a strong *vergüenza*-inspired desire to assimilate when they were young (up through middle school years). Later, however, they developed a strong pride in who they are—Chicana/o. As one student stated:

> When I was a little kid, I would be embarrassed. I would tell my mom, "Why can't I be like other kids?" Or like when we would go to the store or to the doctor with my mom, we would have to interpret and I would think, "Can't mom just explain herself?" Because sometimes I would get stuck and wouldn't know how to say it myself and I would get angry and feel ashamed and just wish my mom could do it herself. But as you get older you realize just how unique you are to be bilingual.

For these students then, the shame was the social shame felt from being different (less than) the majority, monolingual, English-speaking families.

Another Hispanic student with limited production skills (speaking and writing) in Spanish spoke of another type of *vergüenza*, the shame of being Hispanic and not knowing the language well enough to speak fluently:

> I definitely feel the embarrassment issue a lot. I'm sitting here [in class], I'm like well, Hispanic ancestry, I've lived with it my whole life, I've heard it my whole life, I've studied it extensively now [in Spanish as a second language classes at the university], and I *still* can't speak a lick of it. When I try to speak in Spanish I immediately know that I sabotage myself because I get really embarrassed and shy because I don't know it as well as I think I should. And the whole shame issue—I can't communicate with my family – I don't really try to talk to them in Spanish because I get really worried they're gonna make fun of me. Like you know, "well he spent all this money on college and he didn't learn anything."

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This student's experience might be labeled a type of "insufficient Spanish *vergüenza.*"

Another bilingual student of Cuban ancestry who had not experienced *vergüenza* herself spoke of her surprise at the level of *vergüenza* in U.S. Southwest Hispanic culture. Having come from Miami, where even young middle school students proudly proclaimed their heritage such as when displaying Cuban, Haitian, or other countries' flags on their book bags, this student was "shocked" that U.S. Southwestern Hispanics were reticent to speak Spanish and that many had "lost the ability to keep their culture via their language." According to her, this loss of language was best understood in the framing of historical oppression and internalized colonization, a framing which she noted was provided by this course:

> I understand it's a different history with colonization and all of that – it just—it took me a long time, probably not until I got into college and got some history. I was just like, I'd kind of hold it against people. Like, "why aren't you more *proud*? Why aren't your more *excited* about your background?" I just didn't understand. . . . I just thought it was so sad when, you know, when they didn't know the Spanish or sometimes they *did* know but they didn't want to speak it. . . . It just blew my mind. What could happen that *collectively* everybody feels this way? And does not want, you know, wants to *distance* themselves from their past? . . . I think it *is* a sensitive issue and when they don't speak the language and when they don't want to, I mean *just accept their culture*, it's seems like it's a real touchy and personal subject.

Not surprisingly, the Anglo students who had high levels of proficiency in Spanish language did not speak of any personal experiences of *vergüenza*. Instead they spoke of feeling empowered and at times feeling special because of their strong language abilities in English and Spanish. As one student stated:

> I don't know, I've never felt extremely limited. I felt like *liberated* by the fact that I could speak Spanish. . . I feel pretty confident that I can go and speak to people about most topics and it's never like, "oh I'm not gonna make it!" . . . It's always been a benefit that I can speak Spanish, it's never been a limitation. . . . I feel like it's almost an *insult* if someone knows I can speak Spanish and they speak to me in English.

Rather than feeling a sense of shame, then, the Anglo students who had developed a strong proficiency in Spanish hinted at a level of *pride* in their accomplishments. As an element to the phenomenon of differential bilingualism, therefore, one might note a type of "differential pride." This student did however, imply a degree of shame in being Caucasian, in being part of the privileged group who has been the oppressor. She also implied a degree

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of embarrassment and boredom at having not been distinctive as everyone in her homogeneous hometown community was perceived as being the same. She relates that at one point in high school, she even strongly desired to "be Mexican" and today she enjoys being nicknamed "*mejigringa*" by one of her friends from Mexico. This Anglo student's "experimenting" with ethnic identity is reminiscent of Waters' (1990) work in which European Americans feel free to choose their ethnic identities whereas "ethnic others" are for the large part ascribed an ethnic identity.

The Anglo students did readily acknowledge the likelihood of the phenomenon of differential bilingualism (Aparicio, 1998, 2001) about which Hispanic students frequently spoke. While the Anglo students were frequently complimented (and thereby awarded a level of prestige) for their (acquired, and still a bit limited) bilingualism, the Hispanic students were stigmatized for their lifelong and highly proficient oral bilingualism. However, while the Anglo students understood the existence of linguistic prejudice in differential bilingualism and had a *cognitive empathy* (Stephan & Finlay, 1999) for the social *vergüenza* experienced by Spanish-speaking heritage students, they were still rather surprised by the actual display of *vergüenza*. As one Anglo student commented about a very close friend of Spanish-speaking heritage:

> I can see how it happens. I can see how people feel that way [*vergüenza*]. I actually my ex-fiance was Hispanic and she had that *vergüenza* about speaking Spanish, and in my opinion it was *unbelievable* [emphasis added]. I find that in [this state] a lot of people of Mexican descent will forget about that Mexican descent even though their lineage can be traced back there for generation after generation, and automatically they'll say they're Hispanic or from Spain. They don't wanna be anywhere, they don't want to have any relation to Mexico or Latin America. They're almost ashamed of that. They'll say "I'm Hispanic" or "I'm from Spain;" they don't want to use Spanish, they want to be as quote-unquote "*white*" as possible…. The primary force is that by not being the majority per se, or the group in power, they're not normal. They're outsiders and they want to be part of that group in power, and they'll be ashamed of their ancestry and try to adapt to that majority group in power.

Because of not having any similar experience to draw on, these students' reactions were rather similar to those of the student of Cuban heritage, an expression of amazement at the actual display of *vergüenza*. This surprise indicates a cognitive empathy of the social causes of *vergüenza*, but a lack of emotional empathy with its actual "social performance" (for a discussion of the role of empathy, see Stephan & Finlay, 1999).

<u>Pride</u>: One could propose that the goals of the "Spanish of the Southwest" course include 1. providing a safe forum for sharing experiences of shame and oppression (a benefit clearly stated to me by one student), and 2. providing

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specific evidence in support of linguistic and cultural pride for Hispanics of the Southwest. In "response" to the shared pain of imposed shame and oppression, the professor provided cultural, historic, and linguistic evidence in support of rightful pride in being Hispanic in the U.S. Southwest. One historical point that was highlighted was that despite explicit and prolonged efforts to eradicate and/or undermine Spanish in the Southwest, it has survived! Other historical landmarks of which to be proud are in the history of specific Spanish language printing presses (e.g., El Padre Antonio Martinez' book printing press) and newspapers (e.g., *The New Mexican* which was published in Spanish until 1952). Another cultural product of which to be proud is Jesus Maria H. Alarid's "El idioma espanol," published in 1889, which "centers precisely on the ties between language, inherited traditions, and cultural survival" (Martin-Rodriguez, 2001: 8).

Linguistic support for ethnic pride is strongly grounded in the validity, creativity and endurance of dialects of Spanish of the Southwest. First there is the overall linguistic evidence that all dialects or varieties are linguistically equal (one is fully able to communicate effectively and creatively in all language dialects). Furthermore, there are interesting distinctive elements in Southwest Spanish dialects such as distinctive and creative aspects of the lexicon such as words borrowed from Native Americans, archaic words dating back to the era of colonial Spain, and words unique to the flora and fauna of the Southwest, as well as the creativity and linguistic legitimacy of code-switching. Overall, sociolinguists have provided convincing evidence that hierarchical rankings of languages and dialects are due to social attitudes not linguistic traits. In class it became clear that these powerful social attitudes are often vehicles of prejudice and oppression which one should understand and then resist.

One student's words nicely capture the transition from a *vergüenza*-induced desire to assimilate to a renewed pride in speaking Spanish and in being Chicano:

> I grew up in bilingual, well in a Spanish-speaking home. When I started school, English was hard because I couldn't communicate. At first I always sometimes wanted to be like the other kids, the monolingual kids because they are the model. When I was in middle school, everybody talks English. . . so I wanted to be like them but somehow my Spanish came back to me all the time, so then I came to the point – I don't *want* to speak Spanish anymore, like I'm just gonna speak English and only speak Spanish at home. And so it was like that for two years. Then when I started high school, when it came back to me that English was not really my language and so I started to rebel against it. . . And so it was kind of at first, I was part of the system, wanted to speak only English; but then I was like, this is *not* me, I'm gonna speak Spanish. … Then I started college and that was really my transitional stage, no I'm *proud* of who I

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> am and I started taking courses in women's studies, Chicano studies … I think I'm part of those two cultures and again, like at first, I don't want to be part of those two cultures and now I'm *proud* of being the, being the border. . . . Yeah, it is, it is, you have to negotiate in order to survive basically. . . . Also, like we learned in the class, Southwest Spanish, and so yeah when someone speaks Spanish and English to me, it's like yeah, I do that code switching all the time. . . and it's like unique, really unique. . . . Now it's like "nobody is gonna look down on me" you know. . . now I'm *proud* of speaking Spanish and now I'm gonna do it; and I don't care if they will think "he's a dirty Mexican for speaking Spanish" because like I'm not gonna feel that way. I'm gonna be smarter than they are. … They don't have the power anymore because I took the power from the oppressor.

This student's insights nicely capture the theme of *vergüenza* vs. pride. He clearly describes the *vergüenza*-induced desire to assimilate, which is later countered by a pride in being Hispanic (specifically Chicano) and in speaking Spanish including dialects which are often looked down upon: a Mexican Spanish dialect learned in the home and a code-switching dialect learned in the community.

This student's identity development is similar to that described for African American adolescents (Tatum, 1997). Initially, the "Black child absorbs many of the beliefs and values of the dominant White culture, including the idea that it is better to be White" (Tatum, 1997: 55). During a later, immersion/emersion stage, however, the young adult has a "strong desire to surround oneself with symbols of one's racial identity, and actively seek out opportunities to learn about one's own history and culture with the support of same-race peers" and to *unlearn* the internalized stereotypes and to redefine a positive sense of self (Tatum, 1997: 76).

In class and in his interview, this student (whose insights were frequently referred to by other students in their interviews) clearly and strongly articulates the value of the class for him in a number of ways. He explicitly states the value of having a forum for talking about *vergüenza*, of sharing painful experiences, and of understanding the linguistic connection with *vergüenza* and with cultural and linguistic pride:

> I've learned so much in the last few months. I think being able to talk about my experiences, I just love it. It's not talking about me, but about my experiences because now I can talk about it. Yeah, before I didn't have the opportunity to express how I felt—when it came to language, I felt all this stuff. . . . Everybody should have the opportunity to talk about their experience because sometimes we tend to only talk about the positive experiences… I mean this happened to me. It sounds negative, but it really happened. … I can say well now I'm stronger now. I changed because of this reason and now I can go to

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> my teachers who told me not to speak Spanish in the classroom and say… "you are wrong," because before "it was the teacher, you were right," but now I can go back to you because of this reason, yeah and yeah thank you for it, you made me a radical (laughter).

This student shares what many other students acknowledge as well. He now feels strengthened from the supportive environment of the classroom in which he and others read about *and shared* the experience of *vergüenza*. He is also armed with sociolinguistic evidence for pride in who he is and how he speaks (evidence which he notes was lacking in his Chicano literature classes). This evidence is also confirmation that the teachers and others who support a shame-based culture against Spanish-speaking students are wrong and should be actively resisted.

This student's and others' responses are indicative of what Aparicio (1998) refers to as *critical bilingualism*, the developing awareness of the sociocultural, political and ideological contexts in which these bilingual speakers are interacting. Aparicio builds upon Bourdieu´s notion of *habitus*, or dispositions which are inculcated through childhood through numerous everyday interactions. As a result of the racialization of Spanish, the Spanish language has become subordinated and *dispossessed* of its cultural, economic and symbolic capital. Spanish language speakers thus come to be seen in a model of cultural deficit. Yet some come to *reclaim* Spanish as symbolic and cultural capital. Similar to Aparicio's observations, a number of students in this class have come to view bilingualism as a privilege and see themselves as a resource and bridge. Thus a common theme among them is to recognize the value of their Spanish language skills and cultural heritage and so they plan on going into law or education. Of particular note, the students poignantly credit this course and the professor's insights in helping them to understand the stigmatization of their Spanish-language heritage and to reclaim the intellectual and cognitive value of Spanish and of their bilingual and bicultural identities.

5. Reflections on "Underdeveloped" Themes

I believe, however, that further work in such a course could be done in the areas of "cultural contradictions" and "how people solve problems." I also believe that further developing these two points would better serve the full range of students in the class (native Spanish-speaking students from other countries, Spanish-speaking heritage students with limited Spanish proficiency, and non-Spanish-speaking heritage students, as well as the Spanish-speaking heritage students who are highly proficient in Spanish). Spradley's advice is particularly appropriate to the topic of this investigation; the researcher should look for evidence of "social conflict, cultural contradictions, informal methods of social

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control, things that people do in managing impersonal social relationships, methods by which people acquire and maintain achieved and ascribed status, and information about how people solve problems. Each of these is likely to yield major themes in cultures" (Spradley, 1979: 199-201, as cited in Ryan & Bernard, 2000). Many of Spradley's points are explicitly addressed in the course, such as social conflict (over language and identity), informal methods of social control and things that people do in managing impersonal social relationships (stereotypes; language attitudes), and methods for acquiring and maintaining status (through linguistic prejudice).

Regarding the area of "cultural contradictions," it seems to me that the course would benefit from a broader perspective of "all people categorize others; all people have linguistic attitudes (often linguistic prejudice); and most if not all cultures are guilty of oppressing someone." This would not be as an effort to in anyway justify or dilute the impact of social oppression against Spanish-speaking and Spanish-speaking heritage people in U.S. American society; but I believe it would help to address some of the concerns not developed in the classroom. For example, while there was an emphasis on Anglo domination and oppression (political, economic, social, linguistic) toward Spanish-speaking heritage people in the Southwest, there was limited acknowledgment of the historical oppression (political, economic, social, linguistic) of indigenous peoples by the Spanish conquistadors and Anglo "settlers." A greater acknowledgment of these historical injustices and of the language maintenance and language revitalization efforts of indigenous languages could help students reflect upon ways in which they may be both oppressed and (unwittingly) oppressors.

Additionally, developing the "cultural contradiction" of structural power-domination vs. contextualized, personal dynamics of power could help to address some of the interaction dynamics in the class (and hopefully in society at large). In the classroom setting, for example, the voices of the fluent Spanish-speaking students was highly privileged. While this phenomenon is common in a language class with a great divergence in language abilities, it can unintentionally serve to privilege voices and experiences of those who have experienced "fluent-Spanish *vergüenza*" over those who are experiencing the "insufficient Spanish skills *vergüenza*" of the Spanish-speaking heritage students. As a result, such a classroom dynamic can unintentionally serve to reinforce rather than mitigate the latter type of *vergüenza*.

Furthermore, the voices of the Anglo students, particularly those who were not highly proficient in Spanish, were also quite muted. I believe that two strategies would help to lessen both of these problems. One would be to include information on the nature of second language acquisition for *everyone* regardless of language-heritage ancestry (particularly information on amount of

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exposure and time needed to develop productive skills in an additional language). Another would be to develop the theme that *all* people and cultures seem to be prone to categorizing and developing hierarchies (linguistically or otherwise) and that we *all* need to develop an awareness of effective strategies in how to be more authentically inclusive in the classroom and in society at large. The goal of developing critical language awareness is highlighted by both Lippi-Green (1997) and Fairclough (1989) as a strategy in facilitating an awareness of the language subordination process (Lippi-Green, 1997) and in developing an "emancipatory discourse" (Fairclough, 1989: 239-240) which will challenge and eventually transform the dominant orders of discourse.

This point of critical language awareness connects to Spradley's point that we should look for information about how people solve problems. As it seemed that the course focused most explicitly on the social problems of prejudice and linguicism, I asked the students in the personal interviews about what they saw as possible solutions to these problems. Resoundingly, *all* students answered, "education." Several Spanish-speaking heritage students have resolved to dedicate their professional careers to education (some at the university level, others at the K-12 levels) in an effort to combat *vergüenza* and to build social pride in one's identity. While the two Anglo students interviewed spoke of education as a solution, they both have goals of "going to Latin America to help out" (one by working in a nonprofit organization; another by working for the U.S. government in anti-terrorism efforts). It is interesting (but perhaps not surprising?) that these students will use their Spanish-speaking tools to work in Latin America rather than combating social ills in U.S. American society.

Also of interest is the observation that one (international, native-Spanish speaking) student in class frequently spoke of the obligation to educate people, that most negative attitudes were due to ignorance or lack of information. Her position, however, was directly challenged by the professor who explained (proclaimed) that native residents of the Southwest were tired of and not obliged to provide such education. While I agree for the most part with the professor, it seems that the notion of the role of education could have been further developed. Building upon her initial point, the professor could point out that, while at time fatigued and never obligated, a number of Spanish-speaking heritage people have *chosen* to share insights with those who do not understand (through informal social exchanges as well as through more formal ones such as education). She also could have taken this as an opportunity to include Anglo students and invite them to work as allies in the effort to increase the understanding of other Anglos. And she could have used this as an opportunity to develop the more global point that *everyone* harbors language attitudes, whether it be Anglos toward Spanish-speaking heritage people, Spanish-speaking heritage people toward Native Americans, higher proficient speakers

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toward lower proficient speakers, speakers of "Mexican" Spanish vs. speakers of "Spanglish," speakers of peninsular Spanish vs. speakers of "Latin American Spanish," and that we should all work to be aware of and combat negative language attitudes.

Of course, the professor I observed is herself dedicated to education as a strategy in understanding and combating social and linguistic prejudice. In many ways, this course appears to be effective in doing so (such as by building understanding of sources and effects of language attitudes and by helping to build Spanish-speaking heritage students' sense of self-esteem). In many ways, the professor is able to vividly and effectively draw upon both her own lived experiences and her professional insights in helping students to understand the historically- situated, complex negotiation of language and identity for Spanish-speaking heritage people of the southwestern United States. And by welcoming Anglo students and even me as an observer, she is working hard as a cultural bridge person in developing understanding of social and political consequences of language attitudes.

Of course, my own experiences in and evaluation of the course are reflective of my own "thoughts, actions and decisions" (Mason, 2002: 5) as well as of my age, race, class, gender, *and* linguistic identities as “produced and enacted in a historically specific situation.” But like this professor, I too would like to help undergraduates explore the complex negotiation of language(s) and identities and to seek ways to combat language-based social injustices. As mentioned above, while some of the observations made in this study may be generalizable to other contexts, I recognize that, as with all qualitative studies, this study is investigating a phenomenon understood to be “complex, nuanced, situated and contextual” (Mason, 2002: 127). My long-term goal, however, is to draw upon the rich descriptions of these co-researchers' lived experiences to further my own depth of understanding of the complexity and emotionality of language-, social class-, and ethnicity-based negotiation of identities. As my own understanding progresses, I hope to continue to travel on the road from cognitive to emotional empathy. While I recognize that "*every way of seeing is also a way of not seeing*” (Silverman, 2003: 348), I hope to use the insights generated from this ethnographic study to join the efforts in lessening language-based *vergüenza* and increasing socially productive levels of pride. That is, I hope to help the children of today come to see that in our own way, we are all "princes and princesses" who are truly enriched by the great linguistic varieties of the world.

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Appendix A

Interview Questions for Undergraduate Students in Spanish Sociolinguistics Class

First: Introduce myself- a bit of background and interests.
Then:

1. (Opening Q) **I'd like to hear about your experiences with Spanish**.
(Points I'll direct interviewees to if they don't respond much initially:
When were you first exposed to Spanish? What is your level of exposure/use now?
When do you use Spanish? /How much?/ With whom?/ Why? (what factors influence)
Have you ever been discriminated against on the basis of language?)

2. As we look over the course reader and syllabus for Spanish 371, have any topics (readings or exercises or discussions in class) been especially important or revealing?

3. Could you share with me any one story/incident in your life in which issues about Spanish or English were particularly meaningful to you?
(When is it particularly important to speak Spanish/English (or not)?)
(Times when one has had to consciously think about which language to use and how they felt about it?)

4. In class we've talked about the issue of *vergüenza* and language identity—I'm wondering what you think about this issue? Experiences of friends/family/self?

II. Specific Information: Pseudonym =
Age & Major
Origin
Family Language(s)
Languages
Places lived

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CHAPTER TWO

THE MEXICAN *ALBUR*: EXAMINING GENDER, POWER AND SOLIDARITY

NICOLE M. HOUSER

1. Introduction

I first learned about the existence of the *albur* when I was teaching in Mexico about five years ago. Two Mexican male teachers and I were having a conversation in Spanish, and suddenly they both exploded with laughter. I asked them what was so funny, and they told me that they were *albureando,* and that I wouldn't understand. I pressed them for more information, and they told me to forget about it, because *albures* were not for women. Of course, this made me even more curious as to what *albures* and *alburear* ("to *albur*") meant, so I asked another Mexican male friend of mine to explain it to me. He defined it as a code language Mexican men speak that has double meanings, often sexual, and that often refers to women, but women could not partake in the action of "alburring." Later, a Mexican female friend of mine told me that women do indeed participate in the act of the *albur*, but in a different way.

This study examines the uses of the Mexican *albur* in relation to gender. I will particularly focus on the issues of power and solidarity in my analysis of these uses. I will base my analysis and explanation of the "rules" of the *albur* on previous research, and through the responses of interviews I conducted with native Mexican Spanish speakers. I will then discuss the particular speech acts I have found to be included in the definition of the *albur*, as well as present the uses or "rules" for both intragender (men/men, women/women) and intergender (men/women) "alburring." Finally, I discuss how the particular features of the *albur* create solidarity and power relations within each gender and between both genders. Examining these relationships allows us to better understand how language use, in this case the language use of a particular speech event, can reflect societal views and gender relationships in practice. In order to create a theoretical background for my study, I will begin by reviewing previous research on the topic of gender and language, particularly regarding women's

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speech, men's speech, and the issues of power and solidarity. I will then discuss previous research and my interview findings in relation to the definition and usage of the Mexican *albur*. Finally, I will discuss the issues of power and solidarity in intragender and intergender usage of the *albur*, and how these issues provide insight into gender relationships in larger society.

2. Theoretical Background: Women, men, power and solidarity

Early research in language and gender was predominately more women-focused, examining the woman's position of "other" as imposed by man through a feminist perspective. This is known as the dominance approach (Johnson, 1997, p. 9). Robin Lakoff is often credited with beginning a discussion on language and gender in 1973 with *Language and Woman's Place*. In the introduction to this text, Lakoff defines 'women language' as "both language restricted in use to women and language descriptive of women alone" (p. 243). Regarding power, Lakoff discusses how this language submerges women's personal identity, denying her means of strong expression and therefore limiting her power (pp. 243-44). Lakoff examines how reinforcement of the societal norms regarding women's speech, i.e., using tag questions, compound requests, etc., result in women's continued denial of power. I found it necessary to mention Lakoff because the speech event I will discuss, the *albur*, began as (and to some extent still is) a language created by men with the purpose of excluding women.

As sociolinguistic and feminist theories developed, a new perspective of examining gender emerged, which has described women's and men's speech practices through the difference approach. Johnson points out that the difference approach at least partly emerged as a critical response to the dominance view, with the aim of studying women's use of language on its own terms, avoiding the perpetual comparison with males that puts females in a place of deficit (1997, p. 10). Johnson also mentions that both concepts of dominance and difference permeate feminist linguists today (p. 10). Deborah Tannen and Jennifer Coates are strongly associated with bringing these ideas to the field of sociolinguistics by examining 'men talk' and 'women talk.' As opposed to the women-centered view of Lakoff, the "different but equal" theories seek to answer questions about men's talk as well as women's talk, and examine the power and solidarity issues in intragender and intergender interaction. In examining intragender communication, both Tannen (1990) and Coates (2003) found that women's speech tends to focus on relationships, while men's focuses on action. In studying narratives, Coates (2003) found that "men's stories depict a world where solitary men pit themselves against each other… while

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women's stories depict a world where people are enmeshed in relationships and are part of a wider community" (p. 208). In examining how the ways in which women and men use language to mark gender boundaries and create identities, Holmes (1997) addresses the issue of power and social context, stating that "through language we assert or cede control, we indicate the social groups with which we identify, the social roles we embrace." Holmes also mentions how women use more standard forms in order to "claim higher status than they were entitled to" (p. 198). Holmes also references Ochs in describing what has come to be viewed as "feminine" versus "masculine" speaking styles regarding societal views on power. She notes certain usages become associated with masculine or feminine, depending on their relationship with power. Tannen examines issues of solidarity and power among women and men in, "The relativity of linguistic strategies: Rethinking power and solidarity in gender and dominance". In this article, Tannen problematizes the sources and workings of domination and powerlessness. (1993, p. 208). She expresses the idea that power and solidarity, although seemingly opposite, also entail each other. Tannen demonstrates, through various examples, that linguistic utterances associated with either power or solidarity, can be used to express the other, depending on the context.

Sally Johnson examines the downfalls of both the dominance and difference theories in "Theorizing language and masculinity: A feminist perspective," (1997), Johnson claims that, although the difference theory analyzes women's language "on its own terms," it often results in being summarized as the catch phrase, "men compete, women cooperate." Johnson states, "These views are characterized almost exclusively by a problematization of women. As a result, we know very little about men and masculinity, and what we do learn is largely by implication" (pp. 10-11). She continues: "Ultimately, there must be some degree of similarity or overlap in the speech of men and women, otherwise it would be impossible to envisage a situation where they could ever communicate" (p. 11). Johnson uses these ideas to propose the study of men's language and masculinity in addition to women's language. Kiesling (1997), Cameron (1997), and De Klerk (1997) all examine particular aspects of men's language in relation to power and solidarity that are particularly pertinent to the current study. Kiesling examined power and the language of men in a United States fraternity, and Cameron, performing gender in male speech. Finally, De Klerk discusses the use of taboo language regarding gender issues, power and change.

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3. The Mexican *Albur*

In order to define and describe the *albur*, I will draw from two main sources: a master's thesis study on the *albur* conducted by Julie Lavertue entitled, *El albur en México: descripción y percepción* [The albur in Mexico: description and perception] (1998, translation mine), and the responses to interviews I conducted with four native Mexican Spanish speakers. To my knowledge, Lavertue has been the only scholar to formally describe and define the *albur* and its usage. The objective of Lavertue's study was to clarify the definition, rules, and function of the *albur*, and to gain a better understanding of Mexicans' perception of this particular speech event (p. 1). Aside from discussing references to the *albur* in Mexican popular culture and history, Lavertue analyzes linguistic features of the *albur* (which will not be addressed in my report) and discusses the responses of 15 interviews she conducted in the neighborhood of Coyoacán, Mexico City, Mexico. Because of this scarcity of academic writing concerning the *albur*, I decided to conduct interviews with native speakers.

3.1 Participants

Three females and one male participated in the interview process. In order to protect the anonymity of the participants, I have changed their names. I have chosen to use new names, rather than give the participants numbers, in order to maintain clarity as to the gender of each informant, given the gender-focused nature of this study. The informants range in age and the area in Mexico in which they live or have lived most of their lives. The specific characteristics of each informant are as follows: Informant 1, Norma, 53, is a university professor of Spanish. She currently resides in the United States, where she has lived for the past fifteen years. She is from Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico, where she had resided most of her life prior to moving to the United States. Informant 2, Cristina, 34, is a translator and artist who currently resides in the United States, although she has lived most of her life (25 years) in San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato, Mexico. Informants 3 and 4, Ana and Carlos, are both 19 year-old university students who currently reside in Puebla, Puebla, Mexico.

Interviews for Norma and Cristina were individual, in-person interviews that I tape- recorded and transcribed. The interviews for Ana and Carlos were conducted simultaneously through MSN Instant Messenger, which I then saved and printed in full. All four participants were informed of the purpose of the interview, and they permitted me to record and save the interview material. The interview questions were prepared in advance with specific topics in mind. The questions elicited the following information from each informant: the definition

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of the *albur*, an example of an *albur*, knowledge concerning the use of *albures*. The informants were also asked to describe how albures would be used between two women, between two men, and between a man and a woman, or in a mixed-gender group. Ana did not respond to some of the questions, due to the fact that she joined the Instant Messenger interview after the interview had already begun. The interview followed a naturalistic model in that additional questions were asked according to the responses of each participant. The interviews were conducted in Spanish. All of the translations given are mine.

3.2 Results

What is the albur?

In my quest to define the *albur*, I found that the *albur* has many definitions and meanings to Mexican men and women. Lavertue explains:

> …Es importante destacar el hecho de que no existe una definición única del albur, un consenso, como tampoco existe, entre los hablantes, una idea clara acerca de lo que se entiende por "albur." […It is important to point out the fact that one singular definition of the albur does not exist; neither does a consensus between the speakers, nor a clear idea of what is understood as an "albur." (p. 9)]

This is not to say that when asked to define the *albur*, an informant did not give a definition. Instead, the informants for both Lavertue and myself gave various definitions. The informants for my interviews defined the *albur* as follows:

> Norma: El albur, es, son frases incompletas que aluden a un significado, es algo que se quiere decir pero que no se quiere hacer explicito es si quieres simplemente dar de entender. Es que apela al conocimiento cultural de la otra persona, ¿no? Dirigido al conocimiento cultural de la otra persona.
> [Norma: The albur is, are incomplete phrases that allude to a meaning, it is something that someone wants to say but does not want to make explicit. When you only want something to be "understood." It appeals to the cultural knowledge of the other person, you know? It is directed at (understanding) the cultural knowledge of a person.]

> Cristina: Para mi el albur es, más bien son expresiones que a simple vista, entre comillas, por expresión, parecen que no son ofensivas, pero sí hay un tipo de ofensa depende de cómo lo tome la otra persona especialmente la mujer porque el albur es de un hombre dirigido hacía una mujer. Son las expresiones que tienen que ver con la figura de la mujer. Es cómo se expresa un hombre hacía una mujer sin tener que ser muy directo.

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[Cristina: To me, the albur is, really, they are expressions that, on the surface seem inoffensive, but there is some type of offense, depending on how the other person takes the comment, especially a woman, because an albur is [an expression] directed towards a woman from a man. They are expressions that have to do with a woman's body. It is how a man expresses himself to a woman without having to be direct.]

Carlos: Alburear es decir palabras con doble sentido con la intencion de hacer quedar mal a la otra persona con la que estes albureanado, el albur maneja un contenido sexual en la mayoria de los casos pero usado con un doble sentido
[Carlos: To albur is to say words using a double meaning with the intentions of making the other person look bad (The person to whom you direct the albur). The albur carries a sexual content in most cases, but using double entendre (double meaning)]

In her interview responses, Lavertue elicited a variety of definitions as well, which she categorized into duel, double meaning, and word play. As I discuss the usage of the *albu*r, these categories, as well as other definitions, emerge among the answers given by my interview informants as well.

The 'rules' of the *albur*

In examining the rules of the *albur* concerning the gender of the speakers, it is important to first explain how the interaction of the *albur* has developed over time. Lavertue notes that although no exact date has been attributed to the birth of the *albur*, several references in Mexican literature and popular writing allude to its origins. Among them, that the *albur* began among the lowest social classes in Mexico, and were developed by men so that they could talk about taboo subjects, particularly sexual in nature (Lavertue, 1998, pp. 29-31). Over time, the *albur* has included women as participants, to a certain extent, which will be outlined through informant responses. Also, the word *albur* has come to include, for some speakers, the use of double meaning and word play. Women who use *albures* are said to use these forms. Also, where the woman may not have, at the inception and beginning of *albur* use, understood its coded sexual terminology, they are at present, very familiar with the nature of the *albur*, even if they do not employ a form of it themselves. We can view these origins and changes in the interview informants' responses to the question 'Who uses the albur most frequently?' :

Norma: Yo diría que ahora probablemente todo el mundo, pero hará 25-30 años con más frecuencia los hombres.
[Norma: I would say that now probably everybody. But around 25-30 years ago, men used them more frequently.]

I then asked Norma how this has changed. She responded:

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Norma: No te puedo decir exactamente cómo haya cambiado, pero mm. Me parece que antes, me parece, no estoy muy segura era exclusivamente, como en la época de mis padres probablemente era exclusivamente de los hombres. Entonces después, fue también hombres y mujeres y ahora no sé exactamente cómo haya cambiado la proporción, verdad, si son más hombres que mujeres o si son más mujeres que hombres, no sé muy bien decir.
[I cannot tell you exactly how it has changed, but…It seems to me that before, it seems, I'm not very sure, it was exclusively, like, in my parents' era, [the albur] was exclusively for men. Then, afterward, both men and women, and now, I don't know exactly, how the ratio has changed. If more men than women [use albures], or more women than men. I really can't say.]

Cristina: Yo, en mi experiencia, y esto es personal, no quiero decir que sea en todo el país. Verdad, pero en mi experiencia los usan las personas que son de nivel social más bajo porque en México tenemos diferentes niveles sociales, ¿no? Y el nivel social, en los niveles sociales más bajos son las personas que usan los albures más seguido. Y en mi experiencia, los albañiles, por ejemplo.
[Cristina: From my experience, my personal experience, I do not mean to say it is this way in the whole country, but, in my experience people who belong to the lowest social class use them. Because in Mexico we have different social classes, you know? And the social class, people from the lowest social class are the ones who use albures most often. And in my experience, construction workers, for example.]

Carlos: Hombres
[Carlos: Men]

4. Intragender and Intergender usage

Although rules for using the *albur* are not specified, per se, the informants' responses show a clear pattern among the type of *albures* used by women and men, and also the context in which the *albures* are used. I have structured the next section according to the *albur* continuum, which I constructed to replace a "definition" of the *albur* (Appendix A, Table 1). I will begin with women's use among women, then explain men's use of *albures* with women, and finally end with the use of *albures* among men who engage in the "*albur* duel."

Intragender use by women

According to Lavertue's research and the responses of my informants, women are reported to *alburear*, despite the fact this code language was originally meant for men. The type of *albur* women use most often is that associated with double meaning, or *el doble sentido*, in Spanish. This type of double meaning can be innocent word play with no sexual content, or can include the use of sexual euphemisms. Women may use double entendre to

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refer to body parts, both male and female, or to refer to sexual activity. For example, when asked if women use *albures*, Carlos responded:

> Sí, pero mas que alburear utilizan el doble sentido, por lo general las mujeres no son tan habiles en la forma de decir las palabras con tal de alburear, tal ves pero es muy fuerte para una mujer.
> [Yes. They use double meaning more than albures. Generally women are not that skilled in the way in which the words are spoken in order to alburear. Maybe (they might use an albur), but it's strongly offensive for a woman.]

The informants mentioned that socially, women are not expected to use *albures* that contain a stronger sexual content. When I asked Cristina what the difference was, if any, between the use of *albures* between men and women, she explained:

> Sí, hay mucha diferencia porque se permite más a un hombre más socialmente.. especialmente en la sociedad mexicana. Pero para las mujeres alburear … se les ve como que no es buena educación. A una mujer se le espera que sea más tímida y que se calle la boca si le gusta algo, pero no es socialmente aceptable que una mujer alburée.
> [Yes, there is a big difference, because men are permitted [to do] more socially, especially in Mexican society. But for women to alburear…they are perceived as not having good manners. A woman is expected to be more timid and that she keep her mouth shut if she likes something, but it is not socially acceptable for a woman to use albures (here she means the albures associated with men).]

Ana explained the difference in the following way:

> Lo que pasa es que los hombres son especialistas para el tema, pero una mujer si lo dice de verdad que se escucha muuuuuuuuy pero muuuuuuy mal. Es que mira de esos albures, pues la verdad yo no se ni como responder pero por ejemplo de repente decir cosas en doble sentido pues sí, pero no tan fuertes.
> [The thing is that men are specialists on the subject [of the albur], but if a woman were to say a real albur it would look very very bad. You see, concerning these types of albures, the truth is that I don't even know how to respond. But, for example, I am able to say something all of a sudden, using a double meaning, but nothing so strongly offensive. (emphasis used for translation purposes)]

Even though all of the informants said that women can and do use *albures*, they mentioned that it is not associated with women as much as men. When asked about the use of *albures* among women, Cristina responded:

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> He tenido amigas que alburean…pero, especialmente porque su carácter es muy abierto y no les da miedo expresar cómo se sienten hacia otra persona, claro depende de de cómo son personalmente porque hay unas mujeres que son más introvertidas pero las mujeres que son más extrovertidas y que les gusta expresarse son las que alburean.
> [I have had friends who use albures…but, especially because they are very open and they are not afraid to express how they feel toward someone. Sure, it depends on how [women] are personally, because there are some women who are more introverted, but the women who are more extroverted are the ones who use albures]

Here it is important to note that, when asked if they used *albures*, all three women informants in my study said that they do not.

Another characteristic of the interaction between two women is the objective of using the *albur*. All three informants noted that women use *albures* with other women in order to share sexual experiences, or as a way of connecting to the other woman. Finally, there is no competition involved when two women *alburear*.

4.1 Intergender Use: Women and Men

The use of albures in a mixed-gender setting does take place. An interesting characteristic of intergender use, however, is that women very rarely are the ones using the *albures*; only sometimes if a woman wants to express attraction toward a man (this can be seen in the following example.) One way in which men use *albures* in front of women is to make sexual advances, which can be offensive or inoffensive, depending on the context and how well the man and the woman know each other. Cristina gave an example of a non-offensive *albur* to express attraction, which women may also use towards men:

> El ejemplo que puedo pensar ahora es el ejemplo de, "Estás como mango." Y mango es la fruta que que también se llama en inglés mango, ¿no? y el mango quiere decir en español además de fruta quiere decir que estás atractiva. Y se puede usar hacía un hombre también. Una mujer puede llamar a un hombre, "Estás como mango" que quiere decir estás muy bien, eres muy guapo, atractivo. Mm… y para una mujer es lo mismo, ¿no? para un hombre llamar a una mujer, "Estás como mango" quiere decir que eres muy bien, que eres atractiva.
> [The example I can think of right now is, "Estás como mango." (You are like mango) And a mango is a fruit that is also called mango in English, and "mango" in Spanish means, besides the fruit, that you are attractive. It can be used for men, too. A woman can tell a man "You are like mango" in order to say, "You look good," "You are very handsome, attractive." And for a woman

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it's the same. If a man tells a woman she is like mango, he means, "you look good, you're attractive".]

Norma recalled a more offensive *albur* that men use toward women. This type of *albur* is one of wordplay in which the man tries to "trap" the woman in the *albur*:

> Ahorita me estaba acordando de alguno de "cojo o escojo" o algo así pero no me acuerdo algo como "cojo o escojo y luego te cojo",… era algo así en que tú tenías que terminarlo" cojo y escojo y yo te cojo", o sea la ternimación era y" yo te cojo."
> [I was just now remembering the one of "cojo o escojo" or something similar, but I don't remember exactly how it went, something like, "cojo o escojo y luego te cojo," … it was one in which you (the woman) had to end the phrase, "cojo y escojo y yo te cojo," in other words, the ending was, "y yo te cojo."]

This *albur* contains phonetic word play with rhyming (*cojo, escojo..)*, and a sexual double meaning. "*Yo te cojo*" literally means "I catch you." However, in Mexico, the verb "*coger*" also carries the meaning of having sexual intercourse, and is considered vulgar in this context, similar to "fuck" or "screw" in English. Literal meaning to the end of the *albur*: "I catch you." Double meaning: "I 'fuck/screw' you."

Women's reactions to these types of *albures* are worth mentioning here. All of the women informants stated that they would remain silent if a man were to direct an offensive *albur* toward her. When asked how she would respond to an offensive *albur*, Cristina said:

> No lo contesto. Si es muy ofensivo no lo contesto pero si continua el albur… le digo o le puedo decir que no estoy interesada, pero una mujer en la sociedad mexicana no dice nada y se va.
> [I don't answer it. If it is very offensive I don't answer it. But if the albur continues… I tell him that I am not interested. But a woman in Mexican society says nothing and leaves.]

In response to the same question, Norma said, "*probablemente ni contestaría ni me reiría. Bueno, me quedaría seria, ¿no?*" [I probably would neither answer nor smile. Well, I would remain serious, you know?] I then asked Norma if there is any way, any phrase she could think of, as a retort that a woman could use in replying to an *albur*. She said, "*No, nada en que pueda yo pensar, no.*" [No, nothing that I can think of, no.] Norma also told me that she does not find it possible for a man and a woman to engage in an *albures* duel, the *albur* game. (An example of a duel is included in the next section of intragender *albureando* between men.)

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To end this section I will share an "albur experiment" I conducted, based on with what Norma was saying about the use of albures between men and women. I asked Carlos and Ana if they could try to *alburear* with one another. The contrived *albur* occurred as follows:

> Ana: va [Go]
> Carlos: empieza [Begin]
> Ana: véngase! [Come!]
> Carlos: el albur: ¿contigo? [The albur: With you?]
> Ana: jajajajaja [hahahhaha]
> Carlos: yo alburie por que ella dijo vengase y yo le respondi contigo [I said an albur because she said 'come' and I said to her, 'With you?]
> I asked Ana, Y como contestas? [And how do you respond?]
> Ana: a eso??? mmm.... no sé [To that??? mmm…I don't know]

4.2 Intragender use: men and men

Albures between men are viewed most often as a competition. When two men engage in the speech event of *albureando*, it is with the objective of "winning" the *albur* duel. The theme is often sexual and proves one man is more macho than the other in some way. Norma described the content of *albures* between men as follows:

> Me imagino que presumen de o macho o lo opuesto, del homosexual. Hay albures en donde se usa mucho la palabra como mariquita…de homosexualidad o que algo de que ya no se levanta, cosas de que están relacionadas con… la potencia sexual masculine. Yo creo que también son muy relacionados con el estereotipo del macho entre ellos, verdad, o del homosexual.
> [I imagine that one assumes to be macho or [accuses the other] of the opposite, of being homosexual. There are albures that often use the word mariquita (faggot, queer)…of homosexuality or that "something no longer rises," things that are related with male sexual prowess. I believe that they are also related with the macho stereotype among themselves, you know, or of [the stereotype] of the homosexual.]

Crisitna reported the following regarding *albures* between men:

> Yo veo que entre hombres ellos lo dicen entre ellos porque les gusta hacer chistes y sentirse más machos. Tiene que ver mucho con el machismo y de que tanto saben acerca de la sexualidad femenina. ¿no?
> [I notice that between men, they alburear among themselves because they like to joke around and feel more macho. It has a lot to do with machismo and how much they know about female sexuality, you know?]

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Sometimes men use single references to which there is no response, but often, two men engage in a banter, which becomes the *albur* duel. This duel is sexual in nature, using double meaning to allude to sexually explicit acts which include (metaphorically) anally and/or orally penetrating the other man, having sexual intercourse with the other man's mother or sister, or referencing the size of their genitalia. The "game" or duel is one of dominance, in which, through words, one male sexually dominates the other. In this *albur*, someone wins and loses. The loser is determined by who remains silent, without a comeback *albur* (Lavertue, 1998).

Carlos provided the following example of the beginning of a typical *albur* duel between men:

> asi te queria agarrar con la boquita llena de crema" explicacion: cuando un amigo estaba comiendo un pastelillo y le quedo crema en la boca yo le dije "asi te queria agarrar con la boquita llena de crema" hay esta el albur analizemos la frase cuando decimos "la boquita llena de crema"nos referimos a que la cremaes el doble sentido y hace referencia a un blow job
> [That's how I wanted to catch you, with your mouth full of cream
> Explanation: When a friend was eating a cake and some icing or cream was left on his mouth, I said, "That's how I wanted to catch you, with your mouth full of cream." There's the albur. Let's analyze the phrase: When we say, with your mouth full of cream, we refer to "cream" with a double meaning and make a reference to a blow job.]

I asked Carlos how the other man would respond:

> Carlos: Podria contestar con lo siguiente: crema la que le embarre a tu hermana
> [Carlos: He could answer with the following: cream that I smeared on your sister.]

In order to provide a reference to aid in the discussion of the *albur*, I have included a table that summarizes the above findings on usage (Appendix A, Table 2).

5. Discussion

In his study on men in a university fraternity, Kiesling sought to "show how the issues of power and dominance are more complex than previously suggested" (1997, p. 65). In analyzing the data I have gathered on the use of *albures*, it is apparent that complex power relationships exist here as well. Kiesling stated that, "Power is usually cited as the most important factor when discussing the ways in which men's identities are constructed" (p. 65). In his article, Kiesling raises a relevant point regarding men's power in the use of

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albures: "along with the freedom brought by power, however, comes the expectation (or requirement) that a man will somehow embody that power" (p. 66). I will now discuss three specific characteristics in which we may examine the power relationships among women and men, and among men (intragender) in the use of the *albur*: taboo language use, silence, and the *albur* duel.

5.1 Taboo language

Kiesling also discusses how the aforementioned powerful "male" identity is not expected in women, and in some cases, she is punished for assuming a more powerful identity (p. 66). We see this type of societal viewpoint in the way in which women use, or rather, are "socially permitted to use" *albures*. From the interviews with the informants, it is clear that all of the female informants are familiar with the language and structure of the more explicit *albur*. However, they opt for using more nonsexual wordplay and double meaning. De Klerk (1997) notes that in Western cultures, stereotypical powerful speech style is associated with direct language, including the use of expletives (p. 145). She adds, that, although men are expected to use highly intensive language in persuasive attempts, females are seen as violating norms in doing so (p. 145). This is clear from the informants' description of the use of the *albur* being to "too offensive," or as a sign of poor manners for women. This may be viewed as a way in which the Mexican male asserts his power through the language of the *albur*. In a more culturally-specific example, in her article about the use of Caló and taboo language of Chicanas (Mexican American women) Galindo (1999), cites Anzaldúa:

> Anzaldúa speaks of another strategy to stifle the female voice: assign her a derogatory label…These labels seem to imply that women have deliberately stepped outside of the boundaries of what constitutes "female" language and behavior and have appropriated what is considered to be male discourse: the use of expletives…in my culture they are all the words that are derogatory if applied to women-I've never heard them applied to men. (p. 175)

5.2 Silence

Societal pressure keeping women from using the *albures*, as mentioned above, is a way of silencing them. Another way in which we may perceive men's attempt to silence women and gain power, is in the woman's silence as a response to an offensive *albur*. This type of silencing is imbedded culturally, and may not be obvious to the speaker. In an article exploring silence and gender, Lakoff (1995) discusses types of silence, and its traditional association with lack of power and even invisibility, especially from a feminist viewpoint.

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Lakoff defines various types of silencing, and the one that is particularly relevant to the silencing aspect of the *albur*, is that of "interpretive control." Lakoff explains interpretive control as:

> covert and potent, both psychologically and politically. It is often hard to recognize because it can be done silently by those who already have the cultural hegemony. It is not blatantly violative, like interruption, or obviously inconsiderate, like response. Indeed it is so deeply rooted in our culture that it becomes hard to notice at all. (p. 29)

The Mexican woman's response, or lack of response, to an offensive *albur* is a clear example of interpretive control.

6. The *Albur* Duel

Another way in which men exercise power in using *albures* is through performing the duel. In the duel, men are not only creating power relationships among themselves, but also maintaining a representational power over women. This representational power is seen through the "rules" of the game. In vying for intragender power over, the *albur* represents "dominating" or "penetrating" the other man metaphorically. Because women are not equipped to physically penetrate in the way men are, they have a natural disadvantage in the *albur*. In one website that I found concerning *albures*, the author went so far as to say that "since the *albur* was designed for people with male genitalia, they (women) only achieve 'alburring themselves" (http://www.geocities.com/Colosseum/Bleachers/8867/albures/ensayo.html). One interpretation, then, is that in performing the duel, a man not only has the opportunity to gain power over another man, but also over women.

6.1 The complexity of power

Keeping Kiesling's findings on the complexity of power and dominance in mind, I will now put into question the inferences on the power relationships I outlined above. Cameron (1997) discusses how researchers may benefit from using Judith Bulter's idea of performativity. Cameron states:

> Gender has to constantly to be reaffirmed and publicly displayed by repeatedly performing particular acts in accordance with the cultural norms (themselves, historically and socially constructed, and consequently variable), which define 'masculinity' and 'femininity' (p. 49).

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Cameron cautions researchers in letting these stereotyped roles affect the data. She discusses this in the context of an article about male behavior, which, after looking at the data without the aforementioned stereotypes in mind, she found new dynamics among the speakers. By only discussing the above inferences about gender, power, and the use of the *albur*, I, as a researcher, would be subject to this stereotyped analysis. Superficially, it may seem that the findings on the use of *albures* only strengthens the "men compete, women cooperate" catch phrase mentioned earlier. However, upon examining other factors such as societal and language change, and intra and intergender solidarity reflected in the *albur*, we may see these power relationships in a different light.

A factor that brings the man's "power" into question, is what Kiesling described as "believed power." He references Foucault's thought that "power is action that modifies action," and stresses that, "because power takes place in actions, it is exercised that people *believe* that they should perform an action because of another action…the people being acted on must believe in it" (p. 67). This raises the question of the amount of power Mexican women view that men have in using the *albur*. In an interview response, although Cristina viewed the (male) *albur* as a method to gain power, she also viewed it as being a product of fear:

> El hombre mexicano tiene miedo de que la mujer sepa más o sea más fuerte… Es para ellos una manera de sentirse más con poder, ¿no?… para mi es ofensivo para todas las mujeres que los hombres sean así. Y que al mismo tiempo pienso, pues pobrecitos, si tienen que "resort" a ese tipo de cosas lo siento mucho.
> [The Mexican man is afraid that women know more or are stronger than him…the albur is a way in which [men] can feel more powerful, you know?…To me, it is offensive for women that men are that way. And at the same time I think, poor things, if they have to resort to those types of things, I feel sorry for them.]

Taking this attitude about the *albur* into consideration, gives a reason for reexamining the function of silence in women's response to offensive *albures* directed towards them. Tannen (1993) problematizes an overgeneralization of "accepted" sources of dominance and powerlessness. Tannen argues that certain linguistic strategies said to be associated either with power or solidarity need to be reexamined when put into contexts. Regarding silence in particular, she states, " …Many scholars have claimed that men dominate women by silencing them…silence alone, however, is not a self-evident sign of powerlessness…indeed, taciturnity itself can be an instrument of power" (p.

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218). Therefore, Mexican women's "response" of silence toward an offensive *albur* may also be interpreted as an "instrument of power."

The final factors I would like to examine in an alternative interpretation of the power relationships in *albures*, deal with culture and solidarity. In examining the types of solidarity created by the use of the *albur*, we can once again, reexamine power relationships between men and women. At first, it may seem that solidarity relationships regarding the *albur* only apply to intragender groups, especially among women. However, a much broader solidarity exists as well. This solidarity, a national or cultural solidarity, exists within and amongst both genders. To *alburear*, no matter how you view it or use it, is to create solidarity as a Mexican. Consider Norma's response to the question of whether the *albur* is an offense, insult or just word play:

> Puede ser todas esas cosas pero creo que la parte cultural es también parte de la censura o autocensura que hay en el lenguaje del mexicano. De que quiere decir las cosas pero no las dice. Porque es eso el albur es eso, ¿no? es una frase que no se termina.
> [It can be all of those things, but I believe that the cultural part [of the albur] is also part of the censorship or self-censorship that exists in the language of the Mexican. Of wanting to say things but not saying them. Because the albur is just that, you know? It's a phrase that never ends.]

The final point to consider is how the historical development and change of the *albur* reflects societal power changes taking place, particularly regarding gender. As mentioned, the *albur* is said to have begun as a code language only for men. Over the years, however, what has become understood as the *albur* has come to include double meanings, wordplay, and women. Through these changes it appears that, if the *albur* did intend to take power away from women, women are reclaiming this power. This is clear in Mexican larger society as well. There has recently been an explosion of feminist movements and methods of communication that reflect these changes.

7. Limitations

The limitations of this study include the small sample size and the one-dimensional research method. In a future study, I would like to perform an ethnographic study, in which I would spend an extended amount of time as a participant observer in Mexican society. Also, I would triangulate this data with further interview data. The informants would include not only a larger sample size, but also a more diverse population with varying ages, genders, locations, and sexual orientations, and social classes. I did not give much attention to class here, because the social class of the current sample was homogenous. In the

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future, I would like to examine class differences in detail with a larger sample. I also would intend to conduct follow-up interviews, given the extended time period needed to properly perform ethnographic research.

Conclusion

The Mexican *albur* creates a unique base for analysis in that we may observe gender relationships and interactions in a singular speech event. Also, the characteristics of the language, particularly it gender-based origins and sexual content, allow us to explore power issues even further. By examining phenomena such as the Mexican *albur*, we gain insight into intragender and intergender interactions, and how these language-based behaviors reflect gender dynamics and changes occurring in larger society.

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Appendix A

The albur continuum

1. **language** double meaning ➔ non-sexual word play ➔ sexual euphemisms /expressions ➔ *Albur* banter ➔duel

2. **gender association** women and men ➔ some women, mostly men ➔ mostly men ➔ almost exclusively men

3. **degree of offensiveness** non-offensive language ➔ mildly offensive language ➔ highly offensive language

Table 2-1: The Albur Continuum

women/women	men/women	men/men
solidarity	highly unlikely for one woman and one man to banter because of the nature of the language	power-centered/ machismo
double meanings, word play, may be sexual in nature, but mostly to share experiences	men can express attraction to a woman through an *albur* (degree of offensiveness depends on the situation)	more explicit sexual euphemisms, phallic references, references to sexual domination, sexual prowess
may be one expression, question or word	men can exclude women using *albures*	entire conversation in *albures*
no competition	men can assert power over women by “trapping” them in an *albur* or sexual wordplay	competition, almost always a winner and a loser

Table 2-2: Intragender and Intergender Albur Use

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Chapter Three

A Rose by Any Other Name Wouldn't be American: Motivation and First Name Use

Nancy Mae Antrim

> Names are profoundly linked to identity and to private as well as public declarations of self and purpose; they have considerable affective power and, however unacknowledged in daily usage, a magical role as well, the power to change people's lives.
> —The Language of Names

1. Introduction

Gardener and Lambert (1959) in one of the first theoretical statements of motivation proposed that the individual's motivation to learn is determined by his or her "attitudes toward the other group in particular and toward foreign people in general and by his orientation toward the learning task itself." From their research program they identified two types of motivation: integrative and instrumental. Subsequent researchers (Clément and Kruidenier, 1983) have looked at refining these types of motivation by taking into account contextual/cultural factors such as the ethnicity of the learner and the cultural composition of the community. Furthermore, Gardener's social psychological model originally proposed in 1975 claims that integrative motivation is related to L2 achievement. Success depends on motivation and aptitude; motivation depends on integrativeness and attitudes. Graham (1984) further refines the concept of motivation drawing a distinction between assimilative motivation – desire to become an indistinguishable member of a community – and integrative motivation – desire to establish a social relationship with the target-loanguage community. This distinction underlies Schumann's complementary approach. Schumann (1978) proposes an acculturation model focusing on the social and psychological distance between groups. He considers twelve sociological factors

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in describing the relationship between the second language learner's group and the target language group. These factors deal with the political, cultural, and economic dominance relationships between the two groups, as well as, the degree of assimilation and preservation of the cultural groups, their cohesiveness, separateness, size, and congruence. He also considers the ethnic stereotypes by which the two groups either positively or negatively value each other and the intended length of residence of the language learner. This model assumes some degree of homogeneity with respect to the two language groups: the target language group on the one hand and the second language learner language group on the other. In El Paso, Texas, there are at least four distinct communities with respect to Spanish and English:

1. monolingual Spanish – those who speak only Spanish
2. monolingual English – those who speak only English
3. bilingual mixed – those who mix or code-switch using both English and Spanish in the same discourse
4. bilingual separate – those who speak both Spanish and English, but claim never to mix the languages/code-switch.[1]

This paper deals with English as a Second Language (ESL) students. The motivation of an immigrant learning English whether to integrate economically, socially, or culturally into American society takes on an additional dimension that is not present for the native-born student learning a foreign language. Not only is the motivation different, but the learning environment is also. Additionally, these are all Spanish speaking students, whose motivation is further affected by the continuing influx of Spanish speakers and the status of Hispanics in the community (Waters, 1990).

2. The community

El Paso, Texas, situated on the border between the United States and Mexico has a population of around 600,000. Cuidad Juárez, immediately across the border from El Paso, has a population of over 1,200,000.[2] According to the 2000 census, El Paso's population is 76.6% Hispanic; 96% of these are of Mexican origin with the remainder of Puerto Rican (1%), Cuban (.1%), and other (2.9%) origins[3].

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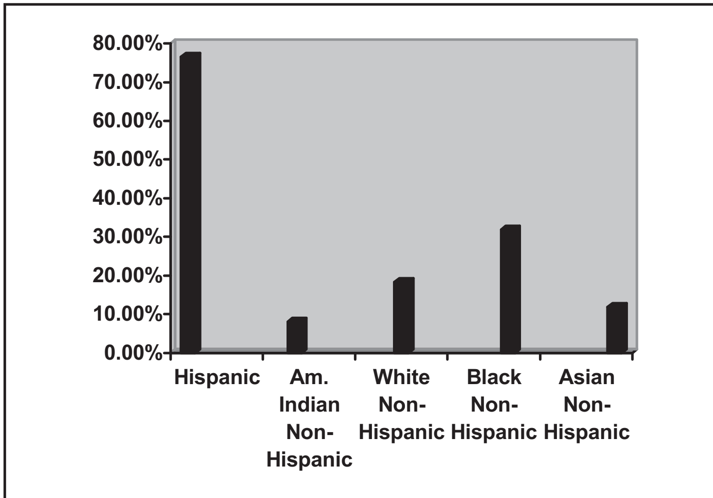

Table 3-1: City of El Paso Population Distribution

Seventy percent of those citing Hispanic heritage are concentrated in two areas of El Paso County: the Central area and the Lower Valley. These two areas also contain the highest percentage of Spanish only speakers since the Lower Valley area is situated directly on the border,

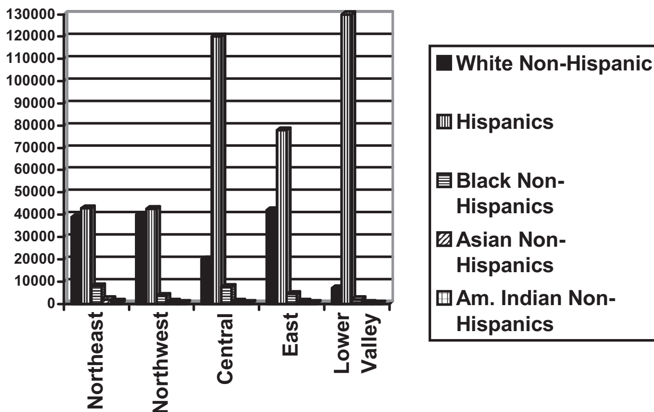

Table 3-2: El Paso County Profiles by Race and Spanish Origin

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The census included questions on language usage with respect to Spanish and English. Dividing the population into three age groups, the census reported the following:

Language	Age 5-17	18-64	65+
Speaks only English	8%	21.7%	4%
Spanish spoken: Speaks English very well	10%	23.6%	1.6%
Spanish spoken: Speaks English well	4.6%	9.3%	1.2%
Spanish spoken: Speaks English not well or not at all	2.5%	10.1%	2.3%

Table 3- 3 Hispanic Speakers of English and Spanish

In all three age groups, there are those who identified themselves asmonolingual English or monolingual Spanish. Determining from the census reports the percentage of speakers who would identify themselves as either bilingual speakers who mix the two languages or bilingual speakers who keep the two languages separate is not possible, since the census did not address this issue of language use.

The existence of these communities raises several questions in regards to the second language learner: first, to which community do second language learners desire to "integrate;" second, will success with respect to the target language vary by community choice; and thirdly, can first name preference function as an indicator?

Since the community is 69% Hispanic, one would expect a preference for Spanish names. And there is a clear preference for Spanish names when naming a child as reported in a 1995 El Paso Times' story entitled "Como se llama, baby?" An informal survey was taken of preference in names given to children born in El Paso County. Questioning parents as to their choices for their children's names many responded that for a boy it is important to carry on the name of the father or grandfather. The top three boys' names on the list were all Spanish: José, Jesús, and Luis; whereas, the top names for girls were English: Stephanie and Ashley. While Ashley does not have a Spanish equivalent, Stephanie does (Estafania). All but two of the names on the list of girls' names were either Spanish or had a Spanish equivalent with the difference in the majority of them being with respect to pronunciation. Of the remaining names on the boys' list, two were Spanish while the others had Spanish equivalents.[4]

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3. The Study

The motivation for this study is in part anecdotal. I have noticed in working with non-native English speakers that a number of students have either anglicized their names or adopted an English name or nickname. In an ESL class I taught several years ago there was a Mexican student named Beatriz who went by the Spanish pronunciation of her name and associated with the other Hispanic ESL students. By the beginning of the second semester she was associating with non-ESL students and announced that she wanted to be called Betty. She exited the program after two years; whereas a number of students took considerably longer. In changing her name, had this student also changed her language community identification? To what extent did her choice of first name reflect her image of herself as an English speaker?

a) Preliminary Study

First name use was selected as a possible factor in identifying the community with which an individual wished to integrate[5]. A preliminary study of first name use was done involving fifteen Spanish-speaking students, between the ages of fifteen and forty. These students were administered a questionnaire concerning their reasons for learning English, use of English, attitudes towards English and use of first names. Twelve were born in the United States and three were born in Mexico. One had learned English at home; while fourteen learned English at school, two of those at the local community college. First name use varied as to whether there was an English equivalent (4) or the names were the same except for pronunciation (8). Where there wasn't an equivalent name (5) the results were divided between adopting an English 'nickname' or using only the Spanish name.[6] Table 4 show that for those using both an English/anglicized and a Spanish first name, usage varied with respect to the interlocutors involved.

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Interlocutors	% of Time[7]
Family Grandparents	1.1
Parents	12.2
Brothers and sisters	30
Aunts and uncles	12.5
Cousins	18.8
Friends Spanish speaking	33.5
Non-Spanish speaking	71
Classmates Spanish speaking	26
Non-Spanish speaking	69
Professors Spanish speaking	30.5
Non-Spanish speaking	66
Employer Spanish speaking	42.8
Non-Spanish speaking	85.7
Co-workers Spanish speaking	34.4
Non-Spanish speaking	86.9

Table 3-4: Use of English

Within the family the use of an English/anglicized name dimished; the least use of an English/anglicized name being with the grandparents. However, those speaking a greater percentage of English within the family, including with grandparents, preferred using an English/anglicized first name. Exclusive use of a Spanish first name was preferred by those who objected to language mixing, as well as, those who spoke only Spanish at home.
In interviews with students who did not want to use an English first name, the explanations given revolved around their sense of identity:

-I will never use my first name in English because I am sure of who I am. I consider myself as a Mexican very proud of my roots.

-No, I would not consider using an English name because ". . . ." tells a lot about who I am as a person.

-I have always used a Spanish name because I like my name and my Spanish name represents who I am and where I come from.

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-I do not see any reason for it. I like for people to call me by my real name not by a fake one.

b) Study of First Name Use

A second study was undertaken to see whether refining of the questionnaire would yield more conclusive results. The second questionnaire focused on first name use and attitudes toward language use.

A survey was done of twelve ESOL students attending university level ESL classes during a summer session. They were enrolled in the final semester of ESOL which is equivalent to the second semester of freshman composition. There were three women and nine men between the ages of 17 and 25. Three were born in the United States; the others were born in Mexico. Those born in Mexico have lived in the United States from one to five years. All, including the American born, were educated in Mexico at least through the equivalent of junior high; one student attended an American high school. All are currently either freshman or sophomores at the university. Four learned English in elementary school between the ages of six and ten; only two learned English after the age of fifteen; the majority (6) learned English between the ages of eleven and fifteen.

By means of a questionnaire they were asked about their reasons for learning English, their attitudes towards English and Spanish; their exposure to both English and Spanish language media; and their first name preference and usage.

4. Results

The possible responses to the question why did you learn English were a) for a job, b) to get an education, c) desire to become a citizen, and d) other. Ten of the students responded (b) to get an education. The two students who selected (d) other, cited "it was taught in school" and "just for fun" as their reasons.

With respect to first names, six have first names, six have first names with English equivalents, four have first names that are the same in English except for pronunciation and two have first names without an English equivalent.[8] While seven of the eight that have English versions of their names claim to like the English version, only three admit to using the English version. None of those whose names do not have an English equivalent, nor those whose names varied only with respect to pronunciation used an English first name. Only one of these students would consider using an English first name. All however admitted that others in addressing them used the anglicized version of their name, even in cases where the student expressly requested that their Spanish name be used.

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The students were also asked whether they ever mixed Spanish and English when they were speaking. Only two of the students responded that they mixed the two languages. They responded that they code-switched with friends or people they knew spoke both English and Spanish; speakers who they perceive as belonging to the same language community, as suggested by Myers-Scotton (1993). Their reasons for code-switching included identification as a Mexican-American. One student employed code-switching as a language strategy that is often employed by second language learners with respect to their L2; however, in this case English (the L2) is resorted to rather than Spanish (the L1). He remarked: "when I'm talking with my friends, I sometimes forget a word in Spanish and I said in English." It would seem more likely that someone who actively switched back and forth between English and Spanish would extend this switching to the use of an English first name. However, neither of the two students who code-switch use English names. Having only two respondents who code-switch does not provide a sufficient number to draw any conclusions. It does point to the need for future research with respect to speakers who code-switch.

Count	Doesn't apply	no	yes	Total
Code-switch		1		1 8.3
no	2	4	3	9 75.0
yes		2		2 16.7
Total	2 16.7	7 58.3	3 25.0	12 100.0

Table 3- 5: Use of English Name

If we consider with whom and how often these students use an English first name, we might gain some insight into these results. The students were asked to indicate with whom and how often they used an English name. The results are tabulated in the chart below.

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With	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%	Average %
Family grandparents	9			2	1	17
parents	9	8	1	2	1	19
Brothers and sisters	9		2		1	17
Aunts and uncles		9		2	1	17
cousins		7	1	3	1	23
Friends Spanish speaking	7	1	1	1	2	29
Non-Spanish speaking	4	1	1	2	4	46
Classmates English speaking		8	1	1	2	23
Non-Spanish speaking	3	2	3	2	2	46
Professors Spanish speaking		8		1	3	29
Non-Spanish speaking	5	2	1	2	2	38
Employer Spanish speaking		8	2	1	1	19
Non-Spanish speaking	7	1	1		3	31
Co-workers Spanish speaking	7	1	2	1	2	33
Non-Spanish speaking	5	1	1	2	1	27

Table 3-6: Use of English First Names[9]

Again usage depended upon the interlocutors with the least usage within the family. Looking only at those students who responded favorably to the use of an English first name: 67% of the students who used an English first name used it on an average of 75% of the time with members of their family. With non-Spanish speaking friends, classmates, co-workers, and employers, all those who used an English name used it on the average 84% of the time. Use of an English name with Spanish speaking classmates, employers, and co-workers reflected the same averages as for use with family members with 67% using an English name on the average 75% of the time. Of interest is their use of an English name with both Spanish and non-Spanish speaking professors, as well as Spanish speaking friends; here 67% used an English name 100% of the time. The university appears to be perceived as an English speaking environment despite the high number of Spanish speakers in attendance; as well as the availability of classes taught in Spanish. The two students whose names did not have an English equivalent used a Spanish first name exclusively with family and only were referred to with an English name, "nickname," by non- Spanish speaking people at school and at work. They also objected to language mixing. This variation with respect to the number of subjects and the percentage of time is not

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surprising given that Spanish is the language spoken in the home. What is surprising is the high percentage (67%) of those using an English first name with family members and the percentage of time used (75%).

That speaking English is considerable desirable and beneficial is clearly demonstrated in their responses to the questions dealing with attitudes towards English.[10] The students responded unanimously with strong agreement to the statement: "Being able to speak English will be useful in my future career." They responded just as positively to their desire to maintain their Spanish. Their desire to speak English and maintain their Spanish is reflected in the amount of time they spend reading and listening to both languages (see Table 6). El Paso, being on the border, has ready access to Spanish language radio, TV, movies, and publications.

	daily	2-3/week	1/week	seldom	never
Newspapers English		4	3	3	1
Spanish	2	3	2	4	
Books and Magazines English	1	5	4	1	
Spanish	3	2	2	2	
TV English	9	2			
Spanish	4	5	1	1	
Radio English	10				
Spanish	5	3		2	
CDs and Cassettes English	10	1			
Spanish	3	4	1	3	
Movies English	4	5	2		
Spanish	1	2	2	3	3

Table 3-7: Exposure to Language[11]

All the students read books and newspapers in both English and Spanish at least once a week. Over half read both English and Spanish language newspapers at least once a week; with one respondent who read a Spanish language newspaper daily, reporting reading an English language newspaper two-three times a week. Over half watch tv in both English and Spanish at least two-three times a week: with 30% watching both daily. Listening to the radio in both English and Spanish daily was reported by 36%. 25% reported watching English language movies exclusively. Over 90% reported listening to CDs and

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cassettes in English daily; whereas only 50% reported listening to CDs and cassettes in Spanish daily.

While maintaining Spanish for career purposes was cited by 64%, 36% cited the importance of Spanish in relating to family members and 45% cited Spanish as a major part of their heritage. With both languages being strongly supported, why then don't more of the respondents engage in code-switching? When queried about the Spanish spoken in El Paso, 82% agreed with the statement: "the kind of Spanish spoken here on the border (El Paso) is not good Spanish." Only one of the respondents born here in the United States agreed with this statement; whereas, 63% of those born in Mexico agreed with this statement. This reflects Hidalgo's (1984; 1986) findings with respect to language attitudes in Cd. Juárez, Mexico, immediately across the border from El Paso. Half of those who code-switch agreed with this statement and half disagreed with it.

While we set out to show a relationship between the language learner's first name use and their identification with a language community, the results did not support this. From these studies it would appear that first name use is not indicative of language community identification with respect to bilingual mixed and bilingual separate speakers. Rather it appears that first name use reflects how one identifies oneself as well as how one is identified by others. While 70% liked the English version of their name and had no objections to others using it in addressing them, only 30% introduced themselves by the anglicized version. However, not everyone is so inclined. A former student of mine asked me why one of his instructors called him "Burt" when his name was Humberto. I explained that "Burt" was a nickname for Hubert, the English version of Humberto. He replied "but that's not my name."

While generalizing about the relationship between language identification and first name use can not be made at this point, because of the relatively small numbers of respondents, the results are suggestive of a relationship. The main influence on first name use, that is seen in both studies, appears to be the speaker's perception of their interlocutor's language use. But again this bears further research due to the size of the studies.

While it is clear that there is a need for further refinement of the notions of language community and motivation, it is also clear that first name use taps into questions of language loyalty and identity as well.

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Notes

[1] The distinction between bilingual mixed and bilingual separate refers only to the use in a given situation of one language or the other or both. One student reported that 'people who mix the languages can't speak either language well.' Another reported that 'if you're gonna speak English, speak English and the same for Spanish.'
[2] Demographics are taken from the 2000 census. These figures have been rounded off to the nearest hundred thousand.
[3] This group consisted of persons whose national origin was from various Central American countries.
[4] Boys' names: José, Jesús, Luis, Daniel, Christopher, David, Juan (tied with Jonathan), Michael, Joshua, Alejandro. Girls' names: Stephanie, Ashley, Jessica, Samantha, Jennifer, Crystal, Maria, Diana, and Alejandra.
[5] A strategy employed in many foreign language classrooms to help a student assume an identity with respect to the new language is to assign the student a name found in the language being studied – either a version of their name or a different name when there is no equivalent. First name usage with respect to ESL students reflects usage outside the classroom.
[6] The first names with their English equivalents from this study were: Soledad, Guadalupe, Juanita, Manuel, Angelica (2) – Angela (Angie), Rosa – Rose, *Araceli, *Mirna, *Evangelina, *Laura, *Elvira, *Sara, *Adela. Those names that differed only in pronunciation are indicated with an *.
[7] Respondents were asked to determine the percentage of time themselves; the second study provided them with options (0%, 25%, 50%, 75%, 100%) in an effort to make the questionnaire more user friendly.
[8] The first names from this study with their English equivalents were: Francisco – Frank, José (3) – Joseph (Joe), Arturo – Arthur, Lizbeth – Elizabeth, Astolfo, Alvaro, *Brenda, *Adrian, *luis, *Celina. Those names that differed only in pronunciation are indicated with an *.
[9] Use of an English first name reflects both the respondents' self reference and the reference of others to the respondent.
[10] One respondent failed to answer the questions dealing with attitudes.
[11] One respondent failed to answer questions on listening and reading.

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Part II:
Language and Advertising

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CHAPTER FOUR

ENGLISH IN MEXICAN PRODUCT BRANDING[1]

ROBERT BAUMGARDNER

Travel writer Fiona Dunlop once described Mexico and the United States as follows: "Mexico shares a 3,326 km border with the US. This vast belt has long been a testing-ground for two radically different cultures which meet, clash and join economic forces…." (Dunlop 1995:26). The culmination of this "joining of economic forces" was, of course, the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) between the two countries (and Canada) in 1994. To be fully implemented by 2008, NAFTA, the world's largest free trade zone, provides for the tariff-free flow of U.S., Mexican and Canadian goods. And with goods come names, the English names of products, or branding.

Mexico is no stranger to English product names. In the late 1930s and 40s ads in English for *Dupont Nylons* and *Gold Tone Razor Blades* appeared on the front pages of Mexico City's *Excelsior* newspaper. And the post-World War II period brought English brands and English borrowings into the Mexican market and Spanish language like a vengeance, a process Kachru has termed "Englishization" (Kachru 1995). As Meyer, Sherman and Deeds (2003) point out:

> United States cultural influences overwhelmed Mexico in the post-war period, occasionally for the better but generally for the worse. … Nobody could explain why Mexican teenagers in Gap jeans began calling up their *suiti* for a date. … [B]eer [Budweiser] supplanted pulque as the favorite alcoholic drink of the lower classes, while Scotch whiskey [Jack Daniels] took the place of cognac among the middle and upper classes. For the first time, Halloween, complete with plastic pumpkins and trick-or-treating, began to displace Mexico's traditional celebration of the Day of the Dead, and hand-carved folk toys lost favor to imported Tortugas Ninja [Ninja Turtles] (707).

Products with English names held (and still hold) a certain appeal to Mexican buyers of all social classes (see discussion below) even though they may not completely comprehend them. And this fact has not been lost on Mexican entrepreneurs, for English permeates the world of Mexican commerce.

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It can be found in names of businesses and in billboard advertising, in print advertising in newspapers and magazines and in the branding of 100% Mexican (*hecho en México*) products.

The names of foreign products marketed in Mexico either remain the same or are translated into Spanish. For example, Kellogg marketed *Frosted Flakes* in Mexico as *Zucaritas*, an easier word for Spanish-speaking consumers. Many names of foreign products, however, are not changed; they are simply imported directly (and pronounced according to the phonological rules of Mexican Spanish). *Converse* (tennis shoes) remains *Converse* in Spanish; *Guess*, *Comfort* and *Levi's* (jeans), *Rayban* (sunglasses) and *Timex* (watches) also retain their English names (see Piller [2003:176-177] for a discussion of the international super-brand). Utmost care must be taken, however, when importing words directly from one language into another as General Motors painfully learned when it marketed the Chevy Nova in Mexico; *Nova* [noβa] in Mexican Spanish means "it doesn't go/run" (Hayden, 1997). (See Aman [1979] for a humorous discussion of international branding mishaps.)

Of concern in this paper, however, is Mexican (not imported) product branding. Mexican products that use English in their names fall into two major categories—those that utilize an existing English word as a brand name. Examples of the outright use of an English word as a brand name include the Mexican cigarette *Boots* and *Boots Lights* (see discussion below); *Guns*, a candy cigarette; a well-known brand of popcorn is called *Gold Pop*; Barcel markets chili-flavored nuts called *Hot-Nuts* as well as *Runners,* fried corn strips in the shape of race cars with "sabor hot sauce" [the flavor of hot sauce]; a Mexican boxer short (*cortos boxer para caballero*—'boxer shorts for men') goes by the name of *Lancer*; Saba sells its line of hygienic products for teenagers under the name *Saba Teens*; Marinela manufactures both *Hit* (marshmallow coconut cookies) and *¡Sponch!* (a sponge cake snack); Mexican fruit juices are marketed under the name *Boing!*; Productos Jetti markets *Snacks Jett* (< Eng. jet), pineapple squash flavored peanuts; and, finally, Nayhsa sells *Strips con chipotle* (chipotle-flavored strips of fried corn meal). There is sometimes a mismatch between an English product name and connotations that name may have for an English-speaking market, for example *Sharky* mango pulp and *Kranky* chocolate-coated corn flakes. It is not an English-speaking clientele that matters here, however; these products are made for Mexican consumption and use.

Grupo Barcel manufactures various flavors of its best-selling potato chip by the name *Chip's* (see Figure 4-1), another outright English brand. Notable here, of course, is not only the foreign brand name itself, but also the aberrant apostrophe in the name that appears in plurals (the so-called greengrocers' apostrophe) and possessive pronouns (*it's* for *its*) in all varieties of written English world-wide. The mission of the Apostrophe Protection Society in

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London is to correct this usage (www.apostrophe.fsnet.co.uk); the short-lived *Commission for the Protection of the Spanish Language* (1981-82) also took exception to the importation of the solecism from north of the border and beyond:

> La deformación de la lengua nacional por el uso exagerado de extranjerismos se manifiesta también en le paisaje urbano. Las calles de nuestras cuidades se han plagado de anuncios comerciales escritos en inglés y francés, o introduciento en el español extraños apóstrofes, siempre con la intención de lograr un supuesto prestigio, a costa de exaltar lo ajeno y despreciar lo proprio (*Qué es*…: 13). [The deformation of the national language by the exaggerated use of foreignisms is also apparent in urban centers. The streets of our cities are plagued with advertisements written in English and French, which introduce into Spanish *foreign apostrophes* [emphasis mine], always with the intention of attaining a false prestige by exalting the foreign at the cost of the local.]

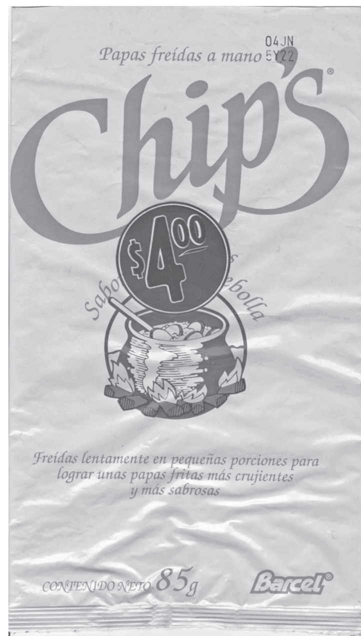

Fig. 4-1

In spite of these efforts, however, the apostrophe has taken hold in borrowed English words in Mexican Spanish. Other than the brand name *Chip's*, one finds the ubiquitous apostrophe in newspaper advertising: "Girl's 2 Drinks Free For You" as advertised by the nightclub Kaos in Monterrey (El

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Norte 5/27/95) as well as in names of shops, e.g. *Dogys Snack's*, a taquería in downtown Monterrey. The apostrophe here appears to have slipped out of Dogys into Snacks (the standard Spanish periphrastic genitive would read *Botanas de Dogy*).

Since the advent of NAFTA in 1994, many manufacturers on both sides of the border have been using bilingual branding where everything on a package, except for the name, is translated into both Spanish and English. In this way, Mexican products can be marketed in the United States and U.S. products marketed in Mexico without any change. Most of the Mexican products discussed above, however, were on the market before 1994; their packaging is not bilingual. The only English element is the name or an occasional English borrowing (e.g. *cronchi*) in the slogan or text on the packaging.

Spanish and English are often mixed in the formation of a brand name, a process Kachru (1986:153) has described as "productive hybridization." The following examples of English-Spanish formations include suffixation, blending and clipping. A popular brand of sandwich bags made by Alfa is called *Sandwichitas* [Eng. *sandwich* + Sp. derivational suffix *–ita* "small", literally "little sandwiches"]; in conjunction with the Mexican debut of the U.S. film *Cars*, the children's division of the Mexican baker Bimbo (Bimbo Kids) offered an array of "bolsándwiches" (or sandwich bags) (Sp. *bolsa* 'bag' + Eng. *[sa]ndwich* or Sp. *bol[sa]* + Eng. *sandwich*—see Bauer [1983:235] on overlap blends). The Texas Whataburger chain in Mexico offers its Tuesday two-for-one Whataburger Cheeseburger special to its *Whatamigos*; El Azteca markets *Bota-nice* snacks (Sp. *Bota[na]* "snack" + Eng. *nice*); from Productos Valle Verde comes *FrutiNola* (Sp. *Frutí[cola]* "fruit" + Eng. *[gra]nola*), a mixture of maple-flavored peanuts, almonds and raisins. Barcel uses the English borrowing *dip* in its tostadas called *Tosti-Dip,* which appears to be composed of a clipping of the U.S. brand name *Tostitos* plus the word *dip* (*Tosti[tos]* Eng. brand name + Eng. *dip*).

The English word "dip" is also used as a base for the name of *Dippas*, a corn chip also made by Sabritas—see Figure 4-2. The chip's slogan, *arma la combinación perfecta para dippear, busca la nueva salsa dip Dippas* [put together the perfect combination for dipping, look for the new salsa dip Dippas], contains three forms of the borrowing "dip": the verb *dippear* (dipp + *-ear*), the product name *Dippas* and the English borrowing "dip" in the phrase *salsa dip.* Closa sells salted Virginia peanuts under the name *Nuttis,* which uses the English word "nut" as its base. And finally, the English lexical item "crunch" is used in a variety of ways in Mexican product branding and packaging. Ruffles, made by Sabritas, is advertised as "más papa, más sabor, más crunch" [more potato, more flavor, more crunch]. Señor Natural advertises its granola bars as *Ahora más cronchi!* [now crunchier] (with no initial inverted exclamation

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mark—an obvious English influence). And Barcel manufactures fried corn strips called *Cronchers,* which uses *crunch* as its base; this product appeared in Mexico in the nineties about the same time as *cronchi* began to be used sometimes in place of its Mexican Spanish equivalent *crujiente.*

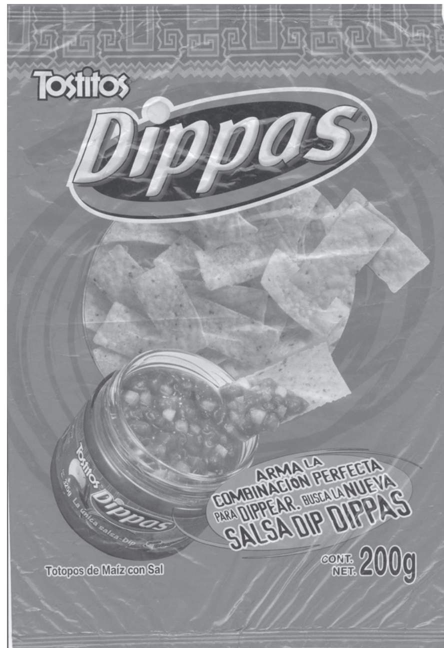

Fig. 4-2

White bread and hot dog buns were marketed in Mexico by the company Maseca Gruma under the name *Breddy* (no longer available), a Mexican Spanish product name that used the English word “bread” as its base; Sabritas, the Mexican division of U.S. Frito-Lay, uses the English word “puff” as a base for its product, *Poffets*, a chili-lime flavored pop corn; Mexican food giant Gamesa markets *Crackets*, which uses the English word “cracker” as a base. Dinky Dino Games (DDG), makers of the digital pet Dinky/Dinkie (now Claymore Games based in Scotland U.K.) markets a fruit-flavored drink called *Drinkydino.*

Barcel’s chipotle-flavored tortilla chip, *Chip-otles* (see Figure 4-3), is a very clever bilingual English-Spanish blend. The fact that the *chip* portion of the name represents both the English morpheme *chip* as well as the first syllable of the Mexican Spanish word *chipotle* (< Nahuatl *chilpoctli*) is indicated by the

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hyphen in the name. This pun is not lost on speakers of either Spanish or English since the word *chipotle* is also in common culinary parlance in U.S. English (Mish 2003) just as *chip* is in use in Mexican Spanish (along with Sp. *totopos*) (see Wilkerson 1997 for a discussion of English bilingual brand names in Japanese).

Fig. 4-3

Mexican companies are well aware of the draw of the English language in branding. Baumgardner and Montemayor (1998 & 1999) reported on interviews done with two high-ranking executives in Cigarrera La Moderna [La Moderna Cigarette Company—now known as British American Tobacco México], Lic.[2] Eduardo Quintanilla, manager of the International Marketing Department, and Ing. Armando Orozco[3], manager of Product Development. Cigarrera La Moderna is the maker of *Boots* and *Boots Lights* cigarettes (see Figure 4-4). The interviews focused mainly on the reason why English is used in their advertisements and product names. Lic. Quintanilla reported that one of the main reasons they used English was because of its status as an international *lingua franca*. By using English in branding, their product enjoys a greater international appeal. Lic. Quintanilla affirmed that English had had a very

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important and powerful role in advertising and that he believed that the English brand name had helped to persuade people (both Mexicans and non-Mexicans) to buy their product.

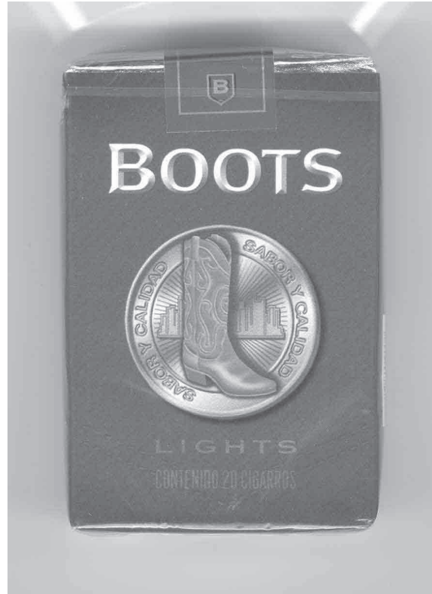

Fig. 4-4

Ing. Orozco, in charge of new product development for *Boots* and *Boots Lights,* said that the company had three main reasons for using English in their product name. First, the word *Boots* is short and catchy. He added that *Boots* and its packaging reflect many people's daily lives (Northern Mexican vaquero culture), so unconsciously they identify with it. As Dyer (1982:141) has pointed out: "The manufacturer has to give a product a distinctive name in a mass market. The name should do more than just label or identify the product; it should also bring flattering associations to mind, associations that will help sell it." Second, Orozco states, Mexicans believe that if a product has a foreign label, specifically English, it will automatically be superior to a Mexican product. Although *Boots* is a national brand, people think it is international, so they buy it. Finally, the name *Boots* had won in a market survey of brand names. In the survey *Boots* was the only English name, and it beat out all other Spanish contenders. Orozco concluded his interview by stating that the company had obtained better results than what they had initially expected. English, he said, has the power to convince people to buy products.

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In 1999 María Eugenia Montemayor also conducted an informal survey of staff members, students, teachers and administrators at the University of Monterrey, San Pedro Garza García, Mexico, regarding the effectiveness of the use of English in branding and advertising. The interviewees were asked questions such as: What do you think about this ad? Do you think English plays an important role in the ad? In branding? Would you buy this product? Why? When you are buying a product, does the use of English in its name or in its marketing influence your choice? Some of their responses to these questions were:

a. English gives the product more status.
b. It sounds more elegant.
c. It looks cooler.
d. It attracts my attention more.
e. It sounds better in English than in Spanish.
f. If you say it in Spanish, it sounds ridiculous.
g. If it's a U.S. product, it's better than a Mexican one.
h. It doesn't matter that I don't understand English; the product will probably be better than the Mexican one.

Only one person in the interview said that the use of English in Mexican advertising was bad. Spanish should be used instead, but that person then added that the use of English is part of a general globalization process.

It is clear from these interviews and from comments by Mexicans of all socioeconomic classes in Monterrey that the use of English in Mexican products plays an extremely important role. Although members of the lower classes sometimes do not understand the language in the advertising or branding and are perhaps not able to buy the product because of its expense, they still are attracted to products with English names or English in a product's advertising, a phenomenon Eastman & Stein (1993) term "language display" and Kelly-Holmes (2005) refers to as the "English linguistic fetish." As Dyer (1982:140) has pointed out:

> …some ads rely more on the style of language than its actual content. In ads, say, for a foreign product like French cheese, wine or cigarettes, the speech or writing might be in the French language. We are not really expected to understand the literal meaning of the words used nor to decipher the details of the sales message but merely to recognize that it is French—a sign in itself that signifies "Frenchness."

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English is used as such as a device to give status and prestige; products advertised in Mexican media using labels and/or slogans in English are perceived by the public as being of superior quality and more reliable because of their "Englishness". English is used to manipulate people to buy a product by leading them to believe that a U.S. brand is better than a Mexican brand.

In a 1996 article about the Mexican Commission for the Defense of the Spanish Language (1981-82), Mexican linguist, José Moreno de Alba, writes that the Spanish language in Mexico is certainly capable of defending itself. More than language, he believes, Mexicans should be concerned about external forces supplanting Mexican culture. As a possible model for Mexico, Moreno de Alba cites a 1980 Colombian law (Decree #2744) which states that the names of all industrial or commercial establishments, hotels and restaurants, i.e., all establishments open to the public, must be expressed in Spanish. In addition, the naming, description and instructions of all Colombian products must be in Spanish. If this law were in effect in Mexico, believes Moreno de Alba, not only could damage to the national culture be avoided, but also damage to the pocketbooks of many unsuspecting Mexicans who are taken in by labels in English (or French), but fail to see the fine print which often reads "Hecho en México" [made in Mexico]. Moreno de Alba's last point is a good one. *Boots* cigarettes bear an unusual U.S. manufacturing address. Would, however, a Mexican Decree # 2744 really curtail the use of English in the Mexican world of commerce?

Of interest here is an article in a recent volume of *World Englishes* on the position of English in South America. In the article on English in Colombia, Gloria Veléz-Rendón (2003) writes:

> English as a symbol of prestige and modernity is mainly realized in Colombia through its use in advertising, names for businesses, and clothes brand names. English in advertising and for business names is probably the most visible realization of the symbolic prestige of English. An increasing number of ads using English words or expressions can be found on television, radio, newspapers, magazines, billboards, and store windows. The number of businesses bearing English language names is growing in spite of the efforts made by the Colombian Language Academy [and Colombian law] (pp.192-193). (see also Eastman & Stein [1993] on Colombia)

So much for the effect of Decree 2744 in Colombia, or in Mexico for that matter. The bottom line here, at least for the foreseeable future, seems to be "English sells." This, in fact, is the common theme in all the papers in the *World Englishes* volume (Berns and Friedrich 2003) covering the influence of English in South America—Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru.

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Before concluding my paper, I would also like to mention the present-day influence Spanish is having on English branding. While this influence is restricted primarily to the culinary domain, it is nonetheless changing the lexicon of English. Shop signs for *taquerías* [taco shops], *carnicerías* [butcher shops] and *panaderías* [bakeries] are present nowadays not only in Hispanic neighborhoods of U.S. urban areas, but also in small towns and rural areas throughout the Southwest and beyond. (They have always been a part of the linguistic landscape of South Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and Southern California.) U.S. grocery and convenience stores are now filled with Mexican products with (for most U.S. citizens) unfamiliar names—*Bimbuñuelos, Conchas, Donitas* [from Eng. *donut*], *Enchilosa, Gancitos, Panqué* [from Eng. *pancake*], *Panquecitos* [from Eng. *pancake* + Sp.*-ito*], *Rebanadas, Pay* [from Eng. *pie*] *con Nuez* and *Submarinos* [from Eng. *submarine*]. These products will more than likely first be bought by Spanish-speaking immigrants, but eventually will catch on with the English-speaking majority and others. While North Texas grocery stores such as Carnival and Fiesta at the present time cater primarily to Hispanics, they are beginning to attract other non-Hispanic customers who are now becoming familiar with not only Mexican brand names but also company names such as Barcel, Bimbo, Chupa Chups, Gamesa, Gruma, Hérdez, and Marinela.

Targeting the larger Hispanic demographic now present in the United States, U.S. products that are marketed otherwise totally in English are beginning to utilize Spanish lexical items in their branding—*limón* [lime] on Crunchy Cheetos, *ranchero* on Doritos, *chili verde* on Guiltless Gourmet baked chips and *queso* and *pico de gallo* on H.E.B. tortilla chips. El Viajero brand of Monroe, Wisconsin, now distributes a wide variety of Mexican and U.S. cheeses—*queso fresco, queso panela, queso quesadilla* and *queso baby jack* (all sold throughout the South at Sam's Club), and Burger King is now selling *dulce de leche cheesecake.* English-Spanish creations are also now appearing as product names marketed by both U.S. and U.S.-based Mexican companies; for example, Delimex markets a beef and cheddar cheese rolled tortilla called a *Wrapido* (Eng. *wrap* + Sp. *[ráp]ido* "quick" or Eng. *w[rap]* + Sp. *rápido*) (see Figure 4-5). Spanish-like words and un-Spanish-like word combinations are also appearing as product names—*Chilines*, *Chimitos, Cruncheros, Guaca Salsa*, *Mucho Nacho*, *Munchos* and *Taquis.* Fast-food chain Taco Bueno has a *muchaco* [*much(o) + (t)aco*] on its menu; at Taco Bell one can eat an *enchurrito* [*ench(ilada) + (b)urrito*]. And while Taco Bell *tacos, gorditas* and *chalupas* are not exactly the same as those food items in Mexico, they have added more culinary Spanish terms to the English lexicon.

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Fig. 4-5

MacNeil and Cran (2005:107) have documented this trend: "The *OED* (*Oxford English Dictionary*) recently noted the growing popularity of Mexican food by adding *huevos rancheros* (eggs on a *tortilla* with sausage, beans, and *salsa*)." Most Spanish borrowings into English are food items—*carne asada, cerveza, chipotle, flauta, huevos rancheros, masa, taquería* (Mish 2003); most English brand names on Mexican products discussed above were also culinary. The last time English experienced such a wave of Spanish borrowings was during the nineteenth century when it borrowed Spanish words from vaqueros/cowboys (Algeo and Pyles, 2004; Smead, 2004). While the motivation for present-day Spanish borrowings in English is different from that for English borrowings in Spanish (demographic changes versus international marketing), the word stocks of both languages are nonetheless undergoing change.

And this increased use of Spanish in English (and English in Spanish) can only increase in the future. As previously stated, NAFTA brought together Mexico, the United States and Canada economically, linguistically and culturally. CAFTA (the Central American Free Trade Agreement) is a similar agreement that would include the United States, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Honduras, Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic. If CAFTA does come into being, products from the whole of the Spanish-speaking Central America will be available in the United States and Canada and vice versa. This will no doubt lead to a larger English/Spanish linguistic sphere of influence, and branding will more than likely serve as its precursor.

In this paper I have attempted to show the strong influence of English in product branding in Mexico. English is also present in other areas of Mexican commerce, e.g., advertising in the print and electronic media and in the linguistic landscape, outside advertising and shop signs (Baumgardner 2006), and as we have seen in this paper in product names, where it symbolizes prestige, exclusiveness and/or modernity, themes echoed in the following interview response by an Ecuadorian an advertising expert:

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> [English] can give many, many different things. For example, . . . it can give a sense of internationalism; something that is accepted abroad. Of course [it can also provide] a sense of being foreign and in Ecuador we love all things that are foreign. Also, [English can give] a sense of quality because we usually relate English with North American and European and, therefore, with quality, with well-made, with technology, with research, with design, with something that is good. American is good. American equals good quality. (interview English original) (Ovesdotter Alm 2003:151)

The English branding trend is not restricted to Mexico and South America. Intersnack in Choustník, Czech Republic, markets *Bohemia Chips*; the German company Funny-Frisch [funny fresh] makes *Chipsfrisch* [fresh chips]; and Lorenz Snack World (formerly known as Bahlsen) in Cologne, Germany, has a line of salty snacks called *Crunchips*, *Curly*, *Monster Munch*, and *Peppies* (see Figure 4-6). *Crunchips* is an overlap blend (Bauer 1983:235), and *Peppies* uses the English word "peppy" as a base. Note also the names of the companies that manufacture these products—Intersnack, Funny-Frisch and Lorenz Snack World. English appears to permeate the European snack world. (See also Bhatia [2000:208-209] for a discussion of English in branding in rural India; Friedrich (2002) for English in Brazilian Portuguese brand naming; Kelly-Holmes [2005] for English, German and French linguistic fetishes in branding; Martin (2006:Chapter 5) for the use of English in French brand names; and Meraj [1993] for the use of English in Urdu branding in Pakistan.)

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Fig. 4-6

For better or for worse, for the foreseeable future English and the ideology that goes along with it carry a certain cachet. Mexicans (at least those interviewed in Northern Mexico) tend to perceive products with English names as more reliable or of superior quality. Use of products with English branding can also be used to elevate a person's social status and to symbolize modernization. Users have embraced Englishized capitalism. As Ing. Orozco stressed in his interview, "Mexican culture is *malinchista*[4]; if we don't see any English, we tend not to buy it."

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¿Qué es la Comisión para la Defensa del Idioma Española? [What is the Commission for the Defense of the Spanish Language?]. 1982. México: Secretaria de la Educación Pública.

Notes

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[2] *Licenciado/a* (Lic.) is a Spanish title that indicates a person has a B.A. degree.
[3] *Ingeniero/a* (Ing.) indicates a person has an engineering degree.
[4] Doña Maria was the multilingual Nahuatl Indian woman who acted as translator for Hernán Cortéz during the conquest of Mexico. Mexicans, who consider her a traitor, call her *Malinche*. *Malinchista* hence means "traitorous". (for further details see Karttunen, 1994).

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CHAPTER FIVE

CONTACT MEDIA: LANGUAGE CHOICE AND IDENTITY IN THE NEW WORLD

SHAHRZAD MAHOOTIAN

> If you really want to hurt me, talk badly about my language. Ethnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity—I am my language. Until I can take pride in my language, I cannot take pride in myself....
> —Gloria Anzaldua (1990: 207)

1. Introduction

Why is language choice an issue? It is clear that the language of a community (country, state, municipality, etc.) has both intrinsic and extrinsic 'value' or meaning. Extrinsically, it is a marked choice that announces, loudly and clearly, that the community is officially a particular ethnicity, or despite multiple ethnicities, has chosen one (or in the case of multiple official languages), language as representative of the community. This linguistic representative has political and socioeconomic forces attached to it that other non-official languages do not. Intrinsically, the language that a bi-or multi-lingual chooses to communicate through represents the individual, his/her ethnic blend, loyalties, heart and soul. Language choice[1] is never neutral, it is never accidental, it is always a political and social statement. Consider the following historic event: Washington J. McCormick, a Republican Congressman from Montana, in 1923 proposed to displace English in favor of "American" as the national language. Apparently, this was the first official-language measure ever considered by the U.S. Congress. The bill died in committee, although it was adopted later that year by the state of Illinois. McCormick's rationale for the change was quoted in *The Nation* on April 11, 1923:

> I might say I would supplement the political emancipation of '76 by the mental emancipation of '23. America has lost much in literature by not thinking its own thoughts and speaking them boldly in a language unadorned with gold

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> braid. It was only when Cooper, Irving, Mark Twain, Whitman, and O. Henry dropped the Order of the Garter and began to write American that their wings of immortality sprouted. Had Noah Webster, instead of styling his monumental work the "American Dictionary of the English Language," written a "Dictionary of the American Language," he would have become a founder instead of a compiler. Let our writers drop their top-coats, spats, and swagger-sticks, and assume occasionally their buckskin, moccasins, and tomahawks.

1923 Declaration of "American" as the Official Language of Illinois

Whereas, Since the creation of the American Republic there have been certain Tory elements in our country who have never become reconciled to our republican institutions and have ever clung to the tradition of King and Empire; and

Whereas, America has been a haven of liberty and place of opportunity for the common people of all nations; and

Whereas, These strangers within our gates who seek economic betterment, political freedom, larger opportunities for their children and citizenship for themselves, come to think of our institutions as American and our language as the American language; and

Whereas, The name of the language of a country has a powerful psychological influence in stimulating and preserving the national ideal; and

Whereas, The languages of other countries bear the names of the countries to which they belong, ... now therefore

Sec. 1. Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois, represented in the General Assembly: The official language of the State of Illinois shall be known hereafter as the "American" language and not as the "English" language.

(H.L. Mencken, The American Language, pp. 92-93)

Clearly, the author of this bill sees the link between a language name and a country name and the implications it bears, (*The name of the language of a country has a powerful psychological influence in stimulating and preserving the national ideal; and*
Whereas, The languages of other countries bear the names of the countries to which they belong, ...). It is not by accident that languages and countries and speakers are linked together, it is by design. This law was later repealed in 1969 (from Smith-Hurd Illinois complied statutes annotated through 1994 supplement) :

Chapter 5, Section 460/20 Official Language (1969)

The official language of the State of Illinois is English.*

*Repealed a 1923 law designating "American" as the official state language.

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2. Back to the future

Have we lost sight of the obvious, that language and identity are (often) inextricably bound together? On October 14, 2003, The Omaha World Herald had an article on the front page about a father who has been ordered by a Nebraska judge not to "speak Hispanic" to his daughter or risk losing visitation rights. The judge is quoted as saying "It's difficult enough to learn the English language, you know ... and if you put her in a situation where people aren't communicating in a language that she understands, that's not fair to the child." Is this an accident, a lone or rare example of bad decision-making or ignorance?

Bourhis and Marshall (1999: 251), write that

> Spanish speakers are aware that knowledge of English is crucial for their economic survival in the United States while also being concerned with the maintenance of their Hispanic linguistic and cultural identity.

They also comment that although Spanish speakers constitute the largest linguistic minority in the USA,

> Spanish speakers are caught in a dilemma: To appear to be good Americans, they feel pressured to shift to English as quickly as possible; but they also recognize that in the long run this shift may be achieved at the cost of losing their mother tongue and their Hispanic cultural and ethnic identity. (250).

These two realities, that on the one hand Hispanics in America are aware that their cultural and linguistic identity is threatened, while on the other hand the rise of ethnic consciousness is linked to an increased use of code mixing, is not restricted to Spanish-English bilingual communities. The threat of loss of ethnic identity is one that all immigrant communities face to greater or lesser degrees. The Spanish–English bilingual communities are the least endangered primarily due to the regular and constant influx of new Spanish speakers entering these communities. Yet, the struggle to maintain culture and linguistic autonomy, hence maintaining Latino identity, while meeting the linguistic requirements of the English speaking larger community is ongoing. One of the most striking responses to the threat of language and identity loss has been the embracing of the previously stigmatized speech variety, that of mixed code (Mahootian 2005). It has also been noted (Gumperz, 1982; Romaine, 1995) that when political ideology changes and a group becomes more conscious of their ethnicity, attitudes toward code mixing change. For example, Romaine points to the reversal of the previously pejorative use of ‘pocho’ and ‘caló’ used in California and southwestern United States to refer to the variety of Spanish-English spoken by Chicanos. She notes, “With the rise in ethnic consciousness,

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these speech styles have become symbolic of Chicano ethnicity. *Pocho* and *caló* are now increasingly used in modern Chicano literature." (291-292).

We know that switching isn't always a matter of conscious choice. However, switching can be used consciously to evoke a sense of cultural identity, unity and camaraderie. It can be used as a direct and undeniable assertion of the bilingual identity. It is a way for speakers to underscore their ethnicity, their connection to their heritage and to others who share that heritage and the values associated with it, *within the majority culture and language* (Mahootian 2004, 2005).

3. Issues in Identity

There are three popular perspectives that address the issue of identity. First is the biological perspective on identity, where various ways of describing self can be traced back to basic human biology. For example, we can describe ourselves as male or female, based on our biological sex. Second is the psychological perspective, in which a person's identity consists of his or her internal traits, some more stable then others. Both of these approaches to the issue of identity are intrinsic and operate at the level of the individual.

A third perspective, takes into account the contexts in which people live, namely the cultural and social factors surrounding them. This approach is thus extrinsic, with identity being defined as a "relational and sociocultural phenomenon that emerges and circulates in local discourse contexts of interaction rather than as a stable structure located primarily in the individual psyche or in fixed social categories" (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). Thus, identity is built, maintained and altered through social relationships.

Since language is the main tool of communication through which social relationships are built, and since, as stated above, all such relationships serve to establish one's identity, language can therefore be said to be a constructor of one's identity. The certainty of a strong correlation between language and identity has long been acknowledged (Anatake and Widdicombe, 1998; Carbaugh, 1996; Gumperz, 1982). ". Language has been discussed as the most important dimension of individual identity (Clement, 1980), one of the most important symbols of ethnicity (Giles, Bourhis, and Taylor, 1977), and a stronger link to identity than residence, religion or ancestry (Pool, 1979). Language not only reflects identity, but also plays a large role in constructing it. Gumperz (1982) notes, "social identity and ethnicity are in large part created and preserved through language

Based on these studies, it can be deduced that monolingual speakers would certainly tie their native language to their sociocultural identity. However, what happens with multilingual speakers, particularly those who have a strong level

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of competence in two or more languages or who may find it difficult to determine which one is their "mother tongue"? In other words, does an individual's language always have such a strong connection to their cultural identity as the studies mentioned above would seem to suggest? Although the answer seems to be overwhelmingly "yes", there are cases that show otherwise. In the lifestyles magazine *Latina*, aimed at twenty-somethings to thirty-somethings, a number of letters to the editor show a resistance to the one-to-one correlation between language and ethnic identity. By the third generation, younger Latinas born and raised in the United States question the validity of basing ethnic identity on linguistic proficiency in the mother tongue. They argue that identity is more than just language and, in fact, they assert that ethnic identity transcends the mother tongue. For these speakers, the language-identity link is a more abstract notion. They are Latina because they are. They embrace their culture *and* their bilinguality/biculturalism through their means. Linguistically, they embrace it through code-mixed discourse. In this way the bicultural and the bilingual/bicultural overlap in more complex configurations. For the less proficient/ non-proficient speakers, the denial of language as a significant indicator of ethnic loyalty comes along with a stated desire to learn the mother tongue. Mixed emotions, mixed languages, mixed lives. Yet, what remains clear is the need to mark identity.

In Mahootian (2000 and 2005), I show that for the readership of *Latina*, a Spanish-English lifestyles magazine, codemixing has become one way of claiming ethnic identity *and* asserting the bilingual identity they are born into. The two languages, Spanish and English, are tossed together to create a new code-mixed variety that captures the mix of identities, lives, values, realities.

Codeswitching in written discourse is not a new phenomenon, but its function change as the internal and external dynamics of speech communities change. For example, we find codeswitching used throughout Luis Valdez's plays from the early 1960s. The plays deal with the lives of migrant farm workers and the issues faced by Chicanos. Valdez sprinkles Spanish interjections and kinship terms through out the plays, reminding the audience of the ethnicity of the characters. Others have used codeswitching as a way to give voice to the multicultural identity of their characters or as a way to authenticate the characters and their experiences (Cizneros, Rushdie, Khaled to name a few).

Latina is a relatively newer codeswitching venue. Unlike literature where characters are developed and given voice and identity through their actions and dialogue, in a magazine, especially one concerned with trends, fashion and makeup, there is no story or character development. Information is mostly passed on in a descriptive reportage. The interesting question is what purpose code-mixed discourse has in this particular context.

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4. The Data

Latina is a bilingual Spanish-English women's magazine with US Latinas, ages 15-40 who can function in both English and Spanish as its primary target audience. It has a national circulation of about 175,000. I first became aware of its existence in 1999 in my dentist's office. I was immediately struck by the cover which, along with a promised tell-all feature on J-Lo, advertised its other feature articles in mixed-code: "Seduce him *en la cocina*", "Dinner in 29 *minutos*", "T*ienes Lupus?* You may not know". A further examination of the magazine showed every article presented in full in both languages. However, many of the English versions were peppered with Spanish nouns, determiner phrases, conjunction, prepositional phrases. Only a small percentage of the switched utterances were words where there was no single equivalent lexical item . On the surface, the majority of the switches had common, simple English counterparts. I spoke with the regional manager of Latina who told me that many features are written by a pool of staff writers, other pieces are by freelance writers and that all articles and features are translated into Spanish. Writers are not directed to use or to not use codeswitching and switching only occurs in the English texts. An interesting feature of the switches is that all switched items are rendered in italic type, a clear indication that codemixing is a conscious, intentional choice.

On the whole, the switches into Spanish serve to emphasize and draw on the bicultural heritage of the readers. A small portion (about 5%) of the switches are due to lack of translation equivalents, such as food names, music terms, etc. The remainder are there to personalize the message and establish a bond with the reader. Specifically, the switches that do have translation equivalents seem to fall into three categories with fuzzy boundaries. [2]

- **Provocative**: Intended to provoke an (intense) emotional response.
- **Evocative**: Intended to stimulate a sense of cultural unity, values, emphasize group membership.
- **Attention-getting**

Examples (1) through (6) fit the *provocative* category, (7) and (8) are *evocative* . Example (9) is *attention-getting* and (10) is a food term.

1. We don't mean to rush you, but will you have *bebe's*?
babies

2. Anyway, you rarely win a battle with a *suegra*, so it's better to reach a diplomatic solution. mother-in-law

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3. The *bochinche* begins
gossip

4. My ex-husband was a triple p: proud, possessive, and *pendejo*
asshole

5. Tired of those good old *marchas nupciales*?
wedding marches

6. You'd think Julia Alvarez was on a mission to give us *heroi'nas* we didn't know we had. Heroines

7. In telling the story of Camila and Salome', and of all the other *dominicanas valientes*
valiant Dominicans
that have inspired her, Alvarez acknowledges that "I didn't give them voice. They gave me voice."

8. Do people automatically know you are *mexicana*?
Mexican

9. *Pero herede'* his love of mariachi music and of laughter.
But I inherited

5. What we call ourselves: Identity and hyphenated Americans

Another part of the language-identity puzzle is the labels we give ourselves, what we want to be called and why. Whether it is the name we ask people to call us, “Hi, I’m Elizabeth, but call me Betty”, or how we refer to our heritage. The immigrants to this country were not faced with such decisions. It was/is clear: if you moved to the USA from Canada or Cambodia, you are Canadian or Cambodian. It is the sons and daughters or the immigrant wave, those born and raised here or those who came over at very young ages that are faced with making the decision of, “Who am I?” The following definition comes from The American Heritage® Book of English Usage. A Practical and Authoritative Guide to Contemporary English. 1996.

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6. Names and Labels: Social, Racial, and Ethnic Terms

§ 38. hyphenated Americans

Naturalized immigrants to the United States and their descendants are sometimes referred to as hyphenated Americans, a term that dates to the end of the 19th century and that reflects an earlier tendency in American English to hyphenate such forms as Irish-American, German-American, and Mexican-American both as nouns and as adjectives. Contemporary usage frowns on hyphenating these constructions, especially when used as nouns; thus, The new mayor is an Asian American; she is the first Asian-American (or Asian American) mayor in the city's history. In the case of Native American, neither the noun nor the adjective is usually hyphenated.[1]

The term hyphenated American has itself come under strong criticism as suggesting that those so designated are not as fully American as "unhyphenated" citizens, and you would do well to avoid this term except in historical contexts.[2]

This term came under fire by Theodore Roosevelt. In a speech before the Knights of Columbus on October 12, 1915, former President Theodore Roosevelt stated the following ("Hyphenated Americanism" Speech – Excerpts):

There is no room in this country for hyphenated Americanism. When I refer to hyphenated Americans, I do not refer to naturalized Americans. Some of the very best Americans I have ever known were naturalized Americans, Americans born abroad. But a hyphenated American is not an American at all. This is just as true of the man who puts "native" before the hyphen as of the man who puts German or Irish or English or French before the hyphen. Americanism is a matter of the spirit and of the soul. Our allegiance must be purely to the United States. We must unsparingly condemn any man who holds any other allegiance. But if he is heartily and singly loyal to this Republic, then no matter where he was born, he is just as good an American as any one else.

The one absolutely certain way of bringing this nation to ruin, of preventing all possibility of its continuing to be a nation at all, would be to permit it to become a tangle of squabbling nationalities, an intricate knot of German-Americans, Irish-Americans, English-Americans, French-Americans, Scandinavian-Americans or Italian-Americans, each preserving its separate nationality, each at heart feeling more sympathy with Europeans of that nationality, than with the other citizens of the American Republic. The men who do not become Americans and nothing else are hyphenated Americans; and there ought to be no room for them in this country. The man who calls himself an American citizen and who yet shows by his actions that he is primarily the citizen of a foreign land, plays a thoroughly mischievous part in the life of our body politic. He has no place here; and the sooner he returns to the land to which he feels his real heart-allegiance, the better it will be for every good American. There is no such thing as a hyphenated American who is a

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good American. The only man who is a good American is the man who is an American and nothing else.

Like so many things that have changed over the last century or even the last decade, the hyphenated debate has taken on a new spin. For many, in the hyphenation lies recognition, public and personal recognition and legitimacy. For many, you now have to 'earn' the hyphenation. To be Irish-American or Mexican-American or X-American means that you are now a legitimate part of the American ethnic quilt: you are home here, you have a neighborhood, a place of worship where services might even be in your home language, restaurants that serve dishes you might have grown up with, bookstores that have books in your home language, in short you have a Community. However, for some, the hyphenation harkens the very points Roosevelt makes in his 1915 speech.

7. Conclusion? What's next?

It's clear that language will always be a significant part of who we are and who we identify with culturally, ethnically and socially, and how we identify ourselves. In the bilingual's world, the significance of language and language choice takes on more complex dimensions as the speaker navigates his/her way through the choices and the sometimes subtle, sometimes obvious implications inherent in each choice.

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Notes

[1] Here we must be clear that language choice refers to just that, conscious choice rather than language use/unintentional language switching which is determined by psycholinguistic considerations.

[2] A total of 356 code-mixed tokens were translated by two Spanish-English bilingual graduate students. They put in them in one of 4 categories: idiomatic with no translation equivalents, provocative, evocative, attention getting. A subset of 56 which included examples from all 4 categories were given to 3 other bilingual Spanish-English speakers. They were asked why they thought the codemixing was taking place.

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Part III:
Language and the Media

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CHAPTER SIX

SIGNS, THOUGHT, AND ACTIVITY IN GRAND THEFT AUTO, *VICE CITY* AND GRAND THEFT AUTO, *SAN ANDREAS*

JOHN UNGER AND KARLA KINGSLEY

C. S. Peirce, one of the founders of semiotics, argued that thought cannot exist without signs (Pierce 1991, 81; 1998). Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky also emphasized the interrelated and transformational nature of signs, cognition, and cultural activity: "The use of signs leads humans to a specific structure of behavior that breaks away from biological development and creates new forms of a culturally-based psychological process" (Vygotsky 1978, 40; see also Wertsch 1998). Consider the example of a farmer cultivating ducks domestically as village life evolved thousands of years ago. As the farmer counted how many ducks he had, he eventually ran out of fingers, toes, or other appendages to aid his counting. Ultimately, he may have been able to count about twenty ducks, assuming he used each of his fingers and toes to represent one duck. Suppose the farmer's flock began to flourish, necessitating a new visual aid for counting ducks. By tying several knots in a vine, with each double knot representing ten ducks and each single knot representing one duck, the farmer could count the knots and know exactly how many ducks he had. As a result, he could begin to *plan* for the future needs of his flocks, including the size of shelters and food requirements, and to make other decisions as a result of *perceiving* his ducks through the knots (see Unger, Troutman, and Hamilton 2005 for more on *artifacts* and *perception*; see also Wartofsky 1979).

The vignette of the duck farmer is a simple illustration of how the creation of signs can expand thinking and human activity: a crucial, fundamental transformation (Vygotsky 1978, 55; Wells 1999; Wertsch 1998). When the farmer developed an *artifact* to count his ducks, a transformation in his thinking occurred within a sociocultural and evolutionary history (Cole 1996; Tomasello 1999; Wells 1999). A similar and equally profound type of transformation is emerging in current postmodern times as humans interact with the sign systems

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in digital video games. While interacting with a video game, a player assigns meaning to objects within and outside of the game, like the farmer assigned meaning to his different knots. While the sign systems contained in video games are certainly more complex than the knot-based counting system devised by the farmer, both are examples of using signs to transform cognition. This study identified and examined some of the fundamental changes in thinking that occurred during digital game play as signs were used to complete game-related activity. This chapter presents data and findings from the first phase of a multi-phase study of two games from the popular Grand Theft Auto Series played on the Sony Play Station 2 (PS 2) Platform: Grand Theft Auto, *Vice City* (GTAVC) and Grand Theft Auto, *San Andreas* (GTASA). The study pinpoints salient moments of player/participant activity with GTAVC and GTASA when participants recognized and demonstrated that a specific sign was crucial for successfully completing a task or mission within the game(s). Following that is a brief discussion of how digital gaming is changing the way humans perceive and react to the world around them.

The game Grand Theft Auto, *Vice City* is based loosely on the film *Scarface* and on the television series *Miami Vice* (Colayaco 2004). The main character is a white, strong-jawed, stubble-faced man named Tommy Versetti. Recently released from prison, Tommy immediately becomes involved in a cocaine deal that goes awry. As a result, Tommy's goal is to work off his debt to some very wealthy and powerful mobsters. He gains this much- needed wealth and power by (car) *jacking* everything from sport utility vehicles (SUVs) to race cars, low riders to luxury sedans; and with the right cheat code, an armored tank. Tommy initially needs money to repay his debts, but as he jacks more cars and begins to amass wealth, he quickly becomes an extravagant spender who favors designer clothing, resides in a lush penthouse, and owns a strip club. Tommy assembles an equally impressive cache of ammunition and weaponry, including AK-47 machine guns, rocket launchers, and grenades to be used against pursuing policemen, FBI agents, and army soldiers. Small, blue police stars flash in the upper right corner of the game screen when Tommy is wanted by the police or has attracted the attention of law enforcement. This, of course, is part of the appeal of the Grand Theft Auto series: many participants in the study explicitly mentioned how many stars they were able to light up. Other important information about Tommy is displayed in the top right corner of the game screen, including symbols for how much money he has (in green), his life and health points (in red), and the number of wanted (by police or others) stars in blue.

The next version of Grand Theft Auto is *San Andreas*, which unfolds in cities resembling Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Las Vegas, Nevada. The main character in Grand Theft Auto, *San Andreas* (GTASA) is Carl Johnson

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(C.J.), a wiry, muscular African American male. Unlike *Vice City*, most of the characters in *San Andreas* are African American gang members or other people of color. As in *Vice City*, the *San Andreas* game displays symbols in the upper right corner of the game screen to inform players of C.J.'s status; however, the information available in *San Andreas* is much more sophisticated. In *San Andreas*, players soon learn that C.J.'s health points reflect his eating and exercise habits. Players can learn to *read* and *influence* C.J.'s vital statistics in such areas as sex appeal, stamina, percentage of body fat, etc., through decisions they make about his diet and exercise. For example, if C.J. eats a Cluckin' Bell Huge Meal, his Fat statistic increases by three percent (Bogenn and Barba 2005, 193). As his percentage of body fat increases, C.J. becomes noticeably heavier, and he moves much more slowly. Conversely, if he exercises his muscles become more defined, he regains his agility, and his Stamina statistic increases. Participants in this study eyed these statistics frequently because they directly impacted C.J.'s ability to successfully carry out missions. Players can also boost C.J.'s Respect and Sex Appeal statistics with interesting haircuts, flamboyant tattoos and piercings, and gangster-rap themed clothing. Clearly, C.J.'s agency is much more complex, and his status more deeply affected by player decisions than that of Tommy in *Vice City.* The players' ability to shape C.J.'s fate and by extension, the game narrative is illustrative of how the cognitive processes of *San Andreas* players were mediated and transformed by interactions with the sign systems contained in the games. In both *Vice City* and *San Andreas*, the goal was to jack cars and complete missions in order to progress to a higher level in the game. This was accomplished by manipulating the PS 2 controls (see Figure One). However, players could also integrate cheat codes, readily available on the World Wide Web and in strategy guides that could be downloaded or purchased separately (see Bogden and Barba 2005). These cheat codes enabled players to drastically increase their characters' health, wealth, stamina, and weapons supplies by pressing a series of buttons on the PS 2 controller. Most players interviewed for this study reported using cheat codes at least some of the time, and for most of them the codes had been memorized and were used automatically in all of their game play.

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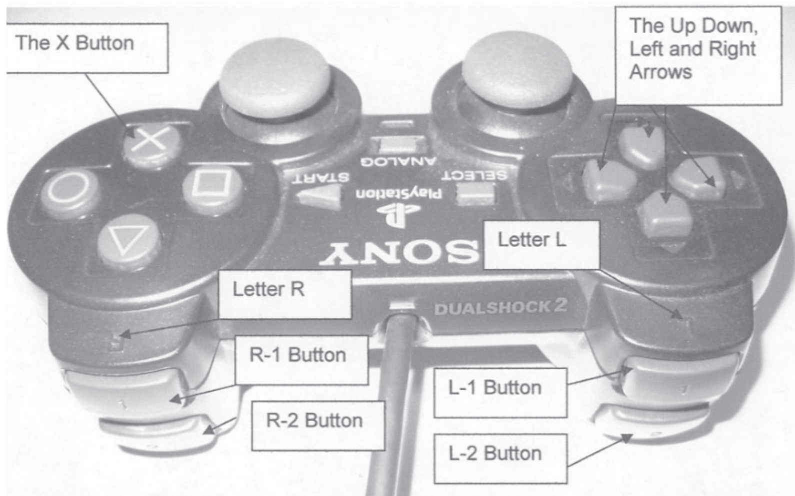

Fig. 6-1: A view of the Play Station Two Controller facing the player. Note the R for the right hand and the L for the left hand.

In order to understand how participants in the study interpreted and manipulated complex sign systems within gaming environments, this study drew upon several Vygotskian-based concepts that are consistent with a semiotic approach to video games. Most important are the Vygotskian concepts of *signification, mediation,* and the idea that human activity with signs occurs on both *interpsychological* (between people) and *intraspsychological* (within an individual) planes of development (Wertsch 1985; Vygotsky 1981). The process of assigning meaning to previously neutral stimuli, like labeling a knot as ten ducks, is called *signification* (Vygotsky 1978, 74). This process of signification happens millions of times a day as people create and share ideas, perceptions, and subjectivity through a synthesis of individual and collective processes of signification (Harré and Gillett 1994; Tomasello 1999; Wartofsky 1979).

Returning to the duck farmer for a moment, the knots *mediated* the activity of counting ducks as well the process of planning for their future needs. For this research, mediation is understood as the use of concrete objects and abstract signs and/or semiotic systems (e.g., the knot, algebraic formulas, language, a set of cheat codes) to monitor and regulate human activity (Lantolf 1994; see also *semiotic mediation* in Wertsch 1998, 28). In the process of monitoring and regulating human activity, these signs exist *transformationaly* (John-Steiner and Meehan 2000; Rogoff 1995; Tomasello 1999) on *interdiscursive* (between people and the context) and *intrapersonal* (in the minds of individuals) planes of

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development. This transformation in thinking occurs through the dynamic, multi-directional, discursive activities (Harré and Gillett 1994) between people, contexts, and sign systems. Because sign mediated activity allows individuals to attend to their own mental activity, it *transforms* the social, psychological, and physical worlds in which people engage (Harré and Gillett 1994; John-Steiner and Meehan 2000; Tomasello 1999; Vygotsky 1978; Wertsch 1998).

This study also drew upon the concept of Burke's Pentad (Burke 1989), which provides a useful framework for describing specific moments of interaction and for denoting moments of participant/player tensions with one or more signs in the game (i.e., signs on the controls, signs on the screen, other characters as signs, etc.). Burke's Pentad is a tool for analyzing thought and action by Act (the what), Scene (the where), Agent (the who), Agency (the means), and Purpose (the why) (Burke, 1989, 139). Wertsch (1998, 26) suggested using the *tensions between the Agent and mediational means* as a unit of analysis when examining behavior and activity (see also Unger, Troutman, and Hamilton 2005). This study focused on tensions between participant/player and the sign systems in two Grand Theft Auto games.

Signs used by participants/players in the game can also be viewed as *semiotic resources* (van Leeuwen 2005; see also van Lier 2004 for more on an ecological and semiotic approach to learning). Semiotic resources can be understood as those *actions* and *objects* that gain meaning during social communication. These actions and objects have a *theoretical semiotic potential* and an *actual semiotic potential*. Theoretical semiotic potential is "constituted by all their [the actions and objects] past uses and all their potential uses" (van Leeuwen, 2005, 4). The actual semiotic potential is construed by users of the resource: "potential uses as might be uncovered by the users on the basis of their specific needs and interests" (van Leeuwen, 4). Thus, by using knots to mediate his cognitive activities the duck farmer transformed his social, psychological, and physical worlds through the creation of a semiotic resource. Because the farmer's perception of his choices was based upon how many knots he counted, his perception of the future was momentarily inseparable from the number of ducks signified by each knot (see also Wartofsky 1979). In other words, in order to plan for the future, the farmer had to reach beyond the limitations of the present and of concrete objects to create an abstract sign for mediating future activity with his ducks. If he taught others about his counting system in order to facilitate trade, the duck farmer may also (albeit unwittingly) have created a new social and cultural semiotic system.

The video game data recorded for this study reveal similar patterns of transformed perception triggered by the creation and use of semiotic resources and sign systems. Data included GTAVC and GTASA game play captured on audio tape as well as with a VCR, and simultaneous video recordings of

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participants' hand movements as they manipulated the PS 2 controls (see Figure One) during game play. All participants were interviewed individually, and several were interviewed on multiple occasions after playing (or not playing) specific scenes in the two games. Initial interview questions focused mostly on game play habits and general histories with video games, while later interviews delved more deeply into topics and details that emerged during initial interviews. Interview transcripts and game play data were analyzed and coded according to players' interactions with the games' sign systems during completion of a mission.

In GTA *Vice City*, the main mission to be accomplished was called *Road Kill*, where Tommy Versetti's task was to kill Carl Pearson, a pizza delivery driver, before he could complete his deliveries. Participants accomplished this goal in a variety of intriguingly disparate ways. In GTA *San Andreas* the main character C.J. and his fellow gang members were ambushed in a mission called *Drive-by*, leading to several shoot-outs with members of a rival gang called the Ballas. C.J. and his friends endeavor to head off the Ballas gang to prevent them from shooting up C.J's neighborhood. As with the *Road Kill* mission, participants in the *Drive-by* mission employed a number of different tactics to accomplish the same goal. Participants in this study were a homogenous group of nineteen Caucasians: sixteen males and three females. Seventeen participants were in their twenties, the other two were in their thirties. One of the older participants taught part-time at a university, while the others were undergraduate and graduate students in various stages of completing their college degrees. Sixteen game sessions were recorded, with fourteen of the nineteen participants playing either GTAVC, GTASA, or in some cases, both. Data were collected over a two-year period, with roughly half of the data focused on playing *Vice City* and the other half on *San Andreas*. Two participants who played *Vice City* early in the study returned to play *San Andreas* during the latter stages of data collection. Two of the three women in the study played *Vice City* only. All participant names in this chapter are pseudonyms.

Three main strands of interest were noted during analyses of interview transcriptions and data: participants' knowledge of and experience with the PS 2 controls; their methods for learning and remembering cheat codes; and their background and experiences with video games in general. For example, more experienced players knew that pressing the X-button on the PS 2 controller repeatedly would enable *Vice City'*s Tommy or *San Andreas'* C.J. to run much faster than normal. This knowledge was invaluable because both Tommy and C.J. were required to kill (and avoid being killed by) other characters in order to progress to the next level of the game. In several instances of both the *Road Kill* and *Drive-by* missions participants who were familiar the PS 2 controls automatically used the X-button to move their character quickly away from

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imminent danger, while participants who did not know about using the X-button to boost running speed were unable to extricate their character from a dangerous situation in time to avoid injury or death.

In the same way the duck farmer learned to mediate thought and activity through use of signs, GTA players used the X-button to mediate Tommy's and C.J.'s running speed in the *Road Kill* and *Drive-by* missions. Participants who knew how to use the X-button to make their character run faster used that capability to mediate their perceptions of current and future activities, thereby transforming it into a semiotic resource for successfully completing goal-directed activity (see also Unger, Troutman, and Hamilton 2005).

Another example of the convergence of sign, thought, and activity was visible in participants' varying attitudes toward the use of cheat codes. Participants displayed marked differences in both in their approaches to memorizing the cheat codes and in deciding when, or whether, to use them at all. One participant, Dan, played both GTAVC and GTASA. As he was driving C.J.'s car to the Cluckin' Bell he asked, "Am I allowed to use cheat codes here?" When informed that he could, he pressed a rather complicated series of buttons on the PS 2 controls. A review of the game tape and of his statements during game play indicated that Dan used cheat codes to obtain more weapons, increase his health statistics, and to bump his money stash up to two hundred fifty thousand dollars. An online search of Game Spot, a popular Web site for gamers, revealed that Dan used the following cheat codes to boost his weapons, health, and money statistics:

> For the best selection of weapons: R1, R2, L1, R2, Left, Down, Right, Up, Left, Down, Down, Down
> For full health, armor, and money: R1, R2, L1 , X, Left , Down, Right, Up, Left, Down, Right, Up

Later in the game, Dan used another cheat code to lower the number of wanted-by-the-police stars. After successfully completing the *Drive Thru* mission, Dan was asked how he had memorized the cheat codes. He explained, "for maybe the first 10 or 15 times I do it, I have to look at the piece of paper that I wrote it down on, but after that, I can't even tell you what the cheat code is, I have to show you". The interactions between Dan (the Agent), and the cheat codes (the mediational means) radically transformed the way he engaged in gaming activities. Having memorized the twenty-three-step sequence (for the health and money) cheat codes, Dan could no longer articulate each individual command contained in the sequence. In order to identify and describe each button pressed, Dan said he would probably have to break down the sequence, perhaps by performing it slowly and in reverse order using the PS 2 controller. The semiotic resources Dan used to procure unlimited health, amass wealth, and

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acquire a top-tier collection of weapons and ammunition, combined with the ability to lower his wanted stars essentially made him invincible in the game. His was a clear example of the complete internalization of a specific sign system; that is, visible tension no longer existed between the Agent (Dan) and mediational means (the cheat codes).

Another participant, Sean, also used cheat codes when completing the *Drive-by* mission, but he used a very different set of procedures for memorizing the cheat codes. In the following interview excerpt, Sean mentions how he recognized patterns in the codes (I=Interviewer; S=Sean):

> I: How do you think you learned 'em [the cheat codes]?
> S: I got 'em off the Internet and then just repetition. I mean you have to look a few times. They keep 'em pretty similar too; so once you know one, you're only having to change a couple of keystrokes.
> I: You mean the, in terms of the categories?"
> S: Yeah, like the weapons code on R2, R2, Left 1, R2, right, down, 2 circles on the directional pad. And then the other one is R2, R2, Left 2, R1, so you just change one stroke. And then the circles. And the other one is R2, R2, Left 1, Left 2, so they don't change very much.

In contrast to Dan's kinesthetic approach to memorizing the code sequences, Sean identified explicit categorical features of the codes and then used that process to memorize the cheat codes. For Sean, the entire signification process took place on a more explicit level.

Nearly all of the participants admitted to using cheat codes at one point or another. With some notable exceptions, most had adopted the cheat codes as an integral part of their game strategy. One exception was Jeb, who took great pride in not using the cheat codes. Another, Jimmy, said he only used the cheat codes when he was "stumped or frustrated". Another participant named Martin had used the cheat codes constantly when he played *Vice City* but said he quit using the cheat codes when playing *San Andreas*. He explained that in the time it took for him to remember and punch in a cheat code, the flow of the game was often disrupted, resulting in unwanted consequences such as being apprehended by the police. However when he had a friend over, or when he played with his wife by his side, he would occasionally have the other person read the code aloud so he could punch it in quickly without disrupting the game. In each of these examples future activity was perceived through the lens of the semiotic system of the cheat codes.

Martin's game play history also stood out because he made extensive use of the GTASA manual, the *Official Strategy Guide for Grand Theft Auto, San Andreas* (Bogenn and Barba 2005). The manual contains two hundred seventy two pages of maps, diagrams, strategies for completing missions, and detailed

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descriptions of weapons, cars, and other important signs in the game. For Martin and his wife Sarah, with whom he often collaborated during game play, the strategy guide became a crucial semiotic resource for successfully completing all missions in the game. In fact for them, the strategy manual was a more useful resource than the cheat codes. Martin and Sarah completed the *San Andreas* game two weeks prior to Martin's game play and interview. By that time playing GTAVC and GTASA had become an important way for the two of them to spend time together. For example, when Martin and his wife accumulated money in GTASA, they went shopping in the game together.

The games also influenced Martin and Sarah's perceptions of places they wanted to visit. Martin described how he and his wife had not traveled outside of the low socioeconomic, rural area where they lived, and how playing the game had prompted them to talk about visiting the beaches around Miami, the casinos in Las Vegas, and the sights around Hollywood. Martin said his wife "wants to go to these places. She wants to see, you know, she wants to see the Giant Pyramid in Vegas, she wants to see the Hollywood sign, you know, she wants to see all the stores and the shops." Martin and Sarah's perceptions of actual places in the world were mediated by the virtual worlds represented in GTAVC and GTASA. On a macro level, GTASA became a semiotic resource for mediating images of the places Martin and his wife planned to visit some day. Martin talked about how Sarah enjoyed simply driving to the beach in a nice car in the game, something that was not possible in their current context. Their experiences were another example of the ways that perception of future activity becomes inseparable from a semiotic system. Moreover, Martin and Sarah's collaborative activities were a clear manifestation of Vygotsky's assertion that "the use of signs leads humans to a specific structure of behavior that breaks away from biological development and creates new forms of a culturally-based psychological process"(Vygotsky 1978, 40).

Although participants demonstrated the indivisible nature of sign, thought, and activity during game play in myriad ways, interviews revealed that they all had similar backgrounds with video games. Most of them began playing video games when they were about four or five years old. A few exceptions were those players who started playing between the ages of ten and thirteen. Most participants started playing video games during the mid 1980s on Atari and Nintendo platforms, which were common at the time (Suellentrop 2006). Overall, participants were mostly first-generation gamers who evolved in concert with the world of digital gaming. Mitch, an avid game player, summed it up this way: "As we were growing up, so was the technology".

Participants were also asked about the reasons they played the GTA series. Responses often included references to fantasy and to engaging in activities that the participants themselves would not engage in outside the virtual worlds of

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GTA. Ken expressed this sentiment in the following interview excerpt (I=Interviewer; K=Ken):

> I: What's your general reaction about the game? What do you think is fun about either one of these games? About the Grand Theft Auto series?
> K: I like car games too, so you can get in the cars and drive around real fast.
> I: "Why? What, what makes you like that in particular?"
> K: "I'm not sure, maybe –
> I: "That's okay; think about it.
> K: "Maybe cause you can't do it in real life.
> I: "Can't do what? Drive around?"
> K: "Drive around fast and crazy and jump off of bridges and things."
> I: "Right, right."
> K: "You're safe in the game; you can do whatever you want and it's okay."

Another participant, Nate, said that for him the major appeal was being able to attack regular people at random, which was usually not possible to do in other games: "I think that's really the appeal of it though: Is that you can attack people, people just like your character, at random." He pointed out that in the GTA series there is an "endless supply of people". Nate described his past experiences with other video games where the main character frequently confronts fierce adversaries such as monsters, demons, or powerful warriors, but rarely encounters regular people during the normal course of the game. When asked what he thought was most appealing to everyone about the GTA games, another participant explained: "I think the most fun is just doin' all the things that you can't really do in real life. I mean you get to go out and do stuff that you wouldn't do otherwise, commit crimes and shoot people. You know, it's fun and it's safe and there's no real consequences to anything". Although the Grand Theft Auto series is known for its controversial content, most part participants did not comment on the criminal activities and themes in the games; rather, they reported just driving around and enjoying the scenery and exploring the virtual worlds of GTAVC and GTAVC by car, boat, and plane.

> With five out of every ten Americans now playing digital games in one form or another (Carstens and Beck 2005; ESA 2005), video games are longer viewed as simply a child's toy or a mindless pastime for troubled teens, or worse, as a dehumanizing, brain-numbing technology that promotes violence and sexual promiscuity. Digital games have gained currency in recent years. They are now used as teaching tools for educated professionals, to provide interactive learning experiences for children, and to train members of the U.S. military (Oblinger 2004). Even the Website for the prestigious Nobel Prize features online games and simulations targeting teachers, students, and non-professionals to help them test and build their knowledge in physics, medicine, chemistry, and peace studies. According to the Entertainment Software

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> Association (ESA), an industry group, in 2005 Americans spent over seven billion dollars on almost 230 million computer and video games, a triple increase in both the number of games sold as well as in gross revenues from game sales (Suellentrop 2006). Studies conducted by the ESA and others estimate that approximately half of all Americans play video games, and half of those gamers are over fifty years old (ESA 2005). Clearly, the world of digital gaming has evolved into an integral part of the mainstream American cultural experience. Undoubtedly, people are experiencing fundamental shifts in cognition and perception through their experiences with these games.

A compelling example of this cultural and cognitive shift can be seen in the way the U.S. military uses video games for recruiting, training, and rehabilitating soldiers (Cowlishaw 2005). Digital games and simulations help troops prepare for warfare by allowing them to train in settings that realistically duplicate the sights and sounds of battle (Suellentrop, 2006). Soldiers returning from combat with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder are increasingly being treated with virtual reality programs using exposure therapy (Dixit, 2006; Jardin, 2006; Suellentrop 2006). The treatments involve gradually reintroducing patients to traumatic triggers using realistic noises (bullet whistles, helicopters, explosions), smells (diesel fuel, burning rubber, Iraqi spices), and other stimuli (the vibration of rumbling tanks, etc.). In a recent *Newsweek* article documenting soldiers' experiences in Iraq (Nordland, 2006), a marine mentioned this about combat: "Before anyone got hurt, it was almost exciting and fun, like a videogame" (May 22, 2006, 8). Vargas (2006) spoke with soldiers stationed in Mosul, Iraq about how video games and simulations are now the basis for combat training. After engaging in his first real-life shoot-out with insurgents, one soldier said, "I felt like I was in a big video game. It didn't even faze me, shooting back. It was just natural instinct. *Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom!*" (Vargas 2006, paragraph 2). The soldiers also mentioned similarities between combat operations and the video game Halo in the context of a battle with Iraqi insurgents: "The insurgents were firing from the other side of the bridge … [w]e called in a helicopter for an airstrike. . . . I couldn't believe I was seeing this. It was like 'Halo.' It didn't even seem real, but it was real" (paragraph 4).

In each of these examples, the virtual world of video games shaped the soldiers' real-life experiences. Even in the midst of life-threatening combat, video games were a part of the discursive mind and context of the soldiers, who used them instinctively as a semiotic resource for mediating their perception of and planning for real-life, goal-directed activity. There were markedly fewer tensions between the Agents (the soldiers), and the mediational means (their weapons) as a result of their interactions with the semiotic systems in war-based video games. It is not surprising, then, that the soldiers interviewed for the articles in both *Newsweek* and the *Washington Post* expressed how they perceived fighting, death, and dying thorough a narrative lens constructed by the

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semiotic systems of video games on which they had trained (see also Cowlishaw 2005).

This study endeavored to identify instances of transformational thinking prompted by the sign systems contained in digital video games. Like all research, this study has limitations. A larger cadre of research participants would have provided more opportunities for a deeper understanding of the cognitive changes occuring during the process of assigning meaning to signs and symbols. The findings described here are interpretive, the result of viewing data through a specific theoretical lens, and are therefore not intended to be generalized to all settings. Rather, this chapter urges readers to reflect on the concept of using signs to transform cognition, and to initiate serious discussion about how digital video gaming can expand and extend the realms of thinking and learning.

A number of questions remain about the kinds of cognitive changes that are occurring across societies and cultures as thinking becomes inextricably intertwined with the semiotic systems contained in digital games. It is unclear, for example, where the sign systems of video games end and the perception of the present and the future begins. Moreover, while there are many aspects of interactive games that are easily adaptable to educational contexts, video games have yet to enter the canon of well-regarded, pedagogically sound tools recognized by educators and policymakers. Fortunately, scholars working in the learning sciences (Gee 2003; Prensky, 2000; Squire 2002) are conducting rigorous research about what people can learn about academic subjects from playing video games. A new generation of youth who spent their formative years interacting with digital media are finding ways to redesign educational materials to bridge the disconnect between traditional curricula and the powerful information technologies that are profoundly and irrevocably changing the way humans perceive and interact with the world.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

"RESPEK": MISUNDERSTANDING, HUMOR, AND ETHNICITY IN *DA ALI G SHOW*

REBECCA A. ADELMAN

1. Allo: An Introduction

Humor is a funny thing. It exists universally, though its forms are culturally specific. It is one of our handiest tricks for defusing tension, but is largely taboo in the most difficult of situations. Laughter, humor's corollary, is a human biological capacity, but the things that provoke it are largely idiosyncratic to cultures and individuals. This paper is an effort to reveal the dynamics of verbal humor within a particular cultural text, HBO's comedy series *Da Ali G Show*, and it begins with the premise that we can productively use sociolinguistic study to illuminate the "connections" between "humor" and the "sociosemiotic" and political systems in which it exists (Alexander 1997, 3).

This project emerges out of my abiding interest in verbal humor, which I maintain is an undervalued cultural resource; for his part, Gregory Bateson maintains that without play, abstraction, and parody, "life would be an endless interchange of stylized messages, a game with rigid rules, unrelieved by change or humor" (Bateson 1972, 193). Certain performances in certain contexts can have profound impacts on social, cultural, and political structures (Bauman 2001, 182), and humor is uniquely capable of doing things that most other modes of expression cannot. So I decided to analyze the funniest thing I could think of, *Da Ali G Show*. Its humor is verbal, physical, and visual. It relies heavily (but carefully) on a collection of different racial and ethnic stereotypes while parodying the processes by which those very stereotypes become salient and legible. Its comedic impact is derived largely from scenarios of cross-cultural miscommunication, even as it invites the audience to mock these failures of understanding. Put another way, *Da Ali G Show* can function as a sort of entertaining pedagogy on the "endemic and increasingly serious communication problems that affect private and public affairs in our society" (Gumperz 1982, 172), specifically insofar as these "problems" have their origins

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in inter-ethnic conflict. To the extent that American culture is structured by what Deborah Cameron calls the "fetish of communication" (*Hygiene* 1995, 25), *Da Ali G Show* is compelling because it troubles our faith in precisely that. It strips us of our illusions about the power of conversation, reveals the things that make communication impossible, and forces us to recognize that communication is imperfect, even when it happens. In the show's hyperbolic world, communication is both hindered and enabled by perceptions of ethnicity, an amplification and stylization of the dynamics of communication in our rather more mundane everyday interactions.

2. Wot is Yous Bangin on About?: A Brief Overview of *Da Ali G Show*

*Da Ali G sho*w began on England's Channel 4, after its star and creator, Sacha Baron Cohen, got his break on another British program, *The 11 O'Clock Show*, for which he auditioned as a character that would later become Borat. *Da Ali G Show* was wildly popular in the UK (there were reports that even the Queen Mum was a fan) and shortly after the release of his feature film, *Ali G In Da House*, Cohen signed a deal with HBO. The American version of the show finished its second season of six 30-minute episodes on the cable network in August 2004, which has aired a total of 12 episodes so far. There has been no announcement of a third season on HBO, but neither has there been suggestion of the show's cancellation.

Originally airing on Friday nights (beginning 21 February 2003), the second season (beginning 18 July 2004) of *Da Ali G Show* was moved to HBO's Sunday night line-up, its most heavily promoted and popular rotation, which is slotted with their most popular programs almost year-round. *Da Ali G Show* has thus shared programming time with HBO's most popular series, including *The Sopranos*, *Six Feet Under*, *Entourage*, *Deadwood*, and Russel Simmons' *Def Poetry Jam*.

Cohen's trademark character, Ali G, a racially ambiguous "gangsta" from Staines, England, stars in all episodes, and most also feature both of his "alter-egos," Borat (a TV reporter from Kazakhstan, sent to the U.S. to inform his countrymen about American culture) and Bruno (an Austrian fashion reporter, bilingual in German and English, broadcasting all the dish on American style on Austria Gay TV). Each of these characters hosts of a fictionalized interview show, and Ali G in particular has interviewed a number of major public figures, including Ted Koppel, Ralph Nader, Newt Gingrich, Pat Buchanan, and Donald Trump. The interviews proceed while the guests remain unknowing that they are a hoax and provide an unscripted (if edited) insight into the dynamics of cross-cultural (mis)communication.

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Ali G is the most fully elaborated character of the three, and accordingly gets the most time in each episode. Cohen never breaks character and will speak to the press and appear in public only when performing, usually as Ali G. Ali G has become something of a star in his own right, and has his own website (disbealig.com) and quite a career apart from the show. In addition to starring in the full-length movie, he also, for example, appeared in a Madonna video. Interested fans outside of England can readily download episodes of the British version of his show, and the proliferation of websites around his character suggests his tremendous popularity.

Despite the fact that "[v]ery few of us are willing to admit that we are prejudiced or bigoted, still less that these unconscious processes, when suitably highlighted, may provoke us to laughter" (Alexander 1997, 124), and *Da Ali G Show*'s reliance upon precisely these taboos, it still garners a wide and loyal audience and critical acclaim, receiving 3 Emmy nominations during its run, even as (or perhaps because) it continually elicits controversy.

3. Wus Da Massiv Deal?: Controversy Around Anti-Semitism and Blackface

The most sustained controversies related to *Da Ali G Show* have orbited around two primary issues, the expressed anti-Semitism of Borat, and whether or not the character of Ali G is enacting a kind of blackface. Without discounting the political import of those critiques, I would argue that we must also consider the question of what has *not* garnered protest and boycott, namely the seeming misogyny of Ali G and Borat, and Bruno's parody of male homosexuality and trivialization of Nazi genocide. Whether because these things are more subtle or because these types of utterances are culturally defined as less objectionable, I believe that it is still worthwhile to look at what sorts of ostensibly violent (though I disagree with such a characterization in this case) speech provoke sustained critique, and which do not.

Cohen is at least culturally Jewish; I was unable to find any conclusive information about his religious practices. Now in his mid-30s, Cohen comes from a prominent North London Jewish family. His mother was Israeli and he himself was active as a young adult in Habonim Dror, the "Progressive Labor Zionist youth movement." During his time as an undergraduate at Cambridge University, he majored in History and wrote his thesis on the Jewish role in the American Civil Rights movement. Of course, Cohen's Jewish heritage does not automatically discount the critique of him as anti-Semitic; after all, it is hypothetically possible that anti-Semitic viewers might not *know* that he is Jewish and thus assume like-mindedness. Even so, I would argue that his

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background and educational pursuits suggest that he would have an investment in parodying and undermining the persistence of anti-Semitism.

Borat, in addition to insulting women and African-Americans, repeatedly makes very anti-Semitic comments. One of the major flashpoints for the controversy, which has taken hold on both sides of the Atlantic, was Borat's performance of what he claimed was a Kazakhstani folk song, "In My Country There is Problem" at a Country & Western bar in Tucson, Arizona. One of the "problems" identified in the song is that of "the Jew" who takes everybody's money; the solution that Borat advocates is to "throw the Jew down the well," to which many people took offense for obvious reasons. Although the criticisms were directed at Cohen for his performance and HBO for sanctioning it, what has been elided in analyses of Borat's behavior is the audience response to it. Indeed, his ostensibly non-Jewish audience, though they initially responded uneasily or bemusedly, ultimately encouraged his performance, clapping and singing along. Perhaps more interesting than the simple fact of the anti-Semitic utterance is this scene's demonstration of the ways in which cultural relativism (which allows us to attribute Borat's anti-Semitism to his putative ethnicity) gets translated into cultural permission for Americans to say things that they otherwise could not.

The issue of whether or not Cohen's Ali G should be read as a kind of blackface is differently complex. Critics who contend that Ali G / Cohen is a white man "acting" black cite Ali G's appropriation of West Indian English vernacular typically associated with hip-hop culture, his clothing, his jewelry, and his comportment as evidence for their critiques. In one of Ali G's running jokes, he says, "Many of you have probably never seen a black man before [3-5 second pause] ... 'Allo." This is somewhat ambiguous insofar as the greeting can be read as an introduction of himself (as a black man) or a welcome to the people that have "never seen a black man before." All in all, the logic of the critique is that because Cohen is Jewish (a sort of common sense whiteness), he has no rightful claim to Black culture, which is understood in this line of reasoning as constitutively authentic, pure, and discrete.

Lisa Keys, in her review of the scandal, points out that there is a long history of Jewish blackface performance, and also acknowledges the contemporary practice of "Jewface" by African-American comedians like Eddie Murphy. Though it is an interesting point, I am concerned about the suggestion of a complete equivalence between the two, as "Jewface" lacks both the long history and widespread institutionalization that blackface has. Even so, however, these practices remind us that the relationships between Jewish and Black cultures remain vexed. Moreover, they suggest the need to consider Cohen's performances as Ali G within those historical legacies of appropriation and counterappropriation.

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HBO contends that all of this is meant to be satire, though the network has stopped short of arguing that *Da Ali G Show* is an intervention into racist discourses. Cable channels generally aim to develop a discernable , distinctive, and unique programming strategy (Grimes 2004, 402), and HBO is now well-known for its original series, which are widely understood as edgy, sophisticated, and leftist, but not uncontroversial.[12] Thus, the context in which *Da Ali G Show* appears goes a long way toward confirming its status as a high-minded (if occasionally low-brow) parody, rather than an overtly racist text.

In *Frame Analysis*, Erving Goffman asks, "Under what circumstances do we think things are real?" (1974, 2), and this question combined with that of "under what circumstances does it matter?" is at the heart of the debate about *Da Ali G Show*. It quickly becomes complicated, however, because the show's audience knows that it isn't "real," really, but this is a knowledge to which the "real people" (that make the show funny) do not have access, even as much of the show's draw originates from the realness of the situations it represents. Perhaps the best way to understand this aspect of its polyvocality is to suggest that *Da Ali G Show* operates on multiple levels of realness, seriousness, and satire, and these things resonate differently, uniquely, and with varying degrees of salience for individual viewers.

This raises an important question about the politics of ethnicity and humor in this particular text, namely whether it matters that Cohen is not a "real" ethnic, but is instead "white," and that informed viewers of the show will understand this. The question of Cohen's actual ethnicity is significant because it forces us to consider how viewers will identify with him,[13] and we might argue that such identification isn't cross-cultural or cross-ethnic at all, but rather predicated on an understanding that he is a White man mocking non-White Others. This kind of humor is, of course, very different from the kind of satire that I would argue Cohen is developing, but the potential for readings like this one is a real and dangerous one, and so worth addressing. However, we know that audience receptions of texts are always unpredictable, and should not let that uncertainty stymie efforts to analyze the text themselves and possible patterns of response to them.

An indirect goal of my project here is a consideration of the extent to which a sociolinguistic analysis of *Da Ali G Show* can complicate literalist readings of the show as a racist text. Indeed, because the show is constitutively a parody, I would argue that the designation of *Ali G* as a racist text amounts to a misreading of it, insofar as it relies on superficial significations, which the audience must read against in order to fully appreciate the show's humor and, accordingly, participate in its project. Of course, there is a compelling line of argument which asserts that whether or not a particular interpretation is true to the initial intent of the show does not matter, because all interpretations have

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material consequences. I agree, but believe that such a conviction can coexist with my project here. I do not seek to excuse what is often identified as offensive speech, nor am I comfortable asserting that public speech should be circumscribed; those questions would take me too far afield, so I will gesture toward them and leave them open. Rather, my investment is in inquiring into the radical potential of parodic verbal humor.

4. 'Ow I Do Fings : Methodology

My data here is drawn from 7 episodes of *Da Ali G Show*. Though I have (re)viewed all 12 episodes that aired on HBO, I focus specifically on episodes 2-8, a sample that spans both seasons of the show. Seven episodes at approximately 28 minutes apiece yielded 196 minutes of data, and I consider both specific occurrences and general themes within the show. Where necessary, I have used direct transcription of filmed conversations, though I do so with two caveats in mind. First, we must remember that despite its provision of insight into the processes of miscommunication and conversational breakdown, *Da Ali G Show* is carefully edited and thus heavily mediated. Second, I find it important to be straightforward about the limits of transcription, and thus recognize (or, rekognize, as Ali G would say) that even the most detailed transcriptions are never perfect accounts of the conversational encounter they seek to document (Cameron "Transcribing" 1994, 39).

Because of its multiple dimensions, humor is best studied in an interdisciplinary manner (Raskin 1999, 207), and so while my primary analytic here is sociolinguistics, I use it in tandem with a range of other methodological perspectives, including a cultural studies approach, which accounts for the extent to which humor is a system of social semiotics (Alexander 1997, 3), an iteration and distillation of larger cultural and political structures. Research on humor generally focuses on why things are perceived or experienced as "funny" (Raskin 1999, 201), and my project here accords with that method, as I focus on some of the specific linguistic devices of each of Cohen's characters that contribute to their funniness.

However, although we can theorize about why things are funny, I have avoided making assumptions about audience responses to the show. In humor, the "range of contextually generated effects such as irony, sarcasm, satire, understatement and hyperbole produc[e] meanings which are non-literal and which require listeners to make indirect, interpretive references" (Carter 2004, 23), and this reminds us that the sensation of funniness is subjective and individualized. Humor research has revealed that "a cluster of factors can be involved in verbal humour and speech-play which reach beyond the bounds of phonology, syntax, semantics, and lexis ..." (Alexander 1997, 59), and these

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things can include other aspects of the performance and audience reception of it. That is, if I am watching *Da Ali G Show* with friends, and we're all laughing at the same time, there's no guarantee that we're laughing at the same things, or for the same reasons.

Although I focus here on how ethnicity or perceived ethnic difference complicates communication and how those scenarios become legible as funny, I am also careful to heed Angeliki Tzanne's reminder that although cultural differences often contribute to miscommunications, there is also a constellation of other factors that can facilitate conversational breakdown and misunderstanding (2000, 8 and 248). Thus, while I emphasize cross-cultural communication dynamics, I endeavor to do so without being reductionist or resorting to determinist logic.

With this understanding in place, however, I also proceed with two convictions about race/ethnicity and communication. First, following Jane H. Hill's formulation, I maintain that American linguistic practices code public spaces and public discourses as "white" (2001, 456) and American; this constrains the range of possible communications in situations when one party is identified as something other than these. Secondly, in accordance with Rosina Lippi-Green's influential analysis of accents in Disney films, my research is structured around the premise that accent (and, by extension, language use in general) has long functioned as something of an ethnic shorthand in the media (1997, 81). Furthermore, the resultant practices of abbreviation and inference extend beyond the media into everyday life; this contention is supported, for example, by Thomas Paul Bonfiglio's study (2002) of the ways in which certain pronunciations were imbued with racialized meanings and institutionalized as such.

Da Ali G Show itself has a complicated cultural legacy, though British-American relations are not quite so fraught as other cross-cultural encounters. It was first developed in and for the UK, but the version that airs in the US was made specifically for that audience, even as it utilizes many of the same devices of humor as its British predecessor. Thus, *Da Ali G Show* must be contextualized simultaneously within British norms about verbal humor (Alexander 1997, 115ff.) and American culture, which is "particularly Anglophilic" (Jones 2001, 13). American identity does not necessarily preclude an appreciation for cultural artifacts and practices that seem British, and indeed, British imports often have a certain cultural cache about them that makes them especially desirable.

Sketch comedy shows are a quintessential feature of British entertainment. Alison Ross, in her overview of the genre, outlines a method for studying them, emphasizing the importance of attending to the "distinct devices" of humor that recur in each segment (1998, 95). She also argues that each sketch can be read

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as a coherent or free-standing whole, but that this kind of analysis should coexist with a consideration of the themes and trends that emerge across the entire series (1998, 95). Accordingly, I attempt to balance a micro-analysis of specific interactions in the show with consideration of how the whole text is arranged.

5. 'Ow I Natta: Ali G's Idiolect and Cross-cultural Miscommunication

One of the most Ali G's most noteworthy characteristics is his use of an elaborate, consistent, and systematic idiolect. His speech performances exhibit discernable and defining features, all of which are humorous (or intended to be). I have included a list of these below, and cited some specific instances:

- Malapropisms
  - Example: conflation of "Homo Sapiens" and "homosexual" [Episode 5]
  - Including difficulty with hard, long, or Latinate words (Alexander 1997, 53)
- Play with near homophones (Alexander 1997, 25)
  - Example: confusion of "veteran" and "veterinarian" in an interview with a man who was both [Episode 8]
- Slang for drugs and sex
  - Example: litany in interview with DEA agent: "the bionic, the bomb, the puff, the blow, the black, the 'erb, the sensi, the chronic, the sweet mary jane, the shit, ganja, spliff, reefer, the bad, the buddha, the 'ome-grown, the ill, the maui maui, the method, pot, lethal, turbo, thai, shake, skunk, stress, wacky, weed, blaze, the boot, dimebag, scooby-doo, bogey, backyard boogey" [Episode 3]
- Catch phrases
  - Examples: Wesside, big up yourself, booyakasha
- Borrowing from hip-hop vernacular
- Borrowing from West Indian vernacular English
- Misunderstanding of figures of speech
  - Example: interview with James Baker (Secretary of State 1989-1992), in which Baker talks about using "carrots and sticks" in foreign policy, and Ali G asks why any country would want carrots, even a lot of them [Episode 6]

The extensiveness of Ali G's idiolect is evidenced by hbo.com's Ali G Glossary (with over 130 entries for words and phrases) and the "Tranzlata" feature on disbealig.com, in which users can type in words, phrases, or sentences and have

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them “tranzlated” into Ali G speech (which I used to develop the subject headings for my paper). There are also a number of unofficial sites offering Ali G dictionaries and translators. Thus, we can understand *Da Ali G Show* as a “dynamically intertextual site” (Spitulnik 2001, 110) upon which language is constructed, manipulated, and resignified.

Ali G speaks in an accent that similar to Cockney or Yorkshire, though whether or not it is faithful to either one of those dialects is somewhat less important to the success of the show than the fact of their recognizable status as highly marked, stigmatized, or non-dominant versions of British English. Ali G’s accent is most noticeable in his *h* sounds, which he tends not to vocalize in words that begin with *h* (“home” is pronounced “‘ome”), but which he adds to some words that begin with vowels (“immigration” becomes “‘himmigration”). Presumably, we are to understand that this is the accent in which English is spoken in Staines, Ali G’s suburban hometown.

Despite Ali G’s highly marked accent, none of the communication breakdowns in the interviews included in my sample can be directly attributed to it, though the accent could conceivably index other things that might make his interlocutors suspicious. Overall, though, most of the miscommunications are related to issues of pragmatics and lexicon. Occasionally, there is an obvious or mutually acknowledged failure of communication in Ali G’s interviews, as when a guest abruptly ends the interview, citing Ali G’s seeming stupidity. Otherwise, however, audiences often witness the conversational tendency to follow the “line” of talk “even when the understanding thus arrived at is nonsensical or absurd” (Tzanne 2000, 84).

The following example, transcribed from Ali G’s interview with a very affable Patrick Buchanan in Episode 8, displays this tendency:

Ali G: What else is the helection going to be for on this year?
Pat Buchanan: It’ll probably be about Iraq.
AG: Does you fink that Saddams ever was able to make these weapons of mass destruction or whatever, or as they is called BLTs?
PB: He ...Was Saddam able to make them?
AG: Could he make BLTs?
PB: Yes, at one time he was using BLTs on the Kurds in the North.
AG: Was it worth fighting a war over BLTs?
PB: I don’t think Saddam Hussein and Iraq were at threat to the United States, even if they had WMDs or BLTs, as long as they weren’t nuclear weapons.
AG: If you had the hevidence that Saddam had these BLTs in his house, would you have said yes, attack?
PB: Not unless he had ... if he had anthrax, if he had mustard gas ....
AG: Whatever you put in them
PB: No, no. If he had mustard gas.
AG: Let’s say he didn’t have mustard and the BLTs just was plain. Would you

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been able to go in there, then?
PB: No.
AG: Is it ever worth fighting a war over sandwiches?
PB: Is it ever worth fighting a war? Yes.
AG: If you becomes president again, what would you do?
PB: I would change the whole country dramatically, and that's why I'm not going to be president.
AG: Yo, yo. For real [Buchanan laughing] I is feeling that, man. Yo. Yo. Is you mashed or something? Yous like so giggly.
PB: No
AG: You had a little puff before?
PB: Yeah [laughing] I had a little puff before, sure.
AG: Respek, yo. You need a little bit of [sniffs] from me own imports. We'll talk business after.

[To audience]: Yo, so listen all you lot out there. You better listen up to the words of my man, Bookanan. Cuz him know nuf things about America and the helection. Listen up, word up, keep it real. Wesside.

[To PB]: Big up yourself.

Research on miscommunication indicates that generally, when a miscommunication occurs, people act in response to two instinctive and often "conflicting goals": 1) conversational repair and 2) face-saving, for oneself and others (Tzanne 2000, 235). At the same time, however, much research on miscommunication analyzes that which occurs accidentally or non-deliberately, and so is complicated by the fact that "intentional misunderstandings" can function as a way for less powerful people to gain control in a conversation (Tzanne 2000, 235). In Ali G's case, this seems to work famously. Buchanan's seamless adoption of Ali G's misnomer, "BLT," reflects the need to stay close to the initial direction of conversation and the desire to keep the integrity of its logic intact. This is similarly evidenced when Buchanan ignores Ali G's play on mustard and mustard gas and his selective response to "Is it ever worth fighting a war over sandwiches?", which he rephrases as, "Is it ever worth fighting a war?". The end of the interview, when Buchanan (perhaps unwittingly) agrees with Ali G's suggestion that he may have been smoking pot, also coheres with this practice. He has saved his own face by denying that he is "mashed" (a synonym for "drunk") and then saved Ali G's by laughingly confirming his other suspicions; it was easier and perhaps more polite to do this than to contradict when it was clear that the conversation was drawing to a close anyway.[3]

This persistence by Ali G's interview subjects with respect to lines of conversation is partly attributable to the documented ways in which certain

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contexts shape expectations about the kinds of communication that will occur there (Alexander 1997, 7; Bauman 2001, 171; Blum-Kulka and Weizman 2003, 125; Gumperz 1982, 153; Kramsch 2003, 132;). Thus, if one is a politician and an ostensible representative from a television interview show calls to set up an interview, one naturally expects that the interview will be legitimate, an expectation further confirmed upon meeting with the interviewer and recognizing the apparatus of television, cameras, producers, crew, etc. Alison Ross, commenting on the increased sophistication of comedy shows that parody real ones, observes that "occasionally the spoof is so close to the original that the participants are not aware that they are being used for humour" (Ross 1998, 98). Institutionalized patterns of discourse help us "trust and predict" in communication encounters (Kramsch 2003, 132); without them, it would be very difficult to know when or how to say anything at all. Ali G's ability to interview very famous people is wholly contingent upon their habits of relying upon these presumptive predictions. In their study of miscommunication in political interviews, Shoshana Blum-Kulka and Elda Weizman observe that "unless otherwise indicated, both interviewers and audiences work with the assumption that no misunderstandings occur and the lack of adherence to the norms is intentional" (2003, 112), which might begin to explain two seemingly contradictory phenomena: why some of Ali G's guests go along with his absurdities but also why some of his guests become frustrated and refuse to speak further or end the interviews. In the first case, context creates the expectation that this is a legitimate interview and should be treated as such, while in the second, that expectation is elicited, but then frustrated by Ali G's failure to perform in accordance with it. We see the latter phenomenon below, in Ali G's interview with former White House Press Secretary, Marlin Fitzwater [Episode 6], which I have reproduced to document the way that the conversation developed:

Ali G: Was it embarassing workin' as a secretary? Did it have the same kind of stigmata as being a male nurse?
Marlin Fitzwater: Well, I think it was uh, the word 'secretary' of course is used in a lot of different ways
AG: Why do you think politicians use so many words that young people just don't understand? Like 'discussion' or 'conflict.' Only chi-chi men would use them words.
MF: [Little chuckle] No, I don't think so. I think you'd find those in high schools in America, and classrooms everywhere you go.
AG: But surely if politicians used words like 'holla swallow back check this out all my peeps in your cribs all ya mofos out there swallow this booyakasha wagwan' then people would 'ear it and understand, innit?
MF: That's crazy. I … You can't find me five people in the entire country of America who could understand what you just said.

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AG: That ain't true
MF: Not five. Not five people.
AG: About … I could find you five billion
AG: 'Cuz of your jobs, you must know a lot of secrets that happened back then
MF: Well, it's been ten years ago. I don't remember very many of them.
AG: What about Hillary Clinton? Does she drink from the furry cup?
MF: I don't know Hillary. I don't know anything about it.
AG: But does she eat from the bushy bowl?
MF: I don't know anything about it.
AG: If she does, just cough
MF:I don't know anything about it

[8 second pause, in which the two men stare at each other]

MF: So what's the deal? Is this your interview technique?
AG: No, I was just waiting to see if you coughed or not.
MF: This is your interview technique? This interview is over. [To camera, crew]
The guy's an idiot.

Fitzwater's frustration is directed Ali G's "idiocy," but more precisely at his interview technique, his failure to adequately perform the conversational role that context suggested he would.[4, 5]

In this interview, Ali G also demonstrates one of his trademark questions, the use of the backchanneling interrogative, "Innit?" (a contraction of "isn't it?," which asks, "isn't this so?" or "isn't that right?"). What is interesting about "Innit?" is that Ali G almost always adds it at the end of an utterance with which the interlocutor most likely disagree, either when he says something outrageous (as in this case), or when he believes himself to have undermined their argument with a ludicrous counterexample. If the presence of conversational repair strategies like backchanneling can prove "both the fragility and the robustness of verbal interaction" (House, Kasper, and Ross 2003, 2), then these uses of "Innit?" mock those habits of communicating and reemphasize the difficulty inherent in making oneself understood.

Beyond straightforward linguistic maneuvers for repairing a conversation gone awry, there is also a range of non- or paralinguistic behaviors that we tend to use to deal with miscommunication, including humor (and laughter), which is generally a quick way to defuse tension (including that which results from miscommunication) and return an interaction to the realm of the apolitical (Kramsch 2003, 146).

Interestingly, humor, in Ali G's case, has the opposite effect. The funnier Ali G is (to his viewing audience), the more awkward and seemingly counterproductive his communications become; I would argue further that this

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progression increases the political stakes of the interaction. This may be confirmed by the fact that Ali G's interview subjects often laugh as the conversations become more stilted, though it is unclear what the subject of or reason for the laughter is. Generally, however, my intuition (based on the sound) is that they are not laughing *at* the jokes that Ali G has made, but rather laughing in frustration, or at him.

One of the notable visual aspects of Ali G's interviews is the occasional switch to black and white film, a production trick which underscores many of the issues I address here. These dichromatic flashes are extremely brief, lasting no more than 3 seconds, and usually punctuate Ali G's interviews, often inserted during a pause in the conversation. This use of black and white can be read in, I would argue, three ways. First of all, the abrupt move to black and white accents the ways in which Ali G is a ludic performance; the abrupt and marked shift between color schemes reflects the ease with which Cohen himself moves in and out of a diverse array of characters. Secondly, the use of black and white also connects metaphorically to the issue of race, specifically Ali G's play with blackness and whiteness, the ostensible racial difference that seems to be operative between him and his mostly white interlocutors, and broadly, the issue of cross-racial communication. Finally, the black and white highlights the literal modes in which Ali G's interlocutors tend to receive and approach him, which stands in stark contrast to Ali G's colorful and deeply comedic performance. All of this, cumulatively, suggests the fundamental dissimilarity between Ali G and his interview subjects, and thus reminds us of the difficulties that inhere in the project (however parodic) of communication.

Put simply, Ali G never interviews someone quite like him. Indeed, he very often interviews people who are quite his opposite. He often refers to people that understand him, including "me mate Dave" and "me Julie" (his girlfriend), but we never meet them. Although I suspect that many of the communication failures that happen in his interviews are attributable to the racialized dimensions of his performance (even if he does not look phenotypically "Black," his clothes and language signal an identification with blackness), we cannot be certain that this is the case, primarily because no one ever directly cites this as the reason for their inability to communicate with him.[6]

Yet even without this evidence, we can still assert that Ali G is marked as culturally (and perhaps ethnically) different from his interview subjects. Furthermore, Ali G is (almost) always intelligible to his television audience, many of whom are loyal and sympathetic fans. Their loyalties lie with him, and thus, in a conversational conflict, they are on his side. This positions them in opposition to hostile guests; the audience is encouraged to laugh at them and their inability to understand what otherwise seems so clear. The audience, thus, can effectively (if only imaginatively) communicate with Ali G, despite the fact

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that they are not like him (in fact, no one can be like him because he is a parody, a floating signifier), despite the fact of their cultural difference.

6. Da Himmigrant: Borat's Bad Manners and Our Misbehavior

In England, as in many other nations, economic industrialization precipitated massive cultural shifts, and one of the quotidian ways that the British responded to these upheavals was with the proliferation of ethnic jokes (Alexander 1997, 123). Predictably, certain ethnic groups were the regular targets of many of them, especially the Irish and the Jews (Alexander 1997, 147). We can also detect similar trends in American humor, though the target groups have been somewhat different. It is worth mentioning, of course, that the social acceptability of ethnic jokes has changed over time in both countries, though the basic idea that certain ethnicities are somehow funny has not. While I am interested in resisting the assertion that *Da Ali G Show* is another iteration of these jokes, I still must concede that it is made possible by their legacy. Cohen's character, Borat, has been at the center of the controversy around anti-Semitism in *Da Ali G Show*; it would be impossible to deny that Borat is an anti-Semite (Borat would probably find the label flattering, or at least accurate). At the same time, however, no one has accused Cohen of anti-Kazakhstani xenophobia for his portrayal of Borat. Of course, anti-Kazakhstani sentiment is not institutionalized (if it even exists in a systematic way in the U.S.) to the degree that anti-Semitism has been and is. This suggests instead that the funniness of Borat's character is based on general stereotypes about people who speak with strong accents and / or are from Third World countries.

Borat's verbal performances in his show, *Borat in USA*, are marked by the following things:

- Incorrect syntax
  - Example: exclaims "Fuck to you!" at a movie audition [Episode 4] Nonspecific but clearly "foreign" accent
- Ignorance or disobedience of American cultural norms about conversational etiquette
- Untranslated Kazakhstani words
  - Example: "Yekshemesh," the greeting with which he begins every episode of his show, and "Chergui," with which he ends the introduction to every show; there doesn't seem to be a clear English analog, but it functions as a transition between his introduction and the footage of him with his interview subjects
- Use of Kazakhstani words within English syntax
  - Example: when canvassing with congressional candidate James

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> Broadwater, promises constituents that the candidate "has a big ... 'chram'" (indicating genitals) [Episode 8]

All of these mark him as non-white / non-American and generally culturally different, a designation confirmed by his physical attributes, which include clumsiness, clothing that is ill-fitting or inappropriate for the situation, drunkenness, digestive problems, and sexual aggressiveness. His linguistic differences are emphasized by the structure of the show, which features occasional subtitles (translated back into English) for his audiences at home, written in what appears to be Cyrillic.

His accent, which is a generalized Other one, seems to be intentionally unpleasant to American viewers, who make aesthetic (Giles and Niedzielski 1999, 86), if unfounded (Giles and Niedzielski 1999, 88) judgments about the appeal of certain accents. Moreover, as Deborah Cameron points out, when we hear accents, we work backwards from them to ascribe ethnic identity (*Hygiene* 1997, 17; see also Jones 2001, 7). Borat's accent is perhaps somewhat similar to the popular perception of an "Arab" accent, which is often used to signal villainy (Lippi-Green 1997, 80) and, more recently, I would add, un-Americanness. Although Borat's accent doesn't seem to indicate duplicity or criminality (indeed, he is portrayed as somewhat guileless and benign, if uncouth) in the case of *Da Ali G Show*, the apparently ineluctable difference of the Middle Eastern man remains intact, and becomes salient because of its location within this distinctive representational history.

My focus in this section is primarily metalinguistic, namely on the topics of conversation that Borat chooses which would generally be understood as bad manners: discussions of bodily functions and sex, references to political violence (fictional massacres in his country), and comments that are misogynist, homophobic, racist, or anti-Semitic. Borat is depicted as physically undesirable (though he is apparently quite popular with the ladies in Kazakhstan), and in a cultural context in which nonbeauty, whether of one's body or one's language, is often taken as a "sign of demoted moral status" (Carroll 2000, 42), his status as an object and agent of humor is complex.

Superficially, it seems that the charges that Borat/Cohen is an anti-Semite or at least some sort of racist are well-founded, but a more detailed analysis reveals the ways in which Borat functions as a cipher and illuminates the persistence of prejudices in American culture. *Da Ali G Show* loves to send Borat to the South, a practice that is perhaps problematic in and of itself. On one of his trips [Episode 7], he attends a wine-tasting, hosted by two older white men. Instead of taking small sips of each vintage, as they do, Borat quickly drains every glass they give him. By the time the following interaction takes place, he has already had at least 6 glasses of wine. A silent African-American man, Robert, has demonstrated the proper pouring technique. As he is leaving the room, Borat

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thanks him for his services and kisses his hand. He then sits down at the table with the other men:

Borat: He is your slave?
First White Man: No no no not a slave. He's not a slave at all.
B: [indicating Other White Man] Oh, he is his his slave?
Other White Man: No
FWM: We don't have slaves here any more.
B: Yes yes I hear you do not have
FWM: No no no no
B: Why you stop?
FWM: No, well, it's a well it's a law that was passed that they no longer can be used as slaves. Which is a good thing. Yeah, it is a good thing. For them.
B: But not not not so much for you.
FWM: Yeah, right.

This revelation that the abolition of American chattel slavery was inconvenient, good for "them" but not for "us" is couched in the rhetoric of educating Borat about American culture, which the men have been doing throughout the segment. Whether or not such an utterance would have occurred if not for Borat's clear foreignness and ostensible sympathy for the plight of white people is doubtful. Although Borat is an object of humor here, because of his drunkenness and generally inappropriate behavior, what really becomes shocking and ultimately funny is the persistent racism of these white men.

Similarly, when Borat goes campaigning with Mississippi Republican congressional candidate James Broadwater (who ended up losing the election, but probably not because of this), he uses his seeming naïveté to elicit more information that other interviewers might have. The segment begins with Borat's greeting to his Kazakhstani audience:

Borat [to camera]: Yekshemesh. [Bow] Democracy is very different in U S and A from Kazakhstan. In America, woman can vote, but horse cannot. I go to help a Republican Party candidate win an election. Chergui. [Bow]

[CUT]

Borat [to James Broadwater]: Uh hello, thank you to speak me. [Kisses cheeks]
James Broadwater: Thank you, thank you for letting me come on.
BS: Do you have policies?
JB: One of my main policies is that I am pro-life.
BS: Yes
JB: I believe human life should be protected

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> **BS**: I feel very strong about this ... because in Kazakhstan my brother Villo he have a child born with hair all over face and nose and arms hair everywhere hair. And his wife say throw him and I say No keep him and now he make them very much money in he travel round the country in a tent people pay money to see children like him and other strange ones.
> **JB**: [nodding and making sympathetic noises] Hmm, well. I'm glad that ... the choice was made for life.
> **BS**: Yes, in Kazakhstan we like the family but there are now some men who pretend to be married but in secret they do bang bang bang in other men anoos. What you call them here?
> **JB**: Uh, we call it homosexual.
> **BS**: So which is the party of the homosexuals?
> **JB**: They tend to go to the Democratic Party.
> **BS**: What else are your policy?
> **JB**: Well, I'm a Christian ....
> **BS**: Nice, I like ...
> **JB**: ... I've been a Christian since I was about eight years old, I guess.
> **BS**: Umm. I want to go to this place, heaven. Uh uh, which religion must I choose to go there?
> **JB**: The Christian Bible says that Jesus Christ is the only way to heaven.
> **BS**: If people choose the Jews, will they go heaven or hell?
> **JB**: Hmm. Well, um. I would have to say that they would go to hell.

Here, the real anti-Semite (if sentencing someone to hell qualifies as anti-Semitism) is revealed to be Broadwater, rather than Borat. Furthermore, because of the guile with which he repeatedly takes what the audience will immediately recognize as Borat's bait, Broadwater seems foolishly dogmatic and gullible.

As with Ali G, Borat's interview subjects assume that they are on a real show, designed in this case to educate people of Kazakhstan about American society. People in Western cultures generally do not use humor in "highly ritualized" spaces (Alexander 1997, 7), and because of the very formulaic nature the situations in which Borat finds himself, his interlocutors presume that he is being serious, and attribute his behavior to his cultural difference. However, because the audience knows that Borat/Cohen is acting, they again have knowledge that the people on television do not; they recognize that Borat is parodying the dynamics of assimilation and cultural identity that immigrants must always enact, and the fact that his guests cannot recognize that makes *them* seem confused, though it is ostensibly Borat who is trying (and failing) to navigate the American landscape.

Noël Carroll (2000) argues that "horror" and "humor" have long converged on the site of the ethnically different body, and that their dialectical connection makes it a spectacle. Admittedly, this is part of what makes Borat recognizable as funny. Watching him fall off the treadmill at the gym, sing Kazakhstan's

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lengthy national anthem ("Kazakhstan ... Kazakhstan ... Kazakhstan ...") at a minor league baseball game, and talk about farting during a black-tie dinner [Episode 2] is identifiable as funny because it is horrifying. Yet in and of themselves, these things are neither very amusing nor especially unsettling; it is the responses of the white Americans around him that makes them such. In this way, the humor is displaced onto the dominant figures in the interactions, the people that don't recognize that Borat is only pretending, and who fall easily into the conversational traps he lays. What is funny is not so much that Borat says things that we are taught never to utter, but rather the ease with which people who should know better respond in kind.

7. Austrian Batty Boy: What Bruno Indexes

German is not fetishized in the U.S. like many other foreign languages or European accents are. Widely and popularly regarded as "ugly" (see Giles and Niedzielski 1999), the language is imagined as unwieldy and inelegant, while the accent is a convenient index for the range of historical and political things that are associated with Germany, specifically fascism and Nazism. More amorphous are the cultural or personal attributes indexed by a German accent, which might include things like discipline, starkness, violence, and, in the case of Bruno (the host of *Funkyzeit mit Bruno*, Austria Gay TV's show about all things American and ... funky), being very, very fashionable.

Bruno is funny because of both his embodied performance and his language use, which is distinguished by:

- Allusions to the Holocaust and fascism
  - Example: asking a boutique owner his thoughts on Hitler's style [Episode 4]
- Somewhat cartoonish German accent
- Use of actual German words within longer English utterances
  - Examples: mit, jah
- Contrived use of sexually suggestive German / German-sounding words
  - Examples: spritzen , poopenschaft
- Imitation of speech patterns and vocalizations popularly associated with homosexual men

Overall, Bruno is marked by an extravagant performativity, irreverence (he wonders, for example, where Jesus would shop [Episode 4]), and his ability to reveal the vapidity of his interviewees. Out of all three of Cohen's characters, conversational breakdown is rarest in interactions with Bruno; the only time an interview subject ends an interaction in the episodes I analyzed is in Episode 6,

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when Bruno goes to the "Pro-America Expo" and gay-baits an anti-Semitic and apparently homophobic libertarian man.

Primarily through his accent, his code-switches into his version of German, and his variously explicit and obscure references to German history, Bruno indirectly indexes Germanic identity, although he is purportedly Austrian.[7] Claire Kramsch argues that indexicality will suggest two things to an interlocutor: "epistemic stanc[e]" and "social identit[y]" (2003, 130), and Bruno's accent, language use, and allusions do both and accordingly invite certain responses from his interview subjects. To the extent that beauty is recognizable as a racialized category (Carroll 2000, 42), Bruno's emphasis on beautiful things connects to the stereotypically Germanic compulsion for purity and thus confirms his identity.

When Bruno goes to the Heatherette Catwalk Show during New York's Fashion Week [Episode 3], he meets two women with whom he seems to be in agreement about politics and couture. He asks Tiffany, a stylist for the show, to tell him a little bit more about it:

> **Bruno**: What is ze philosophy of ze show?
> **Tiffany**: Um, it's kind of like trailer trash, trailer park trash ....
> **B**: What is this trailer trash?
> **T**: Just kind of like I guess like back woods, from like ummm just like middle of nowhere kinda poor dressing what you have around
> **B**: Oh so they are very primitive rubbish people
> **T**. Kind of yeah
> **B**: So tell me: do you hope that these white trash trashing people will buy ze Clothes.
> **T**: I don't think they can afford them
> **B**: [Mirthful laugh] Oh, zey are too poor Ha ha ha … just like in Austria we take the clothes from the homeless people and then we sell them in the shops.
> **T**: Jack up the price [simultaneously]
> **B**: So the homeless people cannot buy them
> **T**: Definitely definitely [smiling]
> **B**: That is the beauty of fashion

Bruno's comment about "primitive rubbish people" echoes Nazi discourses about racial atavism among non-Aryans. Later in the segment, he suggests that Osama bin Laden is the best dressed of the terrorists, as his affinity for bin Laden's fashion sense seems to suggest a similarity between al-Qaeda and the Nazis.[8] Shortly thereafter, he engages in a discussion about "disgusting" disabled people, again referencing Nazi practices about eugenics and racial purification.

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Later, in his chat with an Asian woman identified only as a "real fashion icon," Bruno makes his sentiments more explicit:

> **Real Fashion Icon**: I'm from New York and and I come across a lot of people who are not from here but who are from other parts of the world who really have absolutely no fashion sense
> **Bruno**: They look ridiculous, don't they?
> **RFI**: There is no personal style
> **B**: Why don't you just put them on trains, send them to a camp and say 'bye-bye'?
> **Other man**: [laughing] Yeah
> **RFI**: I would love to say "bye-bye" to most of them! [Big smile]

Whether or not the Real Fashion Icon caught the allusion to Nazi deportations of non-Aryans (in this case, foreigners or "people who are not from here but who are from other parts of the world"), most viewers certainly must have, especially because Bruno says things like this all the time. In this case, his Germanic identity and his devotion to fashion mutually reinforce one another. The excess of his performance and the dead seriousness of the Real Fashion Icon (who is glib but clearly not being facetious) again displays the ease with which permission for violent speech is granted by the presence of a sympathetic cultural other serving as interlocutor.

Moreover, it is very possible that Bruno's interviewees take him seriously precisely because of the excess of his behaviors. Culturally, we expect that "certain roles will incorporate performance as a definitive attribute" (Bauman 2001, 176), and the combination of gay male camp and popular/straight ideas about the connections between extravagance and male homosexuality makes Bruno's character seem realistic or at least plausible. Similarly, the facility with which German accents index so many other things suggests that there is a popular perception about excess in German identity, as well.

Throughout the course of the entire interaction below, Bruno's interlocutor remains straight-faced and responds seriously and relatively respectfully to every question that Bruno poses, which suggests that he senses an authenticity or verisimilitude in Bruno's performance. Below is a transcript of his interview with Pastor Quinn, the "gay converter":

> **Bruno**: So yeah [unintelligible faux German] mit Pastor Quinn. So, ja, I am here with Pastor Quinn. Hi. So, Pastor Quinn, hi. So tell me, tell me about yourself. What do you do?
> **Pastor Quinn**: [enunciating carefully] Yes, I'm a pastor, pastor of a local church here in Little Rock, Arkansas. And I also am married, my wife's name is Beth and we have eight children.
> **B**: Wow. Great and tell me about the stuff that you're doing saving gay people

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PQ: Well, we have opportunity. In fact right now I am teaching through the book of Romans, and that's in the New Testament
B: Right, I love Romans.
PQ: Yes, and in the book of Romans in Chapter One, there's actually a mention of homosexuality ....
B: So why is being gay so out zis season?
PQ: Well, I think because there are people who find homosexuality to be repugnant to them
B: I think I may be becoming a little bit gay because I had sex with this Brazilian guy like really really cute and like immediately after I was spritzen, I was immediately upshtain immediately afterwards and ready to go again. What do you think that means?
PQ: Well, I think if in fact you did have a sexual relationship with another man of the same sex as yourself, then that's a homosexual act. And it could be just one act or a whole series of acts ....
B: No ... A lot ... many ....
PQ: And that means that you are involved in homosexuality.
B: I'm curious about becoming straight, but I've got a few questions first. So, will I still be able to hug men?
PQ: Of course, it's a hug of affection because we're brothers and sisters in Christ with no sexual connotation whatsoever.
B: So hypothetically according to you I can admire a man's penis in the shower but the moment I put it in my mouth, some sort of line has been crossed?
PQ: Well, that again that's putting sexual connotations that is forbidden by God's word
B: After I'm converted, could I choose to spend my life with a chick with a dick?
PQ: Uhhh, you're talking about someone who's had some kind of operation?
B: Yeah, he's almost all the way there but he's just got a little something to remind me of the good old days
PQ: Well, I would say again the issue is if a person has come out of a lifestyle in which they have had physical changes through an operation, you have to know what their heart is
B: Let's talk about you for a moment .... How many years have you been straight?

Bruno's use of the words "spritzen" and "upshtain," reflects the acceptability of using "mock" versions of stigmatized languages (Hill 2001, 454)[9] and also suggests an intersection of his Austrian and gay identities. Ultimately, Bruno's funniness results from the combination of two highly legible cultural "scripts ... opposed in a funny and unexpected way" (Raskin 1999, 203), in Bruno's case, the combination of his German accent (which is usually meant to elicit fear) with his hyperbolic performance of male homosexuality.

Significantly, Bruno is the least controversial of Cohen's three characters, though his trivialization of the Holocaust is surely objectionable, at least as

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offensive as Borat's threats of anti-Semitic violence. Apart from that, however, there has been no particular critique of his performance of male homosexuality (perhaps because of the institutionalization of highly parodic and self-deprecating forms of humor in that community), nor of his stereotypical performance of Germanic identity. Furthermore, guests seem to find it easier to communicate with Bruno than with Ali G or Borat, perhaps because of all the things that a Germanic accent indexes, stupidity is not one of them. Indeed, German / Austrian identity is easily reconcilable with whiteness (if not Americanness). Further, although Bruno is marked as culturally and ethnically different (because of his sexual orientation and his cultural heritage), he is also identifiable as racially similar, evidenced by the white supremacist things that the man says to him at the Pro-America expo. Bruno's white identity is confirmed by the ease with which he references the racialized violence of the Holocaust, and the ease and openness with which Americans engage him in conversation provides a haunting insight into the types of communication facilitated by the presumption of a shared white racial identity.

8. 'Ear Me Now: Some Conclusions

Throughout this paper, I have been implying that we can read *Da Ali G Show* as a text that illuminates two sets of submerged and mutually implicated connections: 1) between non-whiteness and humor and 2) between ethnicity and conversational misunderstanding. Ultimately, however, rather than a simple mockery of the attempts of non-white or non-American people to communicate, I have argued that *Da Ali G Show* displaces the funniness off of Cohen's characters and onto the people that are unable to communicate with them. This invites the audience to laugh not so much at the stereotypes that Cohen enacts or relies upon, but at the people who cannot detect their parodic nature. This movement, I would argue, lends the show some (albeit unstable or limited) potential as an antiracist text.

Admittedly, this assertion generates a host of other intractable questions about the political power of humor, including that of whether or not comedy can ever do more than uphold the status quo (Alexander 1997, 155) and if parody of racial hierarchies is enough to undo them (Hill 2001, 459). Similarly, Rosina Lippi-Green's observation that even "progressive" films can rely on xenophobic or racist logics about language and accent is worth heeding here (1997, 102). But even with these qualifications in place, *Da Ali G Show* can still work as a satire of the related dynamics of ethnicity, misunderstanding, and humor, though not everyone will agree about the extent to which it critiques or undermines them. *Da Ali G Show* plainly displays the extent to which the "process of interdiscursive [or cross-cultural] communication is not a question of finding the

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right words to fit what you want to say, but of trying to see things as others see them" (Kramsch 2003, 148); communication between Cohen's characters and their interviewees is determined by their perceptions of similarity, difference, and power.

While all of this is happening, the audience is left in an odd position. The show would be almost impossible to enjoy if one did not sympathize with Cohen's characters, as some of the interactions become quickly become painful to watch. It might be easy to watch Ali G get the better of a man like Donald Trump, but when the butt of the joke is a regular or unsuspecting person, it can become more difficult (it does for me) to be amused, because one might be more likely or inclined to empathize with him or her.

Ultimately, however, I would argue that Cohen is doing something noteworthy, letting the figures who might otherwise (and often do) function as derided objects of humor–the stupid white man who desires a kind of Blackness, the misfit immigrant, and the very very gay man–dislodge themselves from that position and ally themselves with an audience who might otherwise be inclined to mock them. Through Cohen's multi-layered (and, I think, very smart) performances, the blame for communication breakdown is shifted from where it would typically lie. *Da Ali G Show* suggests that the reasons for these communicative failures is not so much Ali G being daft as his interlocutors being overly literal, and not so much Borat misunderstanding American conversational etiquette as it is his co-conversants seizing the opportunity to exploit his confusion in an effort to integrate him into American hegemony, and not so much Bruno being vapid and offensive as it is his guests responding eagerly to the openings he provides. *Da Ali G Show* thus commands a strange sort of respect (respek, maybe) both for its own project and for the characters who give it life.

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Notes

[1] We might also imagine that HBO's target audience understands itself in the same way, progressive and enlightened enough to speak freely and humorously about race, and thus in possession of enough cultural capital to get Ali G's jokes and also know why they're funny. I discussed this issue with Marcus Fine, an audience member at the 2006 SW/Texas PCA/ACA Conference where I had the opportunity to present a version of this paper, and he pointed out similarities of this sort between HBO and the UK's Channel 4, on which the original version of *Da Ali G Show* aired.

[2] Thanks to an audience member at the PCA/ACA session where I presented this project for challenging my thinking on this.

[3] Melissa Curtin, the panel chair at the PCA/ACA session, suggested also that Buchanan might have confessed to smoking marijuana because it seemed so unlikely. She suggested that it would seem entirely plausible that a man of Buchanan's generation would have "had a little nip" before the interview, which is why he might have denied that, rather than the more extraordinary charge of smoking marijuana.

[4] Somewhat parenthetically and unscientifically, I have found that the higher a person's status (relative to Ali G), the more likely they are to end the interaction as Fitzwater did. The clearest example is Donald Trump, who ends their interview after about a minute (though this could surely have been edited). Not all high-status people do this, but status seems to help predict whether or not someone will. Women–again, anecdotally–and those with less power or influence, tend to be more polite and take Ali G more seriously

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than men. Gender is not a perfect predictor here, but there does seem to be some correlation.

[5] To this end, it is also noteworthy that Fitzwater, immediately after making his proclamation, looked away from Ali G and out toward the camera and, presumably, the crew operating it. My reading of this shift in attention is that he is making an appeal to the production apparatus, the context, either to confirm that he is, in fact, on an interview show, or to elicit sympathy or reassurance from the crew that the man who is interviewing him is, in fact, an idiot.

[6] There are, however, moments of tension when the interview subjects seem to suggest a hunch that Ali G is not "really" black. (Thanks to Mel Clark for reminding me of this.)

[7] I am not sure what function is served, linguistically or otherwise, by making him Austrian rather than German, considering that most American viewers would likely be unable to distinguish between the two accents (and, for that matter, the two nations and cultures).

[8] Comparisons, both overt and inferred, between fighting the War on Terror and fighting the Nazis abound in administration rhetoric and popular discourse in the contemporary historical moment.

[9] "Mock" in this sense, does not imply that such performances have no connection to the language that they seek to imitate. Indeed, there very often is a connection between the mock version and the actual language, if only a parodic one, and in my reading, it is this very connection that enables mock languages to signify in conversation. These mock versions, then, reveal more about the speaker (and the interlocutors who respond to them) than they do about the real languages to which they correspond; what we learn, then, from Bruno's use of German is that there is some familiarity among English-speaking Americans about how German seems to sound, which thus makes his idiolect intelligible, irrespective of its fidelity (or lack thereof) to the real German words for what Bruno is expressing.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

CODE –SWITCHING IN MC SOLAAR'S FRENCH MUSIC

BEATRICE KELLY

Code–switching refers to the movement back and forth between two languages or dialects within the same sentence or discourse. MC Solaar French rapper musician, code–switches in French and English for aesthetic effects. Sociolinguistic factors involved in the formation of French rap music are on one hand, the influence of the American media in French popular culture. On the other hand, rap music represents a *speech community* of people of African descent bound by politics, culture, social conditions.

Many of France's (African) immigrants came in the 1950s and 60s from former colonies such as Algeria, Chad and Senegal, after the collapse of France's African empire. They came from the colonies as guest workers to supply the needs of the booming French economy. They were unskilled, mostly male laborers, and they were eventually joined by their families. When industrial jobs disappeared, immigrants couldn't make the switch to the service economy. Their children found themselves poorly adapted to getting jobs. These immigrants are concentrated in "banlieues" suburbs (equivalent of inner cities in the US), where unemployment rate is high, and social mobility is inexistent for African immigrants in particular.

French rapper Claude M'Barali, better known to music fans as MC Solaar, was born in Dakar, Senegal, on 5 March 1969. His parents left Africa when M'Barali was just six months old to move to France, where they found a flat in the Paris suburb of Saint-Denis. Claude's father returned to Chad once he had finished his studies in France, so the young boy was brought up by his mother, who found work as a house keeper in hospitals. The young rapper was to grow up in another Paris suburb, Villeneuve-Saint-Georges. He successfully passed his baccalauréat (High school exit exam) and then began to study foreign languages such as English, Spanish and Russian in college.

From an early age, Solaar was passionate about music. He had been listening to rap music throughout his teenage years. In 1990, at the age of 21, the young rapper went into the studio to start recording a series of demo tapes.

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Most typically, hip hop consists of one or more rappers who chant semi-autobiographic tales, often relating to a fictionalized counterpart, in an intensely rhythmic lyrical form, making abundant use of techniques such as assonance, alliteration and rhythm.

Assonance is the repetition of similar vowel sounds usually close together (also called vocalic rhyme). In the song *Get up and rap,* Solaar (2001a *)* uses the following internal rhymes:

1. the Sound [ɔ̃] is repeated:

   Pour parfaire m**on** flow et m**on** vocabulaire
   To master my flow and my vocabulary.

2. The sound [i] and [u] are repeated:

   Pur st**y**le de Sn**i**per cam**ou**flage paw- m**ou**che
   Pure style of sniper camouflage like a fly's paw.

3. The sound [i:] is repeated:

   C'est de la w**ee**d quand j' d**ea**le des messages barges
   It's about weed when I deal barjes messages

4. In the song, *The beautiful and the bad boy,* (2001b), the sounds [y] and [i] are repeated:

   Un vrai tr**u**c de ouf st**y**le p**ur** cl**i**p de R&B
   A true kind of an insane style, pur R&B clip

5. In the song *After-effects* (1994a), the sound [i] is repeated four times in the following two verses:

   Mais M**i**ss me nomme L**illi**put comme chez Sw**i**ft/
   Du fait de mon mètre soixante-d**i**x-huit.
   But Miss names me Lilliput as at Swift /
   Because of my seventy-eight meter.

6. The sound [wa] is repeated three times:

   S**ois** belle et s**ois** t**oi**-même, va pas te faire lifter'
   be beautiful, be yourself, don't go have a lift surgery] (1994 b).

Other stylistic devices used in Solaar's songs are alliterations and consonances.

> The word alliteration means 'repeating and playing upon the same letter, usually the repetition of initial consonant sounds in two or more neighboring words or syllables. Alliteration differs from consonance insofar as alliteration

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requires the repeated consonant sound to be at the beginning of each word, where in consonance it is anywhere within the word, although often at the end. (http://www.as.uni-heidelberg.de/projekte/rhetorics/rhf_phon.html.)

Examples:

1.Alliteration and consonance of the sound [d] in the above mentioned song *Get up and rap:*

C'est **d**e la wee**d** quand j' **d**eale **d**es messages barges.
It's about weed when I deal barjes messages].

2. Alliterations and consonances of the sound [m]:

Moie je clique **m**es ri**m**es co**mme** un shoot de **M**aradona
Me, I click my rhymes like a shoot of Maradona. (1994c),

3.Alliteration and consonance of the sounds [m], [l] and [s] in the same song:

Mais **Miss me** no**mme Lilliput** co**mme** chez **S**wift
Du fait de **m**on **m**ètre **s**oi**x**ante-di**x**-huit'.
But Miss names me Lilliput as at Swift
Because of my seventy-eight meter] (1994 d).

The above mentioned examples best illustrate the two phonological figures: alliterations and consonances. Solaar uses the above mentioned phonological figures (assonances, alliterations, consonances) to 'motivate' the sounds he articulates and to achieve musical and *incantory* effects. These stylistic devices reinforce or expand the meaning of the underlying words. They invoke emotional or sensual experiences in the listener/reader. "The focus on the text for its own sake is the poetic function of language" (Jakobson 1960: 356). In addition, words which sound alike mean alike. In other words, sounds structure meaning and create word-fields. .

Solaar's effort to "motivate" the sounds he articulates is exactly what poetic structure seeks to do to maximize the auditory aspect of language. The focus on the various uses of poetic features creates a particular 'style' in his songs.
In *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (2000),* style is defined as the way in which something is said, done, expressed, or performed: *a style of speech and writing.*

Solaar's music style is a soft rap; a French mix of rap and Jazz. In Jazz and rap music, an individual performs a linear piece on top of a rhythm section. The art of both forms is respectively in the "phrasing" and in the "delivery" or "flow". In Jazz, the performer's style of rhythmic delivery of ideas is melodic and harmonic (musical), in rap, the verbal flow is dominant. In the song *To ten*

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of my Disciples, Solaar's style (fusion of jazz and rap) puts more emphasis on music and rhythm:

Le Jazz exprime depuis ses origines
Un feeling non mercantile, une profondeur de style.
C'était de la musique humaine évolutive,
Une révolution musicale, une résistance active.
[…]
Si le rap excelle, le Jazz en est l'étincelle
The Jazz expresses since its origins
A nonmercantile feeling, a depth of style.
It was an evolutionary human music,
A musical revolution, an active resistance
[...].
If the rap excels, jazz is its spark. (1994e).

In the song Solaar *Power*, Solaar's music and style is also defined by the following lexical field: "le pouvoir de la soul" [the power of soul], "l'esprit de la Soul" [the spirit of soul], "rythme" [rhythm] and "moove" [move].
Solaar is known for the complexity and poetry of his songs, which rely on wordplay and jazz rhythm defined as sensual 'grooves' word used in describing rhythmic momentum

Lexical borrowing from English, though increasingly frequent in the French population as a whole, has been prevalent among the young, particularly, in the fields of music (George 1993: 161-62). Code-switching is unavoidable in the specialized domain of music. There isn't any conventional translation in French of the words "soul", "jazz" or "rap".

Although there isn't any French verb for "*to rap,* the term "rapper" pronounced [rapay] has made its way into the French vernacular.

There are several social factors involved in the formation of French rap. The influence of the American media in French popular culture is one of the main factors. Since the privatization of French radio and television broadcasting in 1981, independently owned stations started playing foreign music (including hip hop/rap music) which presented new musical styles to the public. This has also meant an introduction of vulgar, derivatives English words and slang into the French vocabulary and in French and Francophone rap music (Prévos1998) in particular.

In the songs Solaar *Power* and *The New Western* (1994f), Solaar uses vulgar words such as "shit" when he refers to drugs (i.e. crack cocaine) and to convey alarm. "Oh shit!" In the song *Solaar weeps* (2001c), the vulgar slang "fuck" in the expression "Fuck la terre, si je meurs voici mon testament" *[Fuck the world, if I die, here is my testament]* is used as a signal of angry dismissal.

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In solaar' songs derivatives English words are created by adding the French suffix '-er' to create verbs such as "chiller" [to chill], (*Devotion* 1994g), "lifter" [to lift] and "stopper" [to stop] (*The End Justifies the means* 1994h).
In the above mentioned song *Solaar weeps*, the singer mentions his encounter with angels: "je trippe avec les anges" [I trip with angels]. The French verb "tripper" [to trip] is a drug slang term which means to take LSD (also called acid). In the context of the song, death is a dreamlike experience (distorted visions of angles) for the brain similar to experiencing the effect of a hallucinatic drug.

Lexical borrowing adds new words in the French lexicon. The derivative words undergo morphological changes in order to reflect the French structural pattern.

In the song *Baby love*, the verb "love" is inflected to keep both the French structural pattern and meaning:

> Mais ne sois pas trop attirée par ce qui te déconcerte
> Prends ton temps quand tu te loves
> Auprès de ton love. Petite Baby Love.
> But don't be too attracted by what you don't know
> Take your time to love yourself
> Near the object of your love, little baby love (2001d)

Lexical borrowing has syntactic and aesthetic effects in the recipient language (French). The word "love" has multiple functions and meanings: On one hand, "loves" replaces in the lyrics, the French verb "aimer" [to love]. The verb is assigned the (second person singular) inflectional morpheme 's', in order to preserve the French grammatical structure. On the other, the word "love" is used both as a common noun "love" and a proper noun "Love".

Derivative forms may appear to stand between the two languages. Some of these forms are doubly unconventional in that they are not only foreign elements but are non- standard within English usage.
In the prelude to the music video *The Good, The Bad*, the song lyrics alternate between French and non Standard English:

> MC Solaar: C'est longtemps depuis qu'on a vu Guru Gangstarr.
> C'est pas cool, s'il venait à Paris?
> [MC Solaar: It's been a long time since we've seen Guru Gangstarr
> It will be fly [very cool] if he comes to Paris]
> […]
> Guru (on phone): Hello – Who dis? Solaar! What up Man? Yeah!
> No I'm comin' man. I know I'm late Yo! Hold up for me
> (1993)

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Solaar is in Paris. He calls Guru Gangstarr who is in New York. The conversation begins with an informal greeting. The term “what up?” is a slang that means *what's going* on? or *how are you*? and “yo” is an interjection, a slang used to attract someone's attention. At the end of the telephone conversation, Guru leaves to meet Solaar in Paris.

Then the two begin their song about the contradictions of life in respective cities. In the song, the lyrics alternate between French and English. The singers portray urban life and its sometimes violent nature. Each singer takes turns to ‘expose’ the plights of African- Americans in Brooklyn, New –York and ‘poverty’ and the ‘critical situation’ in the suburbs of Paris.

As a music collaborator, ‘mentor’ and friend, Guru warns Solaar not get involved with the “*posse*’ (a slang word), a gang of rappers involved in crimes such as running guns and illegal narcotics. Rappers have to consider what kind of message they are sending out. Some rappers try to show that, in order to survive in such a violent atmosphere (inner cities or ghettoes); people must look after their own self-interests and do what is necessary to take care of themselves including joining gangs. For those gangs who are involved in violence, crime and killing, guns have become the 'must-have' status symbol. Guru and Solaar sing about brotherly love, respect, political and social resistance.

In the song *An angel in Danger,* Solaar calls for social change and the end of human suffering without resorting to violence:

> Me faire entrer dans un gang? T'es ouf ou wak?
> [To get myself into a gang? Are you crazy or wack?]
> (1994i).

The word ‘*wak*’ (English slang) is the synonym of ‘ouf’ in verlan (French slang). Solaar code- switches in French-English to emphasize the meaning. Exaggeration is used for serious effect. Verlan is a form of French slang that consists of playing around with syllables:

Words from standard French are easily transformed into “verlan” by the following basic methods. The simplest method involves dividing the word into its composite syllables and swooping the order of these syllables around so that initial syllables come last, that is inversion. So if we take the word “tomber” [*to fall*] this divides into “tom'+'ber”. Swooping the order of these two, we get “béto”' (the spelling of “verlan” words represents their pronunciation, we note in this example that the word final sound *-er* of “tomber” is written *-é* when it occurs in the middle of a word, but the sound is nevertheless the same).

In forming certain words of “verlan”, another sound is added. For example, an additional vowel sound is added after the final 'f' of the clipped word “prof'” [*prof*] so that this single syllable word can be divided into two syllables, “pro'”

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and "fe". These syllables can then be inverted, to produce the verlan word "fepro". *http://www.well.ac.uk/cfol/argot.asp.*

In the song *The Good, the Bad*, in particular, Guru's language (African American English) and slang mirrors non-standard French (verlan). Solaar and Guru's language represents a 'speech community' (Hymes 1964: 385) This speech is not linguistically and physically located in the same sphere (suburbs of Paris (France) vs. Brooklyn, New York (US), but is bound by sociopolitical conditions.

Moreover, the use of both non-standard French and English constitutes a symbolic act of social and linguistic resistance and subversion. The 'average Frenchman' today believes that the use of English and American Words in French is bad (Ager 1990: 225). French culture has come under increasing pressure with the widespread availability of English media. The *Académie Française* [The French Academia] has tried to prevent the Anglicization of the French language. For example, some loanwords from English (such as "software" and "walkman") are avoided in favor of words derived from French (*logiciel* and *baladeur*, respectively). Hagège (1987: 105-113) is of the opinion that linguistic purism is a covert attitude against American influence and *domination* in the world. Attempts to control language uses have failed to some extent. For example, a new award called the "English Doormat Academy" was created in 1999. It awards annual prizes to individuals who promote the domination of American English in France. "The first winner was Renault chairman Louis Schweitzer, for insisting on using American English in its internal board meeting, despite the fact that everyone present was French." www.globalpolicy.org/globaliz/cultural/2002/0326verlan.htm.

Solaar is a "bilingual rebel" (*To ten of my disciples*). An attempt to control language is an infringement on his personal liberty. Code-switching in nonstandard French-English represents a symbolic act of rebellion against mainstream French society. Solaar's music is the voice of the disenfranchised black and Islamic minorities in France (*Like in a movie* 1996). Solaar sees himself as a social actor. The use of non-standard English and French shows solidarity with particular social groups in France and in the US. In this case, rap language and music becomes the "universalizing of a particular experience" (Bourdieu 1984: 19).

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CHAPTER NINE

COCKS AND GRRRLS: A BRIEF HISTORY FROM THE OXFORD ENGLISH DICTIONARY

AMY SHINBARGER AND BARBARA G. NELSON

1. Introduction

Examining the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) provides us with the contextual background on *girl, boy, woman, lady* and *man*. In its earliest usage, *girl* was a young person of either sex. This definition fades out by 1450 and, in 1530, evolves to a female child. The OED defines *grrrl* as a young woman perceived as strong or aggressive; it first appears in 1992 (OED). *Boy'*s original meaning in 1300 was a male child below the age of puberty; its secondary meaning, which appears in 1320, refers "playfully, affectionately, or slightingly, to a young man, or one treated as such," suggesting an interchangeability between *boy* and *man.* (OED)

The earliest definition of *woman*, which appears in 893 C.E., was an adult female human being, but according to the OED, the context is not clear whether it appears specifically to sex or age. By 950 C.E. *woman* begins to refer specifically to the female human being. *Man*, which appears in 1175 C.E., also began as irrespective of sex. The meaning that we are most familiar with, namely "An adult male human being, contrasted with a woman" began approximately 1200 C.E (OED). *Chick* as a word which specifically refers to a young woman first appeared in 1927. Part of the connotation of the word *chick* is that a young girl is like a baby chicken: immature, fluffy, cute and utterly harmless. While males are not exempt from animalistic references, the context and age is slightly different. Men can be called *cocks*, which comes from the original meaning of the male of the common domestic fowl, the female being the *hen*, but as *cock* also means penis, that connotation is likewise present. It is this meaning that is evoked in the phrase *cock rock* 1) *slang*, rock music, esp. heavy metal, characterized by the ostentatious male sexuality of its lyrics and performance; it originates in 1971 and Led Zeppelin is a commonly cited example. (OED)

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It is intriguing to consider which entries are left out of the OED, as *gURL, dudette*, and *womyn* are not found. *gURL* can denote an empowered young cyber female, which is an important addition to a medium that is still very male-centered. *Womyn* and *dude* will be examined next, and *gURL* will receive treatment in the literature review.

In the ‘80s and ‘90s, *womyn* was suggested by feminists as a more neutral possibility for *woman* because it “avoided the suggestion of sexism perceived in the sequence m-e-n” (Infospeak). It often has specific connotations in the feminist lesbian community. In the way that *the boys* and *the girls* can be communal, *womyn* has also become communal to represent united *womyn* as a political, active and vocal force. For instance, the Michigan Womyn’s Music Festival is a music festival for *womyn* and by *womyn*, with an emphasis on lesbian *womyn*.

Similar to *guy, dude* began to be referred to women and to be used by women in the mid ‘70s, but its use was most popular in the mid-1980s. Interestingly, *dudette* as the feminine form of *dude* never caught on. One of the reasons for this is perhaps because *dude* is often used to refer to both men and women. “Perhaps the first mainstream display of this usage appeared in the 1987 movie *Less than Zero*, in which there is a scene where a young woman defiantly tells her mother, "No way, dude!” (answers.com). Indeed, even American Heritage Dictionary recognizes this in their definition of *dude* as "Persons of either sex." (American Heritage Dictionary)

2. Girls, ladies, and women (literature review):

Bebout (1984, 1995) examines the use of the word pairs *lady/gentleman*, *woman/man*, and *girl/boy* in 1984 and again in 1994. She concludes that *woman* has surpassed *girl* in popularity in reference to females of university age and that, in the 1994 data, *women* could be as young as 16-18, as judged by both females and males. Likewise, the maximum ages for both *girl* and *boy* decreased, with the largest segment of respondents in 1994 indicating that *girl* applies to females 8-12 or younger and *boy* applies to males 12-13 or younger. While *guy* was not an option on her 1984 survey, the 1994 version demonstrates a strong preference for male participants and young (30 and under) female participants to refer to males in all age categories as *guys*. McConnel-Ginet (1980) finds that *guy* is also broadening to encompass groups that include both males and females. In contrast, Gillespie (1994) finds *girl* to be used as a solidarity marker among adult females.

Meier (1999) proposes that *lady* is undergoing a lexical adjustment, from the previous perception of a female who is well-mannered, soft-spoken, and refined to one who is sophisticated and gutsy and that younger females have a greater

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preference to be called *lady* than do older females. Like Bebout, she finds that *female* is replacing *woman* in association with high status professions such as lawyers and professors. This runs contrary to the research of Miller and Swift (1980), who report that *female* is disparaging except in scientific contexts, and Meier (1999, 65) suggests that it too is undergoing a process of lexical adjustment: “Perhaps *female* is currently perceived to carry less connotational baggage than *lady* or *woman*.”

Peters, Collins, and Smith (2002) examine corpus data for patterns of gender marking between 1961 and 1991 and find that, in British, American, and New Zealand Englishes, usage of *lady* decreased and usage of *woman* increased over the 30-year scope of their research. They also find that, in the workplace, *girl* in reference to an adult female can be perceived as a denial of competence and a relegation to subordinate status. Sigley, Sigley and Holmes (2002) report that *girl* is three times more likely than *boy* to be used in reference to an adult. Peters, Collins, and Smith (2002) elucidate that *boys* in the workforce are typically in low-level jobs that are often performed by school-age people, and that *boys* have the potential to gain status and become *men* (*delivery boy* becomes *delivery man*; *newsboy* becomes *newsman*) but *girls* in the workforce is a less age-contingent usage and provides less space for “growing up.”

Anything computer-related is still stereotyped as male territory, and, consequently, usage of gender references associated with computer gaming or in cyberspace may not reflect those of society at large, but they do reflect a substantial and primarily young segment of society which will continue to shape language for many decades to come. There seems to be a strong tendency for members of the gaming industry to refer to female gamers, regardless of their age, as some derivation of the term *girls*. It is sometimes spelled the traditional way, but equally often spelled in some alternative variation, either *girlz, grrrls/z*, or *gURLs*. The spelling *grrrls* is borrowed from the *Riot Grrrl* ([post]feminist punk rock) music movement of the early 1990s, where it was also used as a term of empowerment.

This study is a qualitative exploration of the use of gender terms in popular culture, encompassing the discourse of music, television, movies, and computer gaming and cyber cultures. We hypothesize that, in spite of recent studies that present contradictory findings, popular culture data suggest a lexically-expanded usage of *girl* which does not necessarily specify that the person in reference is a child, nor does it patronize her if she is in fact an adult. Likewise, *boy* is becoming more age-encompassing and acceptable for use in reference to adult males.

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3. Girlz, grrrls, gURLs: Growing into girldom

Bebout (1995,170) finds that ladies are perceived to be "refined, dignified, and sophisticated," whereas women are independent, capable, and carry an element of sexuality not associated with ladies. While *woman* was certainly used prior to the 1960s, such as in the Gershwin's "Bess, You Is My Woman Now," from the 1935 musical *Porgy and Bess*, the usage was less frequent, and *lady* dominated as the preferred usage. For example, staying in the musicals vein, 1955 yielded Rogers and Hart's "The Lady Is a Tramp," and *tramp* certainly features the element of sexuality associated with *woman*. However, by the 1960s, the women's movement had made its impact in the English language. In 1962, Peggy Lee sang of all the things she was capable of doing "'Cause I'm a woman! W-O-M-A-N, I'll say it again." Seven years after Lee sang of women's capabilities, all-male band Led Zeppelin gave us "Living, Loving Maid (She's Just a Woman)." Bob Dylan, likewise, referred to females as *women* in his 1966 "Just Like a Woman" but provided a contrast in the lyrics,

> She takes just like a woman, yes, she does
> She makes love just like a woman, yes, she does And she aches just like a woman
> But she breaks just like a little girl.

In 1965, The Temptations sang about the bringer of sunshine on a cloudy day and warmth in the cold as "My Girl," and, in 1967, Jimi Hendrix released "Foxy Lady," reverting to the earlier-preferred usage, but, as with Rogers and Hart's lady, Hendrix's included a blatant element of sexuality, suggesting that the social forces that lead to the preference for *women* also widened many people's connotations of *lady*.

The music of the 1970s reflected the continuation of this linguistic struggle, with Carole King's (1970) "Natural Woman," The Doors' (1971) "LA Woman," Helen Reddy's (1972) "I Am Woman (Hear Me Roar)," and Bob Marley's (1974) "No Woman, No Cry." In 1976, the television show *Wonder Woman* premiered, but still, some, primarily male, artists continued to refer to adult females as *ladies*. In their 1973 song "Over the Hills and Far Away," Led Zeppelin provided, "Hey lady, you got the love I need," and in 1975, Styx sang "Lady." In 1970, Peggy Seeger, sister of the more-widely recognized Pete Seeger, sang of the struggle of females at that time and used the gender references to strengthen her point:

> Momma told me, Can't you be a lady Your duty is to make me the mother of a pearl…
> … But I'll fight them as a woman, not a lady.

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By the 1980s, people knew which side of the *lady/woman* debate they were on. In 1980, John Lennon released "Woman," and Kenny Rogers released the Lionel Richie-written song "Lady." Moon Unit Zappa emerged on the scene as a "Valley Girl" in 1982, and the seed of a new incarnation of *girl* began to germinate. Males still referred to females as *girls*, such as Rick Springfield's 1981 "Jessie's Girl." By the time *Valley Girl*, the movie, was released in 1983 and Cyndi Lauper sang "Girls Just Want to Have Fun" in 1985, *girl* was once again emerging as a preferred reference for adult females. In 1986, the Beastie Boys riffed that all they really wanted was "Girls." In 1987, Motley Crue sang "Girls, Girls, Girls," The Dead Milkmen sang "Punkrock Girl," and Lionel Richie finally showed some signs of (delayed) evolution and released "Deep River Woman." In 1985, Ms. R–E-S-P-E-C-T herself, Aretha Franklin, teamed with Annie Lennox in the Annie Lennox and Dave Stewart penned "Sisters Are Doin' It for Themselves," an anthem for strong women that rivaled the fortitude of Franklin's 1965 hit "Respect." Specifically, it suggests that "We've got doctors, lawyers,[and] politicians too" amongst all of the other jobs that sisters were taking on in the early '80s. Likewise, Enjoli's use of Peggy Lee's song "I'm a Woman" in their advertisements suggested that the women of the '80s could do it all.

Yet as the '80s faded into the '90s, that change also brought the possibility of greater gender equality. As the children who were born in the '80s began to mature, there was a greater focus on youth-driven programming. The '90s, after all, gave us *Beverly Hills 90210*, *Clueless* and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. These shows all featured strong teenaged girls who also managed to maintain their femininity. In 1990, *Beverly Hills 90210* premieres and shows the audience the triumphs and tribulations of beautiful rich teenagers in this exclusive zip code. It portrayed teenagers as having real problems and addressed issues like teen pregnancy, drug abuse, etc. Perhaps to reassure its audience, it is fairly conservative in its references to gender, and, unlike *Clueless* and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, does not create its own slang. Thus, there is this line spoken by Steve Sanders: "Girls mature faster than guys;" in this quote, it is fairly clear that *guys* means young men as opposed to a more gender-inclusive meaning ("The Back Story" 1992). However, both *Clueless* and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* are a reaction to this show: *Clueless*, by being an ironic glimpse into the vainness of Beverly Hills and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, by showing a high school that is quite literally hell. In the 1995 movie *Clueless*, *Betty* refers to an attractive young woman, while *Baldwin* (after the infamous actor brothers) refers to an attractive young man; that this movie uses names to refer to these ideas shows its obsession with labels and its materialistic nature (*Clueless* 1995). In 1997, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, written by Joss Whedon, premieres, and with it comes strong female characters who could be girls and kick butt.

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This show also focuses on what it is like to be a teenage girl with superhuman powers. In the 1997 “Halloween” episode, Buffy dresses like a noble woman of the 1800s, to impress her Vampire boyfriend Angel who was alive then. The reason she gives is as follows: “I just wanted to be a real girl for once. The kind of fancy girl you liked when you were my age.” (“Halloween” 1997) Tellingly, at the end of the episode, Angel and Whedon reassure both Buffy and its female viewers that being different is preferable than being typical:

> Angel: I hated the girls back then. Especially the noblewomen.
> Buffy: You did?
> Angel: They were just incredibly dull. Simpering morons, the lot of them. (“Halloween” 1997)

Again and again, Whedon reinforces that *girls* can be *women* in the Buffyverse. This is shown in the following exchange between Willow and Buffy as they try and adjust to college in the 1999 episode, “Living Conditions:”

> Willow: “I mean, my roomie is kinda challenging too.”
> Buffy: “And what are we, if not women up to a challenge?”
> Willow: “Exactly. I mean, did we not put the “grrr” in girl?” (“Living Conditions” 1999)

This change is mirrored in song as well, as it was becoming increasingly evident that *girl* was an acceptable and empowered way for both females and males to refer to adult females. The 1990 song, “Hey Ladies,” by the Beastie Boys celebrates girls and ladies who are their equals in relationships. They said,

> Hey ladies in the place I'm callin' out to ya
> There never was a city kid truer and bluer
> There's more to me than you'll ever know…
> …Girls with curls and big long locks
> And beatnik chicks just wearing their smocks.

Though there is a level of objectification to this statement, there is also an element of demand that their female companions must be worthy. In other words, the boys are complex and they seek this complexity in their women. In 1991, Queen Latifah sang about herself as a “Fly Girl,” folk rock duo Indigo Girls carried their name proudly, though, in 1992, they released their song “Joking,” in which Amy Ray sings, “I’m a dying man, and I don’t know what for.” The *girl* had grown into a…*man*? In 1993, folk singer Dar Williams sang the opposite, that she was once a *boy* but grew into an adult female, in her song “When I Was A Boy.” Folk singer Ani DiFranco had emerged by the early

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1990's, and she consistently refers to herself as a *girl* in her lyrics, often in quite powerful contexts: in 1995, in "Not a Pretty Girl," she doesn't deny wanting to be pretty, but rather claims she wants to be more:

> I am not a pretty girl that is not what I do. I ain't no damsel in distress. And I don't need to be rescued. So put me down punk. Maybe you'd prefer a maiden fair.
> Isn't there a kitten stuck up a tree somewhere.

Female music fans had found the decade's empowered anthem, and, while DiFranco consistently refers to herself as a *girl*, she is equally consistent in her references to adult males by the appropriate parallel, *boys*, as in "You're the only boy I ever let see through me" from "Light of Some Kind." However, in "Hour Follow Hour," from the same 1995 album, she sings, "Every time I move, I make a woman's movement." As she fails to deviate from her pattern of referring to herself as a *girl* elsewhere, it is suggested that this reference is in fact an homage to the women's movements. This strong *girl* also appears in Mary-Chapin Carpenter's song, "Girls with Guitars," which Wynonna Judd covers in 1993. The fact that such empowerment is seen in the genre of country, still a male-dominated genre, is significant. In this song, Carpenter recounts the story of a girl who wants to be a musician instead of a cheerleader or a debutante. After she earns her college degree, she resists her parents' desire for a career in law or medicine. She instead decides to make it on her own as a musician:

> Now there's an old chevy van just sittin' in the driveway
> Filled to the gills with all her stuff. . .
> . . . She gets the audition through a friend of a friend
> Who's checkin' out her legs, sayin', This'll never work
> She flips on her boogie and turns to the band
> Gives a little grin and blows away the jerk
> Girls with guitars, now everybody's rockin'
> Girls with guitars, there ought to be a song about girls with guitars
> There's just no stoppin' those girls with guitars
> Get your money for nothin' and your guys for free.

Carpenter's song suggests that the emergence of powerful *girls* had appeared in country music in the early 1990s; these girls were the female country artists who demanded to be recognized for their talent as well as their beauty. It also contains an intertextual reference to the 1984 Dire Straits and Sting collaboration "Money for Nothing," which features the lyrics, "Get your money for nothing and your *chicks* for free." Also in 1995, No Doubt's single "Just a Girl" was ubiquitous on pop stations, followed, in 1996, by Garbage's "Stupid

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Girl." Colombian alternative rockers Aterciopelados demonstrated that a similar evolution was occurring in Spanish when, in 1996, Andrea Echeverri sang, "Soy una chica dificil, pero yo valgo la pena" (I'm a difficult girl, but I'm worth the pain). In 1997, The Spice Girls appeared, with their constant proclamations of "Girl Power!" In 1997, Meredith Brooks demonstrated the complexity of modern females in her lyrics, "I'm a bitch, I'm a lover, I'm a child, I'm a mother, I'm a sinner, I'm a saint, I do not feel ashamed." *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* also began its celebration of girl power in 1997. This is shown in the following quote from the 1998 episode "Faith, Hope and Trick," in which Buffy discusses her desire to be a normal slayer: " All right... yes, date, and hang out and go to school and save the world from unspeakable demons. You know, I wanna do girlie stuff" ("Faith, Hope and Trick" 1998). In 1999, Cordelia, a character in Whedon's *Angel*, also lays claim to her identity as a complicated woman; she identifies herself as stronger than Buffy: "I am not a sniveling whiny little cry-Buffy. I'm the nastiest girl in Sunnydale history. I take crap from no one" ("Rm.w/a Vu" 1999). She will not be dominated, but instead be dominant over all. In 1998, we saw the first episode of the cartoon superheroines *Powerpuff Girls*. While the female artists of the 1990s demonstrated a clear awareness of the continuing struggle of females, they were not alone in this endeavor; in 1993, Tupac released his own tribute to the empowered female, "Keep Ya Head Up."

By the time the millennium changed, it seemed that adult females were welcome to be *women, ladies, girls*, or anything else they preferred, without implications of disempowerment. In 2000, television viewers were introduced to three generations of Gilmore Girls. The title *Gilmore Girls* includes all three "girls," Emily, (the grandmother) Lorelai (the 32-year-old daughter) and Rory (the 16-year-old granddaughter), so, it is using *girl* in the communal sense, not unlike the previously mentioned *womyn* and similar to being "one of the *guy*s." No longer is *girls* necessarily indicative of age or maturity level, as all three demonstrate varying levels of maturity at different points, with Rory, the youngest, often seeming to be the most mature. The three cooperatively provide a simplified, but continually shifting, version of the maiden, mother, and crone trinity. The following quotes bear this out:

> [Lorelai answers her cell phone]
> **Lorelai**: Hello?
> **Emily**: You get over here right now!
> **Lorelai**: Who is this?
> **Emily**: This is you in twenty years! "Who is this?", I swear. (2001)
> **Rory**: [to Lorelai] What am I doing? I'm ranting. You should recognize this, I learned it from you. (2001)

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This sense of the empowerment explicit in being a girl is also demonstrated in 2002, when *Angel*'s Cordelia identifies herself as a "cheerleader, a princess and a warrior;" this statement suggests, once again, that she can be both strong and glamorous ("Spin the Bottle" 2002). Likewise, the significance of Buffy's name is that a slayer with stupendous powers can have a name that sounds like a Valley Girl, but this irony does not go unchallenged. In the 2003 episode "End of Days," a moment of disconnect occurs when it is revealed that "Buffy" is in fact the "Chosen girl," as the monsters cannot believe a slayer would have such a name:

Guardian: What's your name?
Buffy: Buffy
Guardian: No, really? ("End of Days" 2003)

Though her name sounds as if she is a "bubbleheaded blonde," Buffy, who kills vampires on a regular basis, has excellent fighting skills and saves her high school peers regularly, is clearly empowered. (Pender 2004, 2).

This alteration of acceptable options of terms to use in reference to empowered females continues today and is demonstrated recently in Green Day's 2004 lyrics, "She's an extraordinary girl in an ordinary world," from *American Idiot* and in Damien "Jr. Gong" Marley's 2005 song "Hey Girl," which is mirrored by a female singer replying "Hey boy." Likewise, Iron and Wine's 2005 album and song "Woman King," points to a strong feminine identity in its lyrics, "Someday we may see a woman king." This song, in conjunction with the instant oatmeal commercial from the early 2000s in which a mother looks out the window and declares her daughter, standing atop a mound of snow, king of the hill, demonstrates an awareness among non-language scholars of the markedness of feminine terms, still, or else why not refer to both as *queen*? Clearly, a *king*, either male or female, has more power than a *queen*. This movement towards female kings came long after male queens, which leads to the conclusion that either title may now be available for all, regardless of gender, though male queens still carry a connotation of homosexuality not present in the above examples of female kings.

With this pro-girl stance came many strong female roles where the girls could be both physically strong and "girly," intelligent and "girly" at the same time. In *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, Whedon subverts the notion of strength and beauty, as he made its heroine, Buffy, a girl who likes clothes, shopping, and boys and isn't necessarily the smartest or the most popular person in her class. Her initial female foils are Willow, a smart well-rounded computer hacker and Cordelia, the most popular girl in school. The fact that Buffy's message is received by its target audience, teenage girls, as well as academics, television critics and feminists shows that his attempts have succeeded. Patricia Pender, in

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her work, "'Kicking Ass is Comfort Food:' Buffy as Third Wave Feminist Icon," pinpoints the appeal of Buffy kicking ass in the following quote: "For the feminist viewer, the spectacle of Buffy kicking ass is similarly comforting; equally, exhilarating and empowering, Buffy provides the compound pleasures of both the hot chick and her superpowers" (Pender 2004, 4).

While *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* specifically suggests that girls can be strong and girly, *Gilmore Girls* specifically suggests that Emily, Lorelai and Rory are *girls* as well as *women*. There is also an emergence of a matriarchal line in the naming of Lorelai and her daughter Rory. Emily and Richard Gilmore name their daughter after her paternal grandmother, Lorelai Gilmore. Lorelai, the 16-year-old single mother, then names her infant daughter, Lorelai Gilmore (always called Rory), so that Rory can carry on the name. Eventually, Rory will become the "reigning Lorelai," and hence will inherit all the responsibilities implicit in the title:

> **Lorelai**: So, apparently, I'm now the Reigning Lorelai.
> **Rory**: Huh. I guess you are.
> **Lorelai**: It's a lot of responsibility.
> **Rory**: Well, sure.
> **Lorelai**: I mean, it's mostly ceremonial stuff nowadays. Declaring knighthoods, opening supermarkets. But now and then, you get to banish someone or pose for a stamp.
> **Rory**: Neat. And coins.
> **Lorelai**: Yeah, and coins. You know, someday you'll be the Reigning Lorelai. ("The Reigning Lorelai" 2004)

Thus, in conjunction with terminological boundary breaking, the Gilmores also provide an example of matrilineal passing of the family name from generation to generation, a tradition typically reserved for male family members.

4. "A boy tries hard to be a man: Lexical expansion of boy

In 1955, Guys and Dolls began its first run, in 1965, Mary Wells countered The Temptations' "My Girl" with her version, "My Guy," and by 1980, McConnel-Ginet found that *guy* had begun broadening to include females. However, in 1982, The Waitresses' song "I Know What Boys Like" demonstrated a lingering maintenance of the synonymity of *boys* and *guys* in the lyrics, "I know what boys like, I know what guys want." In 1995, Bebout found that males of all ages and females under thirty preferred *guy(s)* to refer to males of all ages, and Ruzycki-Shinabarger (2002) found that both males and females used it in reference to males, but that males used it more heavily than females. In 1999, Clancy suggested that *guy* could not only be inclusive of females but

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could also be used in application to feminine exclusive groups. While *guy* is still most commonly used in reference to males or mixed gender groups, this lexical broadening of *guy*, along with its lack of a socially acceptable feminine equivalent (neither *gals* nor *dolls* seems to be acceptable to younger generations) may have nudged *boy* into a wider array of application, perhaps the semantic equivalent of a vowel push chain.

The newly-broadened *guy*, in association with newly-broadened social definitions of masculinity, worked cooperatively to provide a lexically-broadened *boy* who may not carry the youth traditionally connoted with the term. It is unlikely coincidental that this shift occurred in the same timeframe as the acceptance of metrosexuality and more "high maintenance" straight men. Many questioned whether the metro trend was a fleeting phase or the new direction of masculinity and, either way, if it was, in fact, social progress for males to become more subject to the objectification that many females had been attempting to distance themselves from for generations.

While, not so long ago, referring to someone as a *boy* risked the danger of conjuring connotations involving slavery, it is becoming increasingly common to hear people refer to adult males as *boys* in casual conversation. The Beach Boys conducted their first major tour in 1964, and fans of both the first wave of ska, in the 1960s, and the second wave of ska, beginning in the late 1970s were referred to as *rude boys*, a term still applied to the ska-punk fans of today (their lesser known feminine counterparts were/are the appropriately titled *rude girls*). With the hiphop explosion in the early 1980s came the mainstream introduction to *B-boys* (and their feminine counterparts, *B-girls*) in reference to hiphop fans, particularly those that were breakdancers. According to answers.com, B-boy was coined in 1969 by DJ Cool Herc, in New York City, home of the Boogie Down Borough and The Bronx. While B-boy is not traditionally associated as an abbreviation, it most likely traces back to one of the previously-mentioned B's (Boogie, Bronx, or Break [dance]). In 1981, in Brooklyn, The Beastie Boys were formed. In 1984, in the song "Girl Afraid," The Smiths also sang about a "boy afraid," and, on the *Footloose* soundtrack, Deniece Williams sang, "Let's hear it for the boy, let's hear it for my man, let's hear it for my baby," using the more child-like form as the general and the adult-like form only with a possessive determiner, followed by infantilazation, pushing listeners into a dizzying headspin of references. The *boy* in question is not *a man*, but *her man*, and also *her baby*. In 1983, in Ian MacKaye's pre-Fugazi incarnation, Minor Threat sang of another time, "when boys were boys, girls were girls." Five years later, in Fugazi's most well-known song, "Waiting Room," a then 26-year-old MacKaye began by singing, "I am a patient boy, I wait, I wait, I wait…" In 1989, NWA's song "Boyz in da Hood" and the identically-titled movie provided an example of tough, street-smart adult males referred to as children,

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but, much like its feminine counterpart, the final -s was often replaced with a -z. *Boys/z* became a staple in hiphop for the next few years, and a quick internet search also yields Geto Boys, 5th Ward Boyz, Botany Boyz, The Hot Boys, and The Hard Boys. Folk singer Ani DiFranco consistently refers to herself as a *girl* in her lyrics, so it makes since that she would refer to a male lover as "the only *boy* I ever let see through me" in her 1995 song "Light of Some Kind." In 1997, alternative artists Badly Drawn Boy released their first album and, like DiFranco, provided an additional musical genre shift for the usage. In a case of music inspiring literature (and later, literature inspiring movies), Nick Hornby adapted Nirvana's song title "About a Girl" for the title of his book, *About a Boy*, which features a character who is a Nirvana fanatic. The reference to males as *boys* in popular culture is more frequent than in the recent past but is by no means exclusive. Made famous by their version of "Who Let the Dogs Out," the Bahamian group Baha Men demonstrate preference for a more adult reference. On their 1980 album aptly titled *Boy*, U2 illustrates the struggle of the transition between childhood and adulthood in the lyrics, "In the shadows, boy meets man" and "A boy tries hard to be a man, his mother takes him by his hand..."

Throughout the history of pop music, manufactured groups put together by producers and encompassed entirely of one gender have been referred to as *boy bands* and *girl bands*. It is not uncommon for such bands, typically comprised of singers/dancers who do not play instruments or write songs, to highlight their gender in their names, such as The Backstreet Boys or Boyz 2 Men, and their feminine counterparts such as The Spice Girls. Even still, without further specification, the term *band* used alone typically connotes a group comprised entirely or primarily of males, and the feminine-equivalent (groups such as Go Betty Go, L7, and Indigo Girls, who do play their own instruments and write their own songs) remains awkward and marked, most often appearing in the form of *all-woman bands* or *all-girl bands* (wikipedia.org). While, in the early 1990s, the (post)feminist punk rock movement applied the name *Riot Grrrls*, with a growl, to bands such a Bikini Kill, Rasputina, and Sleater-Kinney, there was no need for *Riot Boys*, because the default punk band was (and remains) comprised entirely or primarily of males.

5. "When I was a boy": cross-gender performativity, sympathetic identity and homosexuality

This linguistic gender evolution has grown to encompass elements of gender identity and sexuality through the study of performativity (Butler 1999), and songs sung by males but from a female perspective and empowering songs about the female condition written by males became more popular. In Pearl

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Jam's 1993 "Daughter," Eddie Vedder sings from a female perspective, "Don't call me daughter, not fit to, the picture kept will remind me." In Fugazi's 1988 song "Suggestion," Ian MacKaye begins singing from the first person singular female perspective: "Why can't I walk down the street free of suggestion? Is my body the only trait in the eyes of men? I've got some skin, do you want to look in?" However, as the song continues, the narrative shifts from first person to third person singular, and the gender of the narrator becomes unidentifiable (and perhaps, more importantly, insignificant), and MacKaye sings, "She does nothing to deserve it, he only wants to observe it," then the narrative shifts once again, this time to first person plural, emphasizing the responsibility of all members of society, when he sings, " We sit back, like they taught us, we keep quiet, like they taught us…we blame her for being there, but we are all guilty."

In his 1993 song "Keep Ya Head Up," Tupac sings about the mistreatment of women from his own masculine perspective but provides insight that many find shockingly sensitive from a self-described "thug," clearly demonstrating that he not only sympathizes, but empathizes:

> You know it makes me unhappy (what's that). When brothas make babies, and leave a young mother to be a pappy. And since we all came from a woman. Got our name from a woman and our game from a woman. I wonder why we take from our women. Why we rape our women, do we hate our women?… …So will the real men get upI know you're fed up ladies, but keep your head up.

Tupac also emphasizes gender fluidity in his reference to single mothers who are forced to be both mothers and fathers. He uses *women* and *ladies* interchangeably but emphasizes the need for "real men," suggesting the term requires a level of both maturity and responsibility. While Tupac offers encouragement, Antibalas apologizes for the mistreatment of women by men in their 2004 song "Sister." Although the song is from the first person singular perspective, the use of the kinship terms *sister* and *brother* suggest that the male singer is apologizing to one half of the human family on behalf of the other half of the human family:

> Sister, oh sister, I come to apologize
> For the time I disrespect you, oh my sister
> Sister, oh sister, I come ask for forgiveness
> For the way I patronize you, oh my sister…

The apology grows into acceptance of male responsibility for the way women have been and continue to be (mis)treated:

> …For what kind of brother I am if I talk my sister like child
> For what kind of brother I am if I chain my sister like dog…

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The song then moves on to a direct address of men and their common fear of feminism and how strong men need not fear either women or the dreaded "f-word," going so far as to provide a role model that men too can identify themselves as such:

Brother, oh brother, I say now go call me "feminist"
For I declare sister good as brother…
…The weak brother no go say it, no, no, no…
…He be fraid, he be fraid of the word-o…
…He be fraid his sister knows her strength
He be fraid his sister smarter than him…
But strong brother no need to fear it at all
Him go feel safe in sister's strength like him brother's…

This sentiment is mirrored in Michael Franti and Spearhead's 2003 song "Crazy, Crazy, Crazy," which is a cry to humanity to unify in general and ends with the repetition of, "No life's worth more than any other, no sister worth less than any brother." In their 2000 song "Little Sister," King Chango narrate the life of a female child whose father has left his family behind in search of providing a better life for by immigrating to the United States for work:

There you go little sister. In a time of so much pain. A family driven by hunger. Your daddy left in the rain. He kissed the wife in tears. Begged the child to be strong. Heading towards the future dreaming. But in the hopeless streets you roam. You gotta be strong little sister. Now that your daddy is gone.

The singer, Blanquito Man, himself immigrated from Venezuela, but his sensitivity to the girl he describes in the song indicates an expanded perspective of masculinity, one that, like Tupac, can not only sympathize, but empathize with her.

Amidst all this gender-switching comes the synth-pop group Book of Love's "Boy." Ted Ottaviano is the songwriter, while Susan Ottaviano is the singer, so we have a woman giving voice to a man's words, not so different from Aretha Franklin and Annie Lennox performing a song co-written by Lennox and Dave Stewart, her male songwriting partner. From 1986, "Boy" describes the plight of a girl who wants to be where the boys are:

I wait outside of the boy's bar
I wait for them to all come out
I'm not a boy

It's not my fault
that I'm not a boy

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it's not my fault
I don't have those toys. . .

. . .And now it's alright
without those boys
I stay at home at night
and I play with my toys

I'm not a boy.

As Book of Love was part of the club scene in the 1990s, it is probable that the "boy's bar" is a gay bar, and the girl is feeling left out of the boys' night out; yet, at the end, she takes pride in her feminine identity and accepts that she is not one of the boys.

Along with songs sung by males from a female perspective and vice versa are references to males using terms traditionally reserved for females and the reciprocal. However, there are elements of homosexuality, both implicit and explicit, associated with these cross-gender references. In the *Real World*, which began in 1992, the gay character became a staple. MTV, as well as other media, provided young gay viewers with more visibility and diversity than there had been in the '80s, when gay characters were often relegated to single "Very Special" episodes or were seen through the gaze of the AIDS crisis. Along with this greater visibility came more diverse terms, often those previously reserved for females, for gay men to use in reference to each other. While *bitch* and *lady* were previously used to specifically refer to women, the terms are now also used regularly by many gay men amongst themselves without necessarily carrying the negative connotations previously associated with them. In Will and Grace, for example, there are both female and gay male *bitches*.

Jack: [to Grace] What I know is, a grown woman shouldn't wear pigtails.
Will: Yeah, what's that about, Pippi?
Grace: You know, I really didn't want to be invited to the 'bitch brunch.' ("Seeds of Discontent" 2000)

Likewise, *ladies* is used similarly in application to both straight women and gay men:

[to Grace and Karen]
Jack: Hey ladies.
[to Will and Jack]
Karen: Hey ladies. ("The Kid Stays Out of the Picture" 2002)

This shifting of the various *bitches* and *ladies* suggests the fluidity of the gender

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identities in *Will and Grace*. This show also points to the strong connections between gay men and straight women, where some of this inclusive slippage probably originated. A similar slippage also occurs in the 2001 movie *Gypsy 83*, as demonstrated in this exchange is between the Goth teen Clive (who is gay) and his best female friend Gypsy (who is straight) and involves Clive's fantasy of a kiss:

> **Clive**: I just want someone to kiss, with big, soft, delicious lips. He'd have to smother me in old-school romance. I mean, candles and incense, Moët and Chandon, but only in a deserted castle in the south of France.
> **Gypsy**: You are so much more of a girl than I ever was. (*Gypsy 83* 2001)

Within the gay community, the term *bitch* can have a more positive and inclusive meaning, as is shown in the previous paragraph with the "bitch brunch" or in the use of the more solidarity-like "we bitches." However, the negative connotation of *bitch* for both males and females does remain within the gay community, with its application mimicking its more traditional, mainstream usage. This is demonstrated in the following exchange from *Will and Grace,* in which Jack refers to Will as a *bitch* in an insulting manner, similarly as to how it is used in the film *Heathers*.

> [Jack is going to work for Grace until Karen returns]
> **Will**: Oh, you girls are going to have a ball, braiding each other's hair and talking about boys and doing the Cosmo quiz.
> **Jack**: Oh, you mean, like, "How To Tell If Your Best Friend's a Bitch?" Yeah, I already took it. You are. ("William, Tell" 1998)

Likewise, in the 1989 movie, *Heathers*, *bitch* is used by a female in application to a female, when the heroine, Veronica Sawyer, addresses Heather Duke, her evil manipulating peer: "Heather, why can't you be a friend? Why do you have to be such a mega-bitch?" (*Heathers* 1989) This usage reinforces the connections between gay men and straight women, who seem to be considered so similar that the same terms are used as insults.

However, connections between usages for gay men and straight men remain. Feminine references like *bitch*, *girl* and *lady* are also used to insult straight males by generally suggesting that they are homosexual or are sexually dominated by the one using the reference (McKenna 1994, Evans and Davies 2000). The element of sexual domination associated with *bitch* is demonstrated in the 1990 film, *Tongues Untied* which explores the oral culture of black gay men. The segment in which this quote occurs is talking about the snaps or the slams that are present in the gay black world: [Spoken to a gay black male)

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"You my Bitch now!" (*Tongues Untied* 1990) This snap uses the word *bitch* as a possessive noun, emphasizing the connotation of a *prison bitch*, an inferior person possessed by the speaker to do whatever he wants to with (wikipedia.org). As a snap, which is meant to demean and show who's boss, it is certainly effective, but, most importantly, even if the snap is spoken to a straight man, the insult and implied ownership are still present. This tendency to refer to people as a different gender in an offensive manner may have decreased over the decades as a result of increased gender equality and acceptance of homosexuality, but evidence of insulting straight males by referring to them *as bitches, ladies, girls, sissies*, or *nancies* and, likewise, referring to straight females as *tomboys*, *butch*, or even considering them *boyish* continues in popular culture.

These references to males with traditionally female terms are matched by references to females with traditionally masculine terms, again, with elements of homosexuality, but these references tend to lack the offensiveness associated with the above data. Openly lesbian Dar Williams sings about her childhood and growing into being a woman in her 1993 song "When I Was a Boy," in which she narrates being a tomboy who rode topless as "a small boy on her bike." but as an adult female, she finds herself in need of a male escort to walk her home at night and tells him, "You can walk me home, but I was a boy too." As the song continues, we find that her male accompanist used to pick flowers, cry, and talk with his mom, that, "I have lost some kindness, but I was a girl too;" however, there is no offensiveness implied in this reference to the male as a *girl*, but rather an expanded gender definition that society forced him to outgrow, and, like the girl who used to be a boy, he is saddened by this reality, because it limits his activities and identification.

It is not uncommon for artists performing the same song to make subtle changes, especially in pronouns, to reflect their gender, such as The Temptations singing "My Girl" and Mary Wells performing the same song as "My Guy," both in 1965, or the myriad versions of "Someone to Watch over Me," which includes the lyrics, "I'd like to add his/her initial to my monogram… won't you tell him/her please to put on some speed…" depending on the gender of the singer. Sometimes a female will cover a song written by a male and opt not to change for perspective, such as when Celia Cruz performs "Guantanamero," based upon a poem by Jose Martí, which begins, "Yo soy un hombre sincero…" (I am a sincere man). Likewise, the Indigo Girls cover Mark Knopfler's song "Romeo and Juliet," but, again, openly lesbian, Amy Ray, who refers to herself as "a dying man" in the song "Joking," sings the song, from Romeo's perspective, including the lyrics, "Juliet, when we made love you used to cry, you said I love you like the stars above, gonna love you till I die." Collectively, this set of lyrics and television soundbytes blurs the lines of gender definition,

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representing varying degrees along the same continuum, from apologizing for stereotyped gender roles, vowing to break those stereotypes, and calling for others to do so as well.

6. Chicas dificiles y nenas lindas

This trend towards age inclusive *girls* and *boys* is noted in Spanish as well. Aterciopelados sing about the empowered adult female as a *chica dificil* (a difficult girl), who is worth the pain, and Ozomatli call out to the members of their audience, with "Oye *chico*… oye *chica*" (listen boy… listen girl). King Chango alternately sing "oye *nena* linda," and "listen pretty baby," and many other artists use the feminine *nena* (little girl), while the masculine *nene* is used far less frequently. Even some artists who code switch or perform primarily in English rely on Spanish gender terms from time to time, including Sublime (whose music is often sprinkled with Spanish) in their song "*Chica* Me Tipo" and Shaggy's "*Chica* Bonita," both of which refer to an adult female as a child. The Clash hailed from England, but singer/songwriter Joe Strummer's father was a diplomat, and Strummer's thusly acquired Castillano comes out through his lyrics on occasion, including in the 1982 song "Straight to Hell," in which he refers to males as both *chico* and *muchacho* (both translate roughly as *boy*).

However, there are an equal number of examples in which maturity or responsibility is emphasized and more adult terms are used, such as in Ozomatli's "Cuando Canto," in which the singer croons, "No soy un *hombre* perfecto, no soy, pero trato mucho" (I'm not a perfect man, I'm not, but I try hard) and Quetzal's "La Pesadilla," in which we hear, "Tengo que ser fuerte, fuerte *mujer*" (I must be strong, a strong woman). It also appears that there may be an association of artists referring to themselves via adult references but to others in a more youthful manner.

Other trends in gender references in English are paralleled in Spanish as well. In English, Meredith Brooks 1997 sings that she is a *bitch*, and Puerto Rican rapper/reggaeton artist Tego Calderon 2004 provides, "*Damas y caballeros, perras y perros*" (ladies and gentlemen, bitches and dogs). While restrooms in Mexico might read *hombres y mujeres*, those in Puerto Rico read the more formal *damas y caballeros*; more interesting is the next line, *bitches and dogs*, or, perhaps more correctly, *bitches and dawgs*. Many young Puerto Rican women address their female friends as *perra*, and *perro* is also common slang to refer to police officers, but the reference to *perras y perros* provides an indication of inclusivity not mirrored in the English *dawg*, which lacks a clear feminine counterpart. The Spanish data sample is too small to draw substantial conclusions from but sets the precedence for more in depth research in the future.

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7. Conclusion

As suggested by popular culture data, today's gender references are not nearly so confining as those of the past. Like Meredith Brooks' "Bitch," adult females today may opt to identify themselves in a multitude of ways, as *girls, ladies, women, chicks, chicas, mujeres, dudes* or *dudettes, guys,* or even *men*, and men are provided a similar range of choices. In sum, we've come a long way, whether or not we're offended by being called *baby*, and this new incarnation of *girl* detracts nothing from *woman* or *lady*, but rather provides strong women with an array of options, an idea at the very core of the feminist revolution.

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Part IV:
Language and Discourse

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CHAPTER TEN

WHAT'S SO FUNNY ABOUT PEACE, LOVE, AND INTERTEXTUALITY? A SOCIOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF *AMERICA (THE BOOK)*

RICHARD W. HALLETT
AND JUDITH KAPLAN-WEINGER

1. Introduction

As a technique, parody, "a subspecies of satire, the genre of making-fun-of" (Chatman 2001:28), is not typical in history textbooks. As non-fiction, textbooks are generally perceived as objective transmitters of a nation's political and cultural history. While some may claim that a text has its own meaning, Barthes (1977:146), for example, views a text as "a multidimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and crash." Schemata theory (See Hodge and Kress 1993:5) and social constructionism (Carbaugh 1996) also view texts as negotiated discourses dependent on interlocutors both applying "pre-formed expectations about structure and content that simplifies information-processing" (Johnstone 2002:81, referencing van Dijk.) and adapting to and influencing each other's interpretations" (Johnstone 2002:231).

This analysis examines the humor of *America (the Book): A Citizen's Guide to Democracy Inaction*, which incorporates written and visual modalities in creating a parodic narrative of American history. These modalities work interdependently in non-parodic texts. In this text, however, these modalities work both interdependently and intertextually to produce messages that inform as well as comment on political and social issues, thus making the book subjective and, in the process, a parody. According to Hutcheon (1989:94), "parody works to foreground the *politics* of representation.... [P]ostmodernist parody is a value-problematizing, de-naturalizing form of acknowledging the history (and through irony, the politics) of representations."

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Exploring the variety of sources that are brought together to create the intertext that is *America (the Book)*, we argue that one might enjoy this book as a self-contained text, but only when one has the appropriate background knowledge of popular culture and history, can one appreciate it as an intertext. Parody writers can exploit the conventions of the history textbook by using different yet compatible, opposite yet overlapping scripts (See Raskin 1985). One's familiarity with textbooks, parodies, and – most importantly – popular culture leads to an appreciation of such a text as an intertext (See Moi 1986). Intertextuality, as explained by Kristeva), denotes the "transposition of one (or several) sign-system(s) into another" (cited in Moi 1986:111). In other words, intertexts derive from the interaction of pre-existing texts, their interpretations, and the newly constructed text. Graham (2000:209) asserts "Intertextuality reminds us that all texts are potentially plural, reversible, open to the reader's own presuppositions, lacking in clear and defined boundaries, and always involved in the expression or repression of the dialogic 'voices' which exist within society." As Hallett and Kaplan-Weinger (in press) have shown in their analysis of *Daily Show with Jon Stewart* – a program which they describe as an intertext stemming from its own form as well as from the incorporation of the traditional American news program frame, viewers' news programming schemata, and viewers' other programming frames – intertexuality can wrest "power from the hegemonic political and media structures and allows it to settle with the populace." They continue, "Through satire, the existing hegemony and its accompanying ideologies are made laughable and are weakened; at the same time, the populace is educated, informed, made knowledgeable and, thereby, strengthened."

2. Humor and Hegemony

America (the Book) is a complement to the Comedy Central program Daily Show with Jon Stewart, which airs Monday through Thursday evenings in the United States. *Daily Show* is a parody of American network news programming that offers summaries of the day's events. In an earlier analysis, Hallett and Kaplan-Weinger (2004), have argued that *Daily Show* serves as a hegemonic force in presenting not only the news, but a parody of and reactions to the news, as well as political leaders and structures that make the news. Recognized for its clever writing and acting, the show was awarded an Emmy for Outstanding Writing for a Variety, Music, or Comedy Program in 2000, 2002, and 2003. Ironically, many viewers now report they get their primary news from this parody, a fact not lost on the Television Critics Association for Outstanding Achievement in News and Information which honored *Daily Show* in 2004 (Piafsky 2005:92). The hegemonic force that *Daily Show* has established has

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resulted in the creation of *America (the Book)* which itself presents and then parodies historical events. In the same way that *Daily Show* provides a parody as well as informs its listeners of the news, *America (the Book),* in parodying the American high school and college history textbook, demonstrates the integral role of background knowledge in the discernment of humor based on intertextuality.

In analyzing the role of intertextuality in the construction and maintenance of humor, we adopt perspective that focuses on the use of strategies of paradigmatic intertextuality (Bakhtin 1986, Kristeva 1986, cited in Fairclough, 1999) and visual semiotic design. Intertextual analysis is a particularly appropriate model for the analysis of satire and its subfield of paraody, as it "selectively draw[s] upon orders of discourse…available to text producers and interpreters in particular social circumstances" (Fairclough, 1999:184). Fairclough explains that texts are dependent "upon society and history in the form of the resources made available within the order of the discourse." He also notes that discourses, narratives, registers, etc. may combine so that, as Kristeva explains, intertextuality is "the insertion of history (society) into a text and of this text into history" (1986:39, cited in Fairclough, 1999). Given Fairclough and Kristeva's claims about the importance of interextuality in and on history, our analysis is especially relevant as *America (the Book)* purports—parodically—to present a history of the nation.[14]

3. Intertextual Analysis

Multimodal in its textual form, i.e., in its use of written and visual texts, *America (the Book)* is an "intertext" in that it has been constructed from a variety of sources. One of the first indications that the book is a parody of a high school history book is the stamp in the inside cover.

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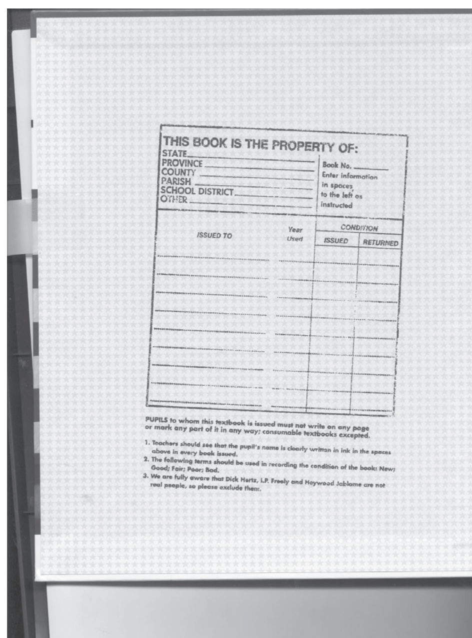

THIS BOOK IS THE PROPERTY OF:
STATE ______
PROVINCE ______
COUNTY ______
PARISH ______
SCHOOL DISTRICT ______
OTHER ______

Book No. ______
Enter information in spaces to the left as instructed

ISSUED TO	Year Used	CONDITION	
		ISSUED	RETURNED

PUPILS to whom this textbook is issued must not write on any page or mark any part of it in any way; consumable textbooks excepted.

1. Teachers should see that the pupil's name is clearly written in ink in the spaces above in every book issued.
2. The following terms should be used in recording the condition of the book: New; Good; Fair; Poor; Bad.
3. We are fully aware that Dick Hertz, I.P. Freely and Heywood Jablome are not real people, so please exclude them.

Fig. 10-1

Those of us who were educated in the United States are familiar with a similar stamp found on the inside cover of our rented or school-supplied textbooks. The positioning of the stamp on the inside cover of the book mimics that of one applied in haste as it is crooked and not fully inked, lending authenticity. As these stamps were/are often applied by hand, they were/are not always perfectly positioned on the page in authentic textbooks. For the most part, the text of the parodic stamp reads as does the one normally found in textbooks, e.g. the stamp has a space for the name of the student to whom the book is issued, the year used, etc. However, what makes this particular stamp parodic is the inclusion of item 3 at the bottom. Following the statement, "The Following terms are to be used in recording the condition of the book: New; Good; Fair; Poor; Bad," there is an additional statement: "We are fully aware that Dick Hertz, I.P. Freely and Heywood Jablome are not real people, so please exclude them." The source of the humor here again is intertextual in nature: each of the names is a phonological joke. "Dick Hertz" is understood as "dick[15] hurts," "I.P. Freely" is read as the sentence "I pee[16] freely," and "Heywood Jablome" is read as "Hey, would you blow[17] me?" In the positioning and size of the stamp, as well as its anticipation of humorous replies that might be supplied

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by a student, the stamp on the inside cover is best appreciated in terms of its intertextuality.

As is also found in many textbooks, *America (the Book)* has a dedication. This one reads 'To the huddled masses, Keep yearnin'!'

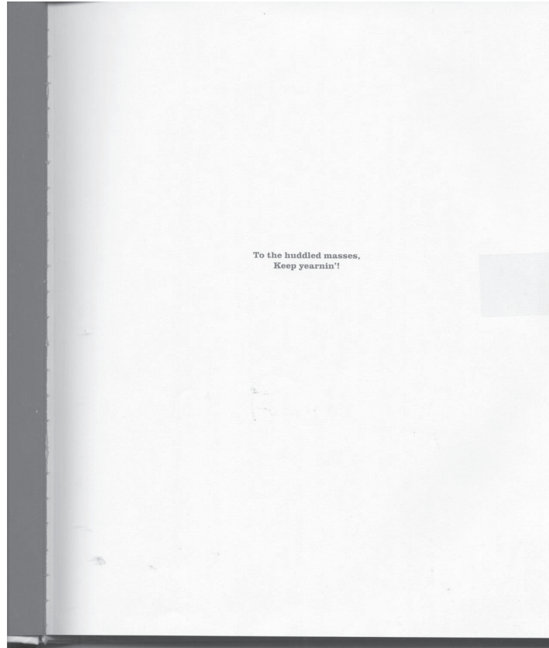

Fig. 10-2

Obvious reference is made to the Emma Lazarus quote on the base of the Statue of Liberty—a major symbol of America's political freedom the French celebrated in their gift—which reaches out to the "huddled masses yearning to breathe free." The connotation of this dedication is that through *America (the Book)* readers will be learnin' (a wordplay on yearnin'—in fact, one can almost imagine a dedication that might read, "keep learning") as a process to freedom. What this book addresses in terms of freedom is the freedom to learn and interpret US history in a way one typically does not through a traditional history text. "Learning" history through this text means being introduced to a history that makes the reader "think" rather than merely read and memorize.

America (the Book) extends the parody to the front matter of the book. One of the best examples of how this book parodies a textbook is the inclusion of a Study Guide on pages viii and ix. Throughout the descriptions in this guide of

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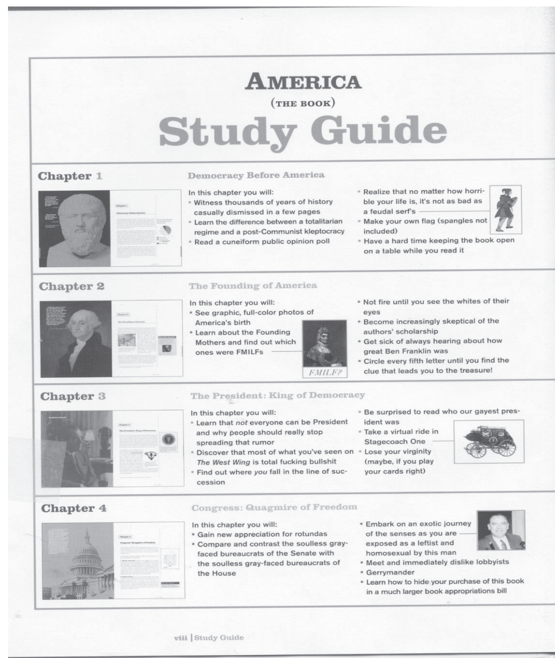
what is presented in each chapter are numerous examples of intertextuality. The authors step outside the text and not only comment on the contents but also predict how the book will be received. Adding to the humor is the fact that these objectives are never met nor even addressed in the actual chapters in the text and are included in the study guide, therefore, chiefly to extend the parody.

The title of the first chapter, "Democracy before America," is ambiguous. One interpretation is that the chapter discusses democracies that existed before America became an independent nation; another is that the concept/ideology of democracy is to be promoted above America the country.

Further parodic content in the Study Guide (See Pictures 3 and 4) includes the following.



AMERICA
(THE BOOK)
Study Guide

Chapter 1 — Democracy Before America

In this chapter you will:
- Witness thousands of years of history casually dismissed in a few pages
- Learn the difference between a totalitarian regime and a post-Communist kleptocracy
- Read a cuneiform public opinion poll
- Realize that no matter how horrible your life is, it's not as bad as a feudal serf's
- Make your own flag (spangles not included)
- Have a hard time keeping the book open on a table while you read it

Chapter 2 — The Founding of America

In this chapter you will:
- See graphic, full-color photos of America's birth
- Learn about the Founding Mothers and find out which ones were FMILFs
- Not fire until you see the whites of their eyes
- Become increasingly skeptical of the authors' scholarship
- Get sick of always hearing about how great Ben Franklin was
- Circle every fifth letter until you find the clue that leads you to the treasure!

FMILF?

Chapter 3 — The President: King of Democracy

In this chapter you will:
- Learn that *not* everyone can be President and why people should really stop spreading that rumor
- Discover that most of what you've seen on *The West Wing* is total fucking bullshit
- Find out where *you* fall in the line of succession
- Be surprised to read who our gayest president was
- Take a virtual ride in Stagecoach One
- Lose your virginity (maybe, if you play your cards right)

Chapter 4 — Congress: Quagmire of Freedom

In this chapter you will:
- Gain new appreciation for rotundas
- Compare and contrast the soulless gray-faced bureaucrats of the Senate with the soulless gray-faced bureaucrats of the House
- Embark on an exotic journey of the senses as you are exposed as a leftist and homosexual by this man
- Meet and immediately dislike lobbyists
- Gerrymander
- Learn how to hide your purchase of this book in a much larger book appropriations bill

viii | Study Guide

Fig. 10-3

1.) In the outline of Chapter 1:
"In this chapter you will:
- Witness thousands of years of history casually dismissed in a few pages

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- Learn the difference between a totalitarian regime and a post-Communist kleptocracy
- Read a cuneiform public opinion poll
- Realize that no matter how horrible your life is, it's not as bad as a feudal serf's
- Make your own flag (spangles not included)
- Have a hard time keeping the book open while you read it"

The entries range from a critique of the book and – we argue – textbooks in general (i.e. how major events are 'casually dismissed') to the very trivial (i.e. how it's hard to keep a new book open to the first section).

2.) In the presentation of learner/reader objectives in Chapter 2, "The Founding of America:"
"In this chapter you will:

- Become increasingly skeptical of the authors' scholarship."

In both this and the following example,

- "Get sick of always hearing about how great Ben Franklin was."

the authors display a strong recognition of the parodic content of the text. Also included in the description of this chapter is the statement: 'Learn about the Founding Mothers and find out which ones were FMILFs. In this example, the intertextuality is twofold. In order to appreciate the humorous content of this statement, a reader needs to know that the men who fought in the American Revolution, signed the Declaration of Independence, etc. are commonly referred to as the 'founding fathers'. The term 'founding mothers' is, in sociolinguistic terms, more marked than 'founding fathers'. In the interests of equal rights (political correctness?) it has become a concern to give equal time to and equal recognition of women in American history (herstory?). On another level, we find a reference to a term that, we believe first appeared in the 1999 movie *American Pie*—MILF[18].

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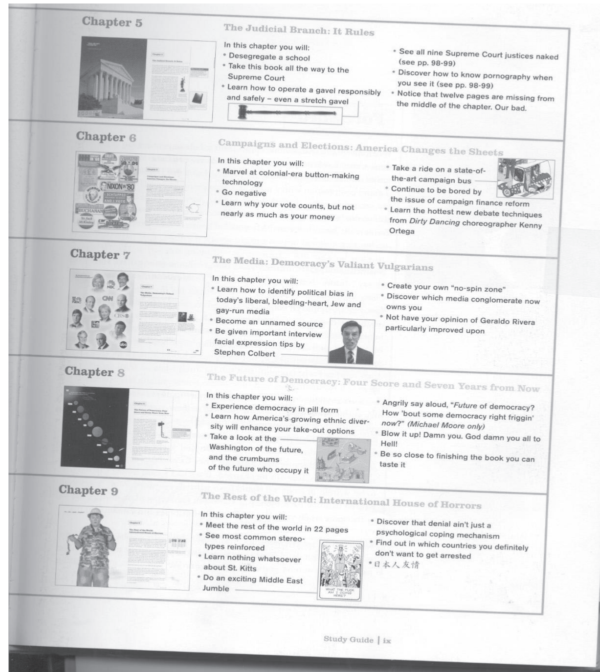

Chapter 5

The Judicial Branch: It Rules

In this chapter you will:
- Desegregate a school
- Take this book all the way to the Supreme Court
- Learn how to operate a gavel responsibly and safely – even a stretch gavel
- See all nine Supreme Court justices naked (see pp. 98-99)
- Discover how to know pornography when you see it (see pp. 98-99)
- Notice that twelve pages are missing from the middle of the chapter. Our bad.

Chapter 6

Campaigns and Elections: America Changes the Sheets

In this chapter you will:
- Marvel at colonial-era button-making technology
- Go negative
- Learn why your vote counts, but not nearly as much as your money
- Take a ride on a state-of-the-art campaign bus
- Continue to be bored by the issue of campaign finance reform
- Learn the hottest new debate techniques from *Dirty Dancing* choreographer Kenny Ortega

Chapter 7

The Media: Democracy's Valiant Vulgarians

In this chapter you will:
- Learn how to identify political bias in today's liberal, bleeding-heart, Jew and gay-run media
- Become an unnamed source
- Be given important interview facial expression tips by Stephen Colbert
- Create your own "no-spin zone"
- Discover which media conglomerate now owns you
- Not have your opinion of Geraldo Rivera particularly improved upon

Chapter 8

The Future of Democracy: Four Score and Seven Years from Now

In this chapter you will:
- Experience democracy in pill form
- Learn how America's growing ethnic diversity will enhance your take-out options
- Take a look at the Washington of the future, and the crumbums of the future who occupy it
- Angrily say aloud, "*Future* of democracy? How 'bout some democracy right friggin' *now*?" *(Michael Moore only)*
- Blow it up! Damn you. God damn you all to Hell!
- Be so close to finishing the book you can taste it

Chapter 9

The Rest of the World: International House of Horrors

In this chapter you will:
- Meet the rest of the world in 22 pages
- See most common stereotypes reinforced
- Learn nothing whatsoever about St. Kitts
- Do an exciting Middle East Jumble
- Discover that denial ain't just a psychological coping mechanism
- Find out in which countries you definitely don't want to get arrested
- 日本人友情

Study Guide | ix

Fig. 10-4

3.) In the outline of Chapter 8, "The Future of Democracy: Four Score and Seven Years from Now:"
"In this chapter you will:

- Experience democracy in pill form."

"In pill form" suggests taking one's medicine in the easiest way possible – quick, easy to swallow, painless, and without an aftertaste. Many students look at history classes as far from quick and painless, but still something they must digest. One must need to know both how medicine is promoted as a "quick cure" and how it is promoted as "something good for you" to recognize the intertextual borrowing from advertising into education.

- "Blow it up! Damn you. God damn you all to Hell!"

This chapter objective references the 1968 movie *Planet of the Apes* in which the character, George Taylor, upon seeing the remains of the Statue of Liberty, exclaims, "You Maniacs! You blew it up! Ah, damn you! God damn you all to hell!" This parodies the possible destruction of the United States. In the movie, it is the ruins of the Statue that show us that the US has been

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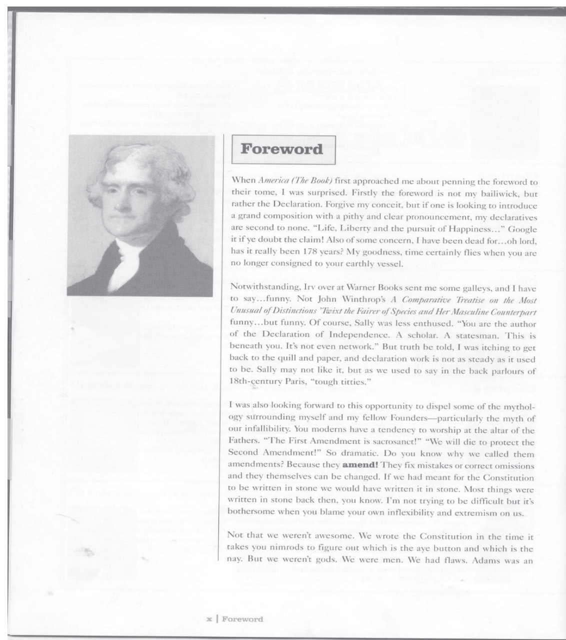
destroyed. The inclusion of this line in the study guide for a chapter headed "The Future of Democracy," leads a reader with this intertextual knowledge to question the possible destruction of democracy and/or of America.

4.) In the outline of Chapter 9, "The Rest of the World: International House of Horrors:"
"In this chapter you will:

- Discover that denial ain't just a psychological coping mechanism."

The source of the humor in this phrase is, once again, found in another text. Many popular culture enthusiasts are familiar with the expression "Denial ain't just a river in Egypt." In this common expression, the word "denial" replaces the noun phrase "the Nile," leading to the comment about Egypt, where the Nile is located. The statement in *America (the Book)*, turns this phrase around by stating what denial actually is, i.e. "a psychological coping mechanism."

The last section of *America (the Book)* analyzed here is the foreword of the text. (See Pictures 5 and 6.)



Foreword

When *America (The Book)* first approached me about penning the foreword to their tome, I was surprised. Firstly the foreword is not my bailiwick, but rather the Declaration. Forgive my conceit, but if one is looking to introduce a grand composition with a pithy and clear pronouncement, my declaratives are second to none. "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness…" Google it if ye doubt the claim! Also of some concern, I have been dead for…oh lord, has it really been 178 years? My goodness, time certainly flies when you are no longer consigned to your earthly vessel.

Notwithstanding, Irv over at Warner Books sent me some galleys, and I have to say…funny. Not John Winthrop's *A Comparative Treatise on the Most Unusual of Distinctions 'Twixt the Fairer of Species and Her Masculine Counterpart* funny…but funny. Of course, Sally was less enthused. "You are the author of the Declaration of Independence. A scholar. A statesman. This is beneath you. It's not even network." But truth be told, I was itching to get back to the quill and paper, and declaration work is not as steady as it used to be. Sally may not like it, but as we used to say in the back parlours of 18th-century Paris, "tough titties."

I was also looking forward to this opportunity to dispel some of the mythology surrounding myself and my fellow Founders—particularly the myth of our infallibility. You moderns have a tendency to worship at the altar of the Fathers. "The First Amendment is sacrosanct!" "We will die to protect the Second Amendment!" So dramatic. Do you know why we called them amendments? Because they **amend!** They fix mistakes or correct omissions and they themselves can be changed. If we had meant for the Constitution to be written in stone we would have written it in stone. Most things were written in stone back then, you know. I'm not trying to be difficult but it's bothersome when you blame your own inflexibility and extremism on us.

Not that we weren't awesome. We wrote the Constitution in the time it takes you nimrods to figure out which is the aye button and which is the nay. But we weren't gods. We were men. We had flaws. Adams was an

x | Foreword

Fig. 10-5

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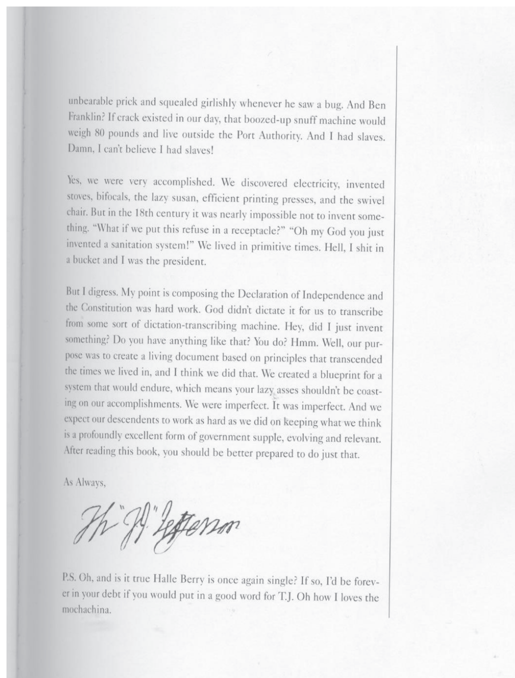
It is common for textbooks to include a foreword. Readers of *America (the Book)* understand this foreword to be a parody. For one thing, the author of the foreward is supposed to be Thomas Jefferson, a blatant anachronism. "Jefferson" addresses this fact in the first paragraph, stating, "When *America (the Book)* first approached me about penning the foreword to their tome, I was surprised. Firstly the foreword is not my bailiwick, but rather the Declaration" (x). He continues, "Also of some concern, I have been dead for…oh lord, has it really been 178 years? My goodness, time certainly flies when you are no longer consigned to your earthy vessel" (x). Thus, from the beginning the reader understands the joke, i.e. that Jefferson could not have written this piece. The reader also understands the intertextual humor of the choice of Jefferson as the author if he/she knows that Thomas Jefferson is renowned for, among other things, being the author of the Declaration of Independence. Who would be a better choice for an author of a foreword of an American history book than one of the founding fathers of America?



unbearable prick and squealed girlishly whenever he saw a bug. And Ben Franklin? If crack existed in our day, that boozed-up snuff machine would weigh 80 pounds and live outside the Port Authority. And I had slaves. Damn, I can't believe I had slaves!

Yes, we were very accomplished. We discovered electricity, invented stoves, bifocals, the lazy susan, efficient printing presses, and the swivel chair. But in the 18th century it was nearly impossible not to invent something. "What if we put this refuse in a receptacle?" "Oh my God you just invented a sanitation system!" We lived in primitive times. Hell, I shit in a bucket and I was the president.

But I digress. My point is composing the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution was hard work. God didn't dictate it for us to transcribe from some sort of dictation-transcribing machine. Hey, did I just invent something? Do you have anything like that? You do? Hmm. Well, our purpose was to create a living document based on principles that transcended the times we lived in, and I think we did that. We created a blueprint for a system that would endure, which means your lazy asses shouldn't be coasting on our accomplishments. We were imperfect. It was imperfect. And we expect our descendents to work as hard as we did on keeping what we think is a profoundly excellent form of government supple, evolving and relevant. After reading this book, you should be better prepared to do just that.

As Always,

P.S. Oh, and is it true Halle Berry is once again single? If so, I'd be forever in your debt if you would put in a good word for T.J. Oh how I loves the mochachina.

Fig. 10- 6

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The reader’s knowledge of American history in general and knowledge of Jefferson’s story in particular is important in understanding the intertextual humor in the following post script to the foreword: “Oh, and is it true Halle Berry is once again single? If so, I’d be forever in your debt if you would put in a good word for T.J. Oh how I loves the mochachina” (xi). Jefferson’s inquiry regarding Halle Berry, an Academy Award-winning, biracial actress, is especially funny if the reader remembers that Jefferson took a biracial slave, Sally Heming, as his mistress. This fact is also the source of the humor in his statement about his love for “mochachina,” which appears to be a blending of the words “mocha,” a chocolate-coffee combination, and “cappuccino,” a coffee drink made with frothed milk that is light in color. Of note is the fact that “mochachina” seems to have a feminine ending, i.e. *–a*. Therefore, his love for “mochachina” is interpreted as his penchant for light-skinned black women.

4. Conclusion

This analysis of intertextual humor focuses narrowly on the front matter of *America (The Book*) – a parody of American high school and college history textbooks. As always can be said of such research, more work needs to be done. If parody relies on intertextuality, and if intertexts rely on texts both current and historical, then pop culture may itself be defined as an intertext – drawing from content not yet old enough to have passed from the audience's experience, and yet new enough to capture and construct a new audience – a new 'culture'. Specifically, the following questions remain: how generalizable is the concept of intertextuality when we are dealing with pop culture? How much of pop culture is an intertext? And how much of an intertext is pop culture itself?

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Notes

[1] As *Daily Show* has become a primary source of news for a segment of the population, the question becomes whether *America (the Book)* will become a primary source of historical information (although we sincerely doubt that the text will ever be used as a textbook in an American history class).

[2] "Dick" is a slang term for "penis" that is frequently used in American casual speech.

[3] "Pee" is a common expression for "urinate."

[4] "Blow" also means "fellate" in American slang.

[5] MILF: '"Mother I'd like to fuck." A Google search yields 21,200,000 results, signifying the popular currency of the term

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

"I TOTALLY DISAGREE WITH YOU AND LET ME TELL YOU WHY…": HOW ADOLESCENT GIRLS[1] CREATE EXPERT KNOWLEDGE[2] IN DISPUTES ON INTERNET FORUMS

JENNIFER KONTNY

> "the text is a form of social relationships made visible, palpable, material…"
> — Bernstein, Codes, Modalities and the Process of Cultural Reproduction: A Model

1. Introduction

What is fascinating about research focusing on the intersection of language and gender, is that within the current context of our society, language and gender are so deeply enmeshed with one another that determining the effect that they have on one another has become a tricky task. By tricky, I mean that gender ideology is so ubiquitous and so pervasive that it becomes almost invisible to anyone living within a particular society. Academic discourse is not exempt from being populated with gender ideology, and often seems to reify and re-establish lay gender ideologies. In studies in language and gender, particularly those concerning power, there has been little dissensus about what is indicated by the fact that women and men tend to use different linguistic strategies in speech. Usually, these studies make claims that women's speech, because it contains particular linguistic features is more polite (Holmes, 1993), less direct (Tannen, 1996), less aggressive (Tannen, 1996), less centered around competition (Tannen, 1996), or even less powerful (Lakoff, 1975). I take issue, however, with these claims because they are made without full qualification by what is meant, for instance, "less direct" or "less powerful" and the social situatedness of power and directness. In other words, these studies fail to account for the nature of these categories themselves and how these categories are only realized as social constructions.

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Because many of these claims about women's speech stem from analyses where women's speech is compared to the speech of men, essentially it is necessary to move to an analysis that pays more careful attention to what girls and women are actually doing in their speech, and how this functions within a given context and works to create identity through existing social categories. As members of a society we tend to believe that certain types of language command attention, thus are more powerful, more competitive, or assertive. Because of this categorization, we tend to understand language that is not constructed in the aforementioned way as less powerful because of its connection to social categories that are understood as such. Despite this, I'm interested in how adolescent girls do indeed use language in a way that can, in fact, and often is, understood as direct, impolite, competitive, powerful, and so forth.

I feel that internet language serves as a wonderful resource for this type of study because it is possible to glimpse at the naturally occurring speech of adolescent girls in a context where they are in dialog with men, and much older men and women. Speech on the internet, of course, is not free of social constraints or pressures, yet it seems that speakers can take liberties using language on the internet that they would not be as likely to take in face-to-face interaction. This does not mean; however, that speakers on the internet use language in a completely separate and isolated way than they would in face-to-face interaction, rather, I feel it suggests that the internet is simply a more profitable location to find women and girls' speech functioning in particular ways.

In my research then, I'm interested in how a critical discourse analysis of online language might be useful in examining strategies employed by adolescent girls when in dialog with much older men, how these strategies are responded to, and what this might suggest about our understandings of knowledge and power.

2. Internet Discourse and a Critical Approach

During the last decade, the Internet has become so widely accessible that it, undeniably, has the power to change facets of society and its social categories. David Bell (2001) analyzed several changes that have occurred in the culture at large and the pervasive effects of cyberculture on the dominant culture. This cultural shift, which will inevitably create shifts in our understandings of identity and social categories such as gender, calls for parallel shifts in the way that researchers look at such categories. Using Ivanic and Fairclough's model for a critical discourse analysis I will regard the text, internet discourse in this case, as reflective of the values of a society at large, the context, and the processes through which it was created (which are also situated within a

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context). In Discourse and Social Change (1992), Fairclough claims that, "When one emphasizes construction, the identity function of language begins to assume great importance, because the ways in which societies categorize and build identities for their members is a fundamental aspect of how they work, how power relations are imposed and exercised, how societies are reproduced and changed," (168). The underlying assumptions of this study then, are that this virtual environment, is operating as a community, although what Andersen would deem and imagined community (1991) that, in language, reflects the norms, values, and ideologies of the broader social context in which it is situated. It is useful then, to look at the language or text produced in this community because the text is both the product and producer of particular social realities, here, gender and power.

3. The Discourse of Gender and Discourse: Problems with Power in Dominance vs. Difference

In linguistics, a multitude of studies have been done on the topics of language and gender. However, many of these studies have taken as premise, the work of Robin Lakoff (1975) or Deborah Tannen (1996) in one way or another as foundation for more current research. Essentially, this has created the domination versus difference divide among sociolinguists, as well as other social researchers addressing intersection between language and gender. Tannen argues that women use language in less direct or less aggressive ways than men, primarily because they are socialized as cooperative rather than competitive linguistic actors (what Tannen refers to as "rapport" versus "report" speech). However, although Tannen and Lakoff address power to varying extents[3], both, in some way, make claims that women's speech performs different functions than men's. It seems to me, then, that although Tannen does not go as far as Lakoff to suggest the consequences of women's speech, specifically in terms of social power, Tannen ascribes meaning to women's linguistic choices that are socially deemed less powerful---passive, cooperative, indirect. Although the scholarship of Tannen and Lakoff, I feel, has indeed been particularly helpful at pinpointing some features associated with men and women's speech and how those features might typically differ, the main weakness presents itself when these features are tied to macro understandings of power or other social structures and how these linguistic features might function within them. What I feel is truly problematic about the work of Tannen, Lakoff, and the preponderance of studies that have used their arguments as basis for further research is that, like our understandings of gender, what is considered passive, cooperative, indirect, powerful, or powerless are all social constructions. Before we make claims about how women's speech functions

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then, we need to qualify what we mean by power, directness, or aggression, and more importantly, how we understand these and define these through a socially tinted lens is inextricably bound to the ways in which we see issues of gender and language. Therefore, gender and language studies have come to a critical juncture where more useful types of questions need to be asked. In my study, then, before making claims about what features are and are not powerful I hope to first look at what these girls are doing linguistically, and address how this might be simultaneously be understood as powerful and powerless, powerless, that is, through a more traditional analysis used by Tannen, Lakoff, and subsequent studies applying this framework.

This circular relationship discussed above most likely arises from the way that more traditional sociolinguists think about research and correlation between variables. In this case, the logic seems to be women's speech is correlated with a specific set of features and being a woman is also supposedly, ideologically at least, correlated with particular personality traits so logically it would seem as if we *could* view language and gender as a type of social tautology where, if A=B and B=C, then A=C as well. However, this simply is not the case because of the social and slippery nature of these variables.

4. Quantification: Collapsing the Categories

The framework of dominance versus difference has resulted in some interesting scholarship that has attempted to categorize and quantify particular features of language and to make claims, based on percentages, as to how power is understood through the absence or presence of features that are ascribed to have a particular social value. Holmes (1993) and Sussman (2000) both use this methodology. Holmes, who applies a framework resembling Tannen, looks at the speech of New Zealand women arguing that their use of tag questions, politeness strategies, compliments, apologies, and wedging, are discursive strategies employed by New Zealand women that deems them "good to talk to" or "the ideal speaker-hearer" (Holmes, 91). Although Holmes does some work to separate the function of these features, her conclusion essentially reifies the circular relationship between language and gender discussed above. Holmes' conclusion limits the ways that these same features in language can also be used as means for constructing power, competition, or aggression. For instance, in Simmons' (2002) discussion of female aggression she argues that female aggression often slips under the radar because it is relationally rather than physically defined. Simmons argues that women are just as competitive as men and create social hierarchies that reflect that competition; language being a key avenue in which they do so.

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Sussman (2000), like Holmes, quantifies features such as length of post (word count), frequency of communication, and fact vs. opinion to determine how power might be correlated with sex in computer-mediated discourse. Sussman's concludes that cyberspace, like other modes of communication, is a male-dominated discourse. Like Tannen and Lakoff's work, Sussman seems to ascribe particular linguistic features with as social meaning in terms of power. When quantified, the data suggests that theories of male domination, or different gendered strategies where men are more direct, competitive and aggressive (depending on whether Tannen or Lakoff is applied), but Sussman, like Holmes fails to account for the possibility that strategies that we may usually look at as cooperative or powerless might have covert functions similar to the ones that Simmons discusses in terms of female aggression.

5. Problematizing Power and Knowledge, a Critical Approach: What about Agency?

My study focuses on a particular aspect of power, that being knowledge, and how girls seem to posit knowledge when talking on internet forums. In imagining knowledge I am using a social constructionist (Foucault, 1972; Bourdieu, 1991) and critical approach, essentially arguing that knowledge is something that is generally imagined in a way that supports hegemony and reifies social structures in favor of the powerful. However, this, then, begs the question of agency, and how social agents that do not have a claim to power operate within hegemonic systems or structures. Bucholtz (1999) in her study on nerd girls addresses the ways in which constructions of hegemonic femininity are at odds with being able to create knowledge in particular ways. The identity that these girls create is at odds with hegemony, but I'm interested also in which girls and women can appropriate stances that may seem in line with hegemony, but for the purposes of carrying out resistant acts and, in the long run, gaining power or privilege. Unlike Lakoff's model that deems women's language as the language of the powerless and men's language as the language of the powerful or Tannen's framework that attributes differences in speech to variations in the way children are socialized, hence, acquiring different value systems that result in particular speech patterns, I am interested here in looking at what it is that these girls *are* doing which might be understood as asserting knowledge or asserting power that may be dismissed because of our more traditional understandings of those strategies.

After looking at some of the patterns that emerge from the data within this on-line discourse, then, we can begin to theorize about how these speakers are optimizing their social power rather than compromising it or acting in accordance with particular social values. Agnes Bolonyai (2005) has done work

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on girls' code choices as means to optimize social power within a given context. Bolonyai's study, which employs rational choice theory as means of understanding this optimization of power, is useful in that it refutes former claims in the literature that girls use strategies in ways that construct their identities as less agentive individuals. Another interesting aspect of this study was that Bolonyai found that these girls also used code-choices to gain power, particularly within a competitive context. This finding is useful in that it suggests, although Bolonyai does not explicitly say so, that although the literature on language and gender has argued that boys and men are more competitive than women, women in particular contexts can act just as competitively when the understanding of what competition means becomes reframed.

6. Methodology

Using a systematic random sample of various discussion forums on politics, music, and relationships from www.myspace.com[4] I will look for instances where expert knowledge seems to be created on the forum. The forums on this website are divided into areas of interest and then sub-divided into more specific threads. In hope of eliminating bias in the way that knowledge is created (because when talking about different topics, knowledge seems to be posited in different ways), I propose to look at these three specific forums. For example, I intend to look at the pronoun usage of I, overt claims to knowledge, and more generally, patterns in lexical choice in girls' attempts to assert knowledge. I will then look at how these assertions might be responded to and how the strategies of the respondents subvert or acknowledge a particular assertion of knowledge or power. When possible I will be looking at an initial post by an adolescent girl, a response to her post, and often the girl's response to her respondent. The context and the topic of the forum will be taken into consideration, along with the stated identity of each member participating in that segment of the forum.

I have collected a sample size of 384 posters, which is a statistically representative sample of a population of 100,000. The entire general population of MySpace users far exceeds 100,000. However, I'm not sure if adolescent girls or girls within the age parameters of my study exceed 100,000. The data in this paper was collected between October 3, 2005 and December 20, 2005. The examples that appear in this paper are all drawn from every fifth thread from the three selected forums discussed above. Further, all examples utilized here are in some way representative of larger trends I saw in much of the data. The following key will be useful in understanding symbols used to transcribe internet forum discourse:

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Key	*Symbol Used*
Data retrieved from	*Forum>>Subforum>>Thread*
Omitted posts	***(number of omitted posts)
Researcher's note	< >

7. Age on the Internet: The subtle differentiations between experience, knowledge, and intelligence

Firstly, I think it is important to address the unique issues with age on the internet. On MySpace, participants have an opportunity to identify themselves in five major ways: name, gender, age, hometown, and photograph[5]. The topic of age, then, often comes up overtly in conversations on forums and in chat. Age on this site, like many others is, of course, self-reported. This poses problems to the validity of this study since it is possible to lie about age. Because I have no way of controlling for this limitation; I can only take for face value, although with a skeptical eye, the identities presented in these forums. There are though, two additional things that I've found interesting in regard to age in these forums. The first is that a few members are starting to claim to be outrageously old. For instance, I found someone claiming to be an 100 year old man and another person claiming to be a 96 year-old woman. When I come across identities presented as such, I do not include them in my data, primarily because I feel that it is a clear indicator of a manipulation of identity, something I'm trying to avoid. What is perhaps most interesting to me about this though is that when age seems to be---obviously at least---tampered with, it is always manipulated in a way that would suggest that the participant is extremely old rather than extremely young. For instance, I've seen several people now claiming to be 100, but no one claiming to be 1, 5, or 6 years old. What might this suggest about age and the possible claims that one is willing to make in a social sphere, even if they are false? Further then, what might this suggest about age and identity in terms of being seen as a competent social actor with a voice or something of value to say? I'm suggesting that age, or being older, is seen as being correlated with a particular type of social power.

The second interesting thing I've noticed is that age segregation is beginning to happen on MySpace forums. For instance, consider the following poster paying particular attention to the title:

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Love/Relationships>>Dating>>Teens: Look Here!!!

Christian
M/30
Ewa Beach,
HAWAII

1 Could you all do us a favor and consolidate your posts into this thread? This forum is
2 getting obscenely cluttered at the moment with variations on the same questions and since you don't
3 look to be changing your tunes any time soon, could you at least do us a favor and consolidate here?
4
5 If you get tired of us 'old people' bashing you, NOW is your chance to get us off your back! I promise
6 that I won't bash any dating/love question you have if you take the time to post it in here.

It is obvious here that there is an explicit attempt to have "teens" or younger participants on this forum post in the same area. Christian, the 30-year old man who posted this makes direct references to age in line 5. Further, throughout the forum there is a divide assumed through Christian's use of pronouns. He starts out by asking those reading the thread to "do us a favor" (line 1) and notes "you don't look to be changing your tune anytime soon" (line 2-3). This suggests that age, for Christian, is divided into at least two groups; 'old people' (line 5) and referent/s of "you" which, judging from the title would be teens. I think that it is less important, though, that Christian makes this age divide than what the act of making this age divide might imply. Underlyingly, when Christian states that teens might be tired of old people "bashing" them (line 5) he is making a reference that teens questions about dating and love are somehow inferior to questions that older participants might have. Personally, I think all dating/love questions on this forum are equally despicable and pathetic, but that is another story. Experience on this forum then, is conflated here with knowledge just as knowledge about a particular topic on these forums is also usually equated with intelligence. This leads me to stress that adolescent girls participating in dialogs on these internet forums are put in unique positions when asserting knowledge. Not only, because of their age, have they had as much formal education as some of these speakers; they have also had less life experience. This often leads other participants to respond to what these girls have to say as if it is less significant or less intelligent.

I have found the following patterns of discursive strategies to gain power or assert knowledge in the data when adolescent girls were in dialog with older men. The below categories are not mutually exclusive. Often, a single post

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could be spliced and put into several categories. Also, these categories are not exhaustive of the strategies that I found, rather, they are examples of trends that were very prevalent in the data.

7.1. Subjective Claims to Knowledge

The use of “I” in writing is supposedly a feature that points out subjectivity and thus thought of as a rhetorical strategy that presents challenges for a writer when commanding authority. Consistent with the literature, adolescent girls tended to assert knowledge with sentences that had “I” for a subject. For instance, “I’ve listened,” “I’ve done,” “I feel,” “I think,” “I know,” “I believe,” were all frequently used phrases in adolescent girls’ posters. However, although I did not do a comparative analysis with men’s speech, I noticed generally that older men, as well as older women used these phrases quite frequently as well. More interesting, perhaps, I found several examples where the location of the “I” as subject in the phrases in responses written by adolescent girls mimicked the position of sentences with I as a subject in the initial post. Initially I thought that this might suggest that subjective knowledge is posited in a particular way, to make particular more personal-experienced based claims or assertions of knowledge. However, it can, and does work in other ways that seem to give girls power---the power to make assessments, or give them voice. For instance, contrary to my expectations adolescent girls seemed to make subjective claims less when talking about relationship topics (dating, virginity), than, for instance talking about politics or music. This is interesting because we usually think of relationships as a topic that one gains knowledge about through personal experience. Below are some examples of how subjective claims were used on the MySpace forums.

Examples from data-

-i don’t like her music AT ALL but ***i think*** that ani difranco blows these boys out of the water. bright eyes? puh-leexe?! **F/19**

-They <army recruiters> still do not FORCE anyone to sign up <for the Army>. ***I’ve listened*** to quite a few of them and I haven’t decided to join YET. **F/17**

-***I think*** you need to pay special attention because you seem to not understand the obvious. **F/17**

7.2. Prefacing as a Pre-emptive Strategy

Prefacing as a pre-emptive strategy might best be characterized by a phrase before a claim that either points out something that the next speaker might, such as age, or lack of education in a particular area allowing the speaker to offer knowledge that either was not elicited or might not be otherwise listened to. To

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me, this feature definitely suggested that these girls were using language in a way that Bolonyai would argue, optimized their power in the given context. For instance, we might be inclined to think of a girl who points out that she is very young in a relationships forum as a way of discrediting what she has to say, but in these forums, these prefaces seemed to be working instead as pre-emptive strategies, pointing out ones "weaknesses" before the other conversationalist could use it to gain power over them. When girls did not preface their statements in terms of their age, it was often brought up by another member of the forum.

Examples from data-
I *know I don't know her* but she seems like she doesn't know who she is or what she wants in life… **F/17**
ok i know I am only 17 but i think that u should go with what ur heart tells u. **F/17**

7.3. Explicit Discourse Markers to indicate Knowledge or How it was Obtained

This was also a very prevalent trend in the data. Girls would often say, "listen", "let me tell you why", "this is the reason" or "I know because". A more traditional analysis of gender and language might suggest that these girls are doing this because of feelings of inferiority, for instance, in explaining themselves. However, in conversation analysis (ten Have, 1999), these strategies are often seen as ways of keeping the floor. What is intriguing about this is that this is a textual analysis, so it would be impossible for these girls to be interrupted. I am interested in these set of strategies, though, as discourse markers to draw attention to what these girls are saying at specific points of dissention or disagreement about "who is right".

Examples from data-
see this is tha thang gurls dont wanna come off as sluts…***this is a true thang***…***see*** if a gurl screws one guy…jus one…and ppl think she aint dated him 4 long enough or didn't…….they are sluts…***but see*** if a guy goes off and screws a gurl 4 a one nite stand…ohhh its all okay……. thats so freakin gay…I hate that.. **F/16**

It is simple like this: Until you stop being a misogynistic, arrogant, judgemental hypocritical
asshole…the "sluts" are all you're going to get cuz no girl worth settling down with would want
you **F/18** *The rest of this example would fit into category 4

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7.4. Appraisals or Compliments as Means for Power

Essentially, this strategy is used to pass a judgment in either a negative or positive way that allows the speaker act as assessor or appraiser, thus constructing the identity of the other "speaker" in a particular way, but simultaneously constructing their own as someone who has a right to do so.

Examples from data-
I suppose I should have known better than posting on ***a forum full of elitists and losers who have nothing better to do than insult people without reason.*** **F/18**

You couldn't be more wrong. **F/17**

7.5. Joking as a Way of Masking Negative Appraisal/Insults

Using humor as a social strategy to slip around an otherwise abrasive comment that would might be considered inappropriate.

Example from data-
Thanks, but I'd rather shoot myself in the foot then ask you for advice. ***Just kidding***…seriously though **F/19**

I would now like to discuss two examples (one longer example and one shorter example) that seemed rather typical of the larger body of data and to discuss those examples in light of the discursive strategies that adolescent girls seem to employ when asserting knowledge. The following excerpt from the data seems particularly interesting in that Andrea, who is 16 years old engages in an on-going discussion with Latimer, a 37 year-old man on the subject of AIDS in the black community, more specifically here, AIDS in Africa. This conversation, like many in the data, it is safe to assume would most likely not occur in face-to-face interaction. Of particular interest then, is the way that Latimer frames the knowledge that he is presenting, and, how, in contrast, Andrea frames the knowledge that she is presenting.

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8. Discourse Data: Adolescent Girls on Internet Forums

EXAMPLE 1A

Politics>>International Politics>>Killing Them Softly: AIDS in the Black Community

Latimer
M/27
Los Angeles,
CALIFORNIA

1 Aids isn't like cancer or polio or whatnot. You don't (almost never) get it
2 on accident due to random occurrences. It is a disease that one gets in direct
3 correlation to ones actions. If people would stop having unprotected sex,
4 using needles for drugs, or sodomizing one another then the chance of getting
5 aids drops to nearly zero. *I'm not condemning those actions, only noting*
6 *that it is the behavior that has caused the aids disaster. The black community*
7 *is being destroyed because of something it brought on itself.*
8 **…**
9 *I would love to see a cure for HIV but if Africa is going (or india or china) is*
10 *going to kill itself through stupidity then I'm not going to feel bad for them.*

***(4)
(Response to Latimer)
Andrea
F/16
Spokane,
WASHINGTON

1 **Um…well listen…see**[6] in Africa they do have AIDS. But most of the women
2 who are infected had to resort to prostitution in order to raise their family. **The**
3 **reason why**[7] Africa has the largest population with AIDS is not because they are
4 immoral, or stupid **(they are probably a lot smarter than you…lol)**[8] it is

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5 because of poverty.
6 **…**
7 You can't control how much money you are born into. And so **while your over**
8 **here taking your wealthy life for granted**[9] (*I consider myself wealthy as long as*
9 *I have clothes on my back and food on my plate*) just remember, **you can't judge**
10 **some one if you haven't been in their situation.**[10]
11
12 *I don't feel bad for anyone…I feel sympathy. The only person you can ever feel*
13 *bad for is yourself.*

Notice in Latimer's post, there are many declarative claims being made. "Aids isn't like Cancer…" (line 1), "It is a disease that," (line 2), etc. However, several of Andrea's claims are being made in the same way. "But most of the women…" (line 1), "You can't control (line 7), etc. These claims often do not include "I" as a subject, such as "I think" or "I feel". This is interesting in terms of how this knowledge is positioned granted that in Western societies subjective knowledge or experience-based knowledge is generally less thought of a something to be identified as knowledge than knowledge that claims to be objective.

The question then becomes, what does Andrea seem to be doing in her post that Latimer does not? Firstly, in line 1, Andrea prefaces her post in a style that seems to mirror conversation (strategy 3). The interesting thing is, she seems to use this as a basis to qualify her argument. In Latimer's previous post, he specifically mentions Africa in line 9, so it would seem as if Andrea does not use her first sentence as a way of making a new claim, but rather, as grounds to dispute the claim that Latimer is making in his post. What is noteworthy, is that this preface in line 1 of Andrea's post may seem or be categorized as a discursive strategy that undermines Andrea's knowledge, but I'm wondering to what extent it could be understood as the opposite.

Another thing interesting thing that emerges in Andrea's post is in line 3, when she states, "The reason why," and then goes on to make her claim. This explanation is directly overtly responding to what Latimer's post seems to imply, but doesn't explicitly state. The last thing that Andrea does that is quite interesting is that she appraises Latimer's intelligence, seemingly as a joke, in line 4, and offers a sort of moral advice. What is most interesting to be about this last feature, is that it was quite prevalent in the data at large and would seem, (although this is an introspective claim), quite unlikely in face-to-face interaction.

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Later in the forum conversation, a follow up dialog occurs where Latimer is responding to Andrea, and Andrea to Latimer.

EXAMPLE 1B

Latimer
M/27
Los Angeles,
CALIFORNIA

1	Andrea,
2	**You seem like a smart lady**[11] but seriously, of course white people have
3	Aids, that has nothing to do with it. Anyone who gets HIV gets it
4	through their OWN actions and not from chance or the actions
5	<Latimer goes on for several more paragraphs>
6	You will not get it if you don't engage in VERY risky behavior, this is
7	cruel natural selection.

(Response to Latimer)
Andrea
F/16
Spokane,
WASHINGTON

1	**All my friends think I'm a ditz**[12]**…**lol…but yeah i see what you are
2	saying…but as long as there is poverty in a country, and the government
3	wont use the campaign you described, then it is not the citizens fault. It
4	is the governments. A government, believe it or not, has more control
5	over a citizen then people think.

Latimer
M/27
Los Angeles,
CALIFORNIA

1	Interesting,
2	There is some work in game theory and whatnot that you might like.

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3 Vernon Smith won a nobel prize in 2002 for some of his work. Why do I
4 bring it? Because it deals with the question (albeit indirectly) of the
5 effect of government on people. The simple truth is that government
6 can't make its citizens behave.
7 <Latimer continues on for several paragraphs>
8 It's esoteric theory but well worth reading. It's my specialty and it
9 happens to apply well here despite the terse commentary on the
10 subject.

This last exchange in this forum between Andrea and Latimer is interesting to me in terms of what happens, in Latimer's first post (line 2) he offers an appraisal of Andrea. Although this could be interpreted as a compliment, it seems not to work that way in terms of the way he follows it up. What is even more interesting, though, is the way that Andrea responds to this in her post (line 1). The fact that she claims to be a "ditz" might suggest, using more traditional frameworks that she is undercutting her own power. However, I'm suggesting that this discourse strategy might be understood in a different way, actually negating Latimer's appraisal of her. This is only a tentative observation, however, it would seem more likely, to me at least, than a traditional understanding, because Andrea does not defer to Latimer, rather goes on, again, to further her own argument. The last post is Latimer, and what I find fascinating in this last post is his obvious stylistic shift, and his explicit claim as an expert on a particular subject here.

This stylistic shift, I think can be seen as a way for Latimer to maintain the power in this dialog, much of this can be attributed in Latimer's shift in position from someone discussing a topic with another participant to someone who has a body of literature as their "specialty" (line 8).

Another pattern that emerged in response to adolescent girls' posts occurred when women, such as Andrea, seemed to overtly argue with older men on the forum was that men would point out errors not only in their "logic" as Latimer did for Andrea, but in their spelling or grammar. Consider the following example:

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EXAMPLE 2

Anthony
M/25

1	Also, slow down in your post..your ranting and adding words like
2	"hypocritical" exactly why am I hypocritical? I didn't lie she did.
3	You put "you" where it wasn't necessary too, learn to type.

The solemn
F/18

1	**I have more integrity in my pinky finger than you have in your whole body.**
2	**And I don't need respect from the likes of you.**
3	
4	As for me typing wrong…wtf are you babbling about? My post was perfectly
5	grammatical. Get bent.
6	And if we're gonna nitpick here…your should be you're, there should be a
7	comma after "hypocritical", too should be to and you've got a number of comma
8	errors/sentence splicing.

In the larger context of this example, Anthony and The solemn are arguing, after The solemn makes a particularly strong and lengthy argument Anthony responds by pointing out a grammatical error (line 3). I find this interesting because women are supposedly supposed to be more grammatically "correct" speakers. Prescriptively correct grammar obviously has a social weight. Arguably then, Anthony could be attempting to use the fact that The solemn had an error as leverage against her, in fact, I can't think of another explanation as to why he would he bring it up. What just amazing here then is The solemn's response to Anthony in line 1 negatively appraising him, in line 2 dismissing his appraisal of her, and in lines 4-8 using the very way that he seemed to have been trying to gain power over her to come back at him. What is interesting about this though is that it is arguable that The solemn, as a woman having been socialized to uphold grammar more than most men uses her position, one very much in line with hegemony, to gain power over her male conversational partner.

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9. Taking it further: Toward a functional analysis

There are, of course, several limitations to this very preliminary study that could be addressed in future research. A major limitation is that the data was extracted was from internet discourse, and from one site in particular. Therefore, this data can only be representative of language in this particular context. Basically, the arguments that I have made in this paper need to be looked at and fleshed out with more data and examples; ideally also, data from other sources, especially sources where data from talk could be obtained. This would account for how specific these strategies are to internet discourse and in what ways these strategies might be applied in face-to-face interaction, if at all.

Further, it would be productive to look at some of this data using a grammar functional approach, to look at, more specifically, the use of discourse/textual markers, and, as you have mentioned to address the categories looking at the literature on assessment, epistemic modalities, and evidentiality. This type of analysis would enhance the argument as to how, at a more micro-linguistic level, what these girls are saying might be working to create or maintain power.

Turning back to the arguments of Lakoff, Tannen, Holmes, or Sussman then when looking at these strategies, it is evident that a one-to-one relationship between what certain features in adolescent girls' speech indicate about a girls' identity is, in fact, quite problematic. For instance, take Andrea, who, in Example 1A states "they are probably a lot smarter than you lol" or The solemn who in example 2 states, "I don't need respect from the likes of you." Neither of these statements would be considered "rapport" speech, or the speech of women working collaboratively. Further, there were many instances of these forums where women would actually work to disrupt harmony in the context of a "conversation", further problematizing Tannen's assumptions about how women work collaboratively. Also, take Lakoff's notion of humor and how women can't tell and don't get jokes and consider how it is used by Andrea in Example 1A above, not to tell a joke in a traditional sense but to mask an insult. Or, consider Holmes discussion of hedging and look at Andrea's preface "Um…well listen…see," which might be interpreted in a similar way. The problem with these studies on gender and language, then, is they address gender and language as categories which are static. In a discussion of an ethnomethodological approach, Heritage (1984) mentions the following:

> In gender studies, it has been traditional to treat the conventional categories 'male' and 'female' as starting points from which to portray the different outlooks, life chances and activities of the sexes in relation to social structure…In these studies, sexual status is treated as a 'social fact' in a fully Durkheimian sense as an 'external and constraining' phenomenon (234).

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It is in this direction that I propose studies on language and gender continue to move. Surely, imagining gender, language, and power in the way that I'm suggesting is a lot messier than the understandings presented in the other studies, however, I think that messiness is useful if it complicates the way we, as researchers create knowledge about the intersections of language and various identities, and even how we see the social world.

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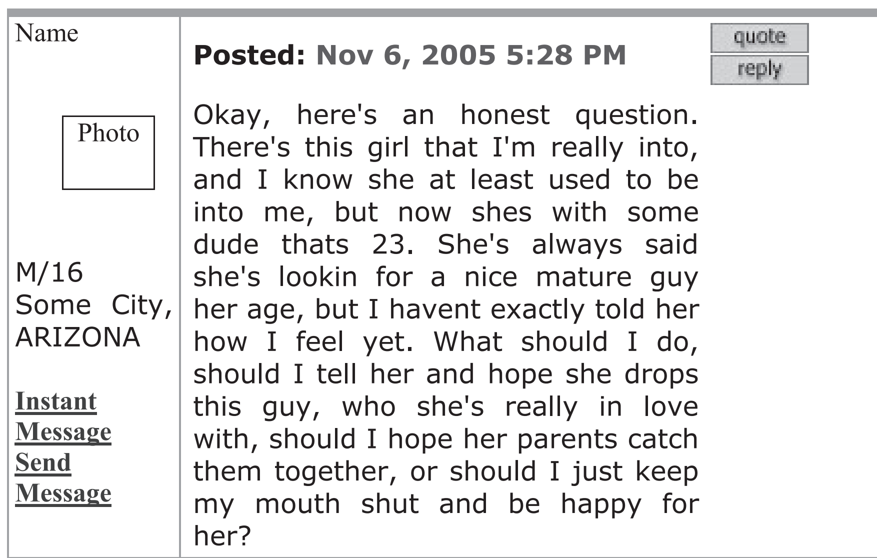
Appendix A: A Glossary of Internet Terms and Abbreviations

forum:	A "space" on the internet where members of an online community can post messages in real time and respond to the messages of others regarding a particular topic.
lol:	Laughing out loud
poster:	A single post or entry on a forum
sub-forum:	A more specific forum within a larger forum, but more broadly defined than a thread.
thread:	A single post that has developed into an online "conversation" once responded to
wtf:	What the fuck?

Appendix B: Format of one Poster as it would appear



Note: Notice the five identity indicators on this poster and where they are located: 1.) name
2.) photo 3.) gender 4.) age 5.) location

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Notes

[1]For the purpose of my study, adolescents will be defined as women self-identifying from 13-19 years of age.
[2] By expert knowledge in this study, I am referring to instances in disputes when speakers make a claim to knowing something about a particular topic. These assertions of knowledge may or may not be presented as something that the speaker “feels”, “thinks”, or “believes”, but for my purposes here, they must at least make a claim to know this thorough experience, or claim it as a truth in some other way rather than recognizing it as a possibility along with other possibilities of what others may think (I would categorize this as an opinion). Surely, knowledge in most cases, especially from a social constructionist viewpoint, is also always an opinion; hence, the distinction I wish to make here is not one of whether what someone says is either knowledge or an opinion. Rather, the distinction I am interested in is one of framing. How the speaker frames what they have to say in the context of what other members of the forum are saying.
[3] Lakoff more explicitly claims that women undermine their own power by using empty adjectives, wedges, and other strategies that compromise their power position in talk (Lakoff, 1975).
[4] My Space is a recently established on-line community that focuses primarily on circles of already established friendships as well as contacting existing members and forming new relationships. The age of participants tends to range from late teens to people in their late forties. For more information go to: www.myspace.com
[5] For a better understanding of how these posters are presented on the actual site, see Appendix B.
[6] Strategy 3.
[7] Strategy 3.
[8] Strategies 4 and 5.
[9] Strategy 4.
[10] Strategy 4.
[11] Strategy 4.
[12] Strategy 4, but used to negate Latimer’s attempt to do so.

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