

RACIAL IDENTIFICATION, KNOWLEDGE, AND THE POLITICS
OF EVERYDAY LIFE IN AN ARIZONA SCIENCE CLASSROOM:
A LINGUISTIC ETHNOGRAPHY

by

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DEDICATION

for Jennifer

You may teach the flowers to bloom in the snow

You may take a pebble and teach it to grow

You may teach all the raindrops to return to the cloud

But you can't teach my heart to forget

(The Louvin Brothers)

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation is a linguistic ethnography of a high school Astronomy/Oceanography classroom in southern Arizona, where an exceptionally promising, novice, white science teacher and mostly Mexican-American students confronted issues of identity and difference through interactions both related and unrelated to science learning. Through close analysis of video-recorded, naturally-occurring interaction and rich ethnographic description, the study documents how a teacher and students accomplished everyday classroom life, built caring relationships, and pursued scientific inquiry at a time and in a place where nationally- and locally-circulating discourses about immigration and race infused even routine interactions with tension and uncertainty. In their talk, students appropriated elements of racializing discourses, but also used language creatively to “speak back” to commonsense notions about Mexicanness. Careful examination of science-related interactions reveals the participants’ negotiation of multiple, intersecting forms of citizenship (i.e., cultural and scientific citizenship) in the classroom, through multidirectional processes of language socialization in which students and the teacher regularly exchanged expert and novice roles. This study offers insight into the continuing relevance of racial, cultural, and linguistic identity to students’ experiences of schooling, and sheds new light on classroom discourse, teacher-student relationships, and dimensions of citizenship in science learning, with important implications for teacher preparation and practice.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This study is the outcome of a year's worth of fieldwork in two high school Astronomy/Oceanography classrooms in southern Arizona, where I became part of a classroom community that included Julia, an exceptional second-year teacher, and an equally exceptional group of students from grades 10-12, most of whom – unlike Julia and me – were long-time Arizona residents of Mexican descent. I conducted my fieldwork during the 2010-2011 academic year, a time when being a teacher or student in Arizona schools, and, to a even greater degree, being identifiably Mexican or Mexican-American in Arizona, were difficult propositions. Through what I continue to regard as the almost inconceivably warm hospitality of Julia and the students, I was afforded the privilege of observing, and at times participating, as the members of the classroom community worked out issues of knowledge, identity, and belonging in their daily interactions. And so, my study is concerned, among other things, with processes of identification in the everyday language use of Mexican-American high school students, the development of teacher-student relationships across lines of racial and linguistic difference, students' socialization to use scientific discourse, and the continuing relevance of racialization to the lives of high school students in southern Arizona. Yet while it explores all these topics in considerable depth, it cannot, finally, be reduced to any one of them. It is, to put it plainly, an ethnography, a representation of what I will go on to theorize as the “nexus of practice” (Scollon & Scollon, 2007) at the high school: a unique situation where particular issues emerged as urgent and relevant, the product of

my being among particular people, at a particular place, at a particular time. The study is my attempt to tell a story about this nexus of practice that will, I hope, be convincing to those who were there, as well as those who were not there, but who share my interests in language and identity, racial identification in the United States, and/or promoting educational equity for traditionally underserved groups of students, especially in the realm of science. That said, the story begins, as many stories do, well before the main characters take their places; a good deal of context is needed at the outset to make sense of everything that comes after.

1.1 The why of the study: The micropolitics of everyday life in an Arizona science classroom

In the years leading up to my research at Vista Del Sol¹ High School (VDS), I was working as a teacher educator at a university in the same urban area in southern Arizona, where I taught a course called “Language, Culture, and Race in Education” to majority white but somewhat racially/linguistically diverse classes that consisted of about half pre-service teachers, elementary and secondary, and about half non-education majors (since the class also fulfilled a general education requirement). During the same period, the Arizona political landscape shifted significantly, both with regard to education and to immigration, in ways that would have far-reaching consequences. As the country’s economic situation worsened, the state targeted K-12 and university education for ever more severe budgetary cutbacks, despite the fact that Arizona already ranked among the

¹ All names (except mine) are pseudonyms. All participants were invited to choose their own pseudonyms, and some did.

very lowest states in per-pupil K-12 funding, and that university tuition was rising out of reach of many working- and middle-class Arizona residents. In southern Arizona, a number of schools were closed, and for a time, teachers in some districts underwent the year-end ritual of receiving “pink slips” informing them that they had been officially let go, and would be rehired, budget permitting, the following year.

These days, the economic hard times continue – and with them, the justification for leaving Arizona schools with fewer and fewer resources to educate a growing, diverse student population: the fall after I completed my fieldwork, Julia, the Astronomy/Oceanography teacher whose class had been the focus of my study, reported that she had classes in excess of forty students, some with ten or more special education students, and little or no help to meet the needs of her exceptional learners. Even as I write this, within the last month, the new head of an Arizona state advisory commission on education (the president, as it happens, of a prestigious chain of science-focused charter schools) dismissed out of hand the idea that better funding might contribute to better educational outcomes in the state. Meanwhile, the state legislature tried to stop new school construction by requiring students in overcrowded districts to attend out-of-district schools, and a state senator from suburban Tucson floated the idea of having the state fund education by getting into the business of nuclear waste disposal.

More notorious on the national stage, however, than Arizona’s disinvestment in education, has been the state’s concurrent rise to prominence as the standard-bearer of

anti-immigrant legislation and anti-Mexican paranoia in all its forms. Arizona was certainly not alone in this; in an article I co-authored at the time of my research, we remarked of the U.S. in general:

Changing demographic realities, the September 11 attacks, and economic hard times in the United States, among other factors, have led to a severe backlash against recent immigrants, particularly those from Latin American countries. At the state level ... this backlash has been institutionalized through ballot initiatives that have sought to limit services for undocumented immigrants and to constrain educational options for bilingual and “English language learner” students. (González, Wyman, & O’Connor, 2011, p. 486)

While it may have been presaged by the “official English,” anti-bilingual education, and anti-immigration initiatives of the 1990s and early 2000s (e.g., California’s Proposition 187 and Arizona’s Proposition 203; see Adams & Brink, 1990 and Crawford, 2004 for background on even earlier manifestations of nativism, linguistic and otherwise), the wave of legislation targeted at Mexican immigrants in Arizona, just before and during my study, was unprecedented. The best known measure, Arizona Senate Bill 1070, passed in April 2010, authorized local law enforcement to detain anyone who might be “reasonably suspected” of being in the country illegally in order to check his/her immigration status; this had the double effect (or would have, had the law not ended up mired in court challenges) of turning municipal police and sheriff’s departments into enforcers of federal immigration law, and essentially legalizing the racial profiling of people who looked or sounded “illegal” (according to the law’s opponents; see chapter two for a fuller discussion of ideological constructions of legality and illegality in the racialization of Mexican-Americans).

Other measures passed around the same time focused on the education system as a field where larger questions about the proper place of immigrants in Arizona must be settled. The state legislature acted to deny in-state tuition to Arizona residents who could not prove legal residence in the U.S., effectively placing the state universities off-limits to students without legal documentation. (Some legislators also raised the question of whether birthright citizenship might legally be denied to the U.S.-born children of unauthorized immigrant parents, although the issue was eventually dropped.) There was a glimmer of hope, in the fall of 2010, that the situation for undocumented youth might improve if the federal government passed the long-awaited DREAM (Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors) Act, which would have granted permanent residency to youth who had immigrated as minors and pursued a college degree or U.S. military service after high school graduation. Some students at VDS followed the debate fairly closely, and were disheartened when the bill went down in flames, amid all-too-predictable arguments that it amounted to rewarding or encouraging illegal immigration. Also in 2010, Arizona House Bill 2281 aimed to eliminate a southern Arizona school district's Mexican-American/Raza Studies programs on the basis that they supposedly "promote[d] resentment toward a race or class of people" (i.e., white people) and advocated the overthrow of the U.S. government (see Orozco, 2011 for a critical analysis of the legislation). In January 2012, after lengthy legal battles, the state announced its intention to enforce the law by withholding needed federal funding from the school district, forcing the district to disband classes that taught U.S. history from a Chicano perspective and engaged students in critical pedagogy. Recent research from Arizona-

based critical pedagogues and anthropologists of education deals with the challenge of fostering critical consciousness and civic engagement among Mexican-American students even in a political environment that is overwhelmingly hostile to their well-being (and even, some might say, to their existence.) This valuable work documents the efforts of researchers who have been directly involved in collaborating with youth to create opportunities for activism against the grain of Arizona politics (e.g., Acosta, 2007; Cammarota, 2011; Cammarota & Romero, 2009; Cannella, 2009). Very recently, there have even begun to appear reports from the “front lines” of the struggle to defend ethnic studies and Mexican-American history (Otero & Cammarota, 2011; Orozco, 2011).

My research was conducted around the same time, and must therefore be understood in the context of these public struggles over racial and linguistic identity and education in southern Arizona, and the U.S. more generally; nonetheless, it takes an approach, and addresses a set of questions, which I see as distinct, but clearly related, to the questions posed by the activist scholars cited above. To put it simply, I wanted to know how Arizona teachers and students who did not have access to explicitly activist coursework were nonetheless surviving – making do, and “doing school” (Pope, 2001) despite the omnipresent challenges to their identities, their ways of being and expressing themselves. I wanted to locate the political in an anthropology of the everyday. In my quest to do so, I began to think deeply about conceptions of citizenship, referring not only to legal status but to dimensions of what it means to belong and participate fully in

society, as a potentially fruitful way to theorize the interconnected social and academic work involved in “doing school” in Arizona in 2010-2011.

My initial interest in doing fieldwork at VDS grew directly out of my work as a teacher educator, and the research questions I proposed to the school district focused on teacher-student relationships. In particular, I was interested in understanding how the toxic social and political environment in southern Arizona might be affecting novice teachers’ potential for developing close, productive relationships with their racially and linguistically diverse students. Even beyond Arizona, existing research documents that students in U.S. public schools are becoming more and more diverse, while the K-12 teaching force remains largely White and monolingual English-speaking, and points to “teacher preparation for diversity” as a significant factor in students’ academic outcomes (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Zeichner & Hoelt, 1996). Yet novice teachers are often reluctant to consider how issues of racial injustice might have an impact on their relationships with students, and on their students’ learning (McIntyre, 1997). They may also feel uncertain about what, exactly, they can do on an everyday basis to help their students overcome structural patterns of racial inequality and low achievement (Pollock et al, 2010), and may struggle further with how to handle linguistic diversity in the classroom. For inexperienced teachers (indeed, for many teachers), it is sometimes easier to resort to simplistic “racial” or “cultural” explanations when faced with contradictory or confusing student behavior (Ladson-Billings, 2006; Pollock, 2004, 2008) than to engage in “deep” cultural analysis that recognizes the variety of factors that may influence the way students

relate to others or approach school. Given these underlying issues, and the often facile treatment of “multicultural education” and “diversity” in teacher preparation programs, I wondered if my pre-service teachers would encounter dynamics of tension and mistrust in their future classrooms, and how they would respond.

I found myself especially drawn to the question of what effect the persistent racial othering of Mexican-Americans might be having on *science* classrooms in Arizona, for two principal reasons. First of all, high-quality science instruction is increasingly regarded as necessary to prepare students for jobs in a twenty-first century knowledge-based economy, but many students of color and English Language Learners lack access to such instruction (Calabrese Barton, 2001; Richardson Bruna & Gomez, 2009)². Further, it has been suggested that science teachers who do not promote equity for their racially, culturally, and linguistically different students may even worsen already-existing achievement gaps for minority groups (National Science Board, 2006). Science education is therefore an area of urgent concern for social justice in education, which would have been enough, in itself, to justify the study.

In addition, however, I became intrigued with how identity and ideology enter into students’ learning of science, or, more accurately, into students’ and teachers’ co-construction of scientific knowledge in the classroom. Anthropologists and sociologists

² The economic argument is important to consider, but many scholars and educators regard science education as indispensable for reasons that go beyond the narrowly economic; for example, see chapter four for a review of literature on scientific citizenship and its relationship to science education.

of science have conclusively demonstrated that what comes to be accepted as scientific fact is actually the contingent outcome of scientists' discursive co-construction of natural phenomena, and that the role of human agency in determining "how things are" is afterwards obscured by the machinery of scientific knowledge production (Garfinkel et al., 1981; Latour & Woolgar, 1979; Ochs et al., 1996; Ochs & Jacoby, 1997). Still, this way of thinking is anathema to most professional scientists. In a similar vein, science and mathematics education is sometimes regarded as a culturally-neutral enterprise, where issues of diversity and difference ought not to matter, and where a teacher's content knowledge, in keeping with recent trends in teacher education, is a sufficient measure of his/her "quality." But students' race- and class-based identities (e.g., Richardson Bruna, 2010), sense of place (Lim & Calabrese Barton, 2006), bilingual abilities (Bayley et al., 2005; Goldberg et al., 2009), and cultural background knowledge (Erickson, 1986), for example, can make a difference for how students are able, or unable, to participate in science classrooms. Often neglected in discussions of "effective" science teaching is the reality that students and teachers not only confront differences in content knowledge, in their everyday interactions, but must also continuously negotiate differences in identity, stemming in part from different histories of lived experience (Lee, 2003). An Arizona science classroom, I thought, would be a fascinating setting for exploring how struggles over knowledge, identity, and belonging, which included but also transcended schools, were brought to bear even on the most "objective" of academic disciplines. And, in the process, I thought I might learn something about how to pursue

better academic outcomes for Latino/a and other underserved students in science classrooms.

1.2 “You had to be there”: Ethnography at the nexus of practice

One day in the fall of 2011, the year after I had concluded my fieldwork at VDS, I returned at lunchtime to say hello to Julia and the students who were still around. In honor of homecoming weekend, a *banda* group with accordion, bass, and guitar was playing popular Mexican songs outside the cafeteria, as Julia and I strolled around the courtyard where many students hung out during lunch. Despite the loud music, we were barely managing to carry on a conversation. I confessed to Julia that, in writing about my research, I was finding it very challenging to express the totality of what I had found at VDS – in other words, to tell the story of what I had learned during my year there with the richness and depth it deserved. Laughing, Julia turned toward the band and the maelstrom of students around us and, waving a hand at the whole scene, said, “I know! How can you describe ... this?” I laughed, too, and told her that I had decided the entire dissertation would be one sentence long: “You had to be there.”

I was, unfortunately, joking. All the same, “you had to be there” – or, more accurately, “I had to be there” – comes very close to my reasons for doing ethnography, and doing ethnography at VDS, in the first place. But before I trace the specific disciplinary lineage of this study, it is necessary to consider what I have in mind by “doing ethnography” at a place like VDS. After all, in late modernity, we ethnographers

no longer have the luxury, even if we once presumed to have the *right*, of studying relatively well-bounded, “culturally” distinct groups whose taken-for-granted existence both justified the antiracist projects of Boasian anthropology and, ironically, made possible the racist assumptions to which early North American anthropology opposed itself (Scollon & Scollon, 2007; Visweswaran, 2010). Rather, in any serious engagement with issues of power, identity, and belonging, in contemporary urban contexts, at least,

the complexities leap out at you and you can really only aim to produce ‘broad, in-depth, and long-term study of a social or cultural group’ (Green and Bloome 1997: 183) if you accept dominant ideological constructions uncritically, or are happy to close your eyes to the rest of social science. (Rampton, 2007, p. 591)

As the culture concept and the social groupings it implies have been shown, exhaustively, to be untenable, even incoherent (cf. González, 1999), one answer to what ethnography can or should be, if it cannot simply “[settle] in advance upon a particular group of people as its unit of analysis and [conduct] whatever observations it might conduct within a scope of agreed power/social interactions with members of that group” (Scollon & Scollon, 2007, p. 620-1), is that it should focus on what Scollon & Scollon (2007) call the “nexus of practice.” The idea is that ethnography should be centered on *action*, on specific *points* at which “historical trajectories of people, places, discourses, ideas and objects come together to enable some action which in itself alters those historical trajectories in some way” (Scollon & Scollon, 2004, viii, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 615). Doing ethnography, then, is not a matter of setting out to describe a discrete cultural group as thoroughly as possible, but a matter of “being there,” of getting oneself into a position where such “historical trajectories” are likely to converge in eye-opening ways, with, it is assumed, implications for social inequality and social justice. Likewise, the process of

identifying group boundaries or dimensions of contrast (cf. Hymes, 1968) – a traditional preoccupation of ethnography – while still important, is best conceived as identifying the boundaries that emerge, or become relevant, in specific scenes or interactions, rather than as positing stable boundaries or categories that necessarily endure in time. Social boundaries are “amenable to empirical analysis,” and the question becomes, “under what conditions and for whom is it meaningful to construct a boundary?” (Scollon & Scollon, 2007, p. 612).

These theoretical commitments have methodological consequences: I had to be there at the nexus of practice – indeed, I had to be *part* of it (Tusting & Maybin, 2007) – but I couldn’t get too comfortable. The evolving concern with process and action, with “capturing mobilities,” means that the ethnographer must be light on his or her feet – prepared, certainly, to spend enough time in one place to understand the profoundly local, situated meanings of particular ways of behaving and communicating, but also alert to the movements of people, and discourses, through space and time (Heller, 2011, p. 41). Accurate description, within the inescapable bounds of the researcher’s own positionality and biases, is still a prerequisite (*ibid.*, p. 42); you start from where you are, as Scollon & Scollon (2007, p. 619) put it, with fine description and detailed analysis of action, but build out from there, “[probing] outward into the histories of actors, resources, scenes, or settings across time and place.” In the case of my research, people’s life stories, linguistic biographies, investment or disinvestment in particular identities, and revoicing

of widely circulating discourses all provided important evidence of *which* trajectories were converging in the nexus of practice, at any given moment, at VDS.

My decision to pursue this research was motivated, to some degree, by specific questions I had about the topics listed above, and the linguistic processes to which they might be related. In particular: as a teacher educator, I wanted to know how better to serve pre-service teachers, like my own students, who might be entering classrooms fraught with tensions related to different forms of racial, cultural, and linguistic identification, in a country and a state where being Mexican or Mexican-American, and speaking Spanish, could make one the target of state surveillance, backed by what I, and many others, saw as discriminatory legislation. I was also interested in exploring the impact of cultural and linguistic difference in a science classroom, with an especially well-trained and committed science teacher and students who, very often, had little previous experience (or successful experience, anyway) with serious academic science or math. As a linguistic anthropologist (which, Ana Celia Zentella (2005) argues, implies an “*anthropolitical*” approach) I was intrigued to discover how, if at all, fierce public debates about the place of Latinos and immigrants in U.S. society were interjecting themselves into what I came to think of as “ordinary” school interactions – that is to say, interactions that were not ostensibly “about” race, immigration, or language use, and where such issues surfaced, when they did, in unexpected and unpredictable ways. However, it would not be accurate to say that I came up with a list of research questions and set out to answer them one by one, with ethnography merely a means to an end.

Ethnography was the means *and* the end; my involvement at the high school was not driven principally by a desire to get answers to questions I already knew, but by a relatively unformed, but nonetheless strong sense that, at the time I undertook the research, the Astronomy/Oceanography classroom at VDS was a nexus of practice where interesting things were likely to happen, and where I would have opportunities to “[get] underneath why people get excited about things in order to figure out what is at stake for them, and why” (Heller, 2011, p. 39).

I was right, as it turns out, but that is another story, to be told in subsequent chapters. The matter at hand is *why* I decided I had to be there and *how* I was able to become part of the story. In the following section, I will discuss the people and theoretical orientations that have informed my perspective on linguistic ethnographic research in educational settings, and situate my work with respect to decades-old traditions and emerging trends in the anthropology of education. I will then describe the processes of entering the field, securing consent, and developing relationships of trust with the study participants.

1.3 Linguistic anthropology of education and linguistic ethnography

This study is situated within the subfield known broadly as the linguistic anthropology of education (Hornberger, 2003; Wortham, 2003; Wortham & Reyes, 2011). Yet, as Wortham & Reyes (2011, p. 139) note, “linguistic anthropology of education” is less a well-defined, separate research program than a catch-all term for an

extremely varied body of work that studies educational processes from a linguistic anthropological point of view, and, in doing so, draws on precedents from a number of other traditions. To use Bernstein's (1996; cited in Rampton, 2007, p. 594) metaphor, we may productively think of the linguistic anthropology of education as a *region*, rather than a *singular*; it is a "unit" of praxis that is not confined to one academic discipline, but is composed of interrelationships among several disciplines, and exists not just for its own sake, but is intended to inform "the field of *external practice*" (cf. also Spolsky, 1975, p. 347, on educational linguistics as a "problem-oriented discipline, focusing on the needs of practice").

Generally speaking, the work that is considered part of the linguistic anthropology of education traces its lineage to the socioculturally-oriented linguistics first developed in the 1960s, in which Hymes (and others) elaborated the notion of communicative competence, in response to the mentalist conception of competence put forth by Chomsky and the generative grammarians³. To think of competence as communicative, Hymes (1964, p. 3) argued, means that

We cannot take linguistic form itself as a frame of reference ... [but] must take as context a community ... so that any given use of channel or code takes its place as but part of the resources upon which the community draws.

³ And in contrast to the quantitative sociolinguistic approach pioneered by Labov and taken up by many others, which applied a very different method to the study of language in social life, though its practitioners have frequently engaged in efforts to oppose linguistic inequality and discrimination in educational settings (and elsewhere), as have linguistic anthropologists in the Hymesian tradition. This is not to suggest that the two approaches are mutually exclusive, as researchers like H. Samy Alim and Norma Mendoza-Denton have demonstrated.

This theoretical orientation became the basis for the methodological approach known as the ethnography of communication, with its joint commitments to the study of linguistic form *in relation to* function and to a view of all communicative practice as situated (Hornberger, 2003). In practice, this entailed close, extended observation of communities and a focus on recurrent patterns of communication or significant speech events in those communities (Saville-Troike, 1997). Studies in the ethnography of communication often focused on identifying the relevant frame or context for linguistic behavior in a particular cultural setting, and specifying what Hymes somewhat facetiously called “rules of use” in addition to rules of grammar. Such studies have been extremely influential in the linguistic anthropology of education, early on (see, e.g., Gilmore, 1985; Mehan, 1979; Philips, 1972, and the other papers in Cazden, John & Hymes, 1972) and more recently.

However, Hornberger (1995) identifies two other “overlapping and intertwining strands of sociolinguistically informed ethnographic research in schools,” which, along with the ethnography of communication, have helped to shape the linguistic anthropology of education, and to which my own work owes specific debts. First, the interactional sociolinguistics of John Gumperz introduced interethnic or intercultural communication as a potentially rich area of inquiry (as opposed to the prevailing concern with the interpretation of communicative events among members of a particular cultural group in the ethnography of communication); research in interactional sociolinguistics highlighted the importance of code-switching and interlocutors’ signaling of contextual presuppositions, or “contextualization cues,” in such situations (Gumperz, 1982).

Second, microethnography, associated closely with the work of Frederick Erickson, advocated the fine-grained analysis of video-recorded data in order to document processes of face-to-face interaction, both verbal and nonverbal, in “particular cultural scenes within key institutional settings” (Erickson & Mohatt, 1982, p. 137). More than either of the other “strands,” microethnography emphasizes the degree to which aspects of social identity (or processes of social identification) are dynamic, relational, and emergent in interaction, rather than static or predetermined (Hornberger, 2003); much, if not all, current linguistic anthropological research on identity, education-related (e.g., Bucholtz, 2011; Mendoza-Denton, 2008; Rymes, 2001; Wortham, 2006) or not (e.g., Agha, 2007; Bucholtz & Hall, 2005; Georgakopoulou, 2008), shares these assumptions.

The present study shows the influence of interactional sociolinguistics in its attention to the interactional means through which racial/ethnic difference (or solidarity) is instantiated or reproduced at particular moments by particular individuals. It also strongly reflects the microethnographic tradition in its use of video, its dependence on the close analysis of key scenes, and its attempt to account for the relevance of broader contextual frames (such as institutional and national context) to the participants’ moment-to-moment interactional moves. In addition, it draws extensively on research from the closely related field (Wortham & Reyes, 2011) of language socialization, which is reviewed in some detail in chapter four; for now, I note that language socialization is concerned with the social nature of learning and with how people come to be seen as legitimate participants in particular discourse communities. Above all, the study shares

the theoretically-informed but practice-directed approach common to these overlapping strands in the linguistic anthropology of education, and continues to engage with the same basic issues Cazden (2001, p. 3) proposed as central to the study of classroom discourse: (1) how patterns of language use affect what counts as knowledge in classroom settings, (2) what effect, if any, these patterns have on students' equality of educational opportunity, and (3) what kind(s) of communicative competence these patterns presume or foster. These are essentially the same questions, somewhat more narrowly phrased, that inspired Hymes and other ethnographers of communication.

Equally important to my research, however, has been recent work in a neighboring "region" called "linguistic ethnography," which, though it comes from the United Kingdom, has a close, though uncertain, relationship to the linguistic anthropology of education in the United States. While Wortham & Reyes (2011) call linguistic ethnography a "related field," much of whose work might be considered part of an overarching linguistic anthropology of education, Rampton's (2007) insider account of how linguistic ethnography emerged as an academic discipline in the United Kingdom suggests that it came about as an attempt to institutionalize a program of research comparable to those carried out by linguistic anthropologists (and linguistic anthropologists of education) in the U.S., but in a context where linguistic anthropology has traditionally received little respect or support within departments of anthropology. This might suggest that it is unnecessary to speak of linguistic ethnography, coming from an environment that is supportive of the linguistic anthropology of education. However, I

have still found it convenient and productive to think about my own work as an example of linguistic ethnography, as I have been inspired by the methodological rigor and innovation from this quite recently articulated field (e.g., Jaspers, 2011; Rampton, 2006; Snell, 2010). As Hornberger (2003, p. 266) says of the linguistic anthropology of education, linguistic ethnography also

seeks to understand macro-level societal phenomena, and in particular societal inequities, in terms of micro-level person-to-person interaction, in hopes of enabling change from both the bottom up and the top down.

Nevertheless, linguistic ethnography distinguishes itself, in my view, in its recognition of the relative strengths of sociolinguistic and ethnographic research, and makes a persuasive case that they complement each other, and may even be said to *need* each other, in a certain sense. Rampton (2007, p. 596) argues that, in principle, ethnography “humanizes” linguistics and “opens linguistics up”; it “invite[s] reflexive sensitivity” into the research process, and provides opportunities for expressing the researcher’s sense of “what happened” in a holistic way that does not simplify the “irreducibility of the ‘lived stuff’ from which the analyst has [elsewhere] abstracted structure.” In other words, ethnography responds to Hymes’s dictum always to take the community of language users – or, to use the Scollons’ formulation, the nexus of practice – and not language *per se* as the primary frame of reference. Linguistics, for its part, “ties ethnography down”: using analytic tools from sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology, ethnographers can put their own assumptions and observations, and their participants’ words, to the test, and can thus “[uncover] unnoticed intricacies in the

discursive processes through which cultural relationships and identities are produced” (*ibid.*).⁴ Linguistics can add a measure of “analytic distance” (*ibid.*, p. 590-1) to ethnography, meaning not that it provides a neutral perspective or a “view from nowhere,” but only that it offers a different, additional perspective on the nexus of practice of which the researcher is/was a part (and in which her/his identity, biases, etc. are likewise implicated) and so must find ways to “make strange,” in order to see social processes with fresh eyes, so to speak, and not to take their workings for granted.

While I find Rampton’s arguments for linguistic ethnography compelling, and have approached my own research with them in mind, it is necessary to acknowledge two important critiques that do not so much discredit linguistic ethnography (or the linguistic anthropology of education) as point out potential blind spots or pitfalls into which the researcher must be careful not to fall. First, Blommaert (2007) observes that to separate the methodologies of ethnography and linguistics – and, in so doing, to separate “culture” and “language” as objects of study – is to miss the point Hymes, Gumperz, and Silverstein (and, even earlier, Sapir and Whorf) made about language and culture’s being a single object of study, “about knowledge of language necessarily being social and cultural knowledge” (p. 683). Blommaert’s concern is that, in moving back and forth between more and less language-focused forms of analysis, we not lose sight of the fact

⁴ Although, as Billig (1999) correctly notes, ethical issues arise whenever analysts employ categories that are not familiar or accessible to the participants, since this implies that the participants’ social reality (the “unnoticed intricacies” to which Rampton alludes) somehow exists outside their awareness of the structures and processes that constitute “ordinary life.”

that analysis of culture (ethnography) is always, to some extent, “about” language, and linguistic analysis can never be divorced from analysis of cultural context.

Second, in laying out her “critical ethnographic sociolinguistics” (again, closely related to both linguistic ethnography and linguistic anthropology of education), Heller (2011) joins others (e.g., Wortham, 2008) in questioning the simplistic scheme according to which micro-level phenomena (e.g., individual documents or conversational moves) are thought to map onto macro-level social realities; in fact, she is not convinced that the micro/macro distinction has any validity at all:

The distinction seemed to imply that there were two separate realms of existence – connected, to be sure, but nonetheless to be approached with different methods and understood on different terms ... But for me, they were in some way the same thing; the challenge became to figure out how it came to pass that normalities came undone and got built up again, and how the multiple heres and nows of our existence were shaped by, and shaped in turn, more durable arrangements ... (p. 34)

Thus, Heller exhorts us not to be content merely with drawing “connections” between two apparently separate realms of existence, but to consider that the “multiple heres and nows” of the micro – the multiple senses of “what is at stake,” as she says, for whom, in particular interactions, at particular places and times – might be the stuff of which “more durable [social] arrangements” are, in fact, produced and reproduced (“built up”) on an everyday basis. In my analysis, I attempt to heed these critiques, and not to fall prey to easy formulations premised either on the language-culture or the micro-macro dualism (though it will also be necessary at times to focus on one term (i.e., language or culture)

or another, or one scale of analysis, even at the risk of “pretending” that neat divisions between such categories really exist.)

In the chapters that follow, I review bodies of literature dealing with specific concepts from linguistic anthropology and sociolinguistics that are important to my analysis. (For example, in the second chapter I review work on race and the racialization of Mexican-Americans in the U.S.; in the third, linguistic style, stylization, and crossing; and in the fourth, language socialization, expert-novice interaction, knowledge in conversation, and cultural and scientific citizenship.) At the outset, however, I want to introduce two thinkers and one research tradition whose ideas, as they have been taken up in linguistic anthropology and sociolinguistics, have been singularly influential for me and appear throughout this study.

First, Erving Goffman’s (1959; 1971; 1974; 1978; 1981) work on forms of participation in interaction, self-presentation, and interactional frames has provided the starting point for nearly every example of interaction analysis here. Often the first questions I ask myself, when beginning to look at data, have to do with the frame to which the participants are orienting, the participant roles they are enacting at a given moment, and the contribution each makes to creating and sustaining a context, an understanding of what is going on and who is involved. Second, Mikhail Bakhtin’s (1981; 1984; 1986) analyses of multi-voicing, or heteroglossia, in literary texts have become increasingly central to how I, and many linguistic anthropologists, think about

the life of discourse; Bakhtin calls our attention to the ways speakers weave “alien” voices and accents into everyday speech, with or without realizing they are doing so, and to the fundamentally intertextual nature of all communication, where nothing truly original is ever said or written, and bits of discourse are incessantly recycled and repurposed for different contexts. Bakhtin’s radically decentered view of language conjures up a world in which, as Jane Hill (lecture notes, 2/11/08) puts it, “everything that comes out of your mouth involves a struggle to make it yours.” Finally, the research tradition known as Conversation Analysis (CA), with its emphasis on the sequential organization of conversation – in which each conversational turn projects possible responses, and the co-construction of meaning by the participants can be observed, empirically, as it unfolds turn by turn – has given me an indispensable toolkit for answering the most basic question about “any bit of talk-in-interaction”: “Why that now?” (Schegloff, 2007a, p. 2). CA has helped me to “tie down” my analyses by forcing me to look closely and carefully at naturally-occurring interactional data, in order to consider every possible answer to the question of why a particular person produced a particular bit of speech (or, indeed, communicated or failed to communicate anything at all, using any semiotic channel) at a particular moment in time. Several exemplary studies that combine principled CA with long-term ethnography (Duneier, 2001; Goodwin, 1990; Moerman, 1988) have inspired me as I have attempted my own synthesis of discourse- and culture-centered approaches.

This genealogy of my study, while not exhaustive, provides an overview of the traditions and bodies of literature that have influenced my research most strongly, and orients the reader to a number of intellectual conversations, taking place in contiguous “regions,” with which my work seeks to engage.

1.4 Beginning fieldwork

1.4.1 Julia

My ability to do the research hinged on my relationship with Julia Tezich, the second-year teacher whose classroom became the focus of my ethnographic case study. By the time I started fieldwork, I had known Julia for around three years; she had been my student the first time I taught the aforementioned multicultural education course, and we stayed in contact afterwards. In fact, I wrote her letter of reference for the Astronomy/Oceanography opening at VDS – without any thought of doing research there, at the time – and was thrilled when she got the job. For me, Julia represented a critical or best case (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 71) of a novice white science teacher working with Latino students. She had exceptionally deep and wide content area knowledge, having trained as a research geologist and accumulated significant field experience, even working on a university-based Mars imaging project for NASA, before deciding to become a science teacher. She brought a sophisticated and up-to-date understanding of astronomy, physics, chemistry, and geological processes to the classroom, and answered even what I saw as the students’ most off-the-wall questions with aplomb, without ever resorting to obfuscation. But Julia was also powerfully

committed to promoting equity for underserved students: she had sought out the placement at VDS, a Title I high school with an 85% Hispanic student population, and maintained her commitment to the school, turning down opportunities to move to comparatively better-resourced schools, though the lack of resources and administrative support sometimes frustrated her to no end. During the spring of my fieldwork year, to the amazement of many students, she bought a house near the school, both for convenience and in order to be in closer contact with the students' families and the surrounding community.

The fieldnotes from my very first day of pilot research at VDS, the semester before I started fieldwork in earnest, document my impressions of Julia as I observed her in action as a teacher for the first time. Reading them now, I feel as though I have hardly anything to add, even after a year's worth of participant observation in her classroom – surely, this is more a tribute to Julia's consistency and maturity as a teacher than to my skill as an ethnographer:

[Julia] seems to relate to her students very effectively ... classroom persona is almost indistinguishable from her out-of-class persona, so she projects a genuineness (for want of a better word) that her students seem to respond to. A few appreciative notes on blackboards/paper posted around class: "Ms. Tezich is cooler than ice!", "Ms. Tezich is awesome (?) - from her favorite student :)" ... Hard to believe it's only her first semester at the school, in that respect. She's mentioned a number of times how new students who make racializing comments [to her] like "Oh, it's because I'm Mexican!" are immediately shut down by other students [who have longer experience with her]. She calls herself a "rambler" but seems to thrive on the energetic give-and-take with her students ... really good at coming up with real-life analogues for scientific concepts off the top of her head – e.g., a jet at the bottom of a swimming pool pushing the "floaties" at the top around → convection currents in the mantle pushing continental plates apart. Also good at illustrating those concepts with gestures and finding

visuals/diagrams. I was particularly impressed with her ... knowledge of the content area ... and how well she was able to field “above and beyond” questions from the students and make the scientific information accessible to them (e.g., how seismic waves can be used to determine the state of the matter in the Earth's core).

Julia had no pretensions of being an insider at VDS. She talked frequently of her Indiana roots, bemoaned her inability to speak or understand Spanish well, submitted good-naturedly to students' teasing about her Midwestern accent, regularly called herself a “dork,” in implicit contrast to the students, and generally acknowledged the differences between her background and the students'. However, she constantly worked to integrate herself more meaningfully into the life of the community; besides buying the house, she attended family events, made symbolic gestures to indicate that she understood the value of learning Spanish (e.g., buying a Spanish Bible, investing in a used copy of Spanish Rosetta Stone software, attempting to send text messages to parents in Spanish, asking students how to say things in Spanish, and encouraging students to use Spanish in the classroom), and hosted family-friendly “star parties,” nighttime telescope observing sessions, in a neighborhood where many students lived (see chapter two for a detailed description). It was clear that most students related well to Julia's exuberant, outgoing, and compassionate nature, and felt comfortable talking to her about matters both personal and academic. Julia, for her part, cared deeply for the students, to the point that she tended to internalize their personal struggles and crises, but was also ever conscious of her relative youth (she was 24 during the study) and the need to maintain what she regarded as appropriate boundaries of talk and conduct with the students.

In many ways, then, Julia was exceptional. In other ways, however, she was a typical second-year teacher, whose easygoing personality sometimes encouraged her classes' tendency to revert to a state of chaos, and who struggled to find ways to make difficult scientific concepts accessible and relevant to students who, very often, had little in the way of quality preparation for high-level science and math coursework, and had apparently had few opportunities to consider why or how learning science might make a difference in their lives. Before approaching the principal and school district, I asked Julia for permission to become part of the nexus of practice in her classroom because I admired her so much, and thought, due to her exceptional qualities, that her case might illustrate how novice science teachers can cross potentially alienating lines of racial, cultural, and linguistic difference with their students. I still believe that this is true, but I do not want to give the impression that Julia always (or ever) made it look easy, or neat. Like any novice teacher, she had good days and bad days, and sometimes had difficulty balancing her goals and high expectations for the students with the demands of bureaucracy, and the stresses of personal life.

To say that she approached the challenges in her classroom with a high degree of maturity and skill is not to say that she was perfect, or that her case, as exceptional as it is, should be considered a "best practice" for educating diverse science learners (to borrow a popular term from teacher professional development). Rather, I argue that by examining the particularities of her situation, we can gain an appreciation for the complexity novice science teachers discover in their classrooms, whether or not they are

prepared for it, and learn a great deal about how they can productively engage with this complexity, even in situations where, for example, a political climate of suspicion and hostility toward people of Mexican descent might be expected to make their work more difficult. This perspective is in keeping with the aims and scope of ethnographic case study research in general: ethnography aims to document “local particulars,” to arrive at deep understandings of singular phenomena – to portray “the world around here,” not “the world in general,” as Geertz (1983) says.

1.4.2 Vista Del Sol and the Astronomy/Oceanography classroom

Vista Del Sol High School is located on the southeastern outskirts of a large urban area in southern Arizona, where the city sprawls into scattered, recently-built cookie-cutter housing developments, alongside trailer parks, older neighborhoods of single-family dwellings and apartment complexes, and an assortment of commercial enterprises – daycares, hot dog trucks, Mexican restaurants, fast food chains, auto repair shops, neighborhood markets, airport parking lots, and so on. Nearby can be found both the regional airport and an Air Force base, whose drones and fighter jets often buzzed the road as I was driving home in the afternoon. (The school had a very active JROTC program, and I knew a number of students who aspired to military careers.) A gigantic coal-burning power plant dominates the area north of the school, and the interstate crosses over the road on which the school is located no more than a quarter-mile to the east. Julia told me that she sometimes felt as though VDS was regarded as the “red-headed stepchild” of the school district, meaning that it received short shrift, compared to

the district's other high school. This perception was probably connected, in part, to the makeup of the two schools: while the other school drew students from more centrally-located, densely populated neighborhoods on the south side of the city, VDS served a geographically diverse population of students, including students who lived in the city, close to the school, but also students from semi-rural and rural areas further out (and even a few students from the nearby Indian reservation.) Some of the students I knew who lived in less central areas started their school days very early, boarding the bus at five or five-thirty in the morning in order to arrive on time for breakfast.

During my year at VDS, the district website listed the school's enrollment as 1,869 (from grades 9-12); according to Julia, there were actually closer to 2,100 students at the school, which, she said, had been built to house even fewer students than the reported enrollment. According to the most recent demographic information available (from the 2008-09 school year), the student population was 83% Hispanic (overwhelmingly Mexican-American), 8% non-Hispanic White, 5% Native American, 3% Black, and 2% Asian; more recent statistics (from the district website) place the percentage of Hispanic students in the district even higher, around 87%. The classroom demographics were, by and large, representative of school-wide demographics: the majority of students in both of the classes I worked with were Mexican-American, but there were a handful of white, African-American, and Native students sprinkled among the two classes. English and Spanish were both widely used throughout the school as languages of peer interaction, and while the school did not offer opportunities for Spanish

content area instruction (beyond ESL/sheltered instruction classes and Spanish as a foreign language classes), many bilingual students used Spanish informally for academic purposes in Julia's classroom, and told me that they did the same in other classes.

The district was very proud, as it ought to have been, of having increased the percentage of students graduating from the two high schools over the past few years, and trumpeted this accomplishment at the VDS graduation ceremony in the spring. Still, the district-wide graduation rate was only 67%, and very few of the graduating students I knew went on to four-year colleges; in addition to working full time, popular post-secondary options included attending the local community college, often with the intention of transferring to a four-year institution later, and going to one of the many trade schools that advertised aggressively on local television and appealed to students with interests in specific career fields, such as art and design. Merely getting to graduation was quite an achievement, as it involved successfully navigating a byzantine system of school and district requirements, along with state standardized tests that would have kept many more students from graduating, but for the fact that low scores could be offset with points earned in classes at VDS. Even then, what it meant to graduate was different for different students: for example, it was possible to "walk" (i.e., across the stage) at graduation but not receive one's diploma, and have to return the following semester to amass more credits and/or pass a particular state test; it was also possible to be in a similar situation and not be allowed to walk, for reasons I did not fully understand. I witnessed students crying tears of joy and tears of sorrow at the graduation

ceremony, and felt like doing both kinds of crying myself, at various times, depending on the company.

The school building had been constructed in the early 1980s, and, perhaps because I attended a very small high school, I found it intimidatingly large and confusing to navigate. Various wings containing classrooms, offices, and so forth surrounded an expansive outdoor courtyard running the length of the school, east to west, where students moved between classes and hung out during lunch and before and after school. Inside, the corridors were wide and bleak but not shabby; the walls throughout the school were cinderblock, painted white and stenciled with “Keep Moving” (with arrows to indicate the desired direction of motion) in “military surplus” font, and the floors were covered in well-worn, grayish-blue carpet. During Julia’s first year, when I conducted a few pilot observations, her classroom was a pretty desperate space, lacking whiteboards, windows, and even a permanent wall to separate it from the classroom next door; it was filled with ancient, sometimes dangerous school furniture, which her students offered to weld back together for her in shop class. Her second-year classroom was a significant improvement: it was located on the second floor and had high windows that admitted some natural light, a whiteboard, round tables and chairs for the students, a proper desk for Julia, and a back room with storage space and a sink. Based on the existence of the sink, the cabinets that lined the back and side walls, and the counter running the length of the back wall, I guessed that it had even been designed as a science classroom. Julia, in any case, was thrilled with the change of scene, and did her best to make the room a

welcoming physical environment for the students. She decorated the walls with spectacular astronomy photos (including one with an image from the Mars project she had worked on), informational and other posters (e.g., from Notre Dame, her hometown university), student artwork, and holiday lights; throughout the year, she would add seasonal touches, such as a Christmas tree that was declared a fire hazard and had to be taken down, severely disappointing the students.

Initially, I was curious about the very existence of the Astronomy/Oceanography class, since I had never heard of another high school's having such a class. Julia explained to me that the class predated her time at the school, and was developed to provide another upper-level science option for students who "needed more science" but were not considered "AP material" – that is, those who were not destined for Advanced Placement science classes that could confer college credit. Julia chafed at the class's reputation among the guidance staff and students as, in her words, a "dumping ground" for lower-achieving students who needed science coursework to graduate. She worked hard to counter this image, and to remake the class as a rigorous, demanding course of study in physical science that was intended to prepare the students for college-level coursework.⁵⁵ In actuality, the students were a mixture of higher- and lower-achieving; it was true that – from what the students and Julia told me, and judging by the difficulty presented by certain tasks in her class (like calculating density) – a good number of

⁵⁵ During my year at VDS, in fact, Julia won approval from the school to design and teach a new, full-year Astronomy course. She had been frustrated by the limited amount of material she was able to cover in a single semester, and planned to include a good deal more math (e.g., Kepler's equations to determine the orbital paths of planets) and optics-related material (e.g., understanding how telescopes work, and even possibly constructing one) in the new course.

students had taken relatively few science classes at the high school level, and tended to be uncomfortable with anything that required math. It was also true, however, that other students had excelled in Chemistry and Physics, and were taking Astronomy/Oceanography because the subject matter appealed to them, because they had sought out an additional science class, or because they had heard about, or encountered, Julia, and wanted to take a class with her. Students usually started with Astronomy in the fall and continued with Oceanography in the spring, but some students had taken Oceanography the previous semester, and were only in Julia's classroom for the fall semester the year I was there (or vice-versa, if they had already taken Astronomy). Many of the students I got to know best, like Alex, Viviana, Clara, and Margot, were in the classroom for both semesters; however, I was also close to others, like John Stamos, Heriberto, and Abraham, who were only present for one semester; there were still other students, like Ignacio, who, even though they had already taken Oceanography, still made regular appearances in Julia's classroom throughout the spring semester, in order to see friends, confide in Julia, use her computer, or say hello to me.

The process of securing permission from the school and district was quite straightforward: I had some difficulty tracking down the principal, but once I did get a chance to meet with her, she was supportive and even interested in the research. (Unfortunately, she left about halfway through the school year, and was replaced by another administrator I knew slightly from interactions in Julia's classroom.) The district also lived up to its reputation as a hospitable place for research; the application asked me

to justify my project in terms of its potential importance for understanding how better to serve the district's student population, which I found an easy enough task, and the project was approved without incident.

1.5 Reflections on positionality, relationship-building, and representation

An ethnographer is a “positioned subject,” no less than anyone else, and some subjects are positioned to “[grasp] certain human phenomena better than others” (Rosaldo, 1993, p. 19), which means that, as an outsider at VDS, in many respects, whatever phenomena I think I “grasped” in the course of this study might be perceived quite differently by any of the students in Julia’s class, for example. That is not to say that I am nostalgic for the anthropological “view from nowhere”: this study follows a tradition of critical ethnography within educational research in rejecting “the positivist notion of a social science that produces value-free ethnographies,” and reflects the viewpoint of someone who is “deeply committed to research that promotes an egalitarian society” (Foley & Valenzuela, 2005, p. 217). But the fact that my research aims to promote social justice, in “‘saying aloud’ this next generation of troubles” (Weis & Fine, 2000, p. 33) – the unique “troubles” faced by Mexican-American youth from lower-income families, and their teacher, in a specific science classroom – does not absolve me of the troubling power dynamics that enter the picture whenever ethnographers presume to speak “of” and “for” others (Fine, 1994). If ethnographers are their own primary instruments of data collection, Reed (2011) suggests, turning the old hierarchy of privilege on its head, that data collected by white ethnographers may even be *less* valid

and trustworthy than those collected by researchers of color. This is true, in her view, for the simple reason that, in research as in life, it is often impossible for non-white anthropologists to ignore their own racial identity, or to hide behind “academic armor” in order to avoid “intimate emotional engagement” and remain “objective and detached” (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 78); thus, white ethnographers’ delusions of objectivity may render them more biased, in reality, than researchers of color, who do not have the luxury of being so deluded.

At the same time, I share Heller’s (2011) conviction that anthropologists and sociolinguists, who are ever leery of essentializing others, should not be so quick to essentialize ourselves. It is indisputably true that one’s biases and positionality need to be taken into account, reflexively, both in order to steer clear of validity threats premised on the researcher’s supposed objectivity and to interrogate the issues of power involved in knowledge production. That does not mean, however, that I was totally unlike the participants in every respect, nor that the very real differences that separated us, in terms of experience and understanding, precluded me from getting *any* idea of how people, situations, and events looked through their eyes. Rather than predicating my relationships with the research participants solely on lines of immutable racial, cultural, and linguistic difference, I find it productive to acknowledge those differences, but also to consider what about my identity made me appear more outsider- or insider-like in interacting with the participants, in particular contexts, or at specific moments. In considering dimensions of my positionality that influenced this research, I want to take

up Fine's (1994, p. 70) exhortation to "examine the hyphen at which Self-Other join in the politics of everyday life, that is, the hyphen that both separates and merges personal identities with our inventions of Others." In other words, to what do I owe the feeling I had, many times, that I was observing or hearing about an experience that I could not relate to, *as well as* the feeling of genuine connection and mutual understanding I had at other times? Where did self and other join in the "politics of everyday life" involved in conducting this research? How did I go about "building relationships of dignity and care and glimpsing insider understanding across multiple borders of difference" (Paris, 2010, p. 4) puts it, with Julia and the students at Vista Del Sol?

To begin with, I was an outsider in the sense that I was (and am) white – that is, of European descent and not from a Spanish-speaking cultural background – which was significant for reasons hinted at earlier in this chapter and expanded on, at some length, in the next chapter. Students oriented to this fact and joked about it early in the year, but generally stopped doing so once we knew each other better. (I found this fascinating, because – again, generally speaking – the only students who engaged in explicitly racial teasing with Julia were students with whom she was very close; see chapter five). For example, at the first star party, in early fall, Julia and I were lying on the baseball diamond with about fifteen students waiting for the Perseid meteors to appear; it was very hard to see anything because of the lights, but eventually a brilliant meteor streaked across the sky, just above us. Julia and I yelled and gave each other a high-five, prompting John Stamos to exclaim, "White power!" On another occasion early in the

year, I was stapling together packets at Julia's desk before fifth period. When Gabby entered, Julia joked that she had enslaved me, and Gabby said, "It's white turning on white!"⁶

Such comments brought forth my whiteness as a salient point of contrast with the students' identities, but what they said about the *significance* of my whiteness is more difficult to puzzle out. Did John's comment refer to the well-documented association of whiteness with science and nerdiness (cf. Bucholtz, 2001), since we were engaged in an indisputably nerdy activity? Was it a commentary on my and Julia's status as teachers who had organized a school-related activity that we desperately hoped would pay off (in meteors) for the students, and were just a little too excited when it did?⁷ Or was it just an offhand remark that pointed to nothing deeper than the fact that two of the only white people present had high-fived each other? (As I go on to discuss in chapter three, the meaning of utterances like "White power!" is often frustratingly indeterminate, though it is still essential to continue to ask what they *might* mean.) At other moments, and in an apparently more serious vein, my racial identity sometimes became salient when students talked of experiences of prejudice and discrimination. Some students, even those I thought I knew well, seemed fearful of saying too much in front of me, or felt they needed to preface comments about race with "I don't wanna be racist," or something

⁶ As it happens, although both John and Gabby were Hispanic students, neither was particularly "Mexican," by VDS standards (see chapter two); for example, neither used Spanish with friends.

⁷ Norma Mendoza-Denton, who provided this insight, also suggests that John's "White power!" could even be a joke to the effect that Julia and I (as teachers and representatives of science) had arranged the whole experience for the students' benefit – that white people are even able to exercise control over astronomical phenomena, in other words.

similar. Others were less reluctant to share those experiences with me, but such interactions could still become uncomfortable, as the stark differences between my daily life and theirs became more immediately evident.

I was also an outsider geographically: I did not live by the school, and had limited experience with the area people in my part of town called “the South side”; in fact, I had never heard anyone refer to my own neighborhood as on “the North side” until I started spending time at VDS, which goes to show that everything is, indeed, relative. Culturally speaking, however, I came to enjoy a certain ambiguous insider-outsider status: Spanish-speaking students were at first astonished, and then unduly impressed, that I spoke the language; it saddened me that a competent white Spanish speaker was such an oddity, in a city where a huge number of people speak Spanish as their primary language, but the students’ reactions were consistent with those of other Spanish speakers I have encountered in the area. I spoke more English than Spanish with students, as they did with me; all the same, I did speak Spanish (riddled with English code-switches) on a somewhat regular basis with a few of the Spanish-speaking students I was closer to. Those students ultimately came to see my Spanish competence as unremarkable. Other students, with whom I was friendly but not particularly close, might speak Spanish to me on rare occasions, but were more likely to comment on my Spanish: for example, Jesús, who spoke English well, sometimes switched to Spanish with Julia or me when he seemed tired or overwhelmed with work; he did this once, late in the year, and upon hearing my reply, remarked, “Mr. O’Connor speaks Spanish *good!*” (I told him I wasn’t

sure what he meant, since I didn't speak it nearly as well as he did.) Many students also knew that I had previously lived and taught in south Texas, near the U.S.-Mexico border, and had acquired a certain amount of familiarity and experience with life in a majority Mexican-American community.⁸

My status as a representative of the university was another aspect of my positionality that marked me as an outsider, but it also provided an entry point for conversations with students, especially early in the year. While the university was no more than a twenty-minute drive from VDS, and the destinies of its sports teams were of great interest to many students, relatively few had firsthand knowledge of the university itself; it was as though the university and the high school existed in parallel dimensions. Upon learning that I was a teacher at the university, students were full of questions, ranging from very broad (Is college hard?) to more specific (How many students are in the classes? What do you actually *do* in class?), and academic to decidedly non-academic (Do people party a lot? Are there fine girls on campus?) When appropriate, I did my best to demystify the "college experience" in answering their questions, and talked up financial aid and college readiness programs, though in less detail, and with less follow-up, than I might have. The students were also intrigued by the idea that a university researcher was interested in observing their daily activities and hearing their thoughts on a variety of topics; at the beginning of the year, I described the purpose of

⁸ For whatever that was worth in an Arizona context that was, admittedly, very different; still, I was not starting from scratch, as I had in Texas, where, on my first day of student teaching in summer school, my students had to explain to me what *menudo* was. (For the uninitiated, *menudo* is a quintessentially Mexican soup made with beef *panza* (stomach) and *pozole* (hominy), traditionally eaten on the weekend and renowned as a hangover cure.)

my research to them largely in terms of teacher preparation, using Julia as an example of a newer teacher whom I had had to prepare, to the best of my ability, to be an effective teacher for a group of students who did not share her background. Julia also reminded the students, from time to time, that one of the goals of my research was “for us to be able to teach you better.”

For many students, the initial weirdness of participating in research seemed to wear off after the first month or two, once we had gotten comfortable with each other. At times, our relationship as researcher and participants would come back into focus, as when I first introduced the video camera and students were conscious, for awhile, of being under scrutiny in a new way, or when my presence had to be explained to classroom visitors; the latter contingency led Viviana to joke (affectionately, I think) “We’re his mice!” – i.e., that the students were my lab rats. In general, though, after the getting-to-know-you period, I would say that most students oriented to me more as a teacher-like member of the classroom community (though without the power to bestow the bathroom pass), a conversational partner, and a resource for getting their questions answered, than as a researcher *per se*. It is not that they had forgotten, but that our relationships had become “thicker” than one would expect from a traditional researcher-participant arrangement.

Notwithstanding the myriad ways in which I was Other to the students, I deliberately worked the Self-Other hyphen with them as I went about the work of

building relationships. That is to say, I drew on different aspects of my positionality, interests, and experience to seek common ground with different students: I discovered a shared love of baseball with Alex (whose knowledge of the subject put me to shame), submitted to Margot's romanticized view of my "secret life" as a folk musician, waxed nostalgic for Texas with John, a fellow ex-Texan, compared notes on the latest blockbusters with Clara, who worked at the movie theater, and tried to keep up with Brian's boundless appetite for all things science-related. I do not pretend that my engagement with these topics and activities was unrelated to the larger social categories I inhabit by virtue of my positionality: after all, I was socialized to talk baseball as a man (like Alex), I cultivated an interest in particular musical genres, like bluegrass and indie rock, most often associated with white people (like Margot and me), and I benefited from a strong K-12 and postsecondary education that gave me the ability and inclination to keep up with new developments in physics and astronomy, and talk about them (somewhat) intelligently, with Brian. Finding these areas of similarity did not make up for the many ways in which the students and I were profoundly unlike each other, but it did suggest that we might not be totally incapable of understanding each other, either, and helped us start a year-long conversation.

1.6 From positionality to methodology

Before going on, I want to make two general observations that bear on methodology as well as positionality. The first concerns what, in qualitative research, is usually called "participant selection." Technically speaking, as I stated above, I took a

critical case approach to selecting Julia and the Astronomy/Oceanography students, as participants in a nexus of practice I deemed worthy of study for a variety of reasons. As Paris (2010, p. 4) argues, however, “selection” fails to capture the reality that the participants were not just chosen *by* me, but had to choose to work *with* me (or not). “Participant selection,” though it does involve a significant power imbalance, is not really one person’s selection of another, but a negotiation among people of how, and how closely, they will work together. This fits with my experience at Vista Del Sol: participant selection was not a one-time, unilateral move on my part, but a “dialogic process of choosing” that took a good deal of time, and was not concluded when a given student (or her parents) signed the consent form. Unlike Paris, who worked with a relatively small number of students, I had the majority of students in two large science classes ($n = 53$) participating; getting a high percentage of students to trust me enough to consent formally to the project was important logistically, because I wanted to record whole-class interactions as well as interactions between Julia and individual students, or among small groups of students. However, not all of the participants who consented formally went on to “select” me in return: not everyone who participated was equally interested in finding out more about who I was on a personal level, and engaging with me openly and honestly, not just as a researcher, but as a fellow member (even a temporary one) of the VDS community, an ally, and a friend.

Those who did select me, and with whom I did go on to develop such relationships – Viviana, Alex, Margot, Ignacio, John, and, of course, Julia, to name just a

few – provided me with some of the richest data and most profound insights⁹. As I gradually learned about the dreams, anxieties, triumphs, and tragedies that made up the daily warp and weft of the lives of these people who had chosen to work with me, I came to care for them deeply. In the process, I also came to understand for the first time how “dropping the academic armor” makes research emotionally riskier, for the researcher and participants, but also holds out the possibility of “a visceral way of moving beyond [mere] seeing to understanding” (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 78). As a consequence, I felt the burden of representation weigh more heavily on my shoulders, and, in writing about the participants’ experiences, have tried to wrestle seriously with the ethnographic examination of conscience Weis & Fine (2000, p. 64) call the “triple representation problem”: “Have I worked to understand my contribution to the materials/narrations provided and those silenced? Have I worked to explain to readers the position from which informants speak? Have I worked to recast the person(s) whom the informant chooses to blame or credit for social justice?” Or, to put it somewhat differently, have I been self-aware enough to “drop that knowledge ... that expert posture for which we [adults and researchers] often get rewarded” (Soep & Chávez, 2010, p. 6) and take great care in theorizing others’ words?

The second observation has to do with the nature of my participation in the nexus of practice at VDS. While most, if not all, present-day anthropologists would agree that

⁹ I feel it is also important to acknowledge that I developed meaningful relationships with students whose words and perspectives did not make it, or barely made it, into this study, for the simple, regrettable reason that it is not possible to do everything. I hope to make it up to them in the future.

“participant observation” is the defining activity of ethnographic fieldwork, the term obscures a great deal of variation in just how much observation versus how much participation is involved in a given project. Ethnography, in practice, entails a “range of opportunities” for involvement, on a continuum from almost entirely passive observation of a cultural setting to what used to be called “going native” (in somewhat racist terms), or attaining full or nearly full membership in the community being studied through extensive, long-term, insider-like participation (Schensul et al., 1999, pp. 92-3). The degree of my participation varied quite a bit from day to day and over the course of the year. At the beginning of the year, I was much more likely to hang back in a corner of the classroom, watching, listening, and tapping out observations on my laptop, as I struggled to make any sense of the undifferentiated activity around me. I was just getting to know everyone, and didn’t want to impose myself on students who were trying to decide if I was ok or not; I was also worried about my status as Julia’s ex-teacher, and was loath to intrude on her lessons or do anything that would make her self-conscious about my presence. Still, from my very first week at VDS, many of the students were exceptionally friendly and welcoming, and conversed easily with me before and after class. I was consistently taken aback by the students’ willingness to trust me both with intimate fragments of their personal and family lives, and shockingly honest observations about the world around them. I did work carefully and respectfully, in many, many small interactions over many months, to find out more about what students were going through, what mattered to them, where they worked, what they wanted to do after they graduated, who had broken up with whom, how someone’s new baby was doing, and so on. But I

cannot claim credit for the participants' openheartedness and sincerity, which made this work possible.

As the year went on, I moved around the room freely, hanging out with students as they worked independently, contributing to class discussions, joking with Julia, having both on and off-topic *sub rosa* conversations with students, answering Astronomy and Oceanography-related questions to the best of my ability, and checking in about students' personal news. While I spent three afternoons per week at the school (i.e., those when I was not teaching at the university), I felt as though I were generally accepted as "part of the class," as something between a second teacher and a genial confidant (or a nuisance, I suppose, depending on whom you asked.) An unforeseen difficulty came at the end of the first semester, when there was a good deal of turnover from Astronomy to Oceanography – since, as I mentioned, not everyone took both courses during the same school year – and I had to go through a second, slightly accelerated process of building relationships, obtaining consent, and waiting to see if any of the new students would select me as someone they would like to work with. Fortunately, quite a few of them did.

The two classes where I spent most of my time, fifth and sixth period, were afternoon classes, so I would sometimes arrive early in order to wander around the courtyard at lunchtime and talk with anyone who was around. Very often, I would also stay after school, either to conduct unhurried interviews with students, or to take in the dizzying array of people and cultural practices that often converged in Julia's classroom

at the time: for example, a group of Spanish-speaking friends from the soccer team might show up and ask to use Julia's computer and projector to watch the Barcelona match; on the side of the room, Somali boys might be trolling YouTube for hip hop beats, over which they planned to record their own lyrics (having figured out how to circumvent the website-blocking software on school computers), while one of their sisters, Isha, killed time by watching Bollywood movies dubbed into Somali on her school-issued laptop. Other students might be working out songs on acoustic guitar, or telling Julia, who was known as a guitarist and singer, about the last hardcore show they had attended at a local club; more than likely, someone was confiding in Julia (and a certain nosy researcher) about his or her latest relationship drama or issues with family; meanwhile, at another table, an artistically gifted student like Margot might be working diligently on a clay sculpture of, in her words, "Tezich and O'Connor" – Julia and me – "as hobbits having a lightsaber duel." Early in the year, Julia had even recruited a few students to show up after school and drill her on Spanish vocabulary and phrases, with limited success. Amidst all this, on any given day, there were probably at least a few students studying for an upcoming Oceanography test, making up a missed lab, or getting help with homework.

1.7 Overview of data collection and analysis

1.7.1 Fieldnotes from observations, student work, journal entries

Throughout the year, I collected data from a variety of sources. At first, my data consisted mostly of fieldnotes, most often composed hastily during class (in the moments when I was more observer than participant) but sometimes written down afterwards, with

the aid of notes I had scribbled to myself at the time. I documented a wide variety of events and interactions in the fieldnotes – principally, classroom events and examples of classroom discourse, but also including informal conversations with students, in and outside of class, observations from star parties and other out-of-school activities (like football games), and my nascent impressions of people and places involved in the study. While I knew recordings of “naturalistic” interaction would be important sources of data for my linguistic ethnography, I had the sense that starting to video-record too early, before I was a known quantity, would be counter-productive, and might turn the participants off to the research. I felt similarly about interviews, and delayed starting them, even with the students I came to know best, until the end of the first semester; I preferred to wait until we knew each other well enough for wide-ranging, honest conversations to be possible. I did begin amassing a broadly representative sample of student work (e.g., creative projects, such as posters and student-made books, along with tests, quizzes, free writes, and worksheets from lab activities) early in the year. I also regularly solicited emailed journal entries from Julia, beginning in October. I thought that email would be a more convenient way of facilitating Julia’s ongoing reflection on her participation in the study than more traditional methods of journal research, which, in my experience, often result in inconsistent data.

1.7.2 Video- and audio-recording

I began video-recording in early November and continued until early May, just before the school year ended. Working with video can be labor-intensive, so I tried to

limit the amount of data I collected this way, and planned my recording sessions to get the broadest, most diverse sample of classroom interaction in the least amount of time. I focused on taking video of a range of participation frameworks (whole-class interaction, interaction among small groups of students, one-on-one teacher-student interaction, teacher-small group interaction, researcher-teacher-student interaction, etc.), activities (taking notes/asking questions during direct teaching, collaborating on laboratory assignments, playing review games, and watching and responding to videos and other media, as well as just hanging out and talking informally), and topics (including, but not limited to, asteroids, meteors, and comets; luminosity and brightness of stars; the structure of atoms; the ocean floor; plate tectonics and volcanism; scientific journal articles; earthquakes and tsunamis; a clam dissection; oil spills). Initially, I used an older, tripod-mounted Sony DCR-HC65 Mini DV camera with attached Sennheiser MKE 300 shotgun microphone to shoot video from mostly stationary positions, usually in the back or on the side of the classroom, but sometimes from behind Julia's desk in the front of the room. The shotgun microphone produced good-quality audio, but the camera, which had to be plugged in and was mounted on a fairly large tripod, limited my freedom of movement; the mini DV tapes also had to be individually digitized and converted to a workable format, and as the study went on, I realized that this was prohibitively time-consuming.

In the spring semester, I switched to a Kodak Zi8 pocket video camera, which the students were quite taken with: it was about the size of their smartphones (and probably

less expensive than many of them) and produced decent-quality, if shaky, videos that I could download directly onto my computer. Even better, it allowed me to move freely around the room, and to respond quickly enough to capture potentially interesting interactions that might pop up unexpectedly. Sometimes I acted in this way, as a roving videographer, but at other times I set the camera up near a certain group of students (or to record the whole class) and let it run for most or all of the class period without interfering. All in all, I ended up with about twenty hours of video. I watched and logged the entire corpus after the study's conclusion, but during the year, I often reviewed incidents of particular interest, or just watched the day's "haul" without knowing what would happen, and used what I saw as I used my fieldnotes: to guide further data collection and the ongoing refinement of analytical categories.

In addition to the video cameras, I used a Philips LFH0882 Voice Tracer digital audio recorder, mostly for recording interviews and participants' responses in data sessions, but sometimes to capture naturally-occurring interaction, when it was not feasible or possible to take video (e.g., to record conversations at a star party, when it was too dark for video, or to record a small group of students working on a lab activity if the camera was in use elsewhere in the classroom.)

1.7.3 Interviews

I conducted in-depth, open-ended interviews (Schensul et al., 1999) with sixteen students and Julia. I was not able to interview all the participants for several reasons: for

one, certain students I did not know very well seemed uncomfortable at the prospect of being interviewed, even though they had formally consented to do so; on the other hand, some students I knew quite well did not consent to be interviewed, despite the fact that we had extensive, informal, on-the-record conversations. (Ignacio, for example, refused to be interviewed because, he told me, he hated the sound of his own (recorded) voice; nevertheless, he had no problem with appearing on video.) Interviews could also be difficult to arrange: I preferred to conduct them after school, so as not to be rushed (they ranged in length from thirty-four to sixty-eight minutes) and also because it was almost impossible to find a quiet, private place during school hours. However, many students held part-time jobs, participated in after-school activities like sports or ROTC, or had family responsibilities that limited their availability. It was not uncommon to have to reschedule an interview three or four times.

While I call the interviews “open-ended,” the term is somewhat misleading: their “apparent looseness” concealed the careful preparation that went into them, both initially and as I continually modified my approach (*ibid.*, p. 135). I did develop an interview protocol, with a set of questions and follow-up probes connected to the initial focus of the research, but the protocol evolved organically over the course of the year, as I got a more accurate sense of which cultural domains were emerging as relevant to the study. Thus, the interviews changed in two fundamental ways as time went on: first, based on what I was seeing in the classroom, or hearing from other participants, I targeted particular domains (or still relatively undefined, but emerging themes) in my interviews with

particular students. For instance, as it became clear that the issue of who spoke Spanish at school was related to how students perceived each other racially and culturally, I talked with both Spanish speaking and non-Spanish speaking interview subjects at greater length, and in finer detail, about the specifics of who spoke Spanish to whom (or not), when, where, and why, and what it implied for the social organization of VDS. Second, as I got to know individual students better, we would often spend a good deal of the interview talking about their unique characteristics, the traits that distinguished them or set them apart from other students, in their own view, or mine. Andrea was the first girl boxer – the first boxer, period – I had ever known, and I could not pass up the chance to explore her involvement in boxing, which she loved to talk about, during the interview, though this was not a common topic of conversation with other students.

In addition to allowing me to refine my understanding(s) of what I thought I was seeing in the classroom, the interviews brought forth surprising insights that had no precedent in classroom interaction. To give one example, I was curious to know whether students found any of the content in Astronomy or Oceanography class relevant to their everyday lives, but I had no idea if they would have very much to say about it. As I began the interviews, I was taken aback by how many students not only said, unequivocally, that they did see the knowledge they had gained from Julia's class as relevant, but also offered stories about occasions when they had shared their astronomical or oceanographic expertise with family members and friends outside of school. On a more sobering note, the interviews also provided an opportunity to discuss subjects that

could not be discussed safely or appropriately in public, especially students' stories of being undocumented. I never pressed students for information about that issue, but it came up as a matter of course in the interviews: in effect, for students in that situation, it was more or less impossible to talk about their lives *without* mentioning immigration status, since it cast such a long shadow over the rest of their existence. It is important to mention that the students who trusted me with their stories of being undocumented differed considerably in how they dealt with the subject, at least outwardly, running the gamut of emotional reactions from crushing depression to frustrated resignation to fiery defiance. Immigration status was not the only problematic issue that came up in the interviews, but given the focus of this study, it is a particularly salient one.

Upon conclusion of the study, I listened to the interviews and logged them in full, selecting excerpts for transcription based on the themes that emerged from the observational and interactional data.

1.7.4 Data analysis: Approaching "the narrow end of the funnel"

Ethnographic data analysis is not really a separate part of the research process that takes place once data collection is complete, but an ongoing endeavor that begins before fieldwork, with the formulation of initial research questions or problems, drives data collection during fieldwork, as theory is gradually "built" from the data collected so far, and keeps going long after fieldwork has been finished (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983, p. 174). This is true of research in the linguistic anthropology of education, and of

qualitative research more broadly. In the ethnography of communication – upon which the linguistic anthropology of education is founded – as in grounded theory approaches to qualitative data analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1994), researchers view data “not in terms of preconceived categories and processes, but with openness to discovery of the way native speakers perceive and structure their communicative experiences” (Saville-Troike, 1997, p. 126). Therefore, as themes emerge from analysis, they guide ongoing data collection, focusing the researcher on particularly salient communicative events and linguistic practices (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p. 273); in this way, “theory building and data collection are dialectically linked” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983, p. 174).

I followed the general ethnographic model of “starting loose and tightening the screws as you go along,” or, to borrow another metaphor, of entering the wide end of the funnel and gradually approaching the narrow end (Agar, 1996, p. 184). In the process, I came to focus on certain topics and themes, and used further observations and interviews to test my tentative conclusions, in such a way that I could imagine convincing a “skeptical outsider” of the accuracy of my account (*ibid.*, p. 167). The following chart, which I developed midway through my first semester at VDS, gives a rough picture of the questions and analytic foci I had formulated at the time and was beginning to use to guide my data collection. My purpose in including the chart is to illustrate how I began to refine my analysis, while data collection was ongoing; many of the concerns represented here are also present in chapters two through five, but have undergone a sort

of metamorphosis, owing to the dialectical relationship between theory building and data collection:

Table 1.1: Research questions, data sources, and guiding questions for analysis (from October 2011)

| Research Questions | Data Sources | Guiding Questions for Analysis |
|---|--|---|
| (1) How and when do the teacher and students in the study display awareness of racial, cultural, or linguistic difference in classroom interactions? What effect does the teacher's handling of these issues have on relationships with students? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video recordings of interactions • Observations from fieldnotes • Interviews w/teacher, students • Journal entries from teacher | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What recurrent patterns or behaviors are connected with displays of identity? • What similarities or differences appear over time in the teacher's and students' responses to, or uptake of, moments of "visible" difference in the classroom? |
| (2) How does everyday talk dealing with social roles and identities relate to science learning in this classroom (especially for Latino students)? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video recordings of interactions • Observations from fieldnotes • Interviews w/teacher and students | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In what ways does talk about identity intersect with talk about science? • How is student-teacher, or student-student "interactional text" connected to students' emergent understanding of scientific concepts? |
| (3) How do the students position themselves (through talk and writing) in relation to scientific knowledge? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video recordings of interactions • Observations from fieldnotes • Student work on class assignments and projects • Interviews with students | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How (if at all) do the students assert themselves as legitimate thinkers about science and/or users of scientific discourse? • Do teacher attempts to frame students as scientists result in changes in student talk or behavior? |
| (4) How do the teacher and students construct scientific knowledge collaboratively in their talk? What effect do these interactions have on students' view of themselves as actual or potential scientists? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video recordings of interactions • Observations from fieldnotes • Interviews w/teacher and students | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When and how do students challenge or take issue with the teacher's "script"? • What do student-generated questions reveal about students' academic identities and student-teacher relationships? |

Because my study is a linguistic ethnography, however, this process looked somewhat different for me than for standard qualitative researchers. The "cultural

domains” (Schensul et al., 1999, p. 6) I thought I perceived in participant observation became the basis for motivated looking at the interactional data. In other words, I used my incipient, holistic sense of what was at stake for Julia and the students (in reference to particular events or phenomena) to guide my choice of which video excerpts to transcribe, in order to “tie my ethnography down,” remembering Rampton’s formulation. And, in turn, once I had thoroughly analyzed the interactional data¹⁰ and was satisfied that I had a solid understanding of what was happening in a given interaction, I incorporated these insights into my larger understanding of the world as I knew it at VDS. My analytical process therefore differs from that in other forms of qualitative research because of the discourse-centered nature of my study: I am interested in the *how*, as well as the *what*, of social action. Furthermore, in contrast to some qualitative researchers, I assert the value of descriptive ethnography (cf. Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983, p. 22) and reject the notion that only discussions of the interrelationships among atomized “categories” can constitute valid qualitative research. My goal is to tell a persuasive story of “a local example of the forms human life has locally taken, a case among cases” (Geertz, 1983, p. 16), in a way that upholds the participants’ humanity (cf. Paris, 2010) and does not estrange them unnecessarily from their words and actions.

¹⁰ For details of the theoretical frameworks on which I based my analyses of naturally-occurring interaction, see the above section entitled “The linguistic anthropology of education and linguistic ethnography” and the remaining chapters.

1.7.5 Validity testing: Thoughts on triangulation and member checks

Finally, I will briefly discuss two strategies I used to ensure the validity of my conclusions in the chapters that follow. Rather than merely saying I triangulated my data or used member checks, “as though [these] were magical spells that could drive away the validity threats,” I want to describe how I employ these strategies effectively to strengthen my study (Maxwell, 2005, p. 110)¹¹. As I mentioned, the process of tracking back and forth between the minutiae of interactional data and higher-level insights gained through participant observation is one example of triangulation, the use of data from multiple sources to lend support to an interpretation. In my analysis, I try to approach every interaction or event with an expansive view of what the relevant context might be; thus, I draw on interview and observational data to bolster my readings of certain strips of interaction, but also include relevant information, such as examples of media discourse, from outside the immediate context of interaction, that might nonetheless be argued to frame the interaction in a certain way. Triangulation, then, is not just a matter of including multiple data sources in the analysis, but of using these data sources to understand the micro in light of the macro, and vice-versa (while not taking the distinction completely seriously). Likewise, I have used member checks, or “respondent validation,” to inform ongoing data analysis. When possible, in order to get an insider perspective on interactional moments, I asked key participants to go over the data with me and to tell me what they thought was going on, as I audio-recorded them.¹² A related

¹¹ The first two strategies mentioned in Maxwell’s discussion of how to combat validity threats are “intensive, long-term involvement” and “rich data,” both of which are fundamental to my study.

¹² This strategy bears some resemblance to the well-established tradition, in linguistic anthropology, of soliciting metapragmatic commentary on specific aspects of language-in-use.

strategy, which I frequently employed during interviews, was to bring up events or interactions I had previously observed and ask the interviewee for explanation or clarification. Hearing how particular events appeared to the participants, in retrospect, and comparing their versions to my own interpretations, was invaluable, and I wish I had had time for more extensive respondent validation. In any case, as I continue writing about VDS, I will continue to share my conclusions with the participants, and rewrite accordingly.

1.8 Notes on presentation of data

Where I perform line-by-line analysis of interactional data, I use the following transcription conventions, modified from Atkinson & Heritage (1984) and Bucholtz (2011). It is quite possibly true that the “splatterings” of diacritics in the transcripts “would try anyone’s patience and aesthetic sensibilities” (Moerman, 1988, p. 13), but what the transcripts lack in beauty and readability I hope they make up for in accuracy and detail, which are important for analysis, since even the finest-grained features of conversation can turn out to be significant in terms of social action. This is not to deny that every transcript is a representation of an interaction, and not the thing itself, nor to discount my role in deciding what to include and what to omit (cf. Bucholtz, 2007; Ochs, 1979).

Table 1.2: Transcription conventions

| | |
|------------------|--|
| <u>underline</u> | emphatic stress/careful articulation |
| ° | whisper/reduced volume/quiet speech |
| CAPS | increased volume |
| = | latching (no pause between utterances) |
| [| overlapping speech |
| - | self-interruption/break in word or intonation unit |
| (1.0) | pause of one second |
| (.) | brief pause |
| (()) | transcriber's comment |
| () | speech which is unclear or in doubt |
| (xx) | unintelligible speech |
| ? | end of intonation unit – rising intonation |
| . | end of intonation unit – falling intonation |
| : | lengthened sound |
| ↑ | pitch accent/high pitch |
| ↓ | pitch accent/low pitch |
| ~ | creaky voice |
| @ | laughter pulse/smile voice |
| .h/h | audible in-breath/out-breath |

Interview data, which I include because of relevant content but generally do not subject to formal discourse analysis, may include the diacritics above, for purposes of accuracy, but have been minimally edited for readability (e.g., some back-channel utterances and instances of repetition are omitted). To preserve the distinction between these different kinds of recorded data, I reproduce interactional data (in a form appropriate for discourse analysis) in *Courier New* and interview data in *Times New Roman*.

CHAPTER 2: LIVING WITH MEXICANNESS AT VISTA DEL SOL

2.1 Introduction

In mid-March, 2011, about halfway through the spring semester of my year at Vista Del Sol, the latest of many flare-ups in the ongoing debate over unauthorized immigration in Arizona attracted statewide notice. Tony Hill, a substitute teacher in the Glendale Elementary School District (who had been placed there by a temporary employment agency) wrote a letter to Arizona Senate President Russell Pearce, the driving force behind many recently passed anti-immigration laws, recounting Hill's experience with 8th graders in the district. According to Hill, the students refused to say the Pledge of Allegiance and had proclaimed, "We are Mexicans and Americans stole our land" (Billeaud, 22 March 2011). As a result of this experience, and similar experiences teaching in the area, Hill wrote, he had concluded that "most of the Hispanic students do not want to be educated but rather (want to) be gang members and gangsters" (Billeaud & Davenport, 23 March 2011).

Without bothering to confirm its veracity, Sen. Pearce circulated the letter among his Republican colleagues; one of them, Sen. Lori Klein, read the letter on the Senate floor on March 17, during a debate about five bills related to unauthorized immigration (one of which would have required parents to prove their children's citizenship in order for the children to attend K-12 schools). The school district subsequently interviewed students from the class in question, who denied having said any such thing, and reviewed

the sub's teaching report from that day, which made no reference to the incident. Nevertheless, Pearce stuck to his metaphorical guns: “ ‘It was all verified ... I'm disappointed that we assault and attack a teacher for speaking out,’ ” he insisted, and anyway, “[Pearce] said the letter wasn't about Hispanics, but rather was about what went on in a classroom where students were disruptive” (Billeaud & Davenport, 23 March 2011). In refusing to apologize, Pearce pursued a strategy of plausible deniability, distancing himself from the racializing assumptions of the letter, despite the fact that it had been read not during a debate on, say, discipline problems or understaffing in Arizona schools, but during a debate on whether or not to deny access to public education to certain children of Mexican heritage. To be fair, Sen. Klein clarified that she did not believe that “all Hispanic students want to be gang members,” but also “said she didn't regret bringing to light a teacher's experience” (*ibid.*). (This sudden concern for respecting and protecting teachers' voices is indeed rich, coming from a legislature that consistently slashed education funding and harassed teachers with restrictive measures.)

In this incident, as in the furor over the Mexican-American Studies program in a Tucson school district (see Otero & Cammarota, 2011, for an overview of the controversy) and the state's attempt, the previous year, to make it possible to reassign English language teachers who spoke “accented” or L2-influenced English, Arizona schools became a proxy battleground for wide-ranging debates about the place of Hispanics, and Mexicans specifically, in Arizona and U.S. society. In general, students at VDS were attuned to media portrayals of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans, and at least

some of them paid attention to political issues that could affect their education. For example, I had conversations with students about the elusive DREAM Act, and Julia told me that during her first year, when she and a number of other teachers had been “pink-slipped” because of budget cuts (laid off, with intent to rehire, budget permitting), her students announced their intention to protest if she did not get her job back. (According to her, one student said, “Miss, we’re going to print up black t-shirts with your picture on it, like César Chávez!”) Later in March, when I brought up the Glendale incident with Julia, she told me that a boy in one of her other classes had alluded to it sarcastically, saying something to the effect of, “Oh, yeah, we’re all ‘gangsters’!”

The same week that the Glendale story broke, but before I became aware of it, I interviewed Abraham, a friendly, thoughtful, slightly built senior in the Oceanography class. Abraham had papers, but he had come to the U.S. for the first time at age twelve, knowing no English, and spoke English with obvious L2 influence. He had been in the U.S. for a relatively short time, compared to most VDS students, but had learned English quickly and caught up with American coursework, and was on track to graduate on time, with the goal of attending community college as the first step to a career in architecture. Spanish was his preferred language for interacting with friends and his Peruvian-American girlfriend, but he spoke English well and talked comfortably with English-dominant classmates. Since I was interested in students’ use of Spanish as a language of peer interaction, as well as a language for discussing scientific topics, I usually asked interview subjects a number of questions about which language(s) they used – when,

where, and with whom – at VDS, and how they had observed other students and teachers using, or reacting, to various languages in the school setting:

Brendan: Does the language you speak to your friends make a difference in how people look at you? at Vista Del Sol? That's one thing I was wondering about.

Abraham: Well, sometimes, yeah, but- we don't even- care anymore.

B: But like in what way.

A: Well like- they think because we uh speak Spanish. Well. We're gonna go into a classroom and destroy everything

B: Hmm

A: Like uh we're bad people or something. But like n- not everybody's like that.

B: You mean like students would think that or teachers would think that or::

A: Everybody.

B: Really=

A: =Yeah because "Oh, they're Mexicans and- they're gonna hit us." Or "They're Mexicans and they're gonna steal this."

B: Yeah

A: I've heard that a lot of times.

B: Really. From students? Or teachers.

A: From everybody, [everybody, yeah

B: really

We:ll but aren't most of the students at the school Mexican?

A: Yeah, it's like- that's the point I don't get that.

While Abraham's story was not typical of most of the students I interviewed, it was by no means unique. He did not make reference to the Glendale incident in this exchange, but the resemblance of what he claimed to have heard about "Mexicans" or Spanish speakers at VDS to the representation of "Hispanic" students in the letter was unmistakable. In both cases, being Hispanic, or speaking Spanish, is equated with disorder and a lack of bodily control: Hispanic students create chaos by refusing to behave appropriately during the Pledge of Allegiance, and are seen as aspiring criminals; meanwhile, "everybody"¹³ at VDS is fearful that Spanish speakers will "destroy everything," "hit us," or "steal this." This is not surprising, since anthropological work on race has shown that nonwhite bodies are often associated with such "disorderly" and impulsive conduct, to the extent that even the jocular use of Spanish words by English monolinguals can index a momentary loss of discipline and refinement (Roth-Gordon, 2011).

But there is another dimension to Abraham's comments: as I will show, the fear of disorder associated with Spanish speakers and Mexicans is also connected to beliefs that they are "out of place," and to the taint of criminality or illegality that has helped to form "Mexican" as a racial category in the U.S. My rejoinder to Abraham in the second-to-last line, where I express surprise that "Mexican" students could feel out of place in a school where 85% of the student body was of Mexican descent, was deliberately naïve – a strategy (unsuccessful, here) to elicit further commentary on this irony, which many

¹³ cf. Rymes (2001) on "ubiquitous antagonists" in students' stories about fights

students mentioned unprompted. By this point in the year, I knew perfectly well that even though most VDS students could be lumped together as “Mexican-American,” not everyone who could conceivably be included in that category was seen as, or felt him/herself to be, equally “Mexican.” Mexicanness was relative, as Abraham’s casual conflation of “because we uh speak Spanish” and “they’re Mexicans” reveals: it depended on a variety of factors, and a student’s degree of Mexicanness was related to whether or not s/he saw him/herself as a potential target of racial discrimination, as in Abraham’s case.

I begin this chapter by placing the Glendale incident alongside Abraham’s comments in order to raise the question of what these two pieces of evidence, taken together, can reveal about “Mexican” as a social category, and “Mexicanness” as an ideological construct, at VDS: what is to be gained by moving between scales, by tracking back and forth between mediatized, public debates about immigration and a single conversation with a Mexican-American high school student? For inspiration, I look backwards: Ten years or so before my fieldwork, at another time of immigration-related ideological ferment – the debate over, and eventual passage of, Arizona’s anti-bilingual-education Proposition 203 – Norma González and her colleagues conducted ethnographic research at a bilingual magnet school not far from VDS. Their experience led González to ask many of the same questions that guided my ever-evolving inquiry into race and language at the high school: “What is the effect on children of this volatile and contentious debate? What discourses do children hear? How do they interpret

them?” (González, 2005a, p. 167). In continuing to explore answers to these questions, I assert, along with her, that schools are a fruitful site for studying the “articulation” of “macro-level patterns,” such as political controversies and legislation related to immigration and education, with the micro-level details of everyday interaction among teachers and students (*ibid.*, p. 164).

However, this articulation is not simply top-down, from politics to everyday life. The students’ words clearly show that macro-level discourses about Mexicanness had an impact on their everyday ways of talking and relating to others, but the Glendale incident is an example of how stories about micro-level interactions (whether they actually happened as reported, or were partially or completely fabricated) can be circulated to inform political opinion about topics like immigration, and can become anecdotal evidence for “commonsense” (i.e., ideological) understandings of certain categories of people, like “Hispanics.” In other words, such interactions, writ large, can breed ideology, and can eventually take on power, as they “speak” to legislation and policy, to shape the same contexts of schooling (e.g., for students of Mexican heritage in Arizona) where future interactions will unfold. For future teachers and students, these interactions will, in turn, be loaded with subtly different kinds of presuppositions about identity, owing to “the self-transforming elements of the discursive formation” in relation to which the participants will continue to “make rough sense of the social reality that they live and create from day to day” (Goldberg, 1993, p. 46). Thus, while the view from Vista Del Sol is necessarily limited and incomplete, as is the case with all ethnography, I argue that

data presented in this chapter still provide insight into the dialectical process (González, 2005a, p. 164) by which already-circulating discourses both speak through people, in a Bakhtinian sense, and yet also emerge over time from people's everyday ways of speaking and attempting to make "rough sense" of the world around them.

My goal in this chapter is to give an account of what it meant to be "Mexican" at VDS, since the idea of Mexicanness turned out to play a pivotal role in organizing interaction and positioning students in relation to others, in and outside of school. In order to do so, I will first review existing literature on processes of racial formation and differentiation in the U.S., with a specific focus on the emergence of "Mexican" as a racial category, which, I will argue, is how the term operated at the high school, rather than as a label that merely denoted ethnicity or national origin. Next, I will appeal to ethnographic evidence to demonstrate the potential of Mexicanness to shape relationships among students, and the slipperiness of the label as an indicator of linguistic and cultural practice. I will then analyze discourse around a fight that happened during the fall semester, which brought to light some salient aspects of Mexicanness at VDS, but also exposed the ambivalence of racial self- and other-identification for many students at the school. In my analysis, I will argue that students' talk about race was fractally recursive (Irvine & Gal, 2000) with more widely circulating discourses about Mexicanness, in that it reproduced societal oppositions on the level of peer interaction at school.

2.2 Racial formation and racialized discourse

Since I treat students' comments about Mexicans and Mexicanness as instances of racializing discourse, some background on how, and why, I use the concept of race is in order. Social science has conclusively demonstrated the inadequacy of older understandings of race: race has no objective basis in biology or reified notions of culture, but its remarkable persistence (Harrison, 1995) and real social effects testify to the fact that it cannot be ignored, either, or dismissed as an illusion. With Omi and Winant (1994), I understand racial categories in the U.S. to be the outcome of processes of racial formation, which are themselves composed of many racial projects. "Racial projects" can refer to any number of activities – from legislation, to the development of curriculum standards, to housing and employment practices, to joke-telling – carried out at multiple levels of society, that function to link particular understandings of racial dynamics with the way society is organized to provide access to resources and opportunities, based on these understandings of race (*ibid.*, p. 56). As such, the meaning of racial categories is not fixed; "race" is "a category available for the purposes of social exclusion that is essentially empty, available to be filled with whatever semiotic elements are most appropriate to a particular epoch" (Hill, 2001, p. 86n). For this reason, racial categories are susceptible to transformation, disruption, destruction, and reinscription over time.

Thus, there are two essential elements to the understanding of race I rely on here: first, race has to do with *cultural representation*, with ideas about what race means and

who belongs to which race; second, race has to do with *social structure*, with the reality that social disparities and social exclusion are perpetuated, in part, by projects of classification that “[refer] to different types of human bodies” (Omi & Winant, 1994, p. 55). People in the U.S. are historicized racial subjects, in that we have inherited (from colonialism, slavery, and expansionism) an inability to stand outside the “vast web of racial projects” that continues to “suffuse” our lives (*ibid.*, p. 60). In the present, then, “race becomes ‘common sense,’ a way of comprehending, explaining, and acting in the world” (*ibid.*). However, this use of “common sense” deliberately echoes Gramsci’s: it is meant to evoke not just a shared understanding of relations among people in society, but the role of this shared knowledge (e.g., about race) in sustaining hegemony, or the relations of power and subjugation in a given social field.

There is another aspect to racial formation, to which Hill (2001) alludes in the quotation above: if racial categories are not pre-existing, and must be “filled” with meaning, through historically-situated racial projects, there must exist semiotic processes by which this filling – the invention, or reinvention, of racial categories as representationally rich – takes place. Race, then, is not just a set of understandings about different types of human beings connected to social organization; it is also a *discursive* object that takes shape in a “field of racialized discourse” (Goldberg, 1993). This field, specific to a time and place in the manner of Foucault’s discursive formations, “consists of all the expressions that make up the discourse, that are and can be expressions of this discursive formation. It is the (open-ended) theoretical space in which the discourse

emerges and transforms in and through its expression(s)” (*ibid.*, p. 42). In this open-ended space, discursive objects like “race” emerge over time from the actual expressions that make up the discourse, and also “[transform] in relation to significant changes in the field of discourse” (*ibid.*), as common sense is “continually reinvented” (p. 43).

Crucially, racialized discourse creates the possibility of unity, of “belonging together” in a single racial category, claiming a single racial identity, but simultaneously makes it possible to define racial “others” who are excluded from one’s own category (p. 51).

Racial differentiation, racial identification, and racial exclusion are therefore inextricably connected; more than that, they may not even appear as distinct processes. Goldberg (1993, p. 60) argues:

The establishment of the other *as* other is promoted by the initial drive to establish self-identity by identifying *with* the other. Negating others, *denigrating* them, becomes in part, thus, also self-negation and self-effacement.

When considered in relation to the field of racialized discourse, this brings to mind Woolard’s (1989, p. 276) reassertion of the “basic anthropological insight ... that ways of talking about the ‘Other’ are ways of talking about ourselves.” This ambivalence is central to my analysis of the data that follow.

2.3 “Mexican” as a racial category

VDS students used “Mexican” matter-of-factly as a racial category. For example, Nadi talked disparagingly of “Mexican people ... who think they’re too good for their race,” Heriberto dismissed a “border hopper” Halloween costume as “plain racist,” and Alex included “Mexican” in a list of (apparently) racial categories with “African-

American” and “Native American.” On a few occasions, when Julia mentioned something related to Mexico or Mexicans, Ignacio yelled, “That’s racist!” to tease her. Before saying anything about white people, in interviews, students sometimes hesitated and said, “I don’t wanna be racist ...”, indicating that, however they might have named their own “race,” it was different from mine.

Still, for my purposes as an ethnographer, to speak of “Mexican,” “Latino/a”, or “Hispanic” as a *racial* category is to confront both the “intrinsic incoherence” and “persistent meaningfulness” of such categories, as well as the intrinsic instability of the race concept itself (De Genova & Ramos-Zayas, 2003, p. 2). After all, the U.S. Census does not identify “Hispanic” as a race, but forces “ethnic” Hispanic respondents to choose between Black, white, American Indian, and “some other race” (which led a majority of Hispanics to choose the latter, in at least one area of the country; see De Genova, 2005, p. 188). “Hispanic” is treated on the Census as an indicator of linguistic or cultural background, rather than a racial designator, but it is often used in ways that presume equivalence with other racial labels: when I had occasion to call the police, in Arizona, to report an intruder in the yard, I was asked if the man was “white, Black, or Hispanic?” Of course, I understood exactly what they meant, even though I have had students and friends who were technically Hispanic, as far as Census data or scholarship

applications were concerned, but whose phenotype (and, e.g., routine ways of speaking) did not match the stereotype the police had in mind.¹⁴

“Hispanic” was used only sometimes and “Latino” was seldom used at VDS; “Mexican” was, by far, the more common identifier. Students were aware that bodies could appear more or less “Mexican”; for example, Francisco, a student whose Mexican family was part ethnically Japanese, and who adored Japan and Japanese music, complained to me that his cousins in Sonora “looked Japanese,” but that he “came out looking all Mexican.” But students’ ideas about someone’s degree of Mexicanness were also connected to her/his language use and cultural practice, as we will see. Outside of VDS, as well, the line between race and culture has become blurred in the recent past, as “ ‘culture’ often substitutes or stands in for race” (Visweswaran, 2010, p. 3) and racist discourse focuses increasingly “not [on] heredity but the insurmountability of cultural differences” (*ibid.*, p. 8, quoting Balibar, 1991). So, as explicitly racist talk has become unacceptable in the U.S. public sphere over the last half-century or so, “cultural” explanations cloaking many of the same racist assumptions have become a convenient way to continue to attribute blame to minoritized groups for phenomena like school failure (Ladson-Billings, 2006; Pollock, 2008).

¹⁴ On the other hand, racial/ethnic labels that are often seen as interchangeable may not be, depending on the context: Fought (2006) reports her unease with being called “Latina” by a student, though she was inarguably “Hispanic.” As the European-descended, Spanish-speaking daughter of a Spanish mother and a white Euro-American father, she did not feel that she could lay claim to *Latinidad*.

So, why “race” and not “culture” or “ethnicity”? If racial differentiation always coexists with other forms of social differentiation, and if “race,” “ethnicity,” and “culture” are used in “purposefully nebulous” ways that do not “[specify] a fixed referent” (Dick & Wirtz, 2011, p. E4), what justifies my analysis of talk about Mexicanness as an expression of racializing discourse? I will confess that my choice of “race” is guided, first and foremost, by my conviction as an ethnographer that VDS students often *experienced* Mexicanness as a racial phenomenon, in the sense that to be Mexican was to face the prospect of being identified as out of place, and therefore being subject to social exclusion. I mean this not principally in terms of peer culture (though Mexicanness did play a role in organizing relations among students) but in terms of the possibility of being deported, having one’s family members deported, being suspected of illegality or criminality, being ineligible for financial aid, or being a target of racializing expressions in everyday interaction.

It is true that some of the students I knew well were undocumented, but most had papers (though some came from mixed-status families). Still, the most relevant academic work on the racialization of Mexicans in the U.S. makes a strong case that the construction of *illegality* as the defining feature of Mexican migrants, in large part through the “intricate and calculated interventions” (De Genova, 2005, p. 227) of American immigration legislation, has come to color the entire social category, such that to be Mexican is to be always already under suspicion of being out of place, illegally occupying sovereign territory, or engaged in criminal activity. Historically, the racialized

position of Mexicans in the U.S., regardless of legal status, has been dependent on the Black-white polarity that dominates U.S. racial dynamics, with Mexicans imagined to occupy an intermediate position between Black and white (*ibid.*, p. 187). Hence, early school desegregation lawsuits on behalf of Mexican-Americans, such as *Alvarez v. Owen*, in 1931 (the so-called “Lemon Grove Incident”; Ferg-Cadina, 2004) and *Méndez v. Westminster*, in 1946 (Moll, 2010), succeeded only because state law provided for the segregation of African-American (in the first case) and Native and Asian-American students (in the second), but not explicitly for Mexican-Americans, who were judged not to fit into any of these racial categories.

Throughout the 20th century, however, federal immigration policy was a study in contradiction: at times, the flow of Mexican migrants to and from the U.S. was largely unregulated, reflecting a demand for Mexican labor in the (newly minted) U.S. Southwest, the historical presence of Mexican citizens in the region, many of whom were denied U.S. citizenship by state policies following the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848)¹⁵, and bi-national agreements between the U.S. and Mexico to facilitate temporary or permanent Mexican immigration. At other times, the movement of Mexican migrants was severely restricted, unrealistically low quotas were imposed, and mass deportations

¹⁵ Hill (1993) and Otero (2010) call attention to the concurrent semiotic work done by linguistic appropriation and mockery and the development of promotional and marketing materials, respectively, to erase the history of Mexican/Spanish occupation of the Southwest (specifically, in southern Arizona) and recast the region’s past as primarily Anglo and cowboy-oriented. Schwartz (2008) analyzes similar processes as exemplars of Gringoism, strategies of linguistic and cultural pejoration and erasure that serve to legitimize the presence of Anglo-Americans in the Southwest (and the U.S. more generally) and to justify their willful ignorance of Spanish and Mexican culture.

took place, often without regard for the legal status of the “Mexicans” targeted (for an overview of this history, see De Genova, 2005, pp. 213-249; Dick, 2011).

There have been two lasting effects of this pattern of relative tolerance followed by intolerance. The first has been to produce *illegality* as “an undifferentiated, transhistorical thing-in-itself,” while the changing, historically-specific nature of laws used to frame people as “legal” or “illegal,” in articulation with other historical circumstances, is seldom questioned – the law is just the law, and unauthorized immigrants are unlawful invaders. This results in a “hegemonic ideological script wherein *Mexican* becomes synonymous with *illegal alien*,” (De Genova, 2005, p. 202), and the legal category “illegal alien” is “[conflated] ... with an image of the Mexican immigrant as a criminal Other” (Dick, 2011, p. E44). Furthermore, through the ideological process that Zentella (1995) calls “Chiquitafication,” distinctions among Mexicans, whatever their legal status, and other Latinos are erased, or at least blurred (Dick, 2011, E41), such that all are racialized, to some extent, along with the “illegals” or “entrants” who are the focus of the current border spectacle (De Genova, 2005, p. 242), and, in Arizona, may have their papers checked by police if they can be “reasonably suspected” of being in the country illegally, perhaps because of “looking Mexican” (cf. Dick, 2011, p. E41) or speaking Spanish.

The second effect of this history, De Genova (2005, p. 215) argues, has been to introduce the condition of *deportability* to migrants’ lived sense of illegality. It is not that

the goal of immigration law enforcement (as currently funded and implemented, anyway) is to deport all unauthorized Mexican immigrants, nor would it necessarily be in the U.S.'s best economic interest to do so; rather, the constant threat that Mexicans *might* be deported sustains their labor-power as an “eminently disposable commodity” (*ibid.*, p. 215). In other words, “some are deported in order that most may ultimately remain (undeported) – as workers, whose particular migrant status has been rendered ‘illegal’ ” (*ibid.*).

Such a way of thinking about immigration and race may seem counterintuitive. In attempting to come to grips with the historical and ongoing processes that have made Mexicans in the U.S. illegal and deportable, it is instructive to recall Foucault’s (2007) ideas about security. According to Foucault, mechanisms of security – unlike discipline, which seeks to regulate individual behavior down to the “smallest infractions” – have the population, rather than the “multiplicity of individuals,” as their object (pp. 44-5). And, instead of constituting an artificial sphere of conduct opposed to the “tenacious and difficult” nature of reality (again, unlike discipline) mechanisms of security try “to work within reality, by getting the components of reality to work in relation to each other” (p. 47). In other words, these mechanisms engage with “natural givens” (p. 19), very often based in human desire (pp. 72-3) – say, the desire to earn a living wage outside one’s home country, if it is impossible to do so therein – and, accepting that certain quantities (e.g., the quantity of undocumented people in a particular nation-state) can only be “relatively, but never wholly reduced,” “[work] on probabilities” (p. 19). That is, they

aim not to *end* so-called “natural” phenomena like migration, but to keep them within “normal” bounds through a variety of normalizing efforts (e.g., building a wall and installing up-to-date surveillance equipment on the geographical border, heavily sanctioning employers who hire undocumented workers, banning Spanish as a medium of instruction for non-English proficient students, and so on). As such, Foucault concludes, from the perspective of the sovereign, mechanisms of security are designed to address

a completely different problem that is no longer that of fixing and demarcating the territory, but of allowing circulations to take place, of controlling them, sifting the good and the bad, ensuring that things are always in movement, constantly moving around, continually going from one point to another, but in such a way that the inherent dangers of this circulation are canceled out. (2007, p. 65)

We come full circle, then, to deportability as a mechanism of security: rendering Mexicans (or people of Mexican descent) deportable – though, crucially, not all of them will actually *be* deported – is a way of ensuring that the circulation of labor power on which capitalism relies can take place while reducing the “dangers” associated with people who, in circulating, are simultaneously constituted as “out of place” through the techniques of power associated with security.

This, in my view, is what distinguishes the salience of Mexicanness at VDS from the salience of Italian and Irish ethnic identities among the South Philadelphia high school girls in Wagner (2007), to propose a contrasting example¹⁶: while these forms of ethnic identification played an important role in delimiting the girls’ social networks and informing their linguistic practice and language ideologies, and were the basis for social

¹⁶ Thanks to Malcah Yaeger-Dror for pushing me to theorize this distinction more rigorously.

differentiation, they did not threaten the girls with social exclusion and marginalization in ways that partook of a history of conquest and subordination, as Mexicanness did.

Wagner's participants were not at risk of being deported, being unable to find or keep a job, or being unable to live with their parents, because of being Irish- or Italian-identified; Pennsylvania legislators were unlikely to read letters in government chambers proclaiming that Irish or Italian students wanted to be gangsters, and saw U.S. rule of their "home territories" as illegitimate; and public displays of Irish or Italian traditions (to say nothing of language) were unlikely to provoke anxiety about the insufficiently transethnified (superficially diverse, but fundamentally American; Ruiz, 1999) "enemy within".

Of course, the history of the racialization of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans in the U.S. is one thing, and what high school students actually *make* of race, in their on-the-ground, moment-to-moment negotiations of identity, is quite another, as is demonstrated by a veritable treasure trove of recent work on the subject. Pollock (2004, p. 19) reports that students at the extremely racially diverse high school where she conducted her research used language to "bend" race strategically, sometimes disputing and sometimes embracing, or imposing, "simple 'racial' labels." Mendoza-Denton (2008) shows that, even within outwardly racially/ethnically homogenous social groupings (i.e., California gang girls of Mexican heritage), stylistic choices can reinforce intraethnic peer group boundaries in ways that are fractally recursive with broader discourses about racial difference and national belonging – that is to say, someone's choice to speak only

English despite knowing Spanish, in accord with the norms of her gang, functions to cast Spanish-speaking rivals as newcomers or foreigners, just as public discourse on immigration tends to cast *all* Mexicans in the U.S. as “illegal” and “out of place.” Bucholtz (2011) documents high school students’ myriad ways of embodying whiteness linguistically, some of which position the speaker as relatively closer to African-American language and culture (through the incorporation of features or stances associated with African-Americans) and some of which clearly distance the speaker from any attempt to associate him/herself with nonwhite groups. To give a final example, Jaspers (2011) discusses the multiple indexicalities of features of a particular working-class Dutch (Flemish) dialect, which was used by nonwhite Belgian students to stylize racist or “angry white” Belgian voices, but could also be used in a non-stylized manner by the same students to distinguish themselves from recently-arrived immigrants who were less competent speakers of Dutch.

My findings, likewise, show that VDS students sometimes used racializing language strategically to bring likeness or difference to the fore of interactions (cf. Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, on *adequation* and *distinction*), but did so in ways that pointed to ambiguities or contradictions in the speaker’s ethnoracial self-identification, as well as in his/her interpellation of others as racialized subjects. That being said, students’ talk about Mexicanness did not *always* have a racializing function, nor did “Mexican” *always* appear as a racialized category. In the next section, I discuss students’ varied ways of

talking about Mexicanness and making sense of what it meant to be Mexican, in terms of their lived experience and interactions with others.

2.4 Ways of living with Mexicanness

2.4.1 “Mexican” as a convivial resource and ethnic identifier

Mexican-American students at VDS sometimes talked about Mexicans and Mexicanness rather transparently, either for purposes of what might loosely be termed conviviality¹⁷ or simply as a way of identifying people according to their ethnic background. Both of these unremarkable uses of “Mexican” are on display in the following interaction, which was captured on video during 6th period Astronomy in early November. It was a Monday, and Julia had just asked the students if they had done anything fun over the weekend. She was getting ready to proceed with the day’s business when Jeremiah raised his hand to share some borderline-taboo weekend news: he had won twenty-five dollars when Manny Pacquiao defeated Antonio Margarito in a much-hyped boxing match (in the transcript, “boy” and “girl” refer to students offscreen whose utterances are audible, but who are not identifiable):

1 Julia: OK. SO. ((sees Jeremiah’s hand)) Yes?
 2 Jeremiah: I won twenty five bucks=
 3 Julia: =yeah?=
 4 Jeremiah: =on the fight.
 5 Julia: betting on the- the [boxing match?
 6 Jeremiah: [fight. yeah.
 7 Julia: ((nodding)) ((tongue click)) °yeah°
 8 boy 1: what boxing match?
 9 Julia: there was a boxing match on Saturday night
 10 Ignacio: I know!=
 11 boy ?: =oh uh=

¹⁷ i.e., in order to make jokes, index shared knowledge, build rapport, and so on; see the end of chapter three for a more thorough discussion.

12 Ignacio: =The Mexican lost.
 13 boy 1: °damn°
 14 Ignacio: I lost twenty.
 15 girl: xxx Pacquiao:=
 16 boy ?: =that's just straight up?=
 17 girl: Pacquia::
 18 boy 2: °they were both Mexicans°
 19 Jeremiah: ((turns)) No they're not, one's Filipino

Ignacio's declaration that "the Mexican lost" (line 12) presupposes the newsworthiness of this bit of information. That is to say, since Ignacio brought it up, the fact of Margarito's being Mexican is assumed to have some special relevance to the people present. This is one example of a convivial use of "Mexican": Ignacio's remark suggests that students who are themselves identified as Mexican or Mexican-American¹⁸ might be expected to have an interest in how a Mexican boxer fared. In bemoaning the defeat of a fellow Mexican, Ignacio relies on his understanding of his audience as people whose default allegiance is, or should be, to the Mexican boxer; the unidentified student's disappointed response ("damn," line 13) to Ignacio's news item supports this interpretation. In this case, referring to "the Mexican" is designed to build rapport, affirming likeness among the Astronomy students and reflecting a similar orientation to the topic at hand (notwithstanding Jeremiah's wise financial decision to back the better boxer.) Moments later, the exchange in lines 18-19, where Jeremiah corrects another student's assertion that both boxers were Mexicans, highlights the second matter-of-fact function of talk about Mexicanness: here, "Mexican" merely serves to label people according to their ethnic background, without (for example) conveying a discernible affective stance toward

¹⁸ The distinction between "Mexican" and "Mexican-American," while not salient in this strip of interaction, is crucial elsewhere; see, for example, Francisco's comment at the star party (discussed below) and the interaction between Heriberto and Julia in chapter three.

Mexicanness or implying that to be truly Mexican one must participate in particular linguistic or cultural practices.

2.4.2 *“Mexican” as an indicator of belonging and exclusion*

However, it became clear, over many, many other interactions with the students, that they did not always, or even usually, treat Mexicanness in such an unproblematic manner. What I did not realize when I first arrived at VDS, and what I came to realize little by little over the course of the year, was the extent to which students who could be labeled as “Mexican-American” experienced themselves as racialized subjects who varied widely in degree of Mexicanness; and, in turn, the way students’ lived experience and interactions, in and outside of school, informed their understanding of what it meant to be Mexican. In this way, the students’ talk about race strongly resembled the “race-bending” Pollock (2004) noticed among her participants: at times, they talked as though all students of Mexican heritage had something in common; we get a hint of this from Ignacio’s comment above (line 12), and in Abraham’s agreement (at the beginning of this chapter) with my statement that “most of the students at this school are Mexican,” which is why he claimed to find discriminatory remarks so puzzling, a theme several other students echoed in interviews. At other times, however, students talked and behaved as though commonsense dictated that some Mexican-American people were “more Mexican” than others, and students were often acutely aware of where they fell on the continuum of “relative Mexicanness.”

The first suggestion that this might be the case came, for me, at one of the star parties Julia organized during the fall semester. The star parties were nighttime observing events held at an elementary school in the school district where VDS was located, but in a fairly rural part of the district that some of the students referred to as “Little Mexico.” The school’s basketball court and playing fields were usually very dark, unlike the VDS campus, and the school itself was far enough away from city lights that we were able to observe fainter deep-sky objects, in addition to the usual bright targets of the Moon, Venus, and Jupiter. In the neighborhoods surrounding the school, where a number of the Astronomy and Oceanography students lived, it was not uncommon to see horse properties and other indicators of the rural, agricultural lifestyle that some students, in interviews and casual conversation, associated with their experience of living in, or visiting, Mexico¹⁹. In fact, several boys attended the star parties on horseback and offered rides to their classmates and Julia.

In any case, the star parties proved to be important occasions both for developing closer relationships with students who attended (and who sometimes brought siblings and parents along) and for observing students’ informal, out-of-class language use with each other, Julia, me, and the amateur astronomers (from a local association) whom Julia sometimes invited to set up their elaborate, computer-controlled telescope rigs and talk astronomy with the students. At the star party in question, I was hanging around with

¹⁹ Or with Mexicanness more generally: one night later in the year, I was dropping Alex off in a nearby neighborhood, a rambling assortment of houses and trailers belonging to his family members and friends, with ample fenced areas for horses or other animals; as my car rattled over the ruts of the unpaved, muddy road leading to his trailer, he offhandedly remarked, “Mexican neighborhood!”

Julia and Francisco, the student who, I mentioned, loved Japanese culture and was distressed by what he saw as his non-Japanese phenotype. Francisco was a gentle, outgoing VDS senior who seemed to be on good terms with all his classmates, but often seemed distracted in class, and was prone to bouts of depression – not to mention an unhealthy amount of relationship drama, which he recounted at length to Julia (who shared my concern for his well-being). During the fall, he sported an impressive spiked Mohawk hairdo and other Goth-style adornments, but by the spring he had toned down his haircut, and the rest of his look, considerably. As the star party took place in the fall semester, I was just getting to know Francisco, and was therefore surprised to hear him speaking Spanish with obviously native proficiency to a classmate. I had always known him to speak English (and without a noticeably strong Chicano English accent, which, of course, has nothing to do with Spanish ability, but probably affected my unconscious beliefs about his linguistic repertoire) and had never seen him speaking Spanish at school. When the other student left, I commented to Francisco that I hadn't known he spoke Spanish, adding, "I mean, I knew you were Mexican-American, but ...". Francisco immediately corrected me – "Just Mexican, mister" – and laughed nervously.

His response was a "rich point" (Agar, 1996) in my fieldwork experience: that is, it was a moment when I suddenly realized my working understanding of "how things were" in and around VDS – the sum of my biases, impressions, and assumptions, based on limited experience – was completely inadequate to account for the social reality presented by Francisco's comment. "Just Mexican, mister" was only the beginning.

Once we got to know each other better, he told me, among other things, that he was undocumented, though he had lived in Arizona for most of his life; that his mother had been deported and had had to cross the border a second time, pulling one of her fellow travelers to safety; and that he resented what he heard people saying about “Mexicans” on television, protesting indignantly, “We come here to work, we help the economy, we pay taxes!” But the pivotal moment in my evolving understanding of how Francisco, and other students, *lived* with Mexicanness every day came at the star party, when he politely pointed out that, no matter how immaterial the difference to me – for whom an English-speaking student raised in the Arizona borderlands was unquestionably Mexican-American – he did not have the privilege, and did not hope to be granted the privilege, of claiming the label “American” for himself. He was “just Mexican,” and his use of “Mexican” in this context (unlike Jeremiah’s in the previous section) did not merely denote heritage, but called my attention to the issues of citizenship and belonging contained in the word (cf. the participants in De Genova, 2005, most of whom could not imagine being able to “become American,” despite long residence in the U.S.)

2.4.3 *Ethnic self-identification beyond “just Mexican”*

Additionally, I learned from the interviews, as well as talking to students in less formal contexts, that, despite the omnipresence of Mexicanness, being Mexican or Mexican-American did not preclude or necessarily supersede other forms of ethnic self-identification. Francisco’s interest in Japanese music and culture is one example; to give another example, Andrea, the Spanish-speaking (though she seldom spoke Spanish at

school) daughter of a Mexican-American mother and an Italian father, talked at length of her interest in her Italian heritage and her desire to visit Italy, where her father still lived. By contrast, John Stamos, who came from a military family, saw himself as unusually patriotic compared to other VDS students, and worked towing retired Air Force planes in the nearby “boneyard,” was so strongly invested in his American identity (as his choice of pseudonym suggests) that he claimed not to know for certain whether or not his family had come from Mexico in the first place (though he allowed that, in certain respects, they still “had ... the Mexican kinda way of life”); he accepted “Hispanic American” as an ethnic identifier, but explicitly rejected “Mexican.”

2.4.4 Relative Mexicanness: Evidence from intimate relationships

Among students, differences in degree of Mexicanness were most clearly visible in *contrast*: just as the inaccessibility of being American to Francisco surfaced in an interaction with me, a white, L1 English-speaking American, the question of whether someone was “more” or “less Mexican” in the scheme of things at VDS could be settled by comparing his or her style, including language use, and behavior with that of another Mexican/Mexican-American student. A particularly intriguing source of evidence for this understanding of Mexicanness comes from students who were in “mixed” romantic relationships, where both partners were Mexican-American, but one was seen as more Mexican than the other. This did not necessarily lead to conflict, but sometimes did (as in Nadi’s case, below), and at the very least made certain ideological dimensions of Mexicanness salient.

During an interview conducted late in the spring semester, Nadi confided in me, prefacing his remarks with “I’ll be honest with you,” as students sometimes did before bringing up a potentially controversial or uncomfortable topic (cf. Edwards & Fasulo, 2006), “I don’t like- like those Mexican people ... that talk about their own people ... that pisses me off.” A moment later, he referred to “people who think they’re too good for their own race,” prompting my follow-up question and his narrative about an argument with his ex-girlfriend:

Brendan: ... how can you tell if someone thinks they’re too good for their race.

Nadi: Like the way they talk and the way they look at somebody else, like like my girl- my ex-girlfriend, she would look at me and say like *asco* this and *asco* that and- the reason I broke up with her is ‘cause she said how my family was like- my family’s really traditional but at the same time y’know we move and do all like- they they do all that stuff at the same time and she’s like asco saying like like saying that’s gross what you guys- like how you guys do stuff y’know and like and her family’s is like s- way different than mine, they were like classy and stuff like that

B: but when she says *asco* like what what things is she thinking of like when you said “how we do things”

N: like how like how we ↑do things ‘cause my family’s really traditional like y’know we get together all the time y’know and like we we have like the *bandas*, the kids running all over the place everywhere, the *piñatas* and stuff like [that

B: [yeah

N: and like like well I like I got mad and asked her like “what do you guys do when you guys throw parties?” “Oh, we go out for dinner at Red Lobster” something like- y’know, that isn’t cool, y’know, you can’t really be with your family, y’know, *convivir con todos*, y’know you can’t see- and the kids can’t run around in there, play with each other, y’know, maybe they haven’t seen each other in awhile, like that. (.) yeah and like- it made me laugh at the same time, I’m like, why am I with this girl? I’m like, I’m done with you.

Even a cursory reading of Nadi's story yields a number of behaviors that, at least to Nadi and his ex-girlfriend, index an ideological orientation to Mexicanness: having "traditional" family gatherings with *piñatas* and "kids running all over the place," and listening to *bandas* (traditional Mexican music). Nadi also implies that certain behaviors or traits are negatively associated with Mexicanness (or, perhaps, index a different *kind* of Americanized Mexicanness), such as "being classy," rather than "traditional," and celebrating at restaurants, instead of at the family's house.

While Nadi was telling this story, I remember being struck by how deeply hurt he seemed at his girlfriend's treatment of him, and especially by the profound sense of insult to his family implied by the word *asco* ('gross') in his girlfriend's reported speech. It is no accident, I think, that Nadi's girlfriend (in his version of the story, anyway) chose to contrast different ways of socializing around food in order to bring the differences between her family and Nadi's into sharp focus. Processes of racial differentiation, and the expressions of racializing discourse that sustain them (even when, as here, the people involved ostensibly share an ethnoracial identity) are often connected to a belief in the value of purity. For this reason, activities associated with possibly "impure" bodily functions, such as food consumption and hygiene, are common sites for the production and reproduction of racializing discourse (Goldberg, 1993). Nadi's ex-girlfriend's *asco*, which Nadi says "she would *look at [him]* and say," invokes the "gaze of disgust"²⁰,

²⁰ Thanks to Jen Roth-Gordon for calling my attention to this phrase, used by Pinho (2010, p. 110) to characterize "the fear and repugnance associated with black bodies" in Brazil, which individuals take pains to avoid (according to Roth-Gordon) through strategies of racial improvement.

documented elsewhere, directed toward insufficiently “well-disciplined and civilized” – in this case, inappropriately “Mexican” – bodies (Roth-Gordon, 2011, p. 216). For the uninitiated, there is nothing self-evidently “gross” in any part of Nadi’s description of the family parties that his ex found so objectionable. We are led to conclude, rather, that her *asco* was a kind of visceral response to the whole assemblage of “Mexican” practices which, taken together, offended her “classy” sensibilities as to proper conduct in family gatherings. Indeed, when I ask Nadi to what, exactly, his girlfriend was referring when she called his family *asco* – “like ... what things is she thinking of like when you said ‘how we do things’ ” – he begins his response by recasting the end of my turn – “like how like how we ↑do things” – with a high pitch accent for emphasis on “↑do”. He struggles, at first, to articulate which *specific* practices provoked such a response from his girlfriend, or maybe is just annoyed that I am missing the point: it wasn’t any “thing” in particular; it was “how we do things” in general.

It is surely no accident, either, that when Nadi’s girlfriend switches to Spanish, in his constructed account of their argument, it is in order to denigrate cultural practices associated, like Spanish, with Mexicanness. This is an example of how, among U.S. Latinos, “careful and controlled use ... of Spanish constitutes a critical ritual” through which speakers “can ... display their bodies as clean and refined ... and well-disciplined and civilized” (*ibid.*). It is as though only by using Spanish can Nadi’s girlfriend adequately convey her disdain for “how you guys do stuff” – for his family’s whole way of life, it is implied, which would itself produce an expectation of Spanish use. By

contrast, when Nadi switches into Spanish (in his own voice), arguing, “You can’t really be with your family [at a restaurant], *convivir con todos* [‘hanging out with everybody’]”, it is to assert the value of a cultural practice associated with Mexicanness, in opposition to his girlfriend’s *asco*, which he clearly sees as superior to her family’s relatively more disciplined practice of going out for dinner at Red Lobster . As Bakhtin might say, Nadi’s narrative is a linguistic battlefield where he and his ex-girlfriend (as he voices her) contest the indexical scope of the Spanish “word”: it is equally available for expressing disgust and appreciation; for his girlfriend, only *asco* can do justice to his family’s “grossness,” but for Nadi, only *convivir con todos* can capture the inherent value in “how we do things.”

Earlier in the interview, Nadi had referred to attitudes like his girlfriend’s as “hypocritical”; I was curious to know how, if at all, he thought such attitudes affected him:

Brendan: Um. I mean do you- do you feel like it affects you at school, the fact that other people: um have those kind of hypocritical attitudes that you were talkin about?

Nadi: Yeah.

B: How does it affect you?

N: Cause it’s like I think too much that’s why.

B: Really.

N: And- yeah. Like like cause I hear it on a daily basis y’know. I hear it on a daily basis and it pisses me ~off~.

B: What do you hear on a daily basis?

N: Like “Oh, the stupid Mexicans,” y’know. Like like the girls, it’s mostly the girls saying it, ~y’know~ like it’s always like at lunch y’know. And then I like I start thinking, I’m like, “Oh my ~Go:d~, why can’t I stop thinking, why can’t I stop thinking=

B: =What are you thinking about?=-

N: =[just let it go and just think about like”- Why, like why they say this. And like I’ll stop thinking about it and when I get home I’ll just be watching TV or something and I’ll start thinking about it again.

B: Wow.

N: Be like “Oh my ~Go::d~, are you serious?” @

In this passage, the ex-girlfriend’s voice merges with the voices from whom Nadi hears explicitly negative remarks about Mexicans (“Oh, the stupid Mexicans,” as opposed to the suggestive “*asco*”) at school “on a daily basis.” The difference is that, while Nadi can, and did, tell his girlfriend “I’m done with you,” he cannot as easily escape, or stop thinking about, the things he hears on a daily basis, even when he is at home, “just ... watching TV or something.” In this context, his “Oh my ~Go:d~”, repeated with the same lengthened vowel and creaky voice quality, serves a double function: in terms of interpersonal stance, especially when combined, at the end of the transcript, with “are you serious?” and a rueful laugh, it expresses Nadi’s incredulity that other students would make such comments in the first place. However, it also seems to reflect his frustration with himself for “thinking too much” and getting “pissed off” about what he sees as obviously hypocritical attitudes. Nadi’s example illustrates that, while students did sometimes joke about Mexicanness, it was also true that perceptions of others’ discriminatory attitudes, based, for example, on comments about the “grossness” of

someone's way of life or "stupid Mexicans," could have real psychological consequences for students like him.²¹

In contrast to Nadi, John Stamos, a diminutive but feisty senior, whose near-constant joking concealed a surprising, underlying seriousness about academics and life, was dating an equally serious (but much quieter) girl who, as he put it, was "more Mexicanized." John, as I mentioned, came from a military family and saw himself as unusually patriotic in comparison to other VDS students. He often joked about inconsequential things (like a pencil) being "American," saying the word in what sounded to me like a mock George W. Bush accent, or protested that other things (like Julia's giving a quiz) were "un-American," in the same accent, yet he was genuinely proud of his American heritage and looked forward to his own career in the military, which he planned to begin during or just after college. Prior to the following exchange, he had been comparing his family's "Mexican kinda way of life" in Texas, where he had previously lived, with what, I inferred, he saw as their more American way of life in Arizona. As in Nadi's narrative, food and family gatherings were central to this contrast: John described life in Texas as "more tacos ... all that stu:ff, just chillin, all family, hanging out," and his current Arizona lifestyle as "just probably McDonald's every day, or hamburgers, we'll make tacos sometimes, Chinese food, it doesn't matter." I then

²¹ Not all students seemed to be aware of this fact: Francisco told me that he sometimes pretended not to be bothered by friends' joking about his being undocumented – e.g., calling him a wetback, or telling him to go back to Mexico – but that he actually found their jokes extremely hurtful, though he knew (or believed) that his friends did not intend to hurt him.

asked, “So, is that a lot different from [your girlfriend’s] family? ... I was just curious,”

to which John responded:

J: Hers- hers is more Mexican ((/ˈmɛʔeɪkn/)), probably **I’ll say**, cause (.) uh- usually- f::athers on the Mexican side are more stricter with their kids, **I’ll say** ... so that’s why she’s- has a little constraint with like she always have to be home at nine o’clock, or she always have to be home at five on weekdays. So **I’ll say** to that, they’re just- I don’t know, I don’t really, and they’re like just- whenever I go over there it’s shredded beans, or- I mean it’s shredded *carne* ((/ˈkarne/)), and beans, rice, *tortillas* ((/tɔrˈtɪjz/)), all that. So **I would say** she’s more (.) Mexicanized.

B: Because of the food?

J: Yeah, or just- I don’t know just- you could tell, just by the way of life, y’know.

B: Huh.

J: I don’t know how to explain it, it’s just- it’s just there, you know when someone’s straight (.) American or (.) Mexican or Chinese or whatever. By the environment.

John proposes a few more indicators of Mexicanness, such as differences in parent-child relationships (“fathers on the Mexican side are more stricter with their kids”) and foods that are commonly eaten in more Mexican households (“*whenever* I go over [to his girlfriend’s house] it’s ... shredded *carne*, and beans” – as opposed to his own eclectic tastes). However, it is not only the information reported, but *the way* John reports this information that is of interest for our understanding of his own subjectivity. He provides knowledge about specific cultural practices that characterize a “Mexicanized” family, to be sure, but presents this knowledge as rather tenuous or uncertain.

In linguistics, this is captured by the notion of a speaker's epistemic stance, or his/her expressed degree of certainty or doubt as to the content of a proposition. Epistemic stance is closely related to evidentiality, the way a speaker marks, or fails to mark, the sources of his/her knowledge (Sidnell, 2005, pp. 21-8; Stivers et al., 2011, pp. 7-8). (For a fuller description of stancetaking in discourse, see chapter four.) Crucially, as Du Bois (2007, p. 141) notes, in taking any kind of stance, speakers evaluate objects, but also (re)position themselves in relation to others: acts of stancetaking are both linguistic and social, and therefore "[have] consequences for social actors, whose lives are impacted by the stances they and others take." Stancetaking is an inherently dialogic process, which is why John's repeated use of "I'll say"/"I would say" in his description of his girlfriend's family life is significant. In terms of epistemic stance, it indicates some doubt, or at least an awareness of the limitations of his perspective; as an evidential marker, "I'll say" highlights the fact that John's knowledge of Mexicanized family life was not gained mainly through *participation* in the practices he describes, but by generalizing from observations of his girlfriend and her family (and, we can imagine, of other people he knows).

Now, John is also deferring to his girlfriend, who is sitting next to him, as the primary authority on the topic of Mexicanness; due to the unusual participation framework of the interview (conducted after school in Julia's classroom), his girlfriend is present as a ratified overhearer but not authorized to talk. Even so, John's act of epistemic stancetaking – his disavowal of experiential knowledge of life in a truly

Mexican family, as opposed to the “Mexican kinda way of life” he knew in the past – also positions him and his girlfriend differently in relation to Mexicanness (in a prime example of what Du Bois (2007) calls “the stance triangle”). However, I would argue that there is another dimension to “I’ll say”/“I would say,” which harks back to Nadi’s struggle to articulate what, exactly, his girlfriend found “gross” about his family. It seems that it is difficult, for both Nadi and John, to say just what it is that makes someone more Mexican, but both of them agree that you know it when you see it. In the transcript above, I follow John’s carefully hedged account of his girlfriend’s Mexicanness with a teasing response: she’s Mexicanized “because of the food”? The tease is also an invitation to expand: I know that John is too savvy to accept such a simplistic characterization. In his next turn, John begins to fumble for a better explanation, with a couple of restarts – “Yeah, or just- I don’t know just-” – before stating, in no uncertain terms, and in contrast to what came before, “You could tell, just by the way of life ... it’s just there, you know when someone’s straight American or Mexican- or Chinese or whatever.” This is akin to Nadi’s “like how like how we ↑do things” (though the two boys, obviously, position themselves very differently in relation to Mexicanness): it may be tricky to spell out what makes one student or family more Mexican than another, but people still “know when someone’s straight American or Mexican.”

John, for his part, was ambivalent about his own family’s Mexican roots:

John: But **originally** I ↑**think** my family’s from Mexico
like four- five generations

Brendan: Wow

J: =Like [**ago**, yeah, so but everyone **now**=

B: [s-
=On your dad's side [[and your mom's side

J: [[yeah

B: So they've been here in the States for a long time

J: Yeah. Even- **I think since there wasn't even a border, I don't even think- since a long time ago, as far as I can remember.**

B: .h So: u:m how- like how do you- if you have to describe yourself in terms of race or ethnicity how do you describe yourself.

J: Um pfff probably Hispanic American

B: Hispanic American

J: Yeah

B: Yeah

J: Cause I'm not from Mexico, but I'm Hispanic

B: Right

J: So **I would say** mys- I'm from- from- **I'm from America**, so Hispanic American.

In his account, John works to distance himself in time and space from his family's Mexicanness. He says "originally I ↑think my family's from Mexico," using the temporal adverb *originally* to describe a state of affairs that was once, but is no longer, the case, along with the weak epistemic verb *think* to suggest that he is not entirely certain that his family was even "originally" from Mexico. He continues, "Four- five generations ... ago", repairing "four" to "five," perhaps to place his Mexican origins at a further remove, or – as in "I ↑think my family's from Mexico" – to give a sense that their

coming from Mexico, if it took place at all, happened so long ago that the details are lost in the mists of time, so to speak. In the utterance immediately following, “Yeah, so but everyone *now*,” there is an implied temporal contrast between *now* and *originally*: that is, at some time in the distant past, his family members may have come from Mexico, but at present, *everyone* is in the United States, and has been for as long as John, or anyone else, can remember. Next, I attempt a summary statement – “So they’ve been here in the States for a long time” – and John ratifies my appraisal: “Yeah. Even- I think since there wasn’t even a border, I don’t even think- since a long time ago, as far as I can remember.” In this way, he continues his work of temporal distancing, but goes even further: he asserts that his family has been in the United States “since there wasn’t even a border.” The specific drift of his meaning here is hard to pin down: maybe he means that the boundary between the two nations “a long time ago” was much more porous, or that much of what is now the U.S. used to be Mexico. Either way, as a consequence, he is able to assert that his family belongs, and has *always* belonged, in the U.S. Southwest. In John’s final two turns, he concludes, “I’m not from Mexico, but I’m Hispanic ... I would say ... I’m from America.” His American origins story is a skillfully crafted narrative of forgetting – forgetting which he is able to accomplish through linguistic strategies that allow him to position himself as temporally and geographically distant from Mexicanness. He is certainly not alone in this respect; the tendency of longer-settled immigrant populations to cast themselves as autochthonous, in explicit contrast to more recent arrivals, is well-documented (in reference to Mexican-Americans in the U.S., see, e.g., Bejarano, 2005; Menchaca, 1995, Mendoza-Denton, 2008). His “I would say,”

though, in “I would say ... I’m from America,” adds a discordant concluding note to his origin story, suggesting that John, at the very least, recognizes that his Americanness is *achieved*, rather than taking it for granted.

There is also an ironic sense in which John’s habitual linguistic practice mitigates his self-presentation as distant from Mexicanness; again, as in my conversation with Nadi, the rare code-switch from Spanish to English is revealing. When John brings up the typically Mexican foods eaten by his girlfriend’s family, it is for purposes of distinction (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005): that is, he is asserting something about his own identity by *distinguishing* his family’s practice of eating McDonald’s, hamburgers, tacos, and Chinese food from the shredded *carne*, beans, rice, and *tortillas* he finds at his girlfriend’s house. Yet his act of distinction brings to light evidence of a linguistic habitus that is at odds with John’s description of himself as more or less fully Americanized, as he effortlessly pronounces the very words he uses to “other” his girlfriend’s family (/’karne/, /tɔr’ɪjɔz/), with native-like Spanish phonology.²² Just so, Bakhtin (1981, p. 276) reminds us:

The word, directed toward its object, enters a dialogically agitated and tension-filled environment of alien words, value judgments and accents, weaves in and out of complex interrelationships, merges with some, [and] recoils from others.

²² Features of Chicano English, such as regularized verbal agreement in third-person forms (“she always **have to** be home”; see Fought, 2003, p. 94) and the voiceless alveo-palatal fricative /ç/ in “Mexican” (/’mɛʒɛɪkɪç/, cf. mainstream American English /’mɛksɪkɪn/), are also present in John’s speech. While ChE is a Spanish-English contact dialect in a historical sense, use of ChE features can index either Americanness or Mexicanness, depending on the situation and interlocutors. For an example of the former, see Mendoza-Denton (2008), chapter 9; for the latter, see my discussion of Alex’s ChE phonology in the following chapter.

John's Spanish word, directed at the "object" of Mexican foreignness in a "recoiling" gesture, vis-à-vis his girlfriend's family, nonetheless "merges" momentarily with the Spanish words used by "Mexicanized" people, placing him in uncomfortably close proximity to those he sees as other. To return to Goldberg's (1993) observations about racializing discourse, establishing the other *as* other cannot be separated from the drive to identify *with* others; thus, John's *carne* and *tortillas* and Nadi's ex-girlfriend's *asco* speak to the important role of distinction in ethnoracial self-identification for VDS students, but also to the troubling ambiguities at the heart of these linguistic processes of distinction.

To summarize: Vista Del Sol highschoolers used "Mexican" as a simple ethnic category label (as Jeremiah did), a resource for affiliative or convivial moves in conversation (Ignacio), a term that concealed unspoken depths of belonging and exclusion (Francisco), an indicator of one ethnic heritage among many (Andrea), and, most germane to my purposes, as a descriptor that could be used to distinguish oneself from, and even racialize, one's Mexican-American peers, based on participation in Mexican-like linguistic and cultural practices (Nadi and John). In the section that follows, I continue to explore the consequences of VDS students' multi-voiced uses of "Mexican," and Mexicanness for peer sociability.

2.5 Mexicans vs. Hardcores: A limit case of relative Mexicanness

2.5.1 Ethnoracial distinctions and peer culture

On a day in late February, a little more than three minutes into the 5th period Oceanography class, Julia looked up from her attendance clipboard, apparently wondering why so few students were present, and asked, “Hey, is today a ditch day by the way?” A few seconds of predictable commotion followed – students called out “Yes!” or “No!”, someone affirmed that today was indeed the ditch day, someone else said, “I thought yesterday was the ditch day” – and then Margot, a bright, quirky, white (non-Mexican/Hispanic) student, spoke up (as she frequently did):

- 1 Margot: it’s like they divided ditch day into eth-nic groups
((hyperarticulated)) for some reason.
- 2 Julia: wait Margot what do you mean it’s divided into ethnic
groups
- 3 Margot: well yesterday was like sports and Student Council ditch
day, and today I guess it’s like-
- 4 everybody was saying it’s *wacho*²³ ((Anglicized)) ditch day?
- 5 girl 1: ↑what? ((offscreen left))
- 6 girl 2: xxx *wacho* ditch day ((offscreen left))
- 7 Julia: yeah ((looking in direction of two girls, confirming))
- 8 Margot: so that’s just what I heard. ((tosses hair, turns back to
table))
- 9 girl 1?: ((high-pitched laughter)) heeheeheeheehee *wachos* ((mock
Anglo phonology?))
- 10 boy: ((offscreen, addressee uncertain)) do you know what that
means?
- 11 girl 2?: ((addressee uncertain)) she’s- she suggested white people.
just kidding.

When Julia asks Margot to explain what she means by saying that “they divided ditch day into ethnic groups,” Margot volunteers (3-4) that “Yesterday was like sports and Student Council ditch day, and today I guess ... everybody was saying it’s *wacho* ditch day.”

²³ I am uncertain as to the “correct” spelling of the word, but will use the form attested in students’ written discourse (e.g., in the online comments reproduced later in this chapter).

Margot seems to realize, in the unfolding of her turn in line 3, that she is about to encounter a potential trouble source in the talk: the word, *wacho*, she uses to describe the students for whom “today is a ditch day” is a racially-loaded word, usually used, at VDS, as a derogatory epithet for “Mexicanized” boys, perceived as recent immigrants, who spoke Spanish in peer interaction. In an interview conducted earlier in the year, Jeremiah provided some background on the word:

Jeremiah: if- if somebody sees you speaking Spanish they're like “Oh, he's a-”- “well that's”- they call 'em- they call 'em *wachos* or something (.) like “Oh, he's a *wacho* because he's speaking Spanish.”

Brendan: And what does that mean?

J: Well, supposedly, that's what they call the Mexicans, *wachos* or whatever, but they don't know that in Mexico, when you call somebody a *wacho*, it's- he's actually a soldier. (huh) He @works in the army@, the Mexican Army.

This is the word Margot has at hand to characterize the specific group of students she is talking about, but, as she seems to recognize, it is also a slur that is off-limits to white students. Thus, she delays the second half of her turn (“today I guess it's like-”), and presents the word as indirect reported speech, using the evidential phrase “everybody was saying.” In the turns following, the other (Mexican-American) students within earshot do seem to act as though this were a breach of conversational conduct, though, given the general state of unrest in the classroom (and the correspondingly poor audio quality on the video), it is hard to say for sure if they are responding disapprovingly to Margot's use of the word (i.e., in lines 5, 9, 10, 11). In any case, in line 8, Margot acts to distance herself further from the content of what was said, ending her participation in the

conversation with “so that’s just what I heard,” before physically reorienting herself away from the other participants.

However problematic, Margot’s remark has two interesting implications, ethnographically speaking: first, it tells us that a racial/ethnic slur, roughly equivalent to English ‘wetback,’ was in everyday circulation as a possible way of referring to certain students at VDS. Second, it reveals the extent to which racial/ethnic category distinctions were laminated onto other kinds of peer group boundaries at the high school: Margot contrasts “sports” and “Student Council” with “wachos,” but the majority of students who participated in sports and Student Council were also, like the “wachos,” of Mexican descent. Nevertheless, the fact that Margot *begins* her commentary on segregated ditch days by characterizing these groups as “ethnic groups” suggests that she (and I think we can assume she is not alone) is in the habit of thinking of VDS peer group boundaries as “ethnic-like.” This is not meant literally, in the sense that white students only hung out with other white students and Mexican students with other Mexican students – many of Margot’s close friends (again, like most of the student population) were Mexican-American – but in the sense that there was a racialized dimension to certain distinctions *among* Mexican-American students at VDS. (I wondered, at the time, if Margot’s ability, as a white student, to stand outside the matrix of relative Mexicanness, as it were, somehow licensed her to speak truthfully (if inelegantly) about these boundaries when Julia raised the issue of ditch days.)

I want to be absolutely clear, before proceeding, that in talking of such group distinctions, I am speaking of them as a social imaginary, based on what I gleaned from my conversations with, and observations of, VDS students. That is to say, these boundaries are relevant to understanding how the students *conceived* of the social organization of the school, but although students oriented to them in conversation and in their everyday behavior, individual students (1) did not usually fall neatly into one category or another, (2) were reluctant to label themselves, (3) took great pride in their individuality, and (4) often claimed to transcend such boundaries in their friendship networks and personal conduct. Camilo, for example, might have been included in Margot's "sports" category (though he was unlikely to have participated in ditch day): he was well-known for his prowess as a baseball player, as well as his academic ambition (he was one of the few students I knew who went to a four-year university after graduation); but he also spoke Spanish frequently and unapologetically with his friends, dressed in a "Mexican" preppy style (described below), and talked enthusiastically of trips to Mexico to visit family, along with his work at his dad's transmission repair business. He was well-liked by just about everyone, as far as I could tell, and while he must have been aware of how other students thought about, and talked about, peer group boundaries, this awareness did not draw him toward a predetermined social or academic fate. I therefore urge readers to think and act like VDS students did, and to take the peer groups under discussion with a grain of salt.

I also want to assert that, in exploring how the students talked about and experienced Mexicanness in their daily lives, I am not endorsing any one (or anyone's) understanding of what it meant then, or means now, to be "truly Mexican," in or outside of a southern Arizona high school, nor do I mean to suggest that there are finite ways in which one can take pride in one's Mexican heritage or perform a Mexicanized identity. While others have purported to distinguish between, for example, "conflicted," "marginal," and "stable" Mexican cultural identities in highschoolers (Cannella, 2009, p. 241-2), and to link these distinctions to students' academic and political development, my purpose here is not to reify or valorize a particular understanding of how Mexican-American students should properly live with Mexicanness. Rather, from a critical ethnographic perspective, I only aim to document the power of ideologies of Mexicanness to shape peer and teacher-student relationships at VDS, and to consider how, if at all, these observations might inform educators' understandings of how best to educate Mexican-American (and other minoritized) students, as well as linguists' and anthropologists' understandings of the multiplex connections among language, race, and identity.

2.5.2 The fight

One of the most visible manifestations of relative Mexicanness in peer culture, during my year at VDS, came in the form of a fight that erupted between two groups of students in late October. I was not present for the fight, but heard plenty about it afterwards, beginning with two conversations documented in my fieldnotes:

There was a big fight the other day at lunch – Julia had told me about this ... apparently there were three or four police officers at the school and someone got arrested, according to the kids. I saw three cops in the courtyard (near where the hip hop dance troupe was performing) today at lunch – not sure if this was in response to the fight or just b/c of Halloween craziness. Heriberto, Josh, and another boy were telling me about what happened [while eating lunch in Julia’s room]: a group of Hardcores and a group of preppies (said Josh; Heriberto corrected to “Mexicans,” and they settled on “preppy Mexicans”) got into a fight over a table – I asked if the Hardcores were white, to clarify; the boys paused and decided they were “mixed.” Heriberto said the Mexicans won: “There were like 10 Hardcores coming out of the office and 40 or 50 Mexicans! [laughing]” I couldn’t tell if this was actually the situation or more a matter of pride. Julia says: this was a fight between more Mexican-oriented (cowboy-ish?) kids and hardcore/metalhead kids, some of whom are also Mexican/Chicano.

As the fight took place within a couple months of my arrival at the school, and the social divisions among the groups of students eating lunch in the packed outdoor courtyard and cafeteria were still largely a mystery to me, I set out to learn who, exactly, had been involved in the fight, and what these social divisions entailed. I discovered that the Mexicans-Hardcores binary, though very few students took it completely seriously or saw themselves as participating in it, was nonetheless salient in how many (though not all) students talked about the social organization of VDS.

In interviews, students often brought up Mexicans and Hardcores, unprompted, as exemplars of peer groups, though they also produced a dizzying array of what I came to think of as “lunchtime” distinctions (cf. Bucholtz, 2011; Mendoza-Denton, 2008; Pollock, 2004, *inter alia*), including (but certainly not limited to): baseball and football players and their respective girlfriends, gangsters/*cholos*, African (refugee) kids, emos, nerds, “weird people,” “people who think they’re popular” – and, in Viviana’s memorable formulation, “the people that think they’re all bad but they’re like in their

own little spot ... like stuck-up people?”, herself included. Still, the iconic status of “Mexicans” and “Hardcores” was apparent: when I asked Andrea – a bilingual, Mexican-American girl who spoke mostly English at school, and whose easygoing nature belied her ferocity as an amateur boxer – how she would describe students at VDS, she replied, “Well, you got the same thing at every school, y’know ... you got the Mexicans that hang out, you got the Hardcores that hang out ... you got your Drama kids,” before hastening to add, “I talk to everybody” and “Pretty much everybody gets along.” I asked her to explain further:

- Brendan: [when you say Mexicans what do you mean
 Andrea: [xxx (good)
- A: like
- B: ‘cause most kids at this [school are Mexican-[[American, right?
 A: [people [[yeah but
- A: there’s this (.) like I guess there’s always this crowd that’s always like-singing their mu- their- their songs
- B: uh huh
- A: in Spanish and stuff
- B: uh huh
- A: with their guitar and their accordion
- B: yeah
- A: during [lunch [yeah
 B: [I’ve never seen anybody with an accordion @[@@@ .h=²⁴

²⁴ At the time of the interview, this was true; however, late in the school year, as I was leaving for the day, I did see a small group of boys hanging out in the otherwise deserted courtyard, one of them playing Mexican songs on a large accordion while another accompanied him on guitar.

- A: =yeah, during lunch actually like they do that=
- B: =really?
- A: and they stand over there [by in front of the library
B: [I've seen people with guitars
- A: yeah, and they sing Spanish songs and stuff
- B: uh huh
- A: and I would like consider them a little mo:re (.) Hispanic, [Mexican than others
B: [uh huh
- B: uh huh. just because of the music?
- A: no↑ (.) because of the way they dress and stuff. and they- they're always speaking Spanish and-
- B: so how do they- like what's the typical style of dress?
- A: Aeropostale
- B: ok
- A: Hollister
- B: [yeah [[that kind of thing. more like preppy clothes
A: [American Eagle [[I guess yeah

The “Mexicans” to whom Andrea is referring, then, can be distinguished from other students by musical preference (songs in Spanish with guitar and accordion, i.e., *corridos* and *banda* music), spatial positioning in the courtyard (standing in front of the library), code choice (Spanish), and clothing (preppy brands like Aeropostale, Hollister, and American Eagle). In a journal entry, Julia contributed a slightly different description of this group, calling them

students who [identify] more with their Mexican culture or heritage. Students who often speak Spanish around school, many of these kids are involved with horses outside of school (Jeremiah is one of these kids), wear more traditional Mexican clothes with cowboy boots and a matching belt, button up shirts and dark jeans. Other than that, I'm not sure what other characteristics they look at to classify them in this category.

Despite its salience, students disputed the status of “Mexican” as a specific peer group identity; for one, they were well aware of the irony in calling only certain students “Mexican” when just about everyone at VDS could be referred to by that term. In contrast to the students in Bejarano’s (2005) research, “Chicano” was not used (as far as I could tell) to distinguish American-born or Americanized students of Mexican descent from foreign-born or unassimilated “Mexicans”; instead, the label “Mexican” could be used both narrowly and broadly, to identify social divisions or to claim a common identity. Students sometimes referred to this irony by using their fingers to put scare quotes around “Mexicans” (when talking of the group involved in the fight), specifying “*those* Mexicans,” or using phrases like “the ‘Mexicans’ *or whatever*” to suggest that, while the term was in common parlance, it was still problematic. In fact, Jeremiah, who was suspended for his role in the fight (which surprised me, since he was one of the friendliest and most thoughtful students I knew), and whom Julia named as a member of the “Mexican” group, took issue with the conventional wisdom that such a group even existed:

We’re not really like a ↑group we’re just friends that know each other since- since like middle school or something ... and since we all speak Spanish we’re like, “Oh, well, we can hang out with each other” and um- and we have a lot of things in common. But there’s not really- there’s no really like Mexican groups and and stuff like that, there’s just a bunch of friends who speak Spanish. Most of ‘em even speak English ↑too:

The group referred to as Hardcores could likewise be recognized, stereotypically, by means of stylistic contrasts along the same dimensions as the so-called Mexicans: musical preference (hardcore, screamo, or other sub-genres of heavy rock music, along with more melodic English-language indie or radio rock), spatial positioning in the courtyard (somewhat variable, but often in the darker, covered area of the courtyard that led to the playing fields, or at picnic tables close to the cafeteria wall), code choice (English), and clothing (generally, dark “skinny jeans” with sneakers and music- or pop culture-related t-shirts, sometimes with knit caps and/or dark-rimmed glasses). According to Julia, certain students she considered Hardcores also distinguished themselves by talking disparagingly of Mexicans and Mexicanness:

The hardcore kids ... often used the term “beaner” to describe the other group of students, and would use “Mexican” after I told them it was inappropriate to use the term “beaner”. They have lots of animosity for people who embrace their Mexican culture, in my opinion ... [One boy] would often say “stupid beaners/Mexicans” in class last year. And when I would chastise any of them about it, whether it’s the hardcore kids or any other students of Mexican heritage here at VDS, they all say “Ms, but I’m/we’re Mexican!”, like having a Latino surname and Mexican heritage excuses them from any violation of ethics. I find that very interesting ... most of them don't think there's anything wrong with using those terms.²⁵

The suggestion is that, like Nadi’s ex-girlfriend and John, a particular group of students has an identity investment in contrasting their linguistic and cultural practices with those

²⁵ Even so, it is important not to oversimplify issues of ethnic self-identification for such students: for example, I witnessed a Hardcore boy I was friendly with – who was one of the students Julia specifically mentioned making “beaner” comments – get annoyed with a friend for questioning the spiritual significance of his earlobe-stretching gauge earrings; he insisted that the sometimes painful experience of wearing the earrings was, for him, “part of being a warrior” and therefore connected to his heritage as a member of a Mexican indigenous group (relocated over a century ago to southern Arizona) and his emerging interest in the indigenous language. “Underground” connections between youth styles and ethnoracial identity could thus reveal themselves in surprising ways.

associated with Mexicanness, and, as in Nadi's story, that this contrast is sometimes achieved through speech that might be construed as insensitive or hateful.

Of course, we should take the ontological status of "Hardcores," as a thing-in-itself, as skeptically as the status of "Mexicans," remembering Jeremiah's comment. Within the set of students who could potentially be called Hardcores or Mexicans, there were varying degrees of engagement with Hardcore- or Mexican-related practices, and varying degrees and forms of orientation to, as well as away from, Mexicanness. Students could display the trappings of Hardcore style, or adopt styles that were not seen as particularly Mexican, without talking scornfully of Mexicanness. Clara, a student I adored for her openness, quiet optimism, and maturity, would certainly not have considered herself (or been considered) a Hardcore; all the same, I "read" her, stylistically, as being "in the same neighborhood": she wore dark-rimmed glasses, skinny jeans, and Transformers or Beatles t-shirts with Converse sneakers, spoke only English, and took an avid interest in superhero and science-fiction movies. Yet she also spoke wistfully of how she had lost Spanish, her first language, and wished she spoke it better because, she said, "I love my family, y'know? And I wish I was able to communicate with them more."

On the other side of the equation, Ignacio and Alex, who spoke fluent Spanish, had immediate family in Mexico, lacked papers, listened to *banda* music – and, in Alex's case, even played tuba in a *banda* group – were never lumped in with the "Mexicans"

who had taken part in the fight. Alex, in fact, impatiently dismissed “that particular group”: “The problem ... is- they wanna be hard ... I don’t like them. Why? Due to the fact that- they’re making u:s, other Mexicans and whatever, look bad.” As I discuss in greater detail in the next chapter, Alex’s own Mexicanness was an extremely important factor in how he “did school” and lived his life; he just did not identify with Jeremiah’s “bunch of friends who speak Spanish” – in other words, with the “Mexicans” in scare quotes. But it is also significant that “ordinary Mexican” students like Alex, Ignacio, and Nadi shared many cultural and stylistic practices with the “Mexicans” in scare quotes – such as listening to Mexican *banda* music, speaking Spanish, being in close contact with relatives in Mexico, and eating typically Mexican foods – which suggests that salient indexes of Mexicanness at VDS can be seen as more widely enregistered (i.e., the same practices that distinguished “Mexicans” from other students could serve to distinguish students like Alex and Ignacio from non-Mexicans *outside* of school).²⁶

For the most part, VDS students regarded the supposed Hardcores-Mexicans divide, and the fight, as “stupid.” Some, like Heriberto, who were not involved in the fight, did take a kind of semi-serious rooting interest in it, not unlike the Astronomy class’s response to the Margarito-Pacquiao bout. But, generally speaking, the students I knew were remarkably consistent in representing the school as a fairly tranquil place, where people got along, more or less, and where peer group boundaries, while often visible, were not inflexible or absolute. Abraham’s and Nadi’s comments about being

²⁶ See the discussion of Irvine & Gal’s (2000) notion of fractal recursivity below.

subjected to discriminatory speech from “everybody” on a “daily basis,” while important to take seriously, were the exception rather than the norm. Jeremiah, who had participated in the fight, responded in the negative when I asked him if he heard anti-Mexican talk on a regular basis: “No, not on a regular basis ... You don’t hear like every day like ‘Oh, like Mexicans’ and ‘immigrants’ and stuff like that. But when you hear it it’s really like shocking like ↑wha:t? w- how can you say something like that?” When I confessed to Alex, late in the fall semester, that I was having a hard time figuring out which students belonged to which cliques, as I scanned the courtyard at lunchtime, he remarked, “It’s not like that here ... Everybody’s everywhere,” echoing Andrea’s statements, “I talk to everybody” and “Pretty much everybody gets along.” Even Nadi, whose ex-girlfriend saw his family life as Mexican to an unacceptable degree, and who felt singled out by “daily” comments about Mexicans, expressed a similar perspective:

I’m friends with everybody. I’m friends with like the gangster guys. I’m friends with like- the guys who are kinda like me, I’m friends with the Hardcore dudes. I’m friends with everybody ... There’s no need to bring upon yourself enemies, y’know?

Esmeralda may have captured the prevailing sentiment best, in musing, “I don’t know what it means, Hardcores or Mexicans, you know. We’re all the same.”

Lest anyone be tempted to dismiss these students’ comments as mere lip service to an idealized view of VDS as mostly harmonious, I will add that my time there led me to a similar conclusion: the school as a whole did not feel like a tense or disagreeable place; in Julia’s class, students with diverse social affiliations and widely varying

linguistic and cultural repertoires of practice (Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003) seemed to get along and work well together, for the most part.

The fight, then, was important *not* because it reflected enduring, sharp divisions in the VDS student body; as I have shown, none of the students I knew really subscribed to the “Mexicans vs. Hardcores” mythology, nor did the binary have much discernible influence, on a school-wide level, on how individual students of Mexican heritage lived with their Mexicanness. Even the existence of “Mexicans” and “Hardcores” as stable social entities (“Mexicans or whatever,” but also “Hardcores or whatever,” in Jeremiah’s words) was a matter of no small dispute. Nevertheless, as I have also shown, ideologies of, and talk about, Mexicanness were indeed central to how students thought about themselves and positioned themselves in relation to their peers, and the fight happened to take place between peer groups *imagined* as polar opposites on the continuum of relative Mexicanness at VDS (even if, at the risk of overstating my case, this was not true, strictly speaking). For this reason, I describe it as a kind of limit case, an uncommonly dramatic example, of contrasts in relative Mexicanness.

The fight was important because it provoked strong emotions, and thus provided an occasion for the emergence of discourses about Mexicanness. This had, perhaps, less to do with how individual students oriented to or away from their Mexican identities in a *lasting* way than with how broadly circulating expressions of racist discourse can easily be reanalyzed and redeployed in intraethnic contexts, revoicing rhetorics of social

exclusion usually associated with white racism. Irvine & Gal (2000) call this semiotic process *fractal recursivity*, in which an opposition that is salient on one level (i.e., between “native” and “foreign-born” populations in the U.S.) is projected onto another level (i.e., to create or reinforce distinctions among Mexican-American students at VDS). Importantly, this is accomplished by exploiting the possibilities inherent in the existing discursive formation.

2.5.3 The fight’s afterlife: Revoicing racializing discourse and disavowing racist intent

On one of Jeremiah’s first days back at school after his suspension, as Astronomy class was ending, he signaled for me to come over, and played me a video of the fight on his phone. I remember that he said almost nothing in response to my questions at the time, as if the fight defied explanation or comment. The video itself was a shaky, chaotic affair, evidently filmed on someone’s phone, and it was hard to make out much of what was going on. I was more interested in how students were responding to the video, so I began to check the online video-sharing site periodically to keep track of the comments being posted.²⁷ The person who posted the video framed it this way in the official description, declaring his allegiance from the outset:

²⁷ A moral panic about student-filmed fights arose near the end of the school year, when a local television station broadcast a story about the supposed prevalence of fights “arranged” to be filmed in the district where VDS is located. Interestingly, the story came about because a former graduate of the district, who had since become a university student, contacted the station to raise awareness of what she saw as a harmful pattern of behavior that was affecting her younger siblings at school. I do not wish to dismiss the seriousness of the student’s concerns; at the same time, such stories help to create a public perception of the district’s students as dangerous or out-of-control. They provide another example of how accounts of isolated incidents (like the Mexicans-Hardcores fight) can be recirculated for larger audiences in ways that inform the development of stereotypes about certain kinds of students or schools. At the time of this writing, the Mexicans-Hardcores fight video had been viewed over 23,000 times, and new comments were

goodness one hardcore took out 4 mexicans.... jesus christ we nailed them hard...

Predictably, many commenters (most of whom represented themselves as VDS students²⁸) followed the poster's example, signaling affiliation with one side or the other and chiming in in order to ridicule their opponents and/or to claim victory for their side. Here, I focus on two examples of back-and-forth exchanges²⁹ between the Hardcore-affiliated poster and apparently "Mexican" antagonists, along with examples of meta-commentary from others who entered the fray. The first exchange begins when a "Mexican" commenter, using Spanish, taunts the poster of the video (who, arguably, invited such a response with his description of the video) and his allies, casting aspersions on their masculinity; the poster then replies with a barrage of anti-Mexican vitriol:

Commenter 1: haha pinchis hardcores no valen verga!!! qe chingen a su puta madre [name]!!!³⁰
((haha fucking hardcores aren't worth shit!!! fuck your whore of a mother (name)!!!))
 All u are fukin pussies and that dumb bitch in white got his ass fucked up by all of us!!!

still being posted, over a year after the video appeared, showing that the fight has had an impressively long afterlife on the internet.

²⁸ E.g., by claiming firsthand knowledge of what had happened during the fight and who had won, implying that they were present (and thereby disputing competing accounts/interpretations).

²⁹ The comments feature of the video-sharing website allows users to respond directly to other users' comments or to post comments directed to no one in particular; therefore, it is possible to see when commenters are addressing each other, as opposed to when they are making comments directed to the entire readership.

³⁰ It is worth mentioning that this commenter uses a Spanish expression that seems designed to provoke the angriest possible response from the poster. For example, Heriberto told me that, even when joking with friends, he was unable to control his anger if someone used the phrase in question to talk about his mother, and he had almost gotten into a fight with a good friend for this reason. Despite the poster's protestations of not being able to speak "taco bell," he probably understood the phrase, as Mexican Spanish swear words were widely understood at VDS, even by students who did not speak very much Spanish otherwise. John Stamos and Laura, both of whom spoke English almost exclusively, offered swear words as examples of the little bit of Spanish they heard regularly at school and *did* understand.

Poster: sorry i dont speak fucking taco bell speak english how your supposed to fucking immigrant... die in mexico .. you know your taco bell crew got their tortillas torn apart.. go fucking die in mexico ... wacho fuck

The second exchange unfolds similarly, with the added complication that the (“Mexican”) commenter points out that the Hardcore boy who had been hurt in the fight was, in fact, Mexican, prompting a somewhat different response from the poster:

Commenter 2: First of all dumasses he was mexican stupid fucks. And only one of u guys jumped in, fucking pussys.. We all got to hit that wanabe hero 100 hardcores= 1 mexican wana test it bitches...?

Poster: umm first of all nothing fucking wet back i know who he is you fucking beaner he was the one that hit your pretty little fucking mexican face and he is my closest freind the guy who he is beating on is mexican u know a well as everyone in that school .. just the music preference.... so fuck you and i hope you die in mexico...

Soon after the comments above were posted, two apparently non-affiliated users posted responses that were not addressed specifically to other users, but were obviously meant as general commentaries on the tenor of the “conversation.” Each meta-commentary brought forth an additional response from the poster of the video:

Commenter 3: Lol Most of the hardcores are Mexican...

Poster: yeah lol i know XP haha almost everyone in that school is mexican... its just music guys lol

...

Commenter 4: I think you guys are both racist. Which is sad because I am hispanic myself.

Esto es tan estúpido.
((*This is so stupid.*))

Poster: i know huh lol i really aint racist because like a dumbass i am hispanic too soo i dont know XP

Two major features of these exchanges bear closer examination. The first is the poster's use of rhetoric that casts his relatively more Mexican-oriented counterparts as foreign and out of place in the United States. (And, while I focus on the poster's comments, he was not alone in this regard; multiple other commenters could be observed using similar rhetoric.) Following the discussion of the racialization of Mexican-Americans at the beginning of this chapter, and in line with the more mundane articulations of difference in Nadi's and John's stories, the poster uses a by-now-familiar array of strategies to frame his antagonists as out of place. As I suggested earlier, these racializing expressions are fractally recursive with the widespread anti-immigrant rhetoric that informed legislation and public debates about Mexicans, and Mexican students, during my year at VDS. "Fucking immigrant," "wacho", "beaner," and "wet back" all allude to the conditions of illegality and deportability that, it is argued, are central to racist constructions of Mexicans as inherently criminal, unassimilated foreigners, who are potentially subject to removal at any time. "Speak english how your supposed to" reproduces nativist discourses of "official English" that have posited the (public) use of languages other than English as a threat to national unity in the U.S. (Hill, 2001; Silverstein, 1998). "Die in mexico" is more puzzling, but may draw on the media portrayals of Mexico as a "failed state," riddled with drug violence, that have helped to provide justification for further militarization of the U.S.-Mexico border.³¹ And, of

³¹ My point is not that drug trafficking and violence were not, or are not, serious problems in Mexico; indeed, I knew several students whose families had been directly affected by the drug trade. However, at the time of my fieldwork, extensive media coverage of sensationally violent drug-related incidents in Mexico also solidified the "image of the Mexican immigrant as a criminal Other" (Dick, 2011, p. E44), as politicians (including, famously and fallaciously, Arizona Governor Jan Brewer) raised the specter of the spread of drug violence across the border in order to justify all manner of measures targeted at unauthorized

course, “your taco bell crew got their tortillas torn apart” points, once again, to the perennial usefulness of food, and eating, for producing racialized stereotypes that indirectly index disorderly or impure behavior (elsewhere, another Hardcore-affiliated commenter contributed a racist joke about *tamales*).

Finally, “i dont speak fucking taco bell” is especially interesting: research on Anglo appropriations of Spanish (known as Mock Spanish) has singled out Taco Bell’s advertising – in particular, its culturally ubiquitous Chihuahua – as a quintessential example of how Spanish can serve as a “symbolic resource” for (monolingual English-speaking) whites’ “everyday mockery” of Spanish speakers (Schwartz, 2011, p. 647-9). Coming from an apparently non-Spanish-speaking student, “i dont speak fucking taco bell” conflates mass-mediated parodic, ungrammatical representations of Spanish with the language spoken by other students; in effect, the ethnically Mexican/Hispanic, socially Hardcore poster of the video *reappropriates* white/Anglo appropriations of Spanish in order to denigrate an antagonist who actually speaks Spanish.³²

If the first outstanding feature of these exchanges is the use of racializing expressions that index Mexican criminality, illegality, and deportability, the second is the almost simultaneous disavowal of racism and the disputing of others’ exclusive claims to

Mexican immigrants. Students at VDS differed quite a bit in their response to the situation: many (if they had papers) continued to travel to Mexico on a regular basis, usually in order to spend time with family members, while others said that they visited less frequently, or not at all, because of the perceived danger.³² This is, then, an intraethnic Mexican-American use of “gringo” semiosis (cf. Schwartz, 2008); a user who responded (long after the fact) to the poster’s comment seems to confirm this, writing: “fkn Taco Bell is betta than any of ur gringo shit!”

Mexicanness. The poster accomplishes this in a number of ways: most obviously, he capitalizes on the irony of only calling some Mexicans “Mexican,” redefining the term in its most *inclusive* sense in saying, “almost everyone in that school is mexican.” He seeks to distance himself from possible allegations of racism by arguing for the use of “mexican” as a general ethnic identifier, as in “the guy who he is beating on is *mexican* u know a well as everyone in that school,” rather than a racializing label, as in “one hardcore took out 4 *mexicans*.” What is striking about his exchange with Commenter 2 is that both are basically arguing for the same use of the word: Commenter 2, in “First of all dumasses he was Mexican,” and the poster, in “the guy who he is beating on is mexican,” treat Mexicanness as a matter of underlying essence, as opposed to the commonsensical way in which, we have seen, students talked about Mexicanness as an ideological construct based in practice and realizable to various degrees. This is probably connected to Julia’s belief that, for certain students, “having a Latino surname and Mexican heritage” licensed them to make comments about other Mexican-Americans that, coming from a non-Mexican, would clearly be considered racist (cf. Bejarano’s (2005, pp. 145-6) commentary on insider uses of “wetback”). According to this logic, that someone’s *essence* was Mexican, even if his/her style wasn’t readable as such, meant that it was literally impossible for that person to speak and act in racist ways toward others of Mexican heritage.

Thus, when confronted with an allegation of racism from Commenter 4 – who, significantly, phrases the complaint in English *and* Spanish, and directs it to *both* of the

feuding parties who are hurling accusations of excessive or insufficient Mexicanness at each other – the poster responds, “i know huh lol i really aint racist because like a dumbass i am hispanic too soo i dont know XP”. Clearly, the ideology of underlying Mexicanness outlined above is operative here; “i really aint racist because ... i am hispanic too” suggests that being Hispanic oneself means that one *cannot* act in racist ways toward others of Hispanic descent.³³ But there is something else, too: we see laughter tokens (“lol”), self-deprecating humor (“like a dumbass”), emoticons (“XP,” which, iconically, resembles a face with eyes squeezed shut and tongue sticking out), and discourse markers that indicate an uneasy or uncertain relationship to what was stated (“i dont know”) alongside agreement markers (“i know huh”) that accede to the criticism, or at least acknowledge the irony, of a “Mexican” person’s racializing other “Mexicans” in discourse. The response to Commenter 3 shares a number of these features (which are completely absent from the poster’s angry responses to “Mexican”-affiliated commenters): “yeah **lol i know XP haha** almost everyone in that school is mexican... its just music guys **lol**”. Laughter tokens and similar emoticons were also prevalent in responses from other users:

haha well first off all those little “hardcores” are strait up mexican **haha..**

IM MEXICAN! N UMM I GUESS A “HARDCORE” ;D

As hardcore i understand how you feel... but don't be racist and call them emxican just say spanish kids.. **lmao**

³³ The poster’s use of “hispanic” instead of “Mexican” could just reflect the fact that Commenter 4 also used “hispanic”; however, John’s preference for “Hispanic-American” and explicit rejection of “Mexican” (in the previous section) might indicate that “Hispanic” was, for some students, a way to acknowledge the unavoidable fact of one’s ethnicity without embracing Mexicanness, *per se*.

All of these features work together, I argue, to convey a profound ambivalence with respect to the “othering” of “Mexican” interlocutors in the uncivil online brouhaha that followed the physical fight. In this minefield of racialized identities, *lol*, *haha*, *lmao*, and co-occurring emoticons like ;D and XP should not be understood as indicators of the writer’s emotional state, but as expressions of the illocutionary force of the comments (Dresner & Herring, 2010).³⁴ When I asked the students to explain what XP “meant” (since they used it frequently in social networking communications), Viviana responded:

HaaHaa when i put that iits like a sticking my tong out LOL like saying something mean or stupid and then putting that Example: “ Ahh your soo stupid xP” something mean but the smile makes it better :D

XP, as Viviana describes it, is a device for keying (Goffman, 1974) online utterances that could otherwise be considered hostile (“mean or stupid”) as unserious joking: “something mean but the smile makes it better.” Through the poster’s laughter tokens and emoticons, in the responses to Commenters 3 and 4, he attempts to re-key the whole conversation as not really serious (in addition to suggesting that the racializing force of his words is mitigated by his status as a person of Mexican descent). Other commenters’ uses of laughter tokens and emoticons (as in the three examples above, e.g., “IM MEXICAN! N UMM I GUESS A “HARDCORE” ;D”), however, have a subtly different function: they seem to evince a general awareness of the absurdity of making Mexicanness a zero-sum game, where one can either be ridiculed for being too Mexican or, on the other hand, risk losing one’s claim to Mexican identity entirely.

³⁴ Just as facial expressions, as part of an utterance’s “visual prosody,” can provide interlocutors with crucial contextual information unavailable from the words or syntax (Swerts & Kraemer, 2010)

And so, commenters³⁵ strategically co-opted elements of racializing discourse but, just as quickly, backed away from them, playing on the ambiguity of the category label “Mexican” at VDS. Racializing uses of “Mexican” were problematic for students on *both* sides of the fight (and, of course, for students who were not involved, but for whom Mexicanness was still a pressing issue): in an obvious sense, such talk framed certain “Mexican” students as un-American, illegal, or criminal; however, it also placed other students in the position of simultaneously criticizing Mexicanness while trying to maintain claims to their own, different ways of being Mexican. In even the ugliest moments of racializing expression resulting from the fight, there is a hidden ambivalence, a secret recognition that the “other” is much more like oneself than one would care to admit (cf. Goldberg, 1993, p. 60).

In considering examples of racializing discourse that emerged in the aftermath of the fight, I do not presume to sit in judgment of VDS students, be they Hardcore, “Mexican,” or, like the vast majority, not explicitly aligned with either group. Rather, as in the introductory comparison of Abraham’s story to the Glendale incident, the point is to explore how macro and micro contexts are “articulated” (González, 2005a, p. 164) within the field of racialized discourse, and to consider the implications for students’ identities and their sense of belonging or exclusion at school. I maintain that the fight itself was not all that important in the larger scheme of things; far more important are stories like Nadi’s and John’s, where ideological dimensions of Mexicanness, like those

³⁵ From both “sides”: after all, *gringo* racializes just as surely as *wacho* or *wetback*.

made briefly visible in the discourse surrounding the fight, intrude on even the closest personal relationships in quietly insidious ways.

2.6 “There’s no right answer or wrong answer to this”: Racism and ambivalence

Finally, to complicate an already-complicated picture just a bit more, I want to add that the students I knew were not always in agreement about which people, expressions, and acts could properly be called “racist”; in fact, individual students were not even consistent in their explanations of what was, and wasn’t, racist (as opposed to acts that were seen as simply “hypocritical” or “self-contradictory,” coming from fellow Mexican-American students). There was general agreement, as far as I could tell, that racializing statements, such as those posted in response to the video, would be much *worse* if voiced by a white person. Such expressions of racializing discourse, while *fractally recursive* with expressions of anti-Mexican white racism, did not seem to be regarded as *equivalent* to white racism.³⁶ At the same time, students did call out other (Mexican-American) students as racist, though they sometimes went back and forth about what (or who) counted as truly racist, and what was just “ignorant.” In the interview, Jeremiah first told me, “I think a lot of people [at VDS] are like- not racist, but ignorant,”

³⁶ To give just one additional piece of evidence for this, my fieldnotes document a conversation among Julia, Alex, Ignacio, and Ignacio’s girlfriend after school, during which Julia got upset because Alex and Ignacio were making Mexican jokes in her presence (as they often did, self-deprecatingly – since they were both quite “Mexican,” relatively speaking – and in part because they knew it would provoke a reaction from Julia; see chapter 3). Julia told them to stop joking about being Mexican, since she felt like they were “putting themselves down,” and Ignacio’s girlfriend backed her up. The boys responded by saying they only made jokes because they knew Julia didn’t *really* feel that way, and that they would be upset if someone else called them “Mexicans” in a derogatory way – but that it would depend on who had said it (i.e., a white person vs. a fellow Mexican).

but later, in talking of the fight, said, “You would never expect ... for people to be that racist.”

On another occasion, Julia, Heriberto, and I were talking at lunchtime about two (Mexican-American) students who had dressed up as “border hoppers” (as students usually referred to unauthorized border crossers) for Halloween. Here is a description of the costumes from my fieldnotes, based on a photo Julia had taken of the two students:

Kid on right: wearing a white cowboy hat, torn white t-shirt, mismatched white/black socks and flip-flops, shorts sagging, carrying a water jug; on his back, a backpack with sleeping roll, Care Bear, cowboy boots, and red Chuck Taylors dangling; back turned to camera, surprised look on face, as if caught in headlights and getting ready to run away. Kid on left: white cowboy hat, torn midriff baring t-shirt, white sweatband on arm, cut-up white sneakers, shorts sagging, backpack, makeup/marker on arms/legs to look “dirty,” mugging for camera – again, look of mock surprise, arms held in front and behind him as though running.

Julia and I both said that we found the costumes “racist,” but Heriberto disagreed with Julia, arguing, “It’s not racist, miss, because they’re Mexican ... if they were white kids, sure, I’d smack ‘em down.” Later in the year, when I asked him about the incident, he first dismissed it as “plain racist.” Moments later, though, he professed that he had not been offended, and had laughed at it, but that it would have been a different story if a white or African-American student had dressed that way, “because why are you gonna be making fun of another race?” I asked him to clarify:

Brendan: you still said you saw it- you said it was “plain racist” though=

Heriberto: =yeah=

B: right? s- so::

H: I- like (.) there's no right answer or wrong answer to this?=
 B: =yeah=
 H: it's like a contradictory to yourself and to- and to other people
 B: yeah
 H: °y'know what I mean°
 B: wh- when you say "contradictory" what do you mean.
 H: like (.) te estás contradicciendo a ti mismo
 ((you're contradicting yourself))
 B: ok::
 H: hasta porque te estás diciendo que- un Mexicano no puede hablar- dice porque-
 ((or even because you're saying that- a Mexican who can't speak- saying
 because,))
 es Mexicano, no (va a estar hablando) español.
 ((he's Mexican (and he's not going to be speaking) Spanish.))
 A Mexican that can't- like you'll be saying, "Why do you- why do you think
 you're Mexican, you can't even speak Spanish?"
 B: huh
 H: That's contra- for me that's contradictory.
 B: so you're saying, the way you see it, if somebody's Mexican they should be
 able to speak Spanish=
 H: =no, not that. I'm saying that (.) certain people see it like that.

For Heriberto, the issue of whether or not the Halloween costumes were "racist" is, in fact, far from "plain": despite his feeling that students of Mexican heritage who dress up

like border hoppers, or who cannot speak Spanish,³⁷ are somehow “contradicting themselves,” he is reluctant to impose his own requirements or expectations for properly “Mexican” behavior on others, even though “certain people see it like that” (cf. Bejarano, 2005, p. 139). I suggest that we should take Heriberto’s words to heart: “there’s no right or wrong answer to this,” no simple way to represent the relationship between VDS students’ racializing expressions (in language or, as here, in other semiotic modes, like clothing) and the vast field of racialized discourse, encompassing but transcending VDS, within which students like Heriberto had to navigate their everyday lives.

The “game” of racial identification at Vista Del Sol was one in which the stakes were high and the possibility of victory was basically nil. Among a student population that was overwhelmingly of Mexican descent, displays of Mexican cultural citizenship (to preview a concept discussed at length in chapter four) such as speaking Spanish, listening to *bandas*, eating *carne* and *tortillas*, dressing a certain way, and so on, could make one the target of racializing expressions that relied on understandings of illegality, criminality, and deportability as transhistorical realities. On the other hand, some students did not or could not claim cultural citizenship so overtly – perhaps because they had not grown up speaking Spanish, or struggled to reconcile ethnic identity with long residence in the U.S. and a family history of military service, or simply were engaged with forms of cultural production that were not seen as Mexican – and found themselves in a kind of racial and cultural limbo when it came to understanding their own identities

³⁷ The topic link between making fun of border hoppers and being unable to speak Spanish is further evidence of the salience of Spanish use in the ideological construction of Mexicanness at VDS.

in relation to others at the school. In the next chapter, I take a closer look at how students refused to play by the rules of this losing game, in committing (or highlighting) linguistic transgressions that destabilized the interactional boundaries among different types of people at VDS. At “high magnification” – i.e., when subjected to sufficiently deep microanalysis – these transgressions provide a critical commentary on the impossibility of winning the race game, and, as I already suggested, the absurdity of having to play at all.

CHAPTER 3: TERRITORIES OF THE SELF: MAKING DO AND MAKING RACE IN EVERYDAY LINGUISTIC TRANSGRESSIONS

When individuals come into one another's immediate presence, territories of the self bring to the scene a vast filigree of wires which individuals are uniquely equipped to trip over.

Erving Goffman (1971, pp. 135-6)

3.1 Introduction

As documented in the previous chapter, race did, at times, become the explicit object of commentary and discussion among Julia and the students at Vista Del Sol.

These times included:

- When “racial” incidents had recently taken place at the school (e.g., the fight between peer groups known as “Mexicans” and Hardcores, or when the two (Mexican-American) students dressed up as border hoppers for Halloween)
- When students took advantage of social situations to tease Julia about being racist (this usually happened with students Julia was particularly close to, like Ignacio and Alex; see chapter five)
- When students talked about out-of-school political issues or events with racial overtones (e.g., Arizona Senate Bill 1070, or the incident when the Glendale substitute teacher’s derogatory letter about Hispanic students was read on the Arizona Senate floor.)

Most of the time, however, race was not an everyday topic of conversation at VDS, as far as I was able to tell, despite the notoriously racist public discourse and legislation

targeted at Mexicans and immigrants in Arizona during my year at VDS. This is, perhaps, not very surprising. Rampton (2009, p. 169), in making an argument for the continued relevance of social class to the multiethnic English youth in his study, invokes Raymond Williams's (1977) account of hegemony to reach a similar conclusion: "Class stratification wasn't much discussed" among Rampton's participants "because it was a matter of 'simple experience and commonsense'" which "saturat[ed] ... the 'whole substance of lived identities and relationships.' "

This would seem to be dangerously close to making an argument for the relevance of social class (or race) by pointing to its *absence* in interaction. But Rampton, still following Williams, goes on to develop a much more subtle proposition: that when the realities of race or class often appear as nothing more than "simple experience and commonsense," conversational orientations to these identities are not likely to take the form of mere "evocation[s] of familiar identities, typifications, or stereotypes." Rather, we would do better to approach interactional data in such situations with the understanding that the indexical links between linguistic forms and social personae (Agha, 2007) will be "much vaguer" and "more blurred" than we might prefer, as analysts. As Rampton puts it (2009, p. 169, following Silverstein and Bakhtin):

it is important to recognize the relative indeterminacy of ... connotational meaning, [and to refer] instead to the "pragmatic residue" associated with particular words and accents ... or to the ways they "taste" of the contexts in which they have lived their socially charged lives.

Thus, I want to argue that the "basic and omnirelevant issue for the participants for any bit of talk-in-interaction" (Schegloff, 2007a, p. 2) of answering the question "Why that

now?” – why, in other words, has another person produced this particular social action, often involving language, at this moment in time? – was complicated for students at VDS, to say the least.

Students sometimes transgressed linguistic boundaries, or called out others for doing so, in ways that made racial difference momentarily salient. In this chapter, I analyze three such interactions in depth, in order to explore the question of how race figured in the everyday talk of Julia and the students, if it did not appear just as a series of easy-to-trace indexical links between widely enregistered linguistic forms and readily-recognizable, stereotypical personae. In the analysis, I am forced to wrestle with “the relative delicacy and indeterminacy” of students’ transgressive linguistic practices *for the participants themselves* (Rampton, 2009, p. 169): as the participants worked to make sense of others’ utterances and actions “online,” as it were, in the moment of the conversation’s unfolding, they confronted the indeterminacy and destabilizing potential (for their own and others’ identities) of the linguistic transgressions being committed.

The point of the analysis, then, is not to arrive at a final determination of what Heriberto, Laura, or Alex was doing when s/he committed, or pointed out, a particular transgression, but to consider *possible* answers to the question “Why that now?” and, in doing so, to come to a deeper understanding of how VDS students used language to “make” race on an everyday basis, even when race was, supposedly, not the issue. (In the second chapter, I discussed my decision to use *race* as an analytic category, as opposed to

(e.g.) *ethnicity* or *cultural identity*.) In sifting through the “pragmatic residue” of the students’ utterances, and triangulating the interactional data with students’ metapragmatic commentary, as well as my ethnographic documentation of their behavior over the year, I bring to light the “creative practice” by which

‘tensions at the edge of semantic availability ... active, pressing but not yet fully articulated,’ find ‘specific articulations – new semantic figures ... in material practice’ (Rampton, 2009, p. 170, quoting Williams, 1977).

Or, to put it another way, I explore how VDS students operationalized race in everyday interaction, not as a category whose meaning and value was fixed and established, but as a lived reality subject to reinforcement, disruption, and transformation in and through language.

3.2 Transgressions: Stylization, crossing, errors

To speak of “style,” in linguistic practice or otherwise, generally means to display awareness of the “holistic properties of a practice or its product,” of how things “‘hang together’ in some coherent manner” (Coupland, 2007, p. 2). Style therefore involves a set of co-occurrence expectations (Ervin-Tripp, 1972), or specific features we expect will “hang together” in an individual’s social practice. A vast amount of fine-grained linguistic work goes into the styling of identities, or the way “people *use* and *enact* and *perform* social styles for a range of symbolic purposes” (Coupland, 2007, p. 3), as has been demonstrated in recent studies of the making of ethnically and ideologically distinctive youth styles among high school students (Bucholtz, 2011; Eckert, 1989; Mendoza-Denton, 2008). However, the same researchers have also shown that co-

occurrence expectations for speech are intimately linked to youth's use of "other available semiotic resources, such as prosody, gesture, posture, clothing, topics of discourse, and material objects" (Bucholtz, 2009, p. 165). That this was true of VDS students should have been apparent from my discussion (in the previous chapter) of the constellation of practices – including linguistic code choice but also clothing, musical preference, spatial positioning in the courtyard, leisure activities – that, "read" holistically as a style, might cause a student to be seen as relatively "more Mexican."

Of course, when speaking, people do not limit themselves to a single style; Labov's original idea of stylistic variation referred to "variation 'within the speech of single individuals,'" or to how speakers enact different styles (for Labov, relatively "more" or "less careful") in different social situations (Coupland, 2007, p. 7).³⁸ A good deal of style-shifting passed without comment at VDS, both in Julia's and the students' speech. Julia might say, "You're always saying stupid crap like that!" to admonish John Stamos for making a joke about drugs, but, in deflecting a question from Camilo during the same lab, would shift to a scientific register: "We don't have the control to get to that kind of depth of analysis." In fact, she often style-shifted strategically in order to make scientific concepts she perceived as difficult or off-putting more accessible to the students. Students who spoke both English and Spanish, for their part, would often switch from one language to the other, or a mixture of the two, depending on the

³⁸ There are important issues, beyond the scope of this chapter, with the relationship of style to both *dialect*, understood as a regional or cultural language variety, and *register*, "suggest[ing] a fixed relationship between 'a style' and 'a social situation'" (Coupland, 2007, p. 14-15), as well as the relationship of style to topic in discourse. Here, I introduce style as an entry point to stylization, and will not address those issues.

interlocutor, the task at hand, and many other variables, without prompting comment from their classmates, except in very rare circumstances (e.g., if someone wasn't sure that another student had understood what s/he was saying) – a different, but equally unremarkable, for VDS, kind of style-shifting.

Intra-individual speech variation, then, was the rule rather than the exception at VDS, as elsewhere. But the students and Julia would also, at times, speak or act in ways that violated co-occurrence expectations, producing “linguistic or semiotic forms that [didn't] fit with the kinds of thing that the activity in play had hitherto led [the listeners] to expect” (Rampton, 2009, p. 152). Sometimes, people would speak in ways that could be perceived as fundamentally unlike their routine ways of speaking, and therefore incompatible with others' commonsense knowledge of the identity, and style, they would be expected to enact in that situation. I refer to these actions, very broadly, as “linguistic transgressions,” since they transgressed the boundaries of what was seen as someone's normal, habitual, unproblematic linguistic practice and resulted in a momentary mismatch of the person speaking – or, more accurately, of others' beliefs about the identity of the person speaking – and what s/he said and/or how s/he said it. Such transgressions placed a “special interpretive framing” around the interaction in question (*ibid.*, p. 151), *re-keying* it in Goffman's sense of a “systematic alteration” of the participants' understanding of what was going on (as opposed to the “primary framework,” or routine interpretation of action that otherwise prevailed) (1974, p. 45).

3.2.1 Stylization

Before turning to the interactional data, I will introduce the three types of transgression I analyze. The first is stylization, the deliberate, conscious production of “[a] ... representation of another’s linguistic style, an artistic image of another’s language” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 362). In terms of participant roles, the *animator* of the utterance – the “talking machine” who speaks the words – is not aligned with the *principal*, the person “whose position is established by the words that are spoken” and “whose beliefs have been told” (Goffman, 1981, p. 144). When I stylize another’s speech, I am understood (if I am successful) to be ventriloquizing another person, or, more likely, another persona or social type – not merely evoking a different way of speaking, but also the social meanings that way of speaking indexes. Coupland’s (2001, p. 350) schematic of stylization processes contains two points that are especially relevant to my analysis, and somewhat problematic in light of it:

Stylised utterances project personas, identities and genres other than those that are presumedly current in the speech event; projected personas and genres have well-formed socio-cultural profiles and derive from known repertoires.

Stylisation is therefore fundamentally metaphorical; it brings into play stereotyped semiotic and ideological values associated with other groups, situations or times; it dislocates a speaker and utterances from the immediate speaking context.

To give a semiotic but non-linguistic example of this kind of stylization, when Camilo (who was usually labeled as a “prep”) dressed up as a “gangster” for Opposite Day, or when the two students (who did not normally dress that way) dressed up as border hoppers for Halloween, their clothing choices were interpreted within a quite different

frame – as *costumes*, not normal clothing; as mockery, good-natured and legitimate or not, depending on whom you asked – than on other days.

3.2.2 *Crossing*

Crossing, the second type of transgression, is closely related to stylization, but carries a higher degree of risk for the speaker, since it “involves a stronger sense of social or ethnic boundary transgression,” the linguistic features being employed “are more likely to be seen as anomalously ‘other’ for the speaker,” and, in addition to the ubiquitous “Why that now?”, it brings up the question, “By what right?” (Rampton, 2009, p. 149). Crossing, unlike stylization, is almost always associated with cross-ethnic uses of languages or dialects (Rampton, 1995). For example, Julia could stylize a “dumb person” voice to dramatize the difference between the well-educated Astronomy students and “laypeople” who didn’t understand Moon phases, but in a way that was ethnically unspecified (or, at least, in a way that was not understood as ethnically “other”) – this was stylization, but not crossing. To give another example, when Margot, who was white, used a racially-charged Spanish term for Mexican-identified students, *wacho*, in reported speech (about the supposed phenomenon of ethnically-segregated “ditch days”), she may have transgressed but was not stylizing. She was not deliberately trying to enact another’s way of speaking, but claimed only to be reporting what someone else had told her. This was not crossing, either. On the other hand, when the students made fun of the way Julia said “y’all” or pronounced particular words in what she called her “Midwestern

accent,” in mocking performances that seemed to evoke a racially-specific, white “hillbilly” persona, their actions might be understood as crossing.

3.2.3 *Errors*

Speech errors are the final type of transgression I identify in these data. At first glance, speech errors would seem to belong to a totally different category of phenomenon than stylization or crossing, since they do not involve the conscious animation of “othering” voices, but rather, the production of anomalous or unacceptable speech due, perhaps, to a *lack* of conscious control or self-monitoring. Nevertheless, I will argue that, in one of the interactions I analyze here, an error in speech played much the same role that crossing and stylization played in the other interactions: it violated co-occurrence expectations for the participants, momentarily exposing a discrepancy between someone’s (racial and institutional) identity and her way of speaking. The crucial moment in that interaction, though, comes not with the production of the error, but with the other participants’ uptake and transformation of the error into the object of metapragmatic commentary – within a teasing frame, to be sure, but in a way that still calls the integrity of the “offender’s” performance into question and represents a semi-serious threat to her face. There is precedent for approaching speech errors this way in Hill’s (1985, p. 734) analysis of Mexicano language purism as “a tool of dominance,” in which a powerful older townsman, despite speaking Mexicano poorly himself, pounces on examples of “contaminating” Spanish influence in an interviewer’s speech in order to solidify his own social position by “scoring ... purist points” (p. 735). Errors, real or

perceived, can thus be taken up by interlocutors in ways, serious or not, that purport to reveal the underlying hollowness of someone's attempt to enact a particular identity competently (see also Goffman, 1959, pp. 70-76).

I now turn to the in-depth analysis of three strips of interaction where particular transgressions were committed, and where, as a result, we witness individuals troubling the boundaries of their "territories of the self," sometimes ensnaring others in Goffman's "filigree of wires" as they do so, and continuously re-negotiating the relationship of race to language and identity by reframing the most mundane sorts of classroom interactions.

3.3 "*Hey ... hey güey!*": *Crossing from within*

One day near the end of the fall semester, as the fifth hour Astronomy students were studying on their own for their final exam, or, just as likely, socializing with their neighbors, I left the camera running as I moved around the classroom, checking in with students and answering questions about the material on the study packet Julia had given them. A little under forty-three minutes into the class period, the following interaction was recorded (There was a good deal of ambient noise in the classroom that day, and I had placed the camera fairly far from the students involved, which accounts for the somewhat sketchy quality of the transcription. Still, the crucial utterances are clearly audible on the video):

Laura is sitting at a table in the middle of the room; Robert is sitting next to her, but at the table nearest the front of the room; Nadi is at Robert's table, to Robert's right, wearing earphones. Laura and Robert were talking a few moments before, but each has turned back to her/his own work.

- 1 Laura: Hey
 2 (0.8)
 3 hey ↑güey↓ ((Robert and Nadi turn))
 4 Huhhuh both of you [guys looked!
 5 Nadi: [(xxx) güey! ((to Laura, smiling))
 6 Laura: (I wouldn't xxx say) güey just (someone like calling),
 7 "Güey! ((harsh whispery voice)) **Hey güey!**"
 8 (1.4)
 9 Is it hard to speak Spanish?
 ((Robert looks to Nadi, who has earphones on))
 10 Nadi: What?
 11 Laura: Is it hard to speak Spanish?=
 ((Robert is shaking his head))
 12 Nadi: =No.
 13 Laura: I wish I (had Spanish)
 14 Robert: (xxx) Spanish you (can't speak) Spanish?
 15 Laura: (xxx speaks Spanish xxx) speaks nothing but Spanish (xxx)
- (3.7 - inaudible)
- 16 Laura: Maybe it's cause I have bad memory
 17 Robert?: Well. You gotta use it.

The sequence begins when Laura hails the two boys in line 1 with “Hey”, an utterance that is nothing more than a request for attention, a bid to start a conversation. It calls for a second pair-part of a display of attention, either verbal (“What?”) or nonverbal, such as a simple turn of the head toward the speaker. When it becomes clear, after a brief pause, that neither of the two boys has heard her, or responded, in any case, Laura reformulates her request for attention as “Hey güey!” (3) with a marked contrast in pitch and intonation. In unexceptional circumstances, “hey güey!” projects a similar response to “hey”: the hearers give some indication that they have heard the speaker and are ready for what comes next. However, it becomes clear in line 4 that Laura is exploiting her

knowledge of the discursive function of “hey güey” to make a joke at Robert and Nadi’s expense: when they produce the expected response (turning to look at her), Laura laughs at them for doing so – “Huhhuh both of you guys looked!”

Laura’s use of *güey* is transgressive because she is not a fluent speaker of Spanish and does not habitually use Spanish in peer interaction, and probably also because she is a woman. *Güey* is an extremely common and oft-stigmatized affiliative address term (though it serves other functions in different contexts), somewhat akin to English ‘dude,’ prominent in the speech of young Mexican and Mexican-American men. In fact, it has developed such a strong direct indexical association with young Mexican Spanish-speaking men that its near-constant use in their interactions became the basis for a humorous Spanish-language Coors Light commercial (Bucholtz, 2009, p. 160-162). It is true that *güey* is not used exclusively by young men, and that some younger women of Mexican descent have begun to use the term (according to anecdotal evidence that speakers of Mexican Spanish have provided to me). However, I can say that I did not generally hear girls at VDS call other students *güey*, nor did I observe them using the word in social networking communications, for example; Spanish-speaking boys, on the other hand, peppered their informal conversations with *güey*. Despite the fact that *güey* is not “proper” either to men or women, strictly speaking, there does seem to be a gendered dimension to the joke’s functioning.

Thus, *güey*, as used by Laura, does not merely function as a request for attention, but projects an interpersonal stance; it calls forth the multiple indexicalities of *güey* and, in positioning the speaker as “someone who could (legitimately) say *güey*,” simultaneously positions the addressees as “people to whom *güey* could (legitimately) be said.” When Robert and Nadi respond to Laura’s hail by looking at her, they fall right into her trap: by ratifying her utterance, they lend her legitimacy as a user of *güey*, but just as importantly, they also “constitute” themselves, in a sense, as the “*güey*” to whom Laura might be referring (cf. Butler, 1997).

Before continuing with the line-by-line analysis, I want to provide some ethnographic context for understanding the relative positioning of Nadi, Robert, and Laura vis-à-vis Spanish in general, and *güey* specifically. Of the three students, I only ever observed Nadi use *güey* in a routine, unstylized manner, which he did quite often. This is not surprising, since he was the only one of the three who used Spanish as a language of peer interaction. For example, in a video of Nadi and Gerardo working on a rock types lab in Oceanography class, both boys use *güey* as an affiliative address term and an emphatic marker in narrative discourse. Accordingly, Nadi was undoubtedly viewed as the most “Mexican” of the three in the school’s taxonomy of ethnicity: he did have papers, but spoke both Spanish and English with his friends, traveled regularly to spend time on his family’s ranch in Mexico, and referred Julia to *corridos* on YouTube, some of which he claimed had been written about his family. Robert, on the other hand, knew very little Spanish, except for what he had learned in Spanish class, and never used

it at school, as far as I could tell (his father was Hispanic, but had not been around much when Robert was growing up, and he spoke only English with his family). While Robert was a bit of a loner at lunchtime, he was a smart, funny, friendly, outgoing presence in class, and participated enthusiastically in socially- and academically-focused interactions with a diverse group of peers.³⁹

By contrast, Laura – who was English-dominant, academically ambitious, and highly involved at school – had grown up around Spanish, but it was uncommon to hear her use Spanish in any context. In an interview, the only times she could recall using Spanish at school were to help a non-English-speaking student who was lost and during friendly exchanges of insults or teasing in the cafeteria:

Brendan: .hh so what about in school, do you ever use Spanish in school, or do you just use English?

Laura: Um, yeah, I have, I was showing a girl to class one time. Um, she didn't know any English, so and she- no one wanted to help her, so I went and helped her. Yeah. Um, I've spoken like to people in the cafeteria in Spanish, um, I've spoken to like football players in Spanish, like if they know Spanish

B: Ok. So why would you: why would you do that if you feel more comfortable um speaking English? Like for example with the girl who didn't speak any English. That (.) is obvious. But with the football players say.

³⁹ Despite this, he had uncommonly strong negative language attitudes about the use of what he called “slang”; for example, he told me he hated when someone addressed him as “dog” (another affiliative address term sometimes used by VDS boys) because, he said, “I’m not a dog”; when I pressed him for a longer explanation, he stuck stubbornly to this referentialist line of argument. Thus, we can imagine that *güey*, as an exemplar of Spanish-language slang (with a folk etymology relating it to *büey*, ‘ox’ (Bucholtz, 2009, p. 151), as Robert may or may not have known), might have come across as doubly inappropriate to Robert – and, therefore, doubly funny as fodder for Laura’s joke.

L: U:m (.) I say certain words in Spanish because they relate to it, like s- they don't understand if I say it in English or they do understand but it's just better said that way=

B: =Ok. Can you give me an example?

L: Um, it's a bad word I don't wanna say it=

B: =That's ok. I won't tell anybody that you were the [one who said it
@@@@@@@

L: [um
@@ um like um- I, I can't say it=

B: =That's ok, that's ok=

L: =But um (.) it's a bad word like if they're joking around like you tell 'em to stop and then they'll stop it right away

B: And [it doesn't have the same effect if you say it in- in English? @@

L: [yeah yeah yeah@

It is clear from this excerpt that Laura had limited Spanish competence, compared to Nadi, but it is equally clear that she knew enough about the local pragmatics of Spanish use to understand (for example) when and how to use a Spanish word, as opposed to an English one, to express negative affect in the cafeteria; similarly, she knew enough about the indexicality of *güey* to know *why* it would be funny for her to call out “Hey güey!” to the boys.

Laura's transgression in line 3, then, re-keys an otherwise routine request for attention because of what the boys know about who she is: a young Mexican-American woman who does not usually speak Spanish to her classmates. When Robert and Nadi turn to look at her, they immediately register the mismatch, and smile as Laura laughs at them. Yet she is only able to carry off the joke by drawing on her admittedly truncated

(Blommaert, 2010, p. 106) Spanish repertoire, along with her implicit knowledge of sequentiality in conversation – that is, if you call audibly for someone’s attention, that person, barring special circumstances, is obliged to respond. Laura “breaks frame” in line 4 by laughing at Robert and Nadi, making it known, were it not already obvious, that she just wanted to see if she could provoke the expected response while speaking out of character. Nadi, however, exploits conversational norms to tease Laura back (5), acting as though there were no “special interpretive framing” in effect and giving a canonical reply:

1 Laura: Hey
 2 (0.8)
 3 hey ↑güey↓ ((Robert and Nadi turn))
 4 Huhhuh both of you [guys looked!
 5 Nadi: [(xxx) güey! ((to Laura, smiling))

By returning Laura’s *güey*, and even overlapping with her tease, Nadi is saying, in effect, “Fine – you want to have this kind of conversation? Let’s have this kind of conversation!”, knowing full well she has no wish to do so. He has the upper hand, for the moment, because he knows that Laura cannot really continue with this sequence; she may be able to toss out a Spanish word or two in the cafeteria, but her competence does not extend to a prolonged conversational exchange in what she called “street” or “slang” Spanish, which she struggled to understand, much less to speak:

Brendan: So let’s say Viviana and Abraham (*two students who used Spanish prominently in peer interaction, and sat at Laura’s table in Oceanography*) are speaking Spanish. What percentage of it would you say you understand? If you had to pick a number=

Laura: =I would say like fifty, seventy-five. **Unless they’re speaking like slang Spanish, like street Spanish.**

B: Like straight Spanish?

L: No, street, like slang

B: Oh, street Spanish, ok

L: Like um because I've heard them like speak like slang like um- just like how in English like we have slang words, like, "Oh, that's ti:ght!" or "Oh, that's si:ck!" like I- **if they speak in Spanish I- I'm gonna be like, "Huh?"**

B: J- Just 'cause you don't know those words, or=

L: =Yeah I'm just like, "What? That's new!"

Of course, even if Laura were a fluent "slang" Spanish-speaking girl like Viviana, her use of *güey* would still be unusual because the word indexes masculinity, and a particular type of masculinity. Laura's next turn alludes to this, as she recasts her transgressive utterance with harsh, whispery voice quality (Laver, 1980, p. 133), giving it a rougher, more masculine edge and adding further nuance to her stylization of the "social figure" who would habitually call out "Hey *güey*!" to someone. At the same time, she seems to be reflecting on the comedic value, and inappropriateness, of her own use of the word by contrasting it with the kind of person who would be expected to use it:

4 Laura: Huhhuh both of you [guys looked!
 5 Nadi: [(xxx) *güey*! ((to Laura, smiling))
 6 Laura: (I wouldn't xxx say) *güey* just (someone like calling),
 7 "Güey! ((harsh whispery voice)) **Hey *güey*!**"

In lines 6-7, Laura is speaking mostly to Robert. Nadi, after his teasing response in line 5, looks to have turned his attention back to his own table, and is wearing earphones, which may indicate limited involvement and facilitate a quick exit from the

sequence. In the substantial pause after Laura's turn in line 7, Robert turns his head slightly left to face Laura more directly, and she attempts to restart the conversation:

8 (1.4)
 9 Laura: Is it hard to speak Spanish?
 ((Robert looks to Nadi, who has earphones on))
 10 Nadi: What?
 11 Laura: Is it hard to speak Spanish?=
 ((Robert is shaking his head))
 12 Nadi: =No.

Laura's question (9) is a kind of ritual face work; in it, we catch a glimpse of the "orientation to potential offense pervading all interaction" (Rampton, 2009, p. 159), which is even more present in interactions where crossing or "unentitled" language use is perceived to have taken place. It sounds strange to call Laura's use of *güey* "crossing," since she is Mexican-American, but, as I made clear in chapter two, students labeled as "Mexican-American" could occupy very different positions in the racial scheme of things at VDS, as Laura and Nadi did (to say nothing of the gendered crossing taking place). By asking Nadi, through Robert, "Is it hard to speak Spanish?", Laura is admitting the limits of her own knowledge and deferring to Nadi as the person with primary authority to talk about Spanish, since he is the only fluent Spanish speaker present. She is, to some degree, responding to the face threat Nadi's response (5) presented by "coming clean" about her unauthorized and unexpected use of Spanish.

However, she is also attending to the threat she may have presented to *Nadi's* face in calling him out as *güey*: Did he think he was chosen as the target of her joke for a reason? Does he think that she is making fun of him, or Spanish speakers in general? In

the moment of Laura's "Hey güey!", was he made racially visible as the type of VDS student who regularly gets called, or calls others, *güey*? That Laura's fears may be justified is suggested first by Nadi's inattention from lines 6-9, and second, by his "No" in line 12, unelaborated and latched to the end of Laura's question. Nadi's "No" is an "unelaborated, type-conforming response" to a polar question (Heritage & Raymond, forthcoming, pp. 6-8) that serves a number of functions: it moves the sequence toward closure – communicating "I'm done with this" – but, more significantly, it implies the question is unworthy of serious consideration or an elaborated response.

Nadi may well have been offended, or he may just have wanted to get back to listening to music or studying. What is interesting, however, is that the episode has made Laura self-reflective and self-critical about her Spanish ability, as we see from the way she continues the conversation with Robert, who is, literally, caught in the middle:

12 Nadi: =No.
 13 Laura: I wish I (had Spanish)
 14 Robert: (xxx) Spanish you (can't speak) Spanish?
 15 Laura: (xxx speaks Spanish xxx) speaks nothing but Spanish (xxx)

(3.7 - inaudible)

16 Laura: Maybe it's cause I have bad memory
 17 Robert?: Well. You gotta use it.

Laura moves from consulting Nadi, the Spanish expert, on the difficulty of learning Spanish to commenting to Robert, another non-speaker, "I wish I (had Spanish)" (13) and musing on the fact that even though someone in her family, we can assume, "speaks nothing but Spanish" (15) she does not speak it herself, perhaps owing to her "bad memory" (16). But when Laura asks Nadi if it is hard to learn Spanish, and tells Robert

that she wishes she spoke Spanish, she understates her own competence. While it is almost certainly true that she cannot speak as fluently or colloquially as Nadi, she is far from ignorant of Spanish, and certainly has a good idea of what it takes to learn Spanish. In the interview, she actually came off as very self-aware about her use of Spanish and how it had changed over her lifetime:

Laura: My mom and dad- or my dad spoke English to me, he never wanted me to learn Spanish ... U:m but my mom wanted me to speak it. They both speak um English and Spanish and their mother and father do also. Um but now I'm- as I'm older I understand it. Cause my grandma, my mom's mother, only speaks to me in Spanish, so I have to=

Brendan: =Oh really?=-

L: =Yeah=

B: =So you feel like you understand it more now=

L: =Yeah=

B: =Than when you were younger? So how does it go when you talk to your grandma?

L: Um, I usually just like, "yes," "no," like if I have to like translate like something huge like I'll attempt to and my mom will fix it. ~Yeah.~

B: But you feel like you can get a↑long with it?

L: ↑Yeah. Yeah I can like have like a decent like "Oh, how are you, what's goin on, do you need help?"

There seems to be a degree of "cloaking" (Mendoza-Denton, 2008) in Laura's representation of her Spanish to the boys – not in the sense that Laura is ashamed or embarrassed that she speaks some Spanish, but rather, in that her transgression exposes her feelings of inadequacy about her Spanish by placing it in such close proximity to Nadi's, leading her to exaggerate her ignorance. (Although, to be fair, it is certainly

possible that she is cloaking her competence for the reason Mendoza-Denton identifies: to avoid being attributed linguistic competence that is discrepant with the particular style she is trying to enact. But I see no evidence for that here.)

Crossing into masculine street Spanish begins as a joke, with Laura's styling another's identity, continues as Laura performs face work to nullify any potential offense (explaining herself in lines 6-7 and deferring to Nadi's authority in lines 9-12), and ends with Laura's reflections on possible contradictions in her own identity, as a young woman of Mexican descent who "wishes she had Spanish." Her linguistic transgression in line 3, which forced the boys to ask "Why that now?", and, depending on how we read Nadi's reaction, "By what right?", brings Laura eventually to ask "Why not?" Why, in other words, *can't* she carry on a conversation with Nadi in "street Spanish"? How did they end up positioned so differently in this brief, but eventful interaction? Perhaps this is something like what Williams (1977) had in mind by a "creative practice" in which "tensions at the edge of semantic availability" take gradual shape in discourse: Laura might have been hard-pressed to explain why the mere act of hailing the boys with *güey* brought forth such personal reflections on the limitations of her normal stylistic repertoire. But the act of speaking *güey*, of momentarily leaving the territory of her habitual self, is itself generative and provides her with an opening to consider where she stands in relation to Nadi and Robert, and in relation to what the word *güey* represents.

3.4 “Man, wha(’s) spectral class? Oh, Mexican!”: Stylizing the self

In early December, the fifth hour Astronomy students were learning about the temperature, color, and luminosity of different classes of stars. Julia had spent the first part of the class period explaining the difference between the concepts of absolute and apparent magnitude, but as the period went on, the students were losing focus, and Julia was getting frustrated, unsure of whether they had already grasped the relatively simple concept or were confused and had just given up. Eventually, she announced, “Ladies and gentlemen. I’m just gonna have you guys work on your own. And you can ask me questions. So do three, four, five, and six before class is over.”

A moment later, after raising her hand but seeing that Julia was otherwise occupied, Laura turned to Alex and Margot, who were sitting behind her, with a question about the relationship between a star’s color and temperature. This led to a brief discussion, with Margot volunteering that a star’s color determines its temperature, Laura speculating that a star would be hotter if it were lighter, and Alex remembering, “Isn’t it like from blue to red or something?” A debate about which stars were coolest followed, with Alex and Laura each teasingly claiming s/he had said “red” first, and Margot playing referee: “Ok, whoever said it was anything, we now know the right answer, so you guys just calm down.” Once the issue was settled, the three turned back to their worksheets and began writing. About twelve seconds later, the following interaction occurred:

(0:26) *Alex and Margot are sitting together in the front right corner of the room, Laura is at a nearby table in the middle of the room, Gabby is at the front center table, Julia and Camilo are both somewhere in the back of the room*

1 Alex: °I'm actually learning in this class.°
 2 (1.2)
 3 °today°
 4 Laura: °spectral [↑class°
 5 Alex: [just today
 6 Margot: °what is a star's (xxx)°
 7 °what's a spec tral [class.°
 8 Gabby: [miss
 9 can you go back to the the the the uh
 10 temperature [(.) for stars thing?=
 11 boy: [no
 12 Margot: ((to Julia)) =what's a spectral ↓class?
 13 Camilo: miss do you [want us to do (six too?)
 14 Laura: [yeah, what is a spectral ↓class.
 15 Alex: ((turning toward Laura and Julia))
 man, wha('s) spectral ↑class!
 16 (2.0)
 17 o:h, Mexican
 ((as Julia approaches, turning back toward screen))

Laura and Margot, as they begin working independently, run into the same bit of unfamiliar scientific discourse – “spectral class” – and speculate audibly, but quietly, about the term (Laura in line 4, Margot in line 7); Julia is working with other students in a different part of the classroom and cannot easily be consulted. Gabby has not been interacting with Laura and Margot, but provides them with an opportunity (8-10) to interject, when she gets Julia’s attention with her loud request to display a different PowerPoint slide. Once Gabby has redirected Julia’s attention, Margot (12) wastes no time in latching onto Gabby’s utterance, repeating what she (Margot) had read from the worksheet, more loudly and confidently, as a question to Julia: “What’s a spectral class?” Laura ratifies and echoes Margot’s question (14), overlapping with an unrelated

before “spectral class,” a stylistic choice that evokes non-native English syntax. Fourth, the intonation contour of his question, with high phrasal tone and a rising peak (L+H*) accent on “class,” clearly contrasts with Margot’s scooped (L*+H) accent on the same word, as well as Laura’s low phrasal and boundary tones and lack of tone target on “class.” Finally, on the video, Alex seems to overplay the difficulty of saying “spectral class” for comic effect, bobbing his head forward and backward and stretching the corners of his mouth as he spits out an elongated /s/ at the end of the phrase. For me, as the ethnographer, these minute details, as they “hang together” in Alex’s stylized performance, somehow add up to an ineffable expression – a “taste,” as Bakhtin says – of Mexicanness. As if to confirm this intuition, Alex pauses, perhaps to wait for a reaction, then tags his utterance with “O:h, Mexican” as Julia approaches.

This was not the only time I heard Alex use stylized “Mexican” speech. For example, one day he and Ignacio were hanging out in Julia’s classroom after school, and he started teasing Ignacio about the pronunciation of the word ‘chair’; I cannot remember whose pronunciation inspired this, or if it was a spontaneous bit of comedy, but the point of the joking was the supposed inability of Mexicans to pronounce the affricate /tʃ/: Alex was asking Ignacio, using hypocorrected “Mexican” phonology, “You want the *shair* (/ʃæʔ/)? The *shair* (/ʃæʔ/)? Sounds like a real Mexican!” (I call this hypocorrection, since substituting /tʃ/ for /ʃ/, rather than the other way around, is a stereotypical feature of Spanish-influenced L2 English). Just as it was problematic to call Laura’s “Hey güey” crossing, it feels odd to call Alex’s performance stylization, since he is, in part, stylizing

himself. His speech is stylized in Coupland's sense that it "projects personas [and] identities ... other than those that are presumedly current in the speech event" and that those "projected personas and genres have well-formed socio-cultural profiles and derive from known repertoires" (2001, p. 350), but the stereotypical persona and identity projected, rather than being distant from the speech event, are those that other people might associate with *him*. Alex, by virtue of his heritage, immigration status, and linguistic and cultural repertoires of practice (Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003), sees himself as, and is seen by others as *Mexican*, despite being a native speaker of English and having spent the vast majority of his life in the United States. He does not habitually talk the way his stylized Mexican English speaker does, which is why his performances violate co-occurrence expectations and count as instances of stylization. However, in crafting his "artistic image" of stereotypically Mexican speech, he draws on features that already exist in his repertoire as a Chicano English speaker, as well as his knowledge of stereotypes about the way Mexicans talk.

Though he joked about it, Alex was well aware that perceptions of non-standardness could attach to him and his routine, non-stylized speech. For example, he once became frustrated with my inability to understand him, due, he implied, to his Chicano English phonology. On the day in question, he had been joking that a girl at his table was a *bully*, but I (and two other students) thought he was calling the girl a *boy*. After several repetitions, Alex lost his patience and pronounced the word very slowly ("bul-ly") and, once we realized what he meant, said, in exasperation, "I'm Mexican, ok?"

It's because I'm Mexican!" Stylization for Alex, then, did not just involve crafting an artistic image of *another's* language, but exaggerating features in his *own* native dialect of English to create a comical grotesque of his speech (or the speech of "people like him") that, perhaps, reflected his anxieties about the way his routine way of speaking could make Mexicanness salient.

But, to return to the interaction at hand, all that does not answer the question "Why that now?" "O:h, Mexican" might satisfy the most rigorous conversation analyst as an explicit orientation to a particular identity category, but its appearance in line 17 is mystifying. Merely analyzing the students' turns in sequence does not get us much closer to understanding what, in the dynamic unfolding of this interaction, brought "Mexicans" to mind for Alex and directly inspired his transgressive performance.

There are a number of possibilities: on the most basic level, Tannen (1989, pp. 94-95) argues that repetition in discourse is sometimes fairly automatic, owing to the human "drive to imitate ... because of the pleasure associated with the familiar, the repetitious." Similarly, Rampton (2006) notes a "contrapuntal aesthetic" among the high school boys in his study, wherein the semantic or referential content of others' utterances was set aside in favor of their "poetic" qualities, as students

[produced] sequences characterised by parallelism (repetition with contrast), picking up pieces of relatively ordinary classroom talk and reworking them into forms that were conspicuously different from the original and often incongruous in the immediate context. (p. 58)

After all, playing with language, and reworking others' utterances, is fun. Not only that, it gives students a chance to "[push] themselves momentarily into the spotlight, bidding for acclaim for their quick wits, resourcefulness or droll humour" (*ibid.*, p. 62).

Communicative competence in the "student counterscript" often has more to do with one's ability to echo or recast others' words creatively, in entertaining ways, than to make completely original contributions or move the "teacher script" forward (Gutiérrez, Rymes, & Larson, 1995, pp. 461-464). In this light, we might view lines 15 and 17 simply as Alex's attempt to push himself into the spotlight by very briefly enacting a hyper-Mexican, comic social style, using the semiotic resources available to him (i.e., as a speaker of (a less cartoonish variety of) Chicano English and someone who, as a Mexican, is entitled to make jokes about Mexicans).

On the other hand, it is easy to imagine that Alex's reworking of Laura's and Margot's questions had a much different subtext: its sequential placement suggests that it could be a commentary on the general lack of understanding among the students, linking Mexicanness to academic or scientific ignorance, or a reflection of his personal confusion about what "spectral class" meant. In this case, the students' troublesome encounter with the language of science might have brought forth a self-parodying response – despite the fact that Alex, Laura, and Margot actually understood the *concept* of spectral classes very well, as their discussion just prior to this strip of interaction demonstrated. Just as Laura did with her Spanish ability, Alex downplays his scientific competence. His remarks in lines 1, 3, and 5 – "I'm actually learning in this class today ... Just today" – give the

impression that he didn't usually learn anything in Astronomy class, but he told me in an interview conducted around the same time that the reality was quite different:

Brendan: So, how much- how much would you say that you've learned in the astronomy class? Like, compared to other classes that you've taken here? ...

Alex: Well, actually, I've- I've learned- (.) I'm gonna say Miss Tezich's is the science class I've learned the most.

B: Yeah

A: Um. I know I don't put the ef- the right effort into it, in learning the things like I have to learn about. But like on my other science classes, I wouldn't even do my ~work~, [honestly.

B: [Hmm

A: Like I wouldn't even pay attention. And like I've ↑learned in this class. I've actually learned about the stars and the planets °and everything°. (Not like in) the other classes.

Alex does not have a long history of success as a science learner. If “actually learning” in Julia’s class sets it apart from other science classes, where Alex “wouldn’t even pay attention,” it is possible that running up against *spectral class*, an indigestible chunk of “Astronomese,” recalled to Alex his past failures. Based only on the evidence in the transcript, though, it is impossible to say whether it was this, or something else, that led Alex to invoke the social category “Mexican” at that precise moment.

So was Alex’s “Man, wha(?’s) spectral class? ... O:h, Mexican!” a thoughtless moment of poetic improvisation, a playful bid for the spotlight, or does it reveal something much more profound about his experience of being Mexican at VDS and, specifically, in science class? Once again, I face the “delicacy and indeterminacy” of linguistic transgressions, and am left sifting the “pragmatic residue” of this interaction for

clues to why Alex said what he said, and how the participants made sense of it all. As I noted before, however, this indeterminacy and ambivalence is often apparent to the participants as well. In fact, when I asked Alex *why* he joked about “Mexicans,” as I had heard him do on numerous occasions, he responded with some uncertainty:

You know what, it’s- the things- I’m gonna say probably the things that that I see in TV or I see- I see going around- around me. .hh “Oh, because, whatever” – Not because, not, I don’t wanna be racist or anything, (one of) the things I hear about African-Americans or Native Americans, even about Mexicans, “Oh, because, oh, Mexicans this, or Mexicans that.” And I’m the type of person that likes to play around a lot. I like- I’m- I like to do that, I like playin around. And (.) like it doesn’t bother me to- to- to say things like that. I mean, just- I don’t know. I- I’m gonna say probably because the things I see around me, why I do that.

Alex alludes to “things that I see in TV or I see going [on] around me” as the source material for his self-knowing jokes about Mexicans, but quickly changes direction, saying, “I’m the type of person that likes to play around a lot” and reassuring me, “it doesn’t bother me to say things like that.” Even his statements about the “things [he] see[s]” are hedged repeatedly – “I’m gonna say probably,” “I mean, just- I don’t know” – as if to imply that he had only a vague sense of how these external influences might relate to his joking. Needless to say, I was curious about what he meant:

Brendan: Ok so tell me- but- give me a better idea about that. Like like what kinds of things do you see um that- that- so that that’s in your head, to say that.

Alex: Now with this law, the SB1070 law. That it’s basically (.) talking about Mexicans. Like it’s basically discriminating you. Well, not you, but me, a Mexican. Um probably things like that. That I see from the government. Doing (.) to us.

On the recording, there is virtually no pause between my question and Alex’s response. He immediately brings up SB1070, the Arizona law that allows police to detain anyone “reasonably suspected” of being in the country without authorization, and his choice of

“now” to begin his turn evokes the shattering repercussions the law had for students and families without papers. The law had actually passed the year before I started my fieldwork, so “now” does not refer to a new development; rather, it suggests that, for people like Alex, SB1070 effectively divided recent history into “before” and “after.” Soon afterwards, Alex says of the law, “it’s basically discriminating you,” but then stops to repair his utterance and disambiguate the referent of *you*: “Well, not **you**, but me, a Mexican.” With this move, Alex ever-so-briefly breaks frame, stepping out of the role of informant in the interview situation to call my attention to the difference between our racial identities and the very different relationships we must therefore have to SB1070.

As Williams says of class, race saturates “the whole substance of lived identities and relationships,” including my relationship with Alex, as this interaction reveals. That does not mean that Alex is conscious, at every moment, of being Mexican, nor that every instance of racial “playing around” equals “resistance” or points to an all-consuming psychological engagement with racial/ethnic difference on Alex’s part. It does mean, however, that, because of this saturation, race seeps into everyday interactions in ways that may be easy to read, as in the interview, or difficult to read, as in the “spectral class” interaction. To assert that race is not a constant *preoccupation* – as Alex does, in saying “it doesn’t bother [him]” to joke about Mexicans – is not to deny its omnipresence and its potential relevance to any given interaction in the post-SB1070 “now.” (To be sure, students who, like Alex, were vulnerable because of immigration status experienced this “now” very differently than Mexican-American students, no matter how “Mexican,”

whose status, and whose families' status, were relatively secure.) Ultimately, Alex's "Man, wha('s) spectral class! ... O:h, Mexican!" remains a delicate, indeterminate bit of play that nonetheless reflects the seepage of race into his "lived identities and relationships" – whether or not he gave it much thought during the "spectral class" discussion.

Before moving on, I want to raise the issue of *addressivity*, the utterance's "quality of being directed to someone" (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 95). Bakhtin says:

the style of the utterance depend[s] on those to whom the utterance is addressed, how the speaker ... senses and imagines his addressees, and the force of their effect on the utterance (*ibid.*).

In other words, addressivity, the way a speaker "senses and imagines" who will hear the utterance, and how they might react, has everything to do with the style of the utterance. But whom is Alex addressing? From the video, it is evident that he addresses "Man, wha('s) spectral class!" to a generalized audience of his classmates and Julia, to anyone present who is close enough to hear and appreciate the performance. He turns toward the center of the room and piggybacks on Laura's question, in an example of "participatory listenership" (Tannen, 1989, p. 59), to voice his own, stylized version quite loudly. By contrast, "O:h, Mexican" is delivered at a lower volume and appears to be primarily *self-directed*. Julia is approaching as Alex says it (and he would sometimes make Mexican jokes while she was within earshot, since they never failed to get a reaction) but she is still conversing with another student in the back of the room, and Alex does not speak loudly enough to suggest that he is trying to get her attention. Moreover, he is turning

back to his table, away from Julia and the rest of the class, as he says it. Margot is closest to meeting his gaze, but she is white, and an unlikely audience for an in-joke about Mexicans; in any case, she does not react, and appears to be looking past Alex, toward the projector screen. There was no uptake from anyone else of “O:h, Mexican,” either. Julia did not appear to hear it, and quickly changed the PowerPoint slide and began a new segment of class, a teacher-led explanation of spectral classes, with “OK. SO.” (Additionally, I remember being struck on the day of the interaction by how Alex had said this *to himself*; this was only an intuition, but the video seems to confirm it.)

If Alex’s remark is indeed an instance of “self-talk,” it can be analyzed as an interaction in which “there are more roles than persons” (Goffman, 1978, p. 788). Goffman notes that self-talk is often a “mimicry” of “speech between persons,” which “implies a social encounter, and the arrangement of participants through which encounters are sustained” (p. 789). Words in self-talk are not just isolated words, but are redolent of “the whole interactional arrangement in which such words might get spoken” (p. 790). Thus, although Alex is the sole *animator* of his self-talk, by definition, different principals and/or addressed recipients may be present in the imagined social encounter. In self-talk,

[s]peaking audibly, we address ourselves as the sole intended recipients of our own remarks. Or, speaking in our own name, we address a remark to someone who isn’t present to receive it ... either we address an absent other, or we address ourselves in the name of some standard-bearing voice. (p. 787)

Alex may be addressing an absent classmate (absent from the encounter, anyway), or he may be the sole intended recipient of “O:h, Mexican”; either way, his remark bears an

unmistakable resemblance to the unattributed derogatory comments he cited as the inspiration for his Mexican jokes in the interview:

it's- the things- I'm gonna say probably the things that that I see in TV or I see- I see going around- around me. .hh "Oh, because, whatever" ... "Oh, because, oh, Mexicans this, or Mexicans that."

This suggests that, even when he is just "playing around" – and even when no one else is apparently listening – Alex is speaking to himself, or his classmates, in the same "standard-bearing voice" that he hears blaming Mexicans for a variety of ills. Whether he is animating this voice to discredit it, as a form of wry commentary on it, or simply because he cannot get it out of his head, we cannot say.

3.5 "Not from a full-born Mexican-American!": Capitalizing on errors

The third and final transgression differs from the previous two in that it was not a deliberate act of crossing or stylization, but an innocent error in speech that occasioned an episode of teasing. This interaction, unlike the other two, took place after school, not during class. The after-school relaxation of the institutional roles teacher and student, and the respective rights to speak associated with these roles, helped to create an environment in which teasing was more likely to occur (though Julia, like many teachers, did not assert teacher rights to speak all the time, even while class was going on, and the students often teased her in class; see Cazden, 2001, p. 82). Just prior to the interaction, Julia, Heriberto, and I were hanging out in her classroom and talking informally as she finished entering the day's attendance on the computer:

1 Julia: I saw Cassandra Garza this morning and she was not here.
2 she hasn't been here in weeks.

3 Brendan: Cas↑sandra.
 4 Julia: Cass↓andra. she was in fourth=
 5 Brendan: =in [fifth?
 6 Julia: [but she transferred. ↓no.
 7 Brendan: not Cassandra who hangs out with Jesús
 8 (0.8)
 9 and um=
 10 Julia: =no. different [Cassandra
 11 Brendan: [ok ((tongue click))
 12 Julia: yeah you might have sawn (.)
 13 s-sawn her? [seen her
 14 Herib.: [seen her
 15 Brendan: mighta sawn [[her
 16 Julia: [[like
 17 Herib.: like you're expecting that from a,
 18 from a newly exchange student or something like that?
 19 (1.3)
 20 not from a full-born [@@ Mexican-American
 21 Julia: [@@
 22 Brendan: °@@@@@@ [[@@°
 23 Julia: [[↑du↓de!
 24 (0.4)
 25 y'know we all make mistakes, it's cool
 26 Brendan: °@@@°
 27 Herib.: ↑YEAH but [(0.5) @ w@@ow
 28 Julia: [@@@
 29 Brendan: @@@
 30 Julia: @@@ ("siren" noise) Oooooooooo

As I try to figure out which Cassandra she is talking about, a very tired Julia (as she explains to Heriberto just after the transcript ends) tries to jog my memory in lines 12-13: “Yeah you might have sawn (.) s-sawn her?” In line 13, Julia immediately recasts her **sawn* from line 12 with rising intonation, as if to express incredulity that she has produced such an obviously ungrammatical utterance. She then quickly repairs *sawn her* to *seen her*, as Heriberto jumps in (14) to repair it for her, his emphatic “seen her” overlapping with Julia’s self-repair. In line 15, even though it has been repaired twice already, I revoice Julia’s original error (“Mighta sawn her”), in effect, evaluating it as an incongruous and humorous bit of speech, and also bringing it forward in the

conversation, offering it up for metapragmatic commentary. Heriberto then claims the floor (17) and explains why *sawn* is worthy of comment, and laughter: the error is not necessarily funny or surprising in itself; it is noteworthy because *Julia* committed it, and because her doing so violated Heriberto's co-occurrence expectations for her habitual stylistic performance. As in the first two interactions, it is not the voice *per se*, but the mismatch between speaker and voice, that amounts to a transgression. Heriberto makes this explicit:

27 H: Like you're expecting that from a,
 28 from a newly exchange student or something like that?
 29 (1.3) Not from a full-born [@@ Mexican-American
 30
 31 J: [@@
 32
 33 B: °@@@@@ [@@°
 34
 35 J: [[↑Du↓de! (0.4)
 36 Y'know we all make mistakes, it's cool
 37
 38 B: °@@@°
 39
 40 H: ↑YEAH but [(0.5) @ w@@ow

“You’re expecting that from ...” in line 17 implies that, for Heriberto, making gross errors in English, like *sawn*, is a category-bound activity, a “[form] of conduct taken by the common-sense ... culture to be specially characteristic of a category’s members” (Schegloff, 2007b, p. 470), and it is *not* one that is associated with the categor(ies) to which Julia, in his view, properly belongs. Social membership categories are “inference-rich”: if we know someone to be a member of a particular category, our common-sense knowledge of the category allows us to infer that person’s characteristics (p. 469), such as whether or not she is likely to speak in an erroneous or nonstandard

manner. But Julia, like everyone, is a potential member of many categories, and might be categorized by many different membership categorization devices. Thus, Heriberto might have said, “You’re expecting that ... not from a *teacher*,” or “not from a *native English speaker*”; instead, he categorizes Julia with the device “race/national origin”: “You’re expecting that ... not from a full-born @@ Mexican-American” (17-20). Again, a linguistic transgression facilitates the “seepage” of racial/ethnic difference, here conceptualized as birth in the United States, into a conversation that wasn’t about race.

There is more, though: as Heriberto racializes Julia (or, perhaps, “Americanizes” her) in lines 17-18, he distances himself from the question of national origin in practically the same breath. He says, “You’re expecting [English errors] from ... a newly exchange student or something like that.” I did not meet any exchange students during my year at VDS, but I did meet students, like Heriberto and Alex, who were not “full-born Mexican-Americans” – who did not have papers – and dealt with the daily consequences of that fact. Some of these students, like Heriberto, were L1 Spanish speakers and spoke English with discernible L2 influence (as nonstandard “newly exchange student” shows). It would have been situationally appropriate for Heriberto to contrast Julia with *himself* as someone who might be “expected” to substitute *sawn* for *seen*; he is certainly aware that his own way of speaking gives him away as less than “full-born,” and to say “You’re expecting that from someone like me” would have hit closer to home than referring to a mythical exchange student. But it might also have defeated the purpose of his teasing.

Heriberto's teasing is a *tactic*, in De Certeau's sense: it is an opportunity seized to upend the "proper," in which a relatively "weak" actor (i.e., Heriberto vis-à-vis Julia) "insinuates [himself] into the other's place, fragmentarily, without taking it over in its entirety" (De Certeau, 1984, p. xix). Time, the "real time" of talk-in-interaction, is Heriberto's ally. He may not be able to "insinuate himself" into the space of U.S. schools and "[take] it over" in order to achieve a lasting validation of his ways of speaking and being, but he can "manipulate events ... to turn them into 'opportunities'" (p. xix), paying close attention to "the circumstances which the precise instant of an intervention transforms into a favorable situation" (p. 38). In other words, he cannot overturn the standards that judge him and his language to be out of place at VDS, but he can ambush Julia in conversation, when he recognizes an opportunity to do so, hinting at the irony that, while unexpected, her speech errors do not really call her belonging into question. This may be why Heriberto removes himself from the equation: low-risk opportunities to intervene and speak back to the assumptions underpinning the normally unchallenged hierarchy of race, language, and immigration status do not come along very often. Rather than calling attention to his own position in the identity matrix, Heriberto makes the most of the event that has given him the opportunity to tease Julia and unsettle *her* position, however temporarily, guessing she will not be offended and that no serious consequences will accrue to him as a result. As De Certeau says, "Sly as a fox and twice as quick: there are countless ways of 'making do'" (1984, p. 29), countless ways of navigating everyday life with one's identity and skin intact, using the tactics at one's disposal while operating from a disadvantage.

Of course, Heriberto is just teasing Julia, and there is no reason to think that he seriously doubts her competence as a teacher, or sees her as any less white or “full-born,” just because of a slip of the tongue. But Julia, though she knows she is being teased, and laughs along with Heriberto and me, still treats the tease somewhat seriously and feels compelled to defend herself, as do the targets of many, if not most, teases (Drew, 1987). In teasing, “participant identities are ... occasioned ... as resources for realizing speakers’ purposes” (*ibid.*, p. 249), when “minor conversational transgressions in the current talk” (p. 250) provide opportunities for transforming, or evaluating, what others have said. Even within the teasing frame, Julia senses that the integrity of her performance is threatened. And so, in lines 23-25, she denies the relevance of the categorization device (“national origin”) Heriberto used previously:

23 Julia: [↑du↓de!
 24 (0.4)
 25 y'know we all make mistakes, it's cool

Julia begins her turn with “↑du↓de,” which is notable for a few reasons: the word itself, as used here, indexes a cool or nonchalant stance (Kiesling, 2004, p. 295) toward Heriberto’s statement; it also “levels” Julia and Heriberto, teacher and student, as conversational participants by maintaining an informal tone, minimizing the differences in their identities; finally, Julia’s downstepped high pitch accent on “dude” connotes that Heriberto’s remark was, in some way, inappropriate or irrelevant to the situation. She then says, “Y’know *we all make mistakes*,” implying that “making mistakes” is not proper to one category or another, and does not necessarily mean anything in terms of identity; mistakes are just mistakes, and are proper to “all of us.”

As I have mentioned, Julia was extremely sensitive to the ways in which her students might experience the effects of racism in and out of school, and therefore went out of her way to communicate her respect for their racial, cultural, and linguistic heritage, while talking openly of her own cultural norms, linguistic practices, and upbringing, and acknowledging the areas of difference. It was typical of her to attempt to defuse racializing interactions by suggesting that something other than race was the issue, as she does here. Most of the time, she simply wanted to steer well clear of possible negative associations of “Mexicanness” or “foreignness” (like Heriberto’s implicit association of “not full-born” with “can’t speak English correctly.”) But Heriberto’s response (27) brings the differences in their identities back into the conversation – just as, when Alex said “Well, not you, but me, a Mexican,” the otherwise hidden interviewer’s racial identity became visible:

27 Heriberto: ↑YEAH but (0.5) @ w@@ow

Heriberto shapes his turn as a preferred response, apparently agreeing with Julia, but only apparently: “↑YEAH,” higher in volume and pitch than the surrounding talk, suggests that, while what she said in lines 23-25 was *technically* correct – everyone does make mistakes – this fact does not make *Julia’s* mistake any less remarkable in light of who she is. The response “↑YEAH but (0.5) @ w@@ow”, with Heriberto continuing to laugh and shake his head, acknowledges the truth of her statement but reasserts the relevance of her identity to the tease-worthiness of *sawn*: “Sure, but *your* saying that is still a lot different than someone else’s” – an exchange student, or a Mexican-born L2 speaker of English – “saying that.”

I have not said anything yet about the most surprising part of this interaction: Heriberto calls Julia a “full-born Mexican-American,” but he knows that she is not of Mexican descent, and Julia does not correct him. Looked at a certain way, there may not be much to Heriberto’s statement and Julia’s failure to respond. It is another error, a slip of the tongue, and Julia lets it go without comment. It is a provocative slip of the tongue, however. As a point of contrast with “newly exchange student,” “full-born Mexican-American” is an example of synecdochization, wherein “a specific feature, trait or characteristic is selectively pushed to the fore as a ‘part for the whole,’ as a representative depicter” (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001, p. 46). Mexican-American, a specific ethnic category label, is pushed to the fore and stands in for “all (full-born) Americans.” Heriberto knows very well that Julia does not belong to the more specific category, but his error in speaking indicates the salience of the distinction, for him, between full-born Mexican-Americans and other Mexicans living in the U.S. During our interview, he talked about his cousins as ever-present reminders of this arbitrary (in his eyes) distinction, and his strong feeling that it was unfair. Julia had interrupted us a few minutes earlier (we were doing the interview in her classroom after school), and has just left the room when the transcript begins:

Brendan: You were talking about what it’s like to- so you were saying like, ok, so as somebody who: doesn’t have papers but like is really pushing yourself to try to
(.)

[excel as a student

Heriberto: [make yeah make something about myself

B: Make something of yourself and go to college and all this, right? Like and then you look at your cousins who go here and- and

H: They’re just pretty much just throwing their life away

B: It seems like they're throwing their life away, yeah

H: It's- like- I'm saying that's not fair. It's just not fair at all cause- they were born here, they- like- like in my point of view, I like- if I was them, I'll be like, "Oh, well, you know what, I'm gonna do this, and get some money and help out my family." Instead they're just, "Oh, I'ma go- I'ma do this, get some money, and buy some weed." Y'know what I mean? and like- I'm like, "Oh, I'm gonna get this, get some money, buy food (.) for my mom and dad, or whatever, and if I have anything left over, for me." Like- it's- like, I don't think it's fair. I don't know.

So Heriberto's description of Julia as a "full-born Mexican-American" is a mistake, but a mistake that, again, reveals the extent to which Heriberto's experience of being undocumented, of being Mexican, saturates his lived identities and relationships. In including white Julia among Mexican-Americans, Heriberto names his own exclusion from the group – an exclusion with real material consequences for him and his family, since it makes it more difficult to find a job and help support his mother and father. On the other hand, his cousins with papers are allowed to commit errors in behavior and moral judgment, to "throw their lives away," just as Julia is allowed to commit linguistic transgressions without raising questions (outside of Heriberto's teasing, anyway) about whether or not she belongs in the U.S., is competent to teach, and so on.⁴¹ "Full-born Mexican-American" in line 20, then, tastes bitterly of Heriberto's experience of being other, even as he "insinuates [himself] into the other's place, fragmentarily" in teasing Julia.

⁴¹ According to Norma González (personal communication), the discourse of "if I were in their position" – i.e., "if I had papers like my cousins/friends/etc." – "I'd act differently/make something of myself" was quite prevalent among the students in her and her colleagues' study of undocumented students in Arizona public schools.

3.6 (No) conclusions: Conviviality or racism as a permanent fixture in American life?

Linguistic ethnographers in the United Kingdom, in attempting to account for instances of stylization and crossing in “superdiverse” classrooms and schools, have theorized such racialized/racializing interactions in terms of *conviviality*, a relatively new construct in ethnic studies. Conviviality refers to the perceived need for racially, linguistically, and culturally diverse groups living in close proximity to cooperate in negotiating and living with difference – to get along with each other, more or less – in order to forge “livable lives.” Gilroy (2006, quoted in Harris & Rampton, 2009, p. 99) says:

Other varieties of interaction have developed alongside the usual tales of ... racial conflict. These patterns emerge ... with an unruly, convivial mode of interaction in which differences have to be negotiated in real time ... In this convivial culture, racial and ethnic differences have been rendered unremarkable ... they have been able to become “ordinary.”

It is true that students at VDS sometimes joked about race in ways that seemed convivial, in the sense of using racial stereotypes – knowingly, but with a certain amount of pride – to make others laugh. Here is an example of such convivial joking from my fieldnotes:

@ end of class – after review of ocean basins w/diagram on PowerPoint – Julia is telling students about possibility of taking a field trip to see fossilized coral reefs by [name of town] (she thinks that’s where they are) ... went there w/geology professor during college and is looking into field trip – only issue is cost of buses. Someone says, “Car pool!” someone else: “Everybody go in Miss Tezich’s car! [Julia smiles, gives thumbs down] Viviana: “Yeah, miss, we can do it Mexicanized style!”

A less innocuous reading is always possible; I suppose I could make an argument that Viviana’s comment about Mexican “style” indexed poverty, or large family size, and was therefore evidence of multiple and pejorative indexicalities of Mexicanness at VDS. But

it didn't *feel* that way. It felt, rather, like a fairly innocent bit of joking that the (mostly Mexican/Mexican-American) class could appreciate because it drew on their collective knowledge of Mexicanness, which might include awareness of stereotypes alongside lived experience, and gave a pleasing sense of belonging, and community, as a result. The fact that Viviana felt comfortable making such a joke in front of Julia, and could even address it to Julia, also speaks to the students' confidence that Julia did not, in fact, harbor such stereotypes, or take them too seriously.

My analysis of the three transgressive interactions, however, tells a different story. In each interaction, circumstances, and participants, conspired to allow race, language, and national origin to seep into everyday interactions in ways that were impossible to predict. And while Laura's, Alex's, and Heriberto's utterances all contain elements of "playing around," close analysis of the interactions, triangulated with data from other observations and interviews, strongly suggests that the interactions were far from purely convivial affairs. Unlike in Coupland's definition of stylization, each transgression (or response to another's transgression, in Heriberto's case), while it did reflect on others' identities, also became an occasion for self-reflexivity, in which the students came into dialogue with the "others" who inhabited the outlying regions of their expanded territories of the self. Laura's moment of crossing into young, male, Mexican Spanish made her confront the differences in her positioning and Nadi's with respect to Spanish, and brought up her desire to learn Spanish, along with her wonderment that she had been (mostly) unable to learn it from her family. In enacting an exaggerated version

of his native Chicano dialect, and muttering “O:h, Mexican!” to himself, Alex stylized himself, as others might see him, and re-animated the voices “going [on] around [him]” in the media, while attempting to engage seriously with scientific discourse. Finally, when Heriberto teased Julia for her verbal misstep, he misspoke as well, and, in so doing, inadvertently brought to light the forces that exclude him from full participation in American society.

Clearly, the rosy-colored lens of conviviality is not adequate. Many anthropologists of education in the U.S., by contrast, would be tempted to analyze these “race-saturated” interactions as further evidence, as if we needed any, that critical race theorists are right, that because racism is “so enmeshed in the fabric of our social order, it appears both normal and natural to people in this culture,” and is therefore “a permanent fixture in American life” (Ladson-Billings, 1998, p. 11). The interactions, then, might be seen as moments when this racial hegemony was briefly challenged, only to reassert itself. But this does not seem right, either: after all, the interactions *were* convivial, to a point; the students and Julia laughed, and pushed against the imposed boundaries of their territories of self to play with alternate possibilities, alternate subjectivities. Yet, at the same time, the interactions made visible the material reality, and the seriousness, of racial, cultural, and linguistic difference, and discrimination, in the lives of the participants. To capture accurately what was going on, it is necessary to embrace both perspectives, and admit the possibility that, while naturalized racism continued to make its presence felt in myriad ways, the students still “made do,” looking for interactional

“events” that they could turn into “opportunities” (De Certeau, 1984) to trouble the racial and linguistic waters at VDS. They “negotiated [differences] in real time” in ways that contributed to the convivial classroom culture, sometimes bringing Julia into the conversation. They had no map, but they proceeded nonetheless, in part by participating (as speakers or hearers) in transgressive linguistic practices, in ways that were delicate, indeterminate, and courageous.

CHAPTER 4: THE EPISTEMICS OF CULTURAL AND SCIENTIFIC CITIZENSHIP

4.1 An expansive view of learning

Classrooms, like other institutional learning environments, are supposed to be places where someone “acquires some identifiable knowledge or skills in such a way that a corresponding, relatively lasting change in the behavior of the subject may be observed” (Engeström, 2001, p. 137). In other words, the point of being at school – according to society, not necessarily according to students – is for “vertical learning” to take place (*ibid.*, p. 153; Gutiérrez, 2008). Schools are supposed to “elevate [students] upward, to higher levels of competence,” or to give them opportunities to acquire forms of expertise that will allow them to “move up” (in Engeström’s purposefully vague phrasing). At the same time, and perhaps even more importantly, students are supposed to be getting some idea of “which way is up,” of what normative expectations have to say about their intellectual and social development and future prospects (Engeström, 1999, p. 26).

The problem with this way of thinking about classrooms is that much, maybe even *most*, of what students (and teachers) learn is not the result of careful planning for vertical learning, but the serendipitous outcome of “sideways moves,” because of which “people ... are all the time learning something that is not stable, not even defined or understood ahead of time” (Engeström, 2001, p. 137). We need what Engeström (1999, 2001) calls an “expansive” sense of learning to capture the many forms of learning,

official and unofficial, that occur in institutional spaces. By participating in classroom interactions, students may embark on “vertical” trajectories (e.g., toward academic achievement), but they will also almost certainly, and concurrently, develop “horizontal forms of expertise” (Gutiérrez, 2008, p. 149), in ways that could not have been foreseen, by virtue of many sideways interactional moves. Just about all the learning that has been documented so far in the present study has been of a horizontal nature: this is ostensibly an ethnography of a science classroom, yet I have written very little about students’ science learning. Instead, the focus in the previous two chapters has been on how students “learned” who they were as racialized and culturally-situated subjects, at a particular place and time and in conversation with particular others, and how they explored and pushed against the bounds of their own subjectivities in, for example, exploiting the creative potential of language and narrating racial and cultural difference. This learning was horizontal, in that it was not a planned-for outcome of the Astronomy/Oceanography curriculum, nor did the students decide ahead of time which paths they would follow (though they did exercise agency from moment to moment) in emerging as particular kinds of people across interactions.

Yet a good deal of vertical learning also took place over the course of the year (as teachers will no doubt be relieved to hear), and my goal in this chapter is to examine the intersection of some significant vertical and horizontal forms of learning in the Astronomy/ Oceanography classroom, and to consider them in light of the same questions about the students’ (and Julia’s) “itineraries of identity” (Bucholtz et al.,

forthcoming) I have been addressing all along. It is well-established that social and academic learning trajectories are intertwined (Wortham, 2006, makes perhaps the most persuasive case). My analysis, however, goes further in theorizing vertical and horizontal forms of learning as instantiations of competing, and sometimes complementary, forms of citizenship in interaction. But to say that either vertical or horizontal learning is taking place, or that people are somehow getting an idea of what it means to be a citizen, in any sense, implies that people are in motion with respect to each other (and to external norms); it implies that processes of socialization are at work in everyday linguistic practice. In the next section, I outline my approach to language socialization in this chapter, and explain what it means for the analysis that follows.

4.2 Experts and novices: Agency and multidirectionality in language socialization

Socialization into particular discourse communities is sometimes treated as a straightforwardly vertical matter, in which novices gradually acquire the behaviors and norms associated with, and demonstrated by, community experts, and are then able to move from relatively peripheral to relatively more central participation in the community of practice. On the interactional level, then, expertise might be viewed as the outward semiotic expression of an expert's inner "powerful cache of individual knowledge," which is disseminated over time to novices (Carr, 2010, p. 19). However, linguistic anthropological research on the construction of expertise has shown convincingly that becoming an expert, in whatever social domain, has much more to do with "the acquisition of a way of *representing* things," than with "*knowing* things" per se (*ibid.*, p.

27, my italics); that is, experts are people who know how to talk and comport themselves like experts, regardless of what knowledge they do or not possess. Furthermore, “expertise is inherently interactional” and dialogic: the expertise of certain people can only be established in relation to other non-experts, as well as ideologically constituted objects of expert knowledge (in Foucault’s sense); there are no experts without novices (*ibid.*, p. 18). Sustaining expertise, and acquiring expertise – in “learn[ing] not only what to say ... but how to say it as well” – is therefore a form of “collaborative labor” realized in “situated practice” (*ibid.*, p. 19, 21). Novices not only depend on experts to socialize them into expert-like ways of talking about objects of knowledge, but actively participate in constructing what it means to be an expert (and, by extension, what it means to be a novice.)

Decades of research on language socialization across cultural contexts lead to the same conclusion. Language socialization is generally taken to refer to the processes by which people (e.g., children, or newcomers to an institution) acquire the knowledge and competence to participate fully in some community. From its earliest articulations, however, language socialization research has emphasized that children and other novices are not “passive participants” in socializing processes, but “actively organiz[e] sociocultural information that is conveyed through the form and content of actions of others” (Ochs, 1986, p. 2). In addition, novices bring their own knowledge and forms of expertise into socializing encounters, and may use these resources, and their developing expertise within the community, “not just to co-construct,” as discussed above, “but

sometimes to resist and reframe their participation in socializing interactions” (Garrett & Baquedano-López, 2002, p. 346). Novices may not get to decide for themselves “which way is up,” but they have considerable leeway to negotiate the terms of their participation in processes of language socialization, through a variety of sideways moves. Bayley & Schechter (2003, p. 6) explain:

Socialization by and through language is not simply a process in which experts in a particular community pass on ways of understanding and acting in the world to novices ... Individuals choose among (and sometimes resist) the identities offered to them, and at times construct new identities when the circumstances in which they find themselves do not offer a desirable choice.

In addition, language socialization is a multidirectional phenomenon: the same social actors who are novices with respect to one discourse community or body of knowledge may emerge as experts with respect to another, repositioning supposed experts as novices (Garrett & Baquedano-López, 2002, p. 346). Finally, these multidirectional processes of language socialization may even be unfolding at the same time, in the same interaction, which can make the whole question of expert vs. novice participation look very muddled indeed.

The relationship of so-called lay or folk knowledges of the natural world to expert scientific knowledge is a case in point. A recurring theme in literature on the public understanding of science, and science education, is that there is what amounts to an ontological conflict between these bodies of knowledge: “conflicts between scientific and ‘lay’ knowledges [are] not just epistemic conflicts between ways of knowing, but ... reflections of different ways of being, of practicing and relating” (Leach et al., 2005, pp.

5-6). Therefore, language socialization into scientific discourse communities is thought to “depend on eschewing everyday knowing” (Moje et al., 2004, p. 45), which, for certain novices, “represents a ... significant loss in terms of a disassociation from, and even opposition to, their lifeworlds” (Gee, 2004, p. 23). Learning to “talk science” is imagined as tantamount to a conversion experience, as a result of which novices gain valuable linguistic and cultural capital, but turn their backs on the “lifeworlds” that have sustained them in the past.

But there is reason to believe that the situation is not so simple, nor the conflict so absolute, in practice. First of all, dismissing cultural beliefs as “incorrect understandings or misconceptions” misses the point that these understandings are “well adapted to decision-making in an everyday world ... marked by uncertainty, contingency and adaptation” and, having been constructed from the materials and experience at hand, have been proven useful as a basis for action in that world (Jenkins, 1999, p. 703). It is also true that “everyday thinking” about the natural world is often a mix of ideas that scientists would endorse, as well as those they would regard as empirically false; thus, rather than opposing a tangle of “misconceptions” to a body of scientific “truth,” it is perhaps more accurate to speak of “ethno-epistemic assemblages,” or situated “coalitions” of knowledge that contain elements of both scientific and unscientific thinking (Horst, 2007, p. 153, citing Irwin & Michael, 2003). Being socialized to use scientific discourse, then, does not necessarily entail turning one’s back on one’s lifeworld; novices’ ethno-epistemic assemblages may already contain elements of

scientific expertise, and, far from experiencing scientific discourse socialization as an ontological conflict, novices are often willing and eager to incorporate dimensions of their growing expertise into existing assemblages. Calabrese Barton's (2012) documentation of the emergence of students in an after-school green technology club as community science experts offers an excellent illustration of this: in her analysis, it is less a matter of trying to "fit" scientific knowledge to existing cultural frameworks, or vice-versa, and more an issue of how socialization into scientific discourse communities does, or does not, contribute to novices' adaptation for "decision-making in an everyday world ... marked by uncertainty" and ideological struggle (Jenkins, 1999, p. 703).

Despite the fluidity of expert and novice roles, it will become clear that group membership, belonging, and legitimacy were constantly at stake, and open to negotiation, in the interactions analyzed here. This was equally true of the "horizontal learning" around race, language, and culture on display in the previous two chapters. In order to capture the continuity between those interactions and the more science-oriented ones in the present chapter, I have found it useful to think about these multidirectional, intersecting processes of language socialization as *socialization for citizenship*. Next, I discuss the two most important senses of citizenship that are present in the data as imagined outcomes of processes of language socialization in the Astronomy/Oceanography classroom.

4.3 Cultural citizenship

Contemporary thinking about citizenship goes beyond a “bipolar” view premised on a definition of citizenship as legal status – “either one is a citizen or one is not, and that is that” (Rosaldo, 1999, p. 254) – to engage with tensions between citizenship as legal status (which was, indeed, an important issue for many students at Vista Del Sol) and a more expansive view of citizenship as having to do with participation and belonging (Bloemraad et al., 2008, p. 155). This expanded view takes the form of a critique of liberal, universalist notions of citizenship, which, it is argued, were exclusionary and marginalizing from the beginning, both in their restrictive definitions of who was entitled to the supposedly universal rights of citizens, and in their reliance on a culturally-specific set of ideas about which goods individual citizens ought to be free to pursue (*ibid.*, p. 157). Formal citizenship, even when it became attainable for people from non-dominant racial, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds (not to mention women), has not always entailed civic equality; for this reason, throughout American history, “dissident traditions of struggle for first-class citizenship” (Rosaldo, 1999, p. 254) have sought to extend full citizenship rights to an increasingly broad spectrum of people, and have taken issue with the persistent assumption that only people from particular social categories have “a claim to be accepted as full members of the society,” to quote Marshall’s (1950, quoted in Bloemraad et al., 2008, p. 157) famous definition of citizenship.⁴² These dissident traditions have worked to disentangle ideas about

⁴² This assumption continues to appear in public discourse, as when the Glendale substitute teacher (see chapter two), whose letter was read on the Arizona Senate floor, declared that Hispanic students thought the southwestern U.S. should still be part of Mexico, or when the Arizona legislature made it illegal to

citizenship as civic participation from an ethnic nationalism that restricts full membership in society to certain classes of people (Bloemraad et al., pp. 158-9).

The push to expand citizenship rights, so as to enable fuller participation by all in the life of society, leads to a seeming paradox, however: in multiethnic, multicultural democratic societies, citizens are entitled to be treated as equals under the law, and to share the same rights and responsibilities with respect to civic involvement; at the same time, ignoring group differences within society, and acting as though “citizenship status transcends particularity and difference” (Young, 1989, p. 250) leaves previously marginalized groups open to continual discrimination and second-class status, and threatens their cultural and linguistic distinctiveness with gradual extinction. Attaining full membership in society has, in practice, often meant that people from non-dominant cultural and linguistic backgrounds are expected to assimilate to dominant norms in order to be accepted as citizens. Thus, while citizenship is, in one important sense, a moral imperative to guarantee universal rights to members of society, and to treat them as individuals with intrinsic dignity and worth, regardless of background, this discourse of universal rights can also mask racial and cultural chauvinism, and can draw attention away from the fact that “individual agency is embedded in particular social and cultural collectives that provide individuals with meaning” (Bloemraad et al., 2008, p. 159). True civic equality can, paradoxically, exist only if citizenship is conceived as differentiated – i.e., according to the needs, backgrounds, and interests of individual citizens with group-

teach Mexican-American Studies classes on the grounds that teaching history from a Chicano perspective was tantamount to promoting racial hatred and advocating the overthrow of the U.S. government.

based identities – rather than universal (Banks, 2008, p. 131); the alternative is to allow dominant groups to define their interests as “the public interest,” as the competing interests of other groups are dismissed as pleas for “special treatment” (*ibid.*, p. 132; Bloemraad et al., 2008).

This has led to calls for a “politics of recognition” (Taylor, 1994), according to which the larger political community should recognize group-based rights as a legitimate and necessary aspect of citizenship, since, by exercising such rights, “individuals [can] attain goals that are consistent with democratic values and that can be achieved only through group action” (Banks, 2008, p. 131). Simply put,

marginalized racial, ethnic, and language groups have argued that they should have the right to maintain important aspects of their cultures and languages while participating fully in the national civic culture and community (*ibid.*, p. 130).

The idea that minority cultural groups ought to be able to maintain some of the practices that set them apart from other groups in a pluralistic society, without being relegated to second-class citizenship, is an old one; as early as the 1920s, scholars talked of “cultural democracy,” or the accommodation of ethnic difference in politically appropriate ways, as essential to the functioning of political democracies (Banks, 2008; Pakulski, 1997).

More recent demands for *cultural citizenship*, however, go beyond the idea that governments should, at least, tolerate expressions of cultural and linguistic difference.

What distinguishes them *as* citizenship claims, as opposed merely to calls for accommodation or tolerance, argues Pakulski (1997, p. 80), is an emphasis on “symbolic presence and visibility”:

Claims for cultural rights can be seen as heralding a new wave, a new breed of claims for unhindered representation, recognition without marginalization, acceptance and integration without “normalizing” distortion ... Full cultural citizenship is seen primarily as not a matter of legal, political and socioeconomic location, but as a matter of symbolic representation, cultural-status recognition, and cultural promotion.

In other words, it is not just that minoritized groups are entitled to representation in the public sphere, and to the same rights as other citizens; they are also entitled to “[propagate] identities and lifestyles through the information systems and in public fora,” and actively to “nurture” the identities and lifestyles that make them different, in visibly public ways (*ibid.*). While this view of cultural citizenship foregrounds people’s agency in propagating particular kinds of identities and lifestyles, it is important not to lose sight of the fact that citizen-subjects do not just *decide* which kinds of people they would like to be. Cultural citizenship is ineluctably “a dual process of self-making and being-made within webs of power,” in which “institutional practices” and legal realities, within particular discursive formations (see chapter two), shape people’s ideas about who they are and the possibilities open to them (Ong, 1999, p. 264).

Thinking about cultural citizenship specifically in relation to U.S. Latinos advances this conversation in a number of directions. Flores & Benmayor (1997, p. 15) conceptualize claims for cultural rights as everyday activities through which subordinated groups claim “safe” space to enact cultural difference, so that people can “feel a sense of belonging and membership”; however, they go on to argue that claimed space is not *seen* as markedly “different” by members of the groups in question. Rather, such space only appears “foreign” and threatening when viewed from the outside, by members of

dominant groups (*ibid.*). To push this line of thinking further, cultural citizenship might even be conceived as the process by which claiming space for cultural expression on the margins of society, over time, may actually move the margins closer to the center (Benmayor, 2002, p. 99). At the same time, struggles for cultural citizenship must not be seen merely as efforts to secure recognition and group rights, by one group among many, in a multicultural society, but as a reflection of U.S. Latinos' particular status as racialized subjects in a postcolonial situation. The testimonies of the Chicano/a educators in Urrieta's (2004) research speak to the powerful influence of schools in determining which expressions of citizenship are considered legitimate, and suggest that disconnecting or disengaging from "mainstream" citizenship practices can be a way of advocating for group-specific conceptions of cultural citizenship.

Cultural citizenship might be productively opposed, then, to the ideal of transethnification (Ruiz, 1999, pp. 1-2), which stipulates that, "in the hierarchy of allegiances that characterizes identification," ethnic and cultural attachments ought to be subordinated to, and treated as relatively less important than, national ones. Thinking about citizenship as an outcome of transethnification reflects a societal discomfort with pluralism and a societal preference that public pluralism be restricted to "symbolic and ceremonial" displays, rather than "personal and political" expressions of allegiance and advocacy (cf. Flores & Benmayor, 1997, on "pluralism"). A level of superficial diversity is permitted, provided that it does not threaten the underlying national unity, to which all citizens are supposed to subscribe. Promoting cultural citizenship, on the other hand,

involves demanding space for difference to make its voice heard in public spaces (e.g., schools) and to do so in sometimes uncomfortable ways that highlight how “citizenship,” as historically understood, has often served as a tool of exclusion and marginalization. Cultural citizenship has less to do with “boundary blurring,” as Zolberg & Long (1999, pp. 9-10) put it, a process of integration that relies on “the taming or domestication of ... ‘alien’ differences,” and more to do with attempts at “boundary shifting ... whereby the line differentiating members from nonmembers is relocated, either in the direction of inclusion or exclusion.”

This, I think, is close to what Rosaldo (1999, p. 260) has in mind in his discussion of Latino cultural citizenship in the U.S.:

Bridging the discourses of the state and everyday life, of citizenship and culture, the demand for *respeto* is a defining demand of cultural citizenship.

Literally, *respeto* would be translated as “respect,” but I argue that Rosaldo’s meaning here is something closer to “deference.” To demand *respeto* for a subordinate group’s way of life is to demand space for its “propagation and nurturing” (to borrow Pakulski’s language) and to demand that others defer to the “agency ... goals, perceptions, and purposes” of the people in that group, *without* concluding that their divergent “purposes” make them any less than first-class citizens (Rosaldo, 1999, p. 260). In her review of anthropological ideas about deference, Rymes (2011, p. 211, citing Bloch, 2005) writes, “Deference is ... a form of *not* knowing, of displaying respect by *not* needing explanation.” This is true of individuals who defer to tradition in performing ritual actions without understanding their significance completely, for example. But “deferring

to often-untraceable sources of knowledge” also accurately captures the need – especially for teachers and researchers – to allow others’ actions to unfold in their cultural specificity, and to show the *respeto* that “requires trust in the knowledge and behaviors of others to perform competently as an ‘individual’” (*ibid.*), before searching for areas of “productive heterogeneity across diverse social domains,” like curriculum connections. Enacting cultural citizenship is not something that can easily be described to an outsider; the nature of one’s participation in culture, Rymes says, is difficult to articulate, as it is “paradoxically” often a matter of “*not understanding* [but] of *knowing* a form of life through collaborative activity.”

And so, when students acted in ways that seemed to demand *respeto* on cultural grounds, when Julia oriented to the students’ displays of cultural citizenship, or when the students enlisted Julia as a cultural ally, how they talked about what they claimed to know, or not to know, and what that said about who they were, and how they lived, was at the heart of these everyday negotiations. “Not understanding” (in relation to others) could be a gateway to knowing, or beginning to know, “a form of life through collaborative activity,” and could in fact lead to connections across social domains, such as the domain of Mexican cultural knowledge, or knowledge of Spanish, and the domain of academic science. However, recognizing interactional asymmetries when issues of cultural citizenship came into play, and responding with *respeto*, was a prerequisite for this “productive heterogeneity” to emerge. To put it another way, Julia was no native-born cultural citizen, but as she deferred to the students, who were constantly socializing

her over the course of the year, she seemed to approach “permanent resident” status at times.

4.4 Scientific citizenship

Another dimension of what it means to participate fully, as a first-class citizen, in the life of society has been theorized and elaborated in recent years as *scientific citizenship*. The idea that citizens in democratic nation-states could be, or ought to be, scientific citizens depends on the conviction, which many scholars share, that the relationship between science and society (i.e., people who are not professional scientists) has undergone a dramatic transformation in recent years. While it used to be the case that that scientific knowledge production was relatively isolated from the rest of society, and was even thought to owe its validity to this isolation, recent decades have seen “the emergence of a new mode of knowledge production characterized by the closely contextualized production of scientific knowledge *in* society (Elam & Bertilsson, 2003, p. 234, my italics). The “cold, straight, and detached” world of scientific knowledge that predominated in the past – which resulted in “élite and authoritarian” forms of scientific governance – has been replaced by a “warm, involving, and risky” world of research (Latour, 1998). The whole situation is imagined as a “collective experiment” (*ibid.*) in which science can no longer take its “license to practice” for granted (Elam & Bertilsson, 2003, p. 234), and in which the publics of science (i.e., laypeople) help to set the agenda and determine the course of scientific research.

Thus, there are two crucial aspects of citizenship that can be related to scientific knowledge: first, modern citizens need a certain level of scientific competence in order to be “effective human [agents] in society”; second, citizens have the right to be informed about scientific developments, and to level particular demands, in line with their own interests, on the scientific establishment (Mejlgaard & Stares, 2010, p. 547). Scholars who formerly studied the “public understanding of science” now speak of “public engagement with science,” and critical analyses of citizen involvement with – and, importantly, the discursive construction of citizenship *in* – debates over the biosciences and genetically-modified food (Irwin, 2001) and gene therapy for cancer (Horst, 2007), for example, testify to the newly prominent role of non-scientists in mediating between the world of research and the world of everyday life. As the “social contract” between science and society is re-written,

Progress is [still] expected in all scientific matters ... but no one expects to disentangle for good a core of scientific facts from the social context of ideologies, tastes, and values. On the contrary, everyone expects unexpected consequences to arise (Latour, 1998, p. 208).

This view of the “recombination” of science and society is open to criticism on the grounds that it rests on an idealized conception of deliberative democracy. It seems to presuppose that the voice of “the people,” as opposed to “*a* people” (Elam & Bertilsson, 2003, p. 244) – defined by “forms of exclusion” that determine who “rules” (Mouffe, 2000, p. 45) – can be heard and can, in conversation with other “voices,” achieve a consensus that is not somehow “the expression of a hegemony and the crystallization of power relations” (*ibid.*, p. 49). This is an important criticism, but to

delve into debates in political science over forms of power and governance in liberal democratic societies is somewhat beyond the scope of this chapter. For now, I will only note that, in speaking of public engagement with science, it is important to interrogate the terms of engagement, and to consider (as Elam & Bertilsson, 2003, do) ways in which emerging models of citizen participation do or do not close down opportunities for activism and dissent, put forth “presumptive normative models of ‘the citizen’ (Leach et al., 2005, p. 11), and democratize (or not) the definition of whose knowledge “counts” as scientific.

In any case, there is a general sense that science education needs to respond to this cultural moment by taking a leading role in the cultivation of scientific citizenship (Jenkins, 1999). There is also an urgent concern that, since students from diverse racial, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds continue to be underserved in U.S. science classrooms, they may be relegated to a new form of second-class citizenship (National Science Board, 2006). However, this begs the question of just what we have in mind by “scientific citizenship”: what does it mean to be, or become, the kind of person who uses “salient [cultural] knowledges and critical perspectives” (Leach et al., 2005) to engage with dominant bodies of scientific expertise on issues that are relevant to his or her life, either “vertically,” in involvement with policy, or “horizontally,” in everyday action and decision-making (Mejlgaard & Stares, 2010)? Or, framed differently,

What does it mean to connect so closely our senses of individual and collective identity and destiny to our participation in novel forms of knowledge production? If citizens in future are to understand themselves to a growing degree as

“scientific citizens,” what shape should the freedoms, rights, duties and responsibilities of these new citizens take? (Elam & Bertilsson, 2003, p. 234-5)

As has been discussed, it does not get us very far merely to assert that students’ misconceptions about the natural world need to be corrected, and confusion cleared up, so that they will be better-informed about science – or “scientifically literate” – when it becomes relevant to their lives (see, e.g., Driver et al., 1994). At the same time, in a large quantitative analysis of citizen competence and citizen participation as components of scientific citizenship, Mejlgaard & Stares (2010) conclude that the two are closely related: in other words, citizens who are highly competent (either “objectively,” in terms of textbook knowledge, or “subjectively,” in terms of “techno-scientific efficacy,” or how well-informed they believe themselves to be) are likely to be highly participatory (again, either “vertically,” in getting directly involved with political issues around science, or “horizontally,” in “engag[ing] in activities that enhance ‘scientific culture’ and inter-subjective learning”; p. 552). So, acquiring competence in scientific matters, one way or another, appears to be a prerequisite to sustained engagement with science *as* a citizen, even if this has more to do with people’s beliefs about their level of scientific knowledge than with the objective correctness of their ideas.

There would, therefore, seem to be a continuing role for science education in helping students “build competence” – which is somewhat different than “correcting their misguided ideas” – and giving them opportunities to explore what it means to *participate* in science as a layperson, though, of course, not to the exclusion of encouraging them to pursue science and technology careers. From a similar perspective, Jenkins (1999, p.

707) argues that, in terms of cultivating scientific citizenship, students in science classrooms would be better served by less time spent on “the minutiae of established physics, chemistry, and biology” and more attention to controversial current issues involving science, even when the science underpinning such discussions (e.g., with respect to global climate change or stem-cell research) is on relatively shaky ground, compared to, say, the laws of thermodynamics. Indeed, two of the transcripts that follow were taken from class discussions about topics that were seen as controversial or potentially relevant to students’ lives (theories about the year 2012 and the Japanese tsunami and ensuing nuclear disaster). It is no secret that allowing students to “engage in ... reflexive ways ... with science-related issues that are likely to be of interest and concern to them” is likely to promote their sense of scientific competence (Calabrese Barton, 2012); what I explore here is the question of how, in this context, particular ways of talking about science – and, therefore, of relating to the world, even momentarily – were central to students’ socialization for scientific citizenship in the classroom.

The ideological assumptions behind cultural and scientific citizenship may seem worlds apart. However, both dimensions of citizenship hinge on the relationships between particular people (or social categories) and particular bodies of knowledge, and, as I demonstrate in the analyses that follow, on what people’s stancetaking, in the context of particular knowledge claims, tells others about the kinds of citizens they are, or hope to be. In addition, the processes of language socialization through which both dimensions of citizenship were realized, in practice, were not only unfolding in the same

interactional “world,” but were often running simultaneously. As such, they intersected in evocative ways, with potentially profound implications for our thinking about the relationship of “cultural” to “scientific” knowledge.

4.5 Displays of epistemic access and primacy in language socialization

Ochs (1993) argues that understanding “the linguistic construction of social identity” begins with attention to “the linguistic structuring of social acts”: in order to get a sense of how language socialization works, rather than “assum[ing] social identities as a priori givens,” analysts must first “look ... at the kinds of acts and stances the linguistic features in question are helping to construct” (p. 297). In other words, instead of expecting a particular form of identification to show up in a given interaction, and looking to data for confirmation, analysis should focus on making sense of the linguistic structures and acts that “give rise” to the “manifold, shifting, momentary identities” – some of which will be closely related to more enduring identity formations, no doubt – people use to construct “satisfactory lives and a coherent sense of self” over interactional, historical, and developmental time (p. 298). This is how I began to conceive of both “vertical” and “sideways” moves in the interactions that follow as socialization for scientific and cultural citizenship: I focused the analysis on a particular feature of language used to construct social acts and stances, and only afterwards was able to theorize what I observed in terms of higher-level processes of socialization.

A remarkable feature of multidirectional socializing interactions in the Astronomy/ Oceanography classroom was the participants' consistent reliance on displays of epistemic stance to co-construct their social reality. Ochs (1993) includes the linguistic marking of epistemic stance in a list of "candidate universals in the linguistic structuring of social acts," suggesting that it is an important resource cross-culturally for the construction of social identities (p. 299). Epistemic stance is understood to refer to speakers' self-positioning with respect to knowledge claims, but can include both speakers' marking of relative certainty or uncertainty (about the content of a proposition), as well as marking the source of a speaker's knowledge (i.e., whether knowledge was gained through direct observation, hearsay, a dream, and so on). From Boas onward, linguists have grouped such acts under the rubric of evidentiality, which could be used to express "both those elements that conveyed 'source of knowledge' and those that conveyed something about 'speaker (un)certainty'" (Sidnell, 2005, p. 21). In an attempt to resolve this ambiguity, Sidnell (*ibid.*) follows Agha in treating epistemic stance as a second-order notion derived from a variety of individual acts of evidential marking: epistemic stance can be described as a speaker's construction – within the same turn, or across turns – of a particular attitude or position with regard to their own or others' knowledge claims (cf. Du Bois, 2007, p. 157). A great many linguistic forms may be used to accomplish this: in the interactions analyzed here, speakers use epistemic verbs (e.g., *think, believe*), modal auxiliaries (*could, might*), discourse markers of information management (e.g., *oh, I mean, you know*), evidential verbs (*heard, checked*), and particular intonation contours, to name just a few, to construct epistemic stance.

However, stancetaking does not merely express a speaker's relation to an object of knowledge; it is inherently dialogic, since, in evaluating objects, speakers also position themselves in relation to other people. For this reason, both Agha (2007) and Du Bois (2007) propose thinking about stance as a "triangular" phenomenon. Du Bois's (*ibid.*) conception of stance as emergent and dependent on "dialogic co-participants' contributions" to conversation is particularly helpful and relevant to my data. According to his scheme, the dialogism of stance manifests itself in three principal ways: first, linguistic acts of stance often point backward to the speaker's own, or others', prior articulations of stance; second, these prior stances must be "brought forward" into the "current stance utterance," or taken into account in the ongoing co-construction of stance; third, displays of stance may span multiple turns, and emerge from interaction among speakers. Stancetaking is therefore fundamentally a matter of intersubjectivity, in that it relies not just on the participants' understanding of, and relation to, objects of knowledge, but on their understanding of what each other knows – and, crucially, on what this knowledge gives them to understand about who they are in relation to each other. Individual displays of stance, then, cannot necessarily be taken at face value, but must be seen in light of this dialogism: for example, making a "less-than-maximal epistemic commitment" by saying "I think" can mean something like "I don't know," but it can also mean "I don't want to tell you that I know" (cf. Sidnell, 2011).

Displays of epistemic stance have recently become a subject of greater interest to conversation analysts. Research on talk in institutional settings has long recognized the

relevance of asymmetries of role and role-associated knowledge, as revealed in relative rights to make knowledge claims, or evaluate others' claims, to the sequential organization of talk in places like schools and medical offices, where

very substantial discrepancies in experience ... are associated with very extensive differences in technical knowledge, institutional know-how, and rights to express knowledge by the participants (Heritage, 2005, p. 114).

But recent work demonstrates that, though epistemic asymmetries may not be as "transparent" in non-institutional settings, they are nonetheless key to maintaining the "moral order" of talk-in-interaction, or the extent to which speakers' contributions are treated as appropriate or inappropriate in terms of social norms (Stivers et al., 2011).

Two dimensions of epistemic stance marking that are especially prominent in the data analyzed here are *epistemic access* (how speakers claim access to information, and make presumptions about, or attempt to ascertain, others' access) and *epistemic primacy* (how speakers orient to relative rights to know, or tell about, some state of affairs; Heritage & Raymond, 2005; Stivers et al., 2011, pp. 9-17). A speaker's role or *status*, and his/her actual *knowledge* of the topic, in relation to other participants, are two possible sources of interactional asymmetries; however, Enfield (2011) also points out that speakers' *agency* (e.g., whether or not s/he was the first person to make a knowledge claim about a particular topic) and, more generally, conversational *enchrony* (one's accountability, to prior speakers, for producing relevant, appropriate, effective next turns) can also contribute to asymmetry. All of these issues come up to some extent, at different times, in the analyses in this chapter.

In each of the following analyses, the focus is on the participants' co-construction of epistemic stance through negotiations over epistemic access and primacy. This fine-grained attention to “linguistic acts and stances” in interactional time makes it possible to see how processes of language socialization, and associated forms of identification and belonging, unfold at higher timescales. As Carr (2010, p. 22) says,

expertise emerges in the hoary intersection of claims about types of people, and the relative knowledge they contain and control, and claims about differentially knowable types of things.

The rest of this chapter illuminates just how this happens, with respect to differing forms of expertise and the different dimensions of citizenship they imply for the participants.

4.5.1 “No, but I heard ... it wasn't really a myth”: Socialization for scientific citizenship

The central place of displays of epistemic access and primacy in socialization for membership in particular discourse communities was perhaps most immediately visible in interactions where Julia and the students discussed, and sometimes debated, which knowledge sources – and, more to the point, which ways of knowing – were and were not proper to “scientific people.” The following example, while exceptionally well-elaborated, is representative of many other, shorter conversations about how it was possible to know something was the case. Such interactions were prime sites for a number of related social actions that, as part of a longer-term process of language socialization, all contributed to *enabling* a context in which scientific citizenship might be realized with varying degrees of legitimacy. (I use “enabling” to draw attention to the fact that the outcome of processes of language socialization (or acculturation) cannot be

known ahead of time, and that, due to the ability of novices to embrace, resist, or seek out alternative identities, the forms of learning that occur through participation in discourse communities may not always match the hoped-for outcomes of community experts; see K. O'Connor, 2003). These actions included Julia's modeling of ways of talking science or approaching questions about the natural world, along with her attempts to discredit what she perceived as unscientific or superstitious perspectives; they also included students' trying-on of emergent scientist identities, and their efforts to defend the value of their own knowledge sources and ways of knowing.

Before proceeding, I wish to clarify my criteria for treating this interaction, and those that follow, as occasions that afford us a glimpse of processes of language socialization – and not only socialization, but socialization *for* citizenship. Assuming that interactional asymmetries are present in some form or another in all these examples, in order to argue that socialization for citizenship is, in fact, taking place, we must, at minimum, be able to observe the following elements:

(1) *uptake* of expert discourse by novices: in other words, that features of scientific discourse (or language that indexes cultural knowledge) are present does not, in itself, mean that socialization is occurring; rather, it is necessary to observe novices responding in some way to experts' deployment of such features.

(2) connection of changes in discourse to personal *trajectories*: processes of language socialization are not, in the end, about language, but about movement – how people are able, unable, or unwilling to move, over time, from relatively more peripheral to relatively more central participation in communities of practice (to use a well-worn, but useful, formulation from Wenger, 1998); thus, to observe language socialization in practice is to observe how changes in language use are connected to imagined futures or possible selves, on the part of novices or experts, with respect to themselves or others.

(3) connection of trajectories of language development and community participation to *ways of knowing* and *ways of being-in-the-world*: whether or not the observed language socialization processes are efficacious (in the sense of bringing about hoped-for outcomes), to speak of socialization for citizenship suggests that what is sought is not a superficial re-orientation toward a community with a slightly unfamiliar set of norms, but a kind of (self-)transformation (Ong, 1999; Ullman, 2010) through which one comes to relate to the world in a fundamentally different way – or, if not, at least becomes aware of the *possibility* of relating to the world in that way, and the potential advantages (e.g., in terms of access to resources) of doing so.

That being said, it is important to keep in mind the limitations of what we can reasonably expect to see in a single strip of interaction, and to keep in mind that enacting “little c”

citizenship – “those practices that exist in everyday interaction, that ‘suggest, define, and direct adherence to democratic, racial, and market norms of belonging’” (Ullman, 2010, p. 10, quoting Ong, 2003) – (a) has membership in an *imagined* community as its intended outcome, and (b) is realized only fractally, bit by bit, one interaction at a time. The data analyzed here should therefore be seen as snapshots or glimpses of processes of language socialization unfolding on higher timescales (Lemke, 2000).

The claim being made here is that, of all the features of language to which we might conceivably look, displays of epistemic stance are a particularly rich site for observing language socialization for citizenship as it unfolds moment to moment. That is, as speakers avow or disavow access to certain truths, or kinds of truths, in conversation, and as they either assert primacy or defer to others’ authority, according to their relative positioning in “culturally grounded ... regimes of knowledge and authority” (Jaffe, 2009, p. 7), we can begin to see how they “choose among (and sometimes resist) the identities offered to them, and at times construct new identities when the circumstances in which they find themselves do not offer a desirable choice” (Bayley & Schechter, 2003, p. 6).

In the first example, the supposedly conflict-ridden relationship between so-called “everyday” and “scientific” or “academic” ways of knowing, and talking about what you know (e.g., Gee, 2004; Leach et al., 2005; Lemke, 1990; Moje et al., 2004), is especially evident (though I will go on to argue, in the context of other interactions, that it was

actually something of a bugaboo). This is due, in part, to the fact that the ostensible topic of the interaction – astronomical events during the year 2012 – was of particular interest to many of the students, and was a topic about which they had knowledge gleaned from a variety of out-of-school sources. It is probably also due to the fact that Camilo, the main student involved, was one of the most academically successful, scientifically savvy⁴³, and socially adept students in the class, and was therefore seen by Julia as able both to participate in serious scientific debate, and to survive a bit of public socialization-cum-hazing without too much damage to his self-regard as an emergent scientist.

The exchange took place in early November, as the fifth-period Astronomy class, having concluded their study of the planets, was beginning a unit called “Vagabonds,” which dealt with comets, asteroids, and Kuiper Belt objects.⁴⁴ The focus on objects that periodically came close to Earth and might even collide with Earth lent itself to student-generated questions about natural disasters of possibly apocalyptic magnitude; as we will see, Camilo does not really intend to ask this kind of question, but, in this context, his question is taken up as such by Julia and the other students:

1 Camilo: alright this is kinda out of the subject I don't know=
 2 Julia: =that's ok=
 3 Camilo: =but I don't know if you heard about like
 4 in two thousand twelve?
 5 like a planet?

⁴³ The year after my fieldwork, as a freshman at a large four-year research university, Camilo decided to pursue a neuroscience major, and was thinking of attending medical school in the future. Thus, he was among a select group of students from Vista Del Sol for whom socialization for scientific citizenship might actually be relevant to present or future membership in *elite* scientific discourse communities (and not, for example, merely to membership in a scientific public that was well-informed to participate in democratic decision-making about scientific issues.)

⁴⁴ The Kuiper Belt consists of icy, rocky material left over from the formation of the Solar System, but too small or insignificant to be considered planets, and is found beyond Neptune's orbit.

Julia, who generally knows a lot about such things, if she has heard about something is also a way of asking if something is really going to happen. From the very beginning, Camilo seems aware that his claim/question is unlikely to be given a fair hearing, and he begins to strengthen his epistemic stance almost immediately as a preemptive tactic. His intonation units in lines 4-6 are short and end with agreement-seeking rising intonation, and the content of his proposition is quite vague (“in two thousand twelve?/like a planet?/is gonna cover the Sun?”). However, he quickly reformulates the subject of his proposition in more specific terms (in line 7, “a planet” becomes “Mercury or Venus” – though, notably, he still defers to Julia with the relatively weak “I think”), continues to talk over Julia’s bid for the floor (8), and coins an astronomical neologism (“planet eclipse,” instead of “planetary transit,” the term in academic usage), using an authentically scientific word and concept – *eclipses*, which the class had studied extensively earlier in the semester – to give substance to his claim. In addition, seeing that Julia is already attempting to jump in (8), Camilo modifies his proposition further, downgrading the claim to make it look more feasible and less 2012-obsessed: “a planet?/is gonna cover the Sun” (6) becomes “we’re not gonna be able to/like see the Sun for a little bit” (10,12), effecting a change in focus from “a planet” to human beings’ *perspective* on astronomical events.

Camilo is acutely aware of the interactional asymmetry between Julia and him in terms of knowledge and status (Enfield, 2011), and does everything he can to exploit his relatively small advantage, in terms of agency, as the person making a claim in first

position. His painstaking stance work does not get him very far with Julia, though, at least for the time being, and so we come to the second crucial thing about Camilo's "I don't know if you heard about" (in line 3). In addition to projecting a response (canonically, confirmation or disconfirmation) from Julia, it also begs the question of whether or not it is even *relevant* that she has heard about, or not heard about, such a thing; it raises the issue of whether or not "hearing about something" is a valid way of knowing about the world. This becomes apparent in lines 13-14, when Julia, latching onto Camilo's previous turn (probably, in part, in response to the rising buzz in the classroom as other students, like the unidentified boy in line 11, start muttering about 2012), says, "yeah I mean/there's tons of rumors with two thousand twelve". In consigning Camilo's claim to the realm of "rumors," Julia effectively banishes him, temporarily, from the scientific discourse community; whether or not there is anything *to* his claim is beside the point, because he has not framed it adequately – he has not "talked science," or not enough of it, anyway. Julia's response is a "transformational answer": rather than confirming that, yes, she has heard about it, or no, she hasn't – either of which would have constituted the preferred response, formally speaking – she disaligns from Camilo in resisting a presupposition he made in asking the question (Stivers & Hayashi, 2010) – namely, the presupposition that an event you have only "heard about" can be a legitimate topic of scientific discussion.

But it is not the case that Julia is just seeking to undercut Camilo: in beginning her disaligning turn with "yeah" (13), and apparently aligning with Camilo, Julia

mobilizes a dispreferred response in the shape of a preferred one (Schegloff, 2007a, p. 66-7), recognizing Camilo's primacy (i.e., in sequence, not in status) as the person initially making the claim (Heritage & Raymond, 2005). Immediately afterwards, however, she uses "I mean" (13) to flag a modification of her intentions vis-à-vis Camilo; she is not, after all, about to provide confirmation or disconfirmation, as implicitly requested. But Julia's "I mean" also falls into a broader pattern of usage wherein she would use the discourse marker to modify her own stance toward the content of what she was saying. As Schiffrin (1987, p. 304) points out, "I mean" is used by speakers both to modify their *ideas* (i.e., "it marks a speaker's upcoming modification of the meaning of his/her own prior talk"; *ibid.*, p. 296) and to modify their *intentions*, and the way those ideas position them in relation to others, co-present or not. So, while Julia's "I mean" in line 13 lets Camilo and the rest of the class know that, in apparently aligning with him, she is actually about to disalign, in another sense, it acknowledges the limits of her own knowledge. She may be reasonably certain of what she says, but, as a good scientist, she cannot say she knows *for sure* until she has gone through a particular knowledge-seeking process. Thus, "I mean" shows that Julia's response is not merely a matter of shooting Camilo down, metaphorically speaking, but of opening up space in the conversation to discuss how scientific people legitimately come to know things. This becomes clear in the next part of the interaction (for space, I have omitted 16 lines where Julia quells a class-wide 2012-related disturbance resulting from Camilo's comments):

((16 lines omitted))

30 Julia: so. u:h.
 31 (1.1)
 32 I don't °think that's gonna happen°

33 I mean you can (.)
 34 che:ck the positions of the planets I mean
 35 we can sit down with Starry Night and see where
 everything's gonna be
 36 you can make it go in the past
 37 the software I have you guys know (xxx)
 38 and you can make it go in the future
 39 so we could che:ck
 40 (0.4)
 41 it prob'ly won't

Julia's extended response to Camilo is in keeping with what came before. In line 32, after her initial transformational answer, she finally responds to his request for confirmation, more or less, by making a knowledge claim of her own, "I don't think that's gonna happen." "I don't think" suggests a relatively low level of epistemic commitment to her proposition, but given Julia's status as the scientific authority in the classroom – owing not only to her role as the teacher, but to the students' awareness of her long involvement as a legitimate participant in elite scientific discourse communities – her statement is likely to carry more weight than similar statements from students, like Camilo's "I think it's Mercury? or Venus"⁴⁵. No sooner are the words out of her mouth, however, than she begins to modify her stance, first saying, "*I mean* you can (.)/ che:ck the positions of the planets" (33-34), and then expanding on what she means, again using "I mean" to mark her modification of her ideas, but explaining *how* one could test the veracity of Camilo's claim (i.e., by using Starry Night software to simulate the motions

⁴⁵ It is also important to note that Julia's institutional role allows her (relatively) unchallenged access to the floor here. Students may occasionally interrupt her or take issue with what she says, but because of the inherent asymmetry in the roles "teacher" and "student," she can require students to delay or suspend their bids for the floor, and can therefore construct longer turns-at-talk, generally speaking, than the students (Cazden, 2001, p. 82).

of the planets; 34-38). In this stretch, I argue, we can see socialization for scientific citizenship at work in a number of ways:

(1) With “you can che:ck” (33-34), “we can sit down ... and see” (35), and “we could check” (39), Julia implicitly contrasts one form of perception (visual: checking/seeing) with another (hearing/hearsay, in Camilo’s preceding turns) as a mode of epistemic access to the universe; the implication is that visual evidence is preferable to hearsay as a source of knowledge about natural events.

(2) In continuing to use “I mean” to weaken her epistemic stance as to whether or not the events described will take place in 2012, Julia asserts that her *belief* on the subject is not what matters; rather, she puts it forth as a topic for empirical investigation, and outlines how such an investigation might be done.

(3) Finally, in shifting from “you” (“you can che:ck”) to “we” (“we can sit down,” “we could che:ck”), and using the tag question “you guys know” (37), Julia takes the focus off *Camilo*, and brings his claim before the entire class. Scientific citizenship is figured as joint engagement in scientific endeavor: rather than talking about what “we” merely believe to be true, or what we have heard about, the class can undertake to investigate the truthfulness of specific claims in scientifically accepted ways.

While the scientific endeavor Julia is proposing, in *this* interaction, might take the form of a simple classroom investigation, at other times, she used students' debatable knowledge claims, or unanswerable questions, as opportunities to position the students as potential members of *professional* scientific communities. For example, later in the year, when the class was discussing volcanism, in response to a question from Robert about whether it was possible for Yellowstone National Park to "blow off the face of the Earth," Julia commented that "they" – geologists – "don't know" exactly how random hot spots in the Earth's crust form, and recommended that Robert become a volcanologist in order to study the question. In her response, Julia referred to something Robert had said on another occasion: when she brought up the possibility of studying plate tectonics and the ocean floor, Robert had asked, "But don't they already know everything?" Robert's comment suggested that he perceived the members of professional scientific discourse communities – the people who determine what counts as scientific knowledge – as fundamentally other, a distant "they" from which he, and people like him, were excluded. Nevertheless, in Julia's imagined future (and that of certain students, perhaps), students like Camilo and Robert had at least a chance of attaining a degree of legitimacy and power as producers of scientific knowledge. For this reason, Julia's stance work in the interaction with Camilo is finely calibrated to allow the class to draw connections between how we approach claims about the natural world in everyday discourse, and how professional scientists assess what is likely, or not likely, to happen.

So far, two of my criteria for socialization for citizenship are visible in the interactional friction between Julia and Camilo: different discourse norms are being put forth as relevant to personal trajectories (i.e., Camilo's becoming a scientific person), and the language socialization going on is tied to ways of knowing (i.e., seeing/checking vs. hearing about) and ways of being-in-the-world (i.e., using the scientific method to resolve questions about astronomical events). What remains to be seen is how Camilo does, or does not, take up features of Julia's expert discourse in his own speech. In the next part of the interaction, I argue, we can observe him doing this (for space, I have omitted another fifteen lines, in which Julia makes the point that only planets between the Earth and Sun (i.e., Venus and Mercury) can appear to transit the Sun from Earth's perspective):

((15 lines omitted))

56 Julia: =good question though
 57 'cause there's lots of like ((breathy)) myth and
 58 (1.3)
 59 paranoia around like
 60 (0.7)
 61 Camilo: no but I heard [it wasn't like
 62 Julia: [things like that
 63 Camilo: it wasn't really a myth like
 64 like they calculated it?
 65 and it was really gonna pass through us
 66 I mean it's not gonna be there like the whole like-
 67 forever
 68 Julia: yeah=
 69 Camilo: =but it was just gonna like pass it by just like
 70 Julia: it might go across the [Sun
 71 Camilo: [yeah (just like) [[go across it
 72 Julia: [[but it'll still
 be really sma:ll (.) so
 73 Camilo: °oh°
 74 Julia: yeah it might
 75 I'm not sure
 76 I haven't- I haven't looked.

At this point, Camilo is probably frustrated that Julia continues to dismiss his relatively specific knowledge claim about planetary transits as an exemplar of apocalyptic “rumor,” “myth,” and “paranoia,” and he is justified: Julia’s remarks to me, while viewing the video of this interaction in a data session, suggested that she was indulging in a bit of anti-2012 polemic for the whole class’s benefit, at Camilo’s expense:

I’m still really impressed with Camilo’s questions. and where do they hear this stuff? like- these to- “Well, I heard that” ... they always really freak out about [2012]. I’m just- I’ll be very happy when 2012 is over. so that- ((laughing)) I don’t have to answer these questions anymore ... **I just wonder like as far as the eclipse thing like- I think he understood that but I wonder how much everyone else did.** Like- the fact that it’s really small and how far away I’m like- how far away everything is we had done that already. but. °I don’t know.°

Julia’s problematization of Camilo’s knowledge claim, in other words, is audience-designed (Bell, 1997) for the rest of the class, who participate in the interaction as ratified overhearers (Goffman, 1981) and who, according to Julia, are in even greater need of socialization for scientific citizenship than is Camilo.

In any case, in lines 56-59, Julia attempts to close the book on this sequence, praising Camilo for asking a question that has allowed her to debunk the “myth” and “paranoia” around 2012. Her pause in line 60, however, gives Camilo a chance to reopen the subject, and to reformulate his claim, for a second time, hard on the heels of Julia’s socializing action. Camilo begins by explicitly disaligning from Julia in lines 61-62 (“**no** but I heard it wasn’t like/it wasn’t really a myth like”); he still uses “heard” to indicate the source of his knowledge, but quickly expands: what he had heard is not a myth because “they calculated it?/and it was really gonna pass through us” (64-65). In framing

his claim thus, he takes up Julia's contention that, if we really wanted to know, we could check: *they* – presumably, scientists, remembering Robert's "they" – have checked. Even better, they have *calculated* and determined what is going to happen. Then, in lines 66-67, in order to forestall possible objections from Julia – since this knowledge is still hearsay – Camilo imitates her pattern of making relatively strong knowledge claims, and then backing away from them, modifying his stance toward his own talk with "I mean": "**I mean** it's not gonna be there the whole like-/forever." In doing so, he shows his sophistication as a scientific person: downgrading, or calling attention to the limited scope of, a knowledge claim, is a way of distancing himself from the merchants⁴⁶ of "myth" and "paranoia" and placing himself relatively closer to the category of people who "calculate" what is or isn't true. In at least two ways, then, Camilo visibly takes up features of Julia's scientific discourse: he selects "calculated," in line with her emphasis on "checking" and "seeing," to describe the basis for this knowledge claim, and he uses "I mean" to underline its narrowness.

For his efforts, Camilo receives a token of agreement from Julia (68), who goes on, in line 70, to propose an alternative, consensus description of what may happen ("it might go a↑cross the Sun"), while using the modal auxiliary "might" to maintain her relatively skeptical stance toward Camilo's claim. Camilo overlaps with Julia in line 71 ("yeah (just like) go across it"), ratifying her description, and giving us a glimpse of what

⁴⁶ Julia was fond of pointing out that one reason companies (e.g., the History Channel) might exaggerate "mythical" fears about topics like 2012 was in order to get people to watch their programming, sell advertising space, and so on. In fact, just following this strip of interaction, she made this very point in response to another student's comment about a 2012-themed show he saw on the SyFy Channel.

Wolff-Michael Roth (2005, p. 103) calls “the interactive stabilization of new ways of talking” about science. As Roth says, “Destabilizing influences allow agreement on common ways of talking to emerge as achievement, a product of interaction, rather than the result of a consensual world” (*ibid.*, p. 102). It is not so much that Camilo and Julia have attained a state of intersubjectivity through this conversation, such that they understand the world in the same way, but that, under the “destabilizing influence” of Camilo’s knowledge claim, and through incremental changes in their discourse patterns – especially their cross-turn construction of epistemic stance – they have been able to come to an agreement, for the time being, on a “common way of talking” about a possible astronomical event.

Julia closes the sequence by emphasizing the contingency and uncertainty of even the much-weakened (“a planet is gonna cover the Sun” → “it might go across the Sun”) consensus proposition:

74 Julia: yeah it might
75 I'm not sure
76 I haven't- I haven't ↓looked.

Thus, Camilo has gotten Julia to acknowledge the feasibility of his claim, which the two collaborated to reformulate in narrower terms, with Camilo taking on features of Julia’s expert discourse in the process. But Julia, for her part, keeps working to orient the class to her, and their, lack of epistemic access to the phenomenon in question: without having “looked,” none of them can be “sure.” This is part of the social meaning of being scientific: according to Julia, scientific inquiry is primarily a matter of joint engagement

in scientific activity, not of verbal reasoning or argumentation (though, as Camilo discovers, the way one argues about natural phenomena is important because it reveals whether or not one has gotten to scientific truths *through* engagement in legitimate forms of scientific inquiry.)

All in all, this first interaction is a valuable illustration of how, in the course of language socialization for scientific citizenship, students marshaled features of scientific discourse on behalf of their own knowledge claims and sources of knowledge. Even more importantly, it demonstrates the extent to which ways of talking about natural phenomena were connected to ways of knowing and ways of relating to the world, to the kind of person one might become in the future, and to other personae (in Agha's (2007) sense), such as the "they" of the professional scientific community, in relation to whom one might position oneself. In other words, it reveals how interactional moves in educational settings are always connected to issues of belonging and to the imagined *outcomes* of processes of language socialization.

Next, I turn to an example of how students' enactment of cultural citizenship (here, conceptualized as public displays of "insider" knowledge about Mexico) could interact with processes of socialization for scientific citizenship, and could have a discernible effect on Julia's construction of epistemic stance, as she deferred to the students' authority in cultural matters.

4.5.2 “The big earthquake in Mexico City?”: Cultural citizenship and scientific expertise

On the day the next interaction was recorded, the class had been viewing video of, and discussing, the catastrophic Japanese tsunami that caused the meltdown at the Fukushima nuclear reactor. The tsunami had occurred just a few days before, and the students were intensely interested not only in the tsunami itself, but also in how nuclear reactors worked and what a nuclear meltdown was; in fact, because of their interest, Julia devoted most of a subsequent class period to explaining nuclear reactions and the operation of nuclear reactors in (I thought) considerable detail. As in the 2012 interaction, the students’ interest in the topic appeared to be due, in part, to the perceived possibility that the events being discussed could directly affect them, or people they knew. Accordingly, in the transcript, Julia is addressing students’ questions about whether waves from the Japanese tsunami hit, or could have hit, the western coast of Mexico (i.e., Baja California):

1 Jesús: they thought a tsunami was gonna be right there a tsunami
 2 Robert?: so that's what (xxx)
 3 Jesús: °yeah°
 4 Julia: no I mean- (.)
 5 I think from what I know hang on hang on
 6 they were asking about Mexico?
 7 boy: Mexico?=
 8 Julia: =um (.) so from what I kno:w
 9 of the ma:p (.) ((starts walking to map))
 10 like that I sa:w?
 11 so Baja di:d-
 12 (0.5)
 13 I mean
 14 (0.6)
 15 anywhere across this Pacific Ocean
 16 could have been affected by the tsunami.
 17 'cause it spreads across the whole ocean?
 18 (1.2)
 19 from- I never heard anything bad that happened to Baja
 20 I heard it was r- like really small there and nothing
 really intense
 21 [now if you get a big earthquake near he:re

((pointing to map))
 22 boy: [well I was over there miss this ↑weekend
 23 ?:
 24 Julia: it could hit a tsunami (.) there
 25 but there's a big trench
 26 it's further south in Mexico ((pointing))
 27 (0.8)
 28 there's a- there's a subduction zone ((modeling with
 hands)) there
 29 so that could
 30 (0.6)
 31 uh make a really- there was a really bad earthquake (.)
 32 in Mexico from that subduction zone (.)
 33 llll I forget what year
 34 Abraham: eighty five?=
 35 Julia: =it was awhile ago? I don't know
 36 maybe?
 37 Abraham: the big earthquake in Mexico City?
 38 Julia: uh yeah
 39 Abraham: eighty five.
 40 Julia: ok. so.

The exchange between Julia and Abraham at the end of the segment (lines 29-40) is of greatest relevance to my argument, but let us first consider how the participants get to that point. Julia's effort to mobilize a response (4-14) to the students' questions about how the tsunami could have affected Mexico is notable for its disfluency. In her construction of a weak epistemic stance, Julia delays the denotational text of her response (i.e., any proposition about the tsunami and Mexico), "piling" epistemic verbs, discourse markers, and evidential phrases (bolded below) onto the beginning of her turn, to communicate to the students that she lacks epistemic access to the specific information they want:

4 Julia: no **I mean-** (.)
 5 **I think from what I know** hang on hang on
 6 they were asking about Mexico?
 7 boy: Mexico?=
 8 Julia: =um (.) so **from what I know**
 9 of the ma:p (.) ((starts walking to map))
 10 **like that I sa:w?**

11 so Baja di:d-
 12 (0.5)
 13 **I mean**
 14 (0.6)

Once this interactional work has been done, Julia does make a knowledge claim (19-20) – “I never heard anything that happened to Baja/I heard it was like really small there and nothing really intense” – but, in doing so, uses the same evidential verb (*heard*) that, in the previous interaction, she construed as an indicator of rumor or myth. Also telling is the fact that she *prefaces* her claim with “**I mean**/anywhere across this Pacific Ocean/could have been affected by the tsunami” (13-16): she is projecting into the future and modifying her stance toward the knowledge claim she is *about* to make, letting the students know that, while she doubts Mexico was much affected, it is theoretically possible that “anywhere across this⁴⁷ Pacific Ocean” could have been.

Then, in line 21, Julia starts to develop a contrasting example of a hypothetical earthquake/tsunami that *would* affect Mexico (“**now** if you get a big earthquake near he:re”), using “now” to signal a change in topic, and emphatic stress on “here” to call the students’ attention to what is different about this example.⁴⁸ She may not be able to speak with much certainty about the effect of the Japanese tsunami on Baja, but she can speak from a position of relative authority about why and how tsunamis happen, and so

⁴⁷ Julia’s use of demonstrative “this” instead of “the” sounds strange, taken out of context, but is probably due to the fact that she is standing in front of a large relief map of the Earth and pointing at the Pacific Ocean.

⁴⁸ The unidentified student’s overlapping turn in line 22 (“well I was over there miss this weekend”) is almost certainly a joke, as his classmate’s laughing response in line 23 suggests: Baja California is quite distant from southern Arizona, and it is highly unlikely that the student would have traveled there for the weekend. Most Mexican-descended students’ families hailed from closer Mexican states like Sonora and Sinaloa.

she takes advantage of this opportunity to socialize the students into thinking about tsunamis in scientific terms. Julia steers the conversation away from the Japanese tsunami, specifically, and toward the geological features and processes that cause tsunamis, in general:

25 but there's a big trench
 26 it's further south in Mexico ((pointing))
 27 (0.8)
 28 there's a- there's a subduction zone ((modeling with
 hands)) there

The class has been studying trenches and subduction zones, and Julia uses the map and her hands, which she brings together in a heart-shaped gesture to mimic the action of a crustal plate being subducted (sliding under another plate, resulting in volcanism), to index the class's shared – she hopes – knowledge of how these phenomena relate to tsunamis. Julia is getting at a general principle here: the closer the trench or subduction zone to a given area, the greater the likelihood that area could be harmed by a tsunami. She has, in effect, transformed what Gee (2004) might call a “lifeworld” line of inquiry into a scientific one. As she continues, however, her hypothetical example turns into a real-life historical event, the details of which she remembers only vaguely; her self-repair of “could make” to “there was,” in lines 29-31 (“**that could/uh make** a really- **there was** a really bad earthquake”) opens up space for the lifeworld to reenter the interaction:

29 so that could
 30 (0.6)
 31 uh make a really- there was a really bad earthquake (.)
 32 in Mexico from that subduction zone (.)
 33 l111 I forget what year

What happens next is significant for two reasons: it clearly illustrates the nature of stance as dialogically achieved, and it shows that students' enactment of cultural citizenship, with sufficient deference on the part of the teacher, can enter into conversation with scientific knowledge productively. Thus far, Julia has constructed a weak epistemic stance toward her first knowledge claim (that the tsunami had little or no effect on Mexico), put forth a contrasting hypothetical example about which she can speak with some certainty (if a big earthquake occurred near a particular trench, it would produce a tsunami that could threaten Mexico), and made a second knowledge claim (that such an earthquake did, in fact, occur in the past), using the lexical and prosodic resources in bold below to take a similarly weak stance on it:

29 so that could
 30 (0.6)
 31 uh make a really- there was a really bad earthquake (.)
 32 in Mexico from that subduction zone (.)
 33 **llll I forget** what year
 34 Abraham: eighty five?=
 35 Julia: =it was awhile ago? **I don't know**
 36 **maybe?**
 37 Abraham: the big earthquake in Mexico City?
 38 Julia: **uh** yeah
 39 Abraham: eighty five.
 40 Julia: ok. so.

When Abraham enters the conversation, in order to be able to construct a strong epistemic stance toward the Mexico City earthquake – and, by extension, to position himself in a certain way vis-à-vis Julia and the other students – he has to work around the fact that Julia was the first person to say something about the earthquake, for to do so implies that the speaker is the primary authority on the subject (Enfield, 2011; Heritage & Raymond, 2005). And so, Abraham first asks “eighty five?” (34) and follows up with

another question (37), “the big earthquake in Mexico City?”, as he navigates the asymmetries between Julia and him: briefly, Julia has the superior position with regard to agency (she was the first person to speak about the earthquake) and status (she is the science teacher and an experienced geologist), but Abraham has greater epistemic access to this particular topic. Thus, his rising phrase-final intonation in both turns does not reflect uncertainty on *his* part about when the earthquake occurred, but reflects his uncertainty as to what, and how much, *Julia* knows, and defers to her agency and status, for the time being. Julia reacts to Abraham’s agreement-seeking with a preferred response, albeit a somewhat non-committal one (38: “uh yeah”), whereupon Abraham states “eighty five,” with definitive falling intonation at the end of the phrase (39), leading Julia to ratify his contribution (40).

Abraham’s “eighty five,” in line 39, contrasts dramatically with Julia’s prior turns and, indeed, with her cross-turn construction of epistemic stance throughout the interaction. Epistemic downgrades such as “maybe” and “I think” are conspicuously absent from Abraham’s turn, as are denials of epistemic access like “I don’t know” and “I forget.” Instead, Abraham speaks with “the presumed certainty that attends a bare assertion” (Sidnell, 2011, p. 139). But, to return to the point about stance as a dialogic achievement, Abraham’s strong epistemic stance can only be “presumed” from his unelaborated assertion in line 39 because it contrasts so obviously, in formal terms, with Julia’s much weaker statements. Abraham’s epistemic primacy on the subject of the earthquake is most accurately described as a collaborative achievement, in which Julia’s

willingness to defer to his knowledge plays as great a role as his desire to share it, despite the interactional difficulties involved.

So, in what way can Abraham's talk here be understood as a display of cultural citizenship? I interviewed Abraham not long after this interaction took place, and made a point of asking him "how you know about all that stuff"; along with his intervention in the exchange above, I cited another remark he had recently made, during a discussion on Atlantis, about how the Aztecs had built Mexico City on a lake – a fact of which Julia and I were both ignorant. He said,

Abraham: Well, they taught me in um in schools. Yeah, in uh Mexico. Nogales. They teach you all that because, like, it's part of history, I guess. And the city was built there and like- they had their own reasons why because when this Indian- like um his god told him to look for a eagle eating a snake on top of a cactus. And there's gonna be- you're gonna build a city there. So they saw it in the middle of the lake so they- they started thinking what to do, what to do, so they covered the lake and they made the city. And then the Spaniards came and then they didn't knew so they started building like h- real heavy buildings there. Like- I don't know, that's why. And then the earthquake, well, everybody knows about that. Because it was a pretty big one- (xxx) in Mexico. And then because the city was built on the lake and all that stuff, it made it worse because everything sunk. So that's why.

...

Brendan: So the- the s- the story about how the city was built would have been from like a history class?

A: Yeah history

B: Like Mexican history? (A: mmhmm) But then everybody- you said everybody just knows about the earthquake

A: Yeah every- just- yeah. [Pretty much everybody

B: [cause it's like a big disaster
it's like if you were in Japan in thirty years everybody's gonna remember that earthquake=

A: =or the atomic bombs just like=

B: =or the atomic bombs=

A: =it's the same thing (.) because it happened

For Abraham, knowledge of the 1985 earthquake is not specialist knowledge; it is, rather, something that “everybody knows about.” To be more specific, it is a shared national trauma, as unforgettable for Mexicans as he guesses the dropping of the atomic bomb is for Japanese people. However, he also connects this event to the legendary story of the founding of Mexico City, which he learned about in history class (in the Mexican border city of Nogales), since the legend helps to explain why the earthquake was so disastrous. Relating the earthquake to the circumstances of Mexico City’s founding indexes Mexican cultural citizenship in a fairly literal way: the image of the eagle, snake, and cactus, as depicted in the Aztec Codex Mendoza (c. 1541, just after the Spanish conquest), now appears prominently on the Mexican flag. Abraham’s epistemic primacy in the earthquake discussion, relative to Julia, therefore stems both from his academic formation in Mexican schools and from what we might call his general cultural inheritance, his access to “what everybody knows.”⁴⁹ But, tellingly, this “everybody” excludes Julia, as well as his classmates who lack Abraham’s experience living and attending school in Mexico, or do not claim the same degree of cultural citizenship, for whatever reason. In “going public” with his knowledge of the earthquake, in the form of

⁴⁹ Although, in saying that he learned about the founding of Mexico City in school because “it’s part of history,” Abraham also seems to suggest that this is an event (or a story) well-educated Mexican people should know about; thus, we could argue that the “parts of history” people are expected to learn about in history class likewise form part of their shared cultural inheritance.

a bare assertion, and in explicit contrast to Julia's inferior position, Abraham ever so subtly enacts Mexican cultural citizenship: as the conversation shifts from Julia's decontextualized, hypothetical description of geological processes to events in Abraham's lifeworld, he insists on getting the facts right, and, in the process, tells Julia and the class something about who he is. For a counterexample, we need only look back to John Stamos's story of his family's Mexican origins in chapter two: John, unlike Abraham, does not want to lay claim to Mexican cultural citizenship, and so he epistemically downgrades his assertions about his family's past with "I think" (for example), which tells us something quite different about who *he* says he is.

In sum, looking carefully at this interaction reveals the "subsurface" ways in which Abraham and Julia's co-construction of epistemic stance is related to Abraham's sense of being culturally Mexican⁵⁰. Importantly, it is Julia's show of *respeto*, in deferring to Abraham's authority on the matter of the earthquake, that allows a previously hidden dimension of his expertise to emerge. The interactional encounter between the world of science and Abraham's lifeworld, while apparent enough, does not lead to an irresolvable conflict, but gives Abraham a chance to enact cultural citizenship in a way that relates directly to the scientific topic being discussed, and even enriches the discussion, however briefly. Nevertheless, there is little to suggest that Abraham is attempting to socialize Julia into a greater understanding of, or participation in, Mexican

⁵⁰ Which, according to him, had caused him to be harassed at school; see chapter two.

cultural citizenship. In the next strip of interaction, on the other hand, I argue that we can get a glimpse of such a process of socialization at work.

4.5.3 “O-xi-da-da”: *From expert to novice and back again*

As the following interaction begins, Julia is assisting a group of four Oceanography students (Viviana, Abraham, Andrea, and Manuel) with a rock identification lab. For this lab, each table of students had been given three rocks and had to use a chart with information about different rocks and rock types, which they had filled out in an earlier class period, to identify the rocks through deductive reasoning. The “big picture” objective of the lab was for the students to be able to connect the observable features of rocks (e.g., visible crystals, layering, reactivity to acid) to the geological processes of volcanism, sedimentation, and metamorphism, and the role these processes play in making and remaking the Earth’s crust, on the ocean floor and elsewhere. In lines 1 and 2, Julia, the geology expert, is in the middle of explaining what the students should do if they are unable to identify a particular rock (using “conglomerate,” a recently introduced geological term, as an example) when Viviana interrupts to comment on a rock she is scrutinizing, and expert and novice roles are abruptly reversed:

1 Julia: so it can be unknown
 2 like if you think "I don't want it to be a conglomerate"
 you can say=
 3 Viviana: =it looks like it's *oxidada*
 4 (0.5)
 5 Abraham: what rust?
 6 (1.2)
 7 that's rust=
 8 Julia: =°say that one again?°
 9 Viviana: ((looking at Julia)) *o-xi-da-da*=
 10 Andrea: =oxidated?
 11 (0.3)

12 Abraham: like [rust
 13 Julia: [o:h like rust yeah
 14 (2.4)

In almost no time at all, Julia has gone from geology expert to Spanish novice. Viviana's code-switch in line 3 initiates a side sequence in which Julia, stopped in her tracks, tries to figure out the meaning of *oxidada*, while Abraham, Viviana, and Andrea, in turn, try three different "scaffolding" strategies to make the Spanish content accessible to her. First, as Julia falls silent after Viviana's turn, Abraham offers an English translation (5), and, getting no response, repeats it (7). Then, Julia asks Viviana to "say that one again," and Viviana repeats the Spanish word, but this time segments it into syllables for Julia's benefit, looking directly at her in a teacherly way: "*o-xi-da-da*" (9). Andrea latches onto the end of Viviana's turn, proposing a different English translation; instead of the word for *oxidada* in everyday English usage ('rust(y)' – as Abraham translated it), she offers a literal translation (10: "oxidated?"), perhaps hoping that this will help Julia, who still has not displayed understanding, make the connection more readily. In line 12, Abraham begins to repeat his original translation, when Julia reenters the conversation, using the change-of-state token "oh" and echoing "like rust" (13) to confirm that she has finally understood. It takes Julia a relatively long time to puzzle out *oxidada* – about six seconds, to be exact – despite the students' efforts to clue her in.

So, how does this interaction get to be "about" socializing Julia to speak Spanish? It seems probable that Viviana's code-switch is not a "crutch" (Zentella, 1997, pp. 97-

99); she speaks both languages proficiently, so it is highly unlikely that she does not know the word “rusty” in English. (When Viviana saw the video, she speculated that she might have preferred *oxidada* to “rusty,” which she pronounced with something approximating a sneer, because “it’s more interesting” – an intriguing notion to which we shall return.) And, whether or not she set out to teach Julia a Spanish word, Viviana comfortably settles into the Spanish expert role in line 9, where she repeats *o-xi-da-da* syllable by syllable. When I showed Julia the video clip, months later, she commented on this, musing, “Now I see they’re trying to teach me.” I asked her what she meant, since it had been fairly obvious to me, at the time, that Viviana (with help from her classmates) was making an overt effort to teach her something. In reply, Julia said:

Well ... I feel like I can look back and see now like- thinking of moments ... like them being excited about trying to teach me? And I’m like, “Ohhh,” like- but it doesn’t process to me in the moment because I think like anybody trying to learn a new language you’re like, “AAAHH!” my fear is the first thing in my mind. And I don’t think of it from their point of view, y’know ... Cause [Viviana’s] like, “Repeat after me!” And I’m like, “Ohhhh!”

“Them being excited about trying to teach me” is a good way to characterize what was going on: this was not an isolated incident, but was part of a larger pattern in which certain students would go out of their way to teach Julia Spanish words, or would speak to her in Spanish, either for purposes of teasing or, sometimes, for personal reasons that were hard to discern.⁵¹ Julia herself set the stage for such interactions by actively soliciting Spanish translations, in whole-class interaction and from individual students, especially for words that were related to the astronomical or oceanographic topic being

⁵¹ This interaction took place in mid-spring, so there were many months of precedent for socializing Julia to speak or understand Spanish.

studied. For example, when the Astronomy class was learning about eclipses, Julia introduced the words “umbra” and “penumbra,” which refer to specific areas of shadow cast by the Moon during a lunar eclipse, then solicited the Spanish word for ‘shadow’ (*sombra*) and pointed out that all three words shared a Latin root. Furthermore, she frequently talked of her desire to learn Spanish, which had quite an effect on some students’ view of her, given the contested status of Spanish as both a form of linguistic capital and an index of racial/cultural identity at Vista Del Sol. In an interview, Alex remarked:

[Miss Tezich] asks me all the time, “How do you say this?” or “How do you say that?” To translate to her.

Brendan: And you don’t mind helping her with that?

Alex: No, I don’t, actually. Like- I actually- it makes me happy that people like her wanna know Spanish. Knowing the fact that she’s from over there, like, wherever she’s from, from the east side (and) she wants to understand Spanish and know the language. It gets me happy to- to know people like that ... It makes me like think about her like she- she- like- I don’t w- I don’t wanna sound racist, like mean or anything. ((deep in-breath)) Like she’s- she’s not like t- like other white people. That- that- that gives us hard times. Like she- she- she’s not racist ... She cares ... Like other white teachers like here at school, like you- you ask ‘em if they wanna know Spanish, they wanna learn Spanish, (and then) they’re like, “No. Why would I need that?”

Thus, even seemingly unremarkable moments like the *oxidada* interaction, when viewed in the context of many other, similar moments, can speak volumes about whether or not someone like Julia is a potential ally in terms of cultural citizenship. But it is also significant that Julia’s insecurity about not knowing Spanish apparently keeps her (in her words) from “processing” the exchange with Viviana, Abraham, and Andrea, “in the

moment,” as a “teachable moment” from the students’ point of view: as Julia says, the “fear” associated with learning a new language – with being re-positioned as a novice, in other words – was “the first thing on [her] mind,” which might account for her delay in picking up on the students’ cues. Even Julia, a teacher who regularly broadcast her desire to know more Spanish, and was vocal in her support of students’ Spanish in the classroom, has difficulty recognizing and taking advantage of an opportunity to engage with Spanish in the context of a scientific activity.

Based on the three criteria outlined earlier, this interaction can be treated as an example of socialization for cultural citizenship: first, Julia orients to Viviana’s code-switch, asking for a translation and confirming that she understands; in a later turn, she also takes up the English version of the word, “oxidated,” in her response to Viviana’s observation. Second, Julia’s participation in interactions like this one, throughout the year, is connected to her incremental Spanish language development and her growing involvement in the local community. Third, showing an interest in Spanish is one way Julia is able to get (at least some) students to see her as not racist, despite her whiteness; more than that, adopting a Spanish learner identity is transformative for her as a teacher because it gives her a chance to see things – in the moment, or in hindsight – from the students’ point of view.⁵² However, “it looks like it’s *oxidada*” is not *only* an attempt at socialization for cultural citizenship by way of Spanish language socialization; it is also

⁵² Of course, Julia strove to convey respect for students’ racial, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds beyond speaking Spanish, and she sought to understand how things might look through the students’ eyes in other ways, as well; see chapter five.

an assessment that appeals to Julia's epistemic authority on geological topics: the rock looks rusty – is it? After the side sequence prompted by her code-switch (4-14), Viviana calls Julia's attention back to the rock (15); her tenacity suggests she thinks there may actually be something to her original observation:

15 Viviana: ~yeah~ look. all right [(here)
 16 Brendan: [is that what that is is it ↑iron?
 17 Julia: I didn't look at it very carefully
 ((takes rock from Viviana))
 18 (1.9)
 19 Manuel: ah drop it
 20 no it's that she was perfect right there with the rock
 21 and now she don't @have it@ @@@
 22 Julia: I think I think it's quartzsite which is um
 23 metamorpho:sed.
 24 (0.8)
 25 red oxidated sandstone
 26 °so [I believe yes°
 27 Brendan: [oh wow
 28 (0.9)
 29 Julia: go Viviana
 30 (1.6) ((Viviana starts dancing))

In line 16, I partially overlap with Viviana's turn, recasting her observation as a question, and putting Julia on the spot: the point of the lab activity, after all, was to label the rocks with their correct names, not necessarily to discuss the chemical processes that formed them, and so Julia has to admit (in line 17) that she is unprepared to speak to Viviana's observation, and my question, because she "didn't look at [the rock] very carefully." Julia then takes the rock from Viviana to examine it, and another few seconds pass (punctuated by the cinematographer's⁵³ distress) before Julia, who has been abruptly thrust back into the expert role after spending several turns as a novice, ventures an

⁵³ Manuel, who was filming (while I was sitting with the students), had zoomed in on Viviana, and lines 19-21 appear to reflect his concern that the rock had moved, creating a less-than-perfect shot.

knowledge claim.⁵⁴ When she does, she begins “I think I think,” constructing a rather weak epistemic stance (though, again, one that is still relatively strong by virtue of her status) in addressing the unanticipated question. She seems to convince herself as she goes along, concluding her turn somewhat strongly, with “so I believe yes”; perhaps she is getting used to the idea of being an expert again – or, more likely, she is working on how to scaffold this knowledge effectively, so that the students will have epistemic access to it. The way Julia articulates her knowledge claim, in sequence, suggests that she is consciously “bridging” from geology back to Spanish:

22 Julia: I think I think it's quartzsite which is um
 23 metamorpho:sed.
 24 (0.8)
 25 red oxidated sandstone
 26 °so [I believe yes°

The unpredictable appearance of the Spanish word in line 3, then, makes it possible for Julia to expand on the planned-for content of the lab activity: rather than simply telling the students that the rock is quartzsite, or helping them match the rock to its name, *oxidada* prompts Julia to describe the metamorphic process, involving the oxidation of sandstone, that formed the rock. One “interesting” thing about *oxidada*, unlike ‘rusty’ (to take Viviana’s remark as a point of departure), is that the Spanish word commonly used to describe the appearance of a rusty object *also* expresses the chemical

⁵⁴ Julia’s and Viviana’s interactions with the rock bring to mind Carr’s (2010, p. 20) comments on the centrality of “culturally valued or valuable” *objects* of expert knowledge to the successful construction of expertise: “Because a single kind of object ... can play a number of roles across institutional contexts — generating opportunities for would-be experts to distinguish themselves from laypersons and novices along the way — apprenticeship involves learning how to define and frame, as well as to interpret and engage objects in an expert way.”

reaction (oxidation) due to which objects come to look that way. “Oxidated,” in English, belongs to scientific discourse, but *oxidada*, depending on the context, could be translated either as ‘oxidated’ or just plain ‘rusty’.

The painstaking, long-term process of socialization to talk like scientific people – and, lest we forget, to *act* like scientific people by “look[ing] ... very carefully” (17) to answer questions about the natural world – is ongoing, even as different processes of language socialization, like Julia’s Spanish socialization for cultural citizenship in lines 4-14, momentarily intervene. But these processes also intersect: were it not for Viviana’s code-switch, the interaction probably would have gone very differently, and it is not at all certain that Julia would have ended up discussing the specifics of how quartzsite is formed with the students. This is not to say that the students necessarily retained everything that they saw and heard. Afterwards, Julia was worried that she had gotten “too technical” with them, and Viviana, judging by her celebratory reaction in line 30, mostly seemed excited that her observation was on target. The point is that the outcome of interactional asymmetries with respect to different kinds of knowledge – here, Spanish language and Mexican cultural knowledge on one hand, and geological/scientific knowledge on the other – can indeed be a “productive heterogeneity” that drives “vertical” learning forward, even as these asymmetries also contribute to significant trajectories of “horizontal” learning (e.g., the students’ learning that Julia is not racist, Julia’s learning to speak and understand more Spanish, Julia’s coming to understand the local ideological meanings of Spanish). In contexts of

multidirectional language socialization, the participants must negotiate sudden reversals of expert and novice roles, in the process demonstrating how displays of stance and alignment always imply “claims about types of people, and the relative knowledge they contain and control, and claims about differentially knowable types of things” (Carr, 2010, p. 22).

4.5.4 “I’m tryin to understand what you’re saying”: Cultural and scientific citizenship in conversation

The final interaction I will analyze in this chapter is especially relevant because it occurred during an Oceanography class activity designed expressly to familiarize the students with the genre conventions of scientific journal articles. Julia came up with the idea for this activity, she told me, based on her own experience struggling with the reading in undergraduate-level geology courses:

Brendan: So when you went into college-

Julia: Like- well- and I remember taking mineralogy and- what was the other class ... regional tectonics. And then they had us read- like it was the first time I ever read, like, peer-reviewed journal articles. And I was like, “Aaaaaaah! This is eight pages long and I don’t know what the hell it’s talking about!” Y’know, and I’d get to the end, and I was like, “I read this. I don’t know what it said.” Like- y’know? So- and I didn’t realize until a couple other classes in, “Oh, there’s a structure and it’s all the same! And, like, I can read the end, read the beginning, and get the gist of what’s happening, before I try to pick apart what they’re doing in the middle.” And I was like, “Oh. That would have been helpful years ago.” So. I was like, “Pass on ... knowledge ... before you guys get there!” Like that was what I was thinking in doing that.

Originally, Julia had hoped to have groups of students write their own articles, sticking as closely as possible to scientific journal style, to report the results of an experiment they had done themselves. In the end, she decided that would take too much time, and

planned another activity, in which she gave each table of students three different journal articles, and asked them to compare and contrast the style and organization of the articles, without actually reading them. Each table had to make a list of similarities and differences in how the articles were formatted and structured, and then to share their list in whole-class discussion. Results were mixed, I thought, and Julia agreed: most students were put off by the impenetrability of the text, even though they had been told not to worry about reading the articles, and the tables I observed seemed to have a hard time even figuring out what the purposes of different sections of the articles were.

At the same time, whatever the outcome, the *intent* of the activity was clearly to socialize students for scientific citizenship: Julia hoped that by demystifying the texts in which “legitimate” scientific discoveries are reported – by people with names, not the anonymous “they” of Camilo’s and Robert’s statements – students might ultimately be able to gain greater access to the information therein. Furthermore, she explicitly framed the activity in terms of her own confusion as an undergraduate science major, and said that her goal was to “pass on knowledge before [the students] get there,” so that they could avoid similar confusion. In other words, her planning and implementation of the activity were connected to an imagined future in which the Oceanography students would “get there,” to college, and might even come to participate in elite scientific discourse communities in relatively more central ways. From Julia’s perspective, knowing what to look for, when confronted with a difficult journal article, would ease the students’ transition into the world of academic science.

Manuel responds to Viviana's minor provocation with a rapid-fire show of Spanish virtuosity, which Viviana cannot easily reproduce, even though Spanish is her first language. I guessed that some kind of Spanish language play was going on in lines 2-6, but consulted a native speaker of Mexican Spanish for clarification, and then confirmed her account with Viviana: "Parangaricutirimícuaro" is a *trabajalenguas*, a tongue-twister, the sort of thing one's parents or older siblings might try to get one to say, as a child who is still mastering the intricacies of Spanish phonology. (As it happens, the word comes from the indigenous Purepecha name for a volcano and nearby town, now called San Juan Parangaricutiro, in the Mexican state of Michoacán.) Thus, in the midst of an activity that is, "vertically" speaking, geared toward socialization for scientific citizenship in English, Manuel's sideways move, in challenging Viviana with "parangaricutirimícuaro," indexes a very different context for, and process of, socialization. It also becomes an opportunity for Manuel to socialize Spanish-speaking Viviana, teasingly, into a particular "expert" use of Spanish, and, as such, a display of cultural citizenship. After Viviana's first halting attempts (3-4), Manuel pronounces the tongue-twister more slowly (5), breaking it into three parts for her benefit; she makes one more effort, in line 6, before giving up in exasperation, and turning back to the journal articles, still speaking Spanish, to note another difference for Jessica to write down (7-8).

At some point during all of this, Julia arrives on the scene (it is impossible to say exactly when, because she is offscreen; my best guess is around lines 6-7) and stands

listening to the students, without saying anything. Viviana looks up at her expectantly, and, after a pause, Julia makes her own sideways move (12):

10 ((Viviana looks at Julia))
 11 (1.1)
 12 Julia: °I'm tryin to understand what you're saying°
 13 Viviana: ~oh~
 14 Julia: no you're fine
 15 Viviana: [well it's
 16 Julia: [I'm just like
 17 Viviana: we discuss it in Spa[[nish
 18 Julia: [no that's- you can totally do that
 19 Viviana: @oh@@ ((looks down at paper))
 20 Julia: I'm not- I'm just like-
 21 y'know 'cause I'm tryin to like up my Spanish?
 22 so I'm like can I te:ll what you're saying
 23 Viviana: @h↑↓u:hm
 24 Julia: I can pick out parts but (.) not always
 25 Viviana: ((to tablemates)) la mía en cada página tiene una foto
 grandotota
 ((mine on every page has a huge photo))

Initially, Viviana seems to interpret Julia's "I'm tryin to understand what you're saying" as an indicator of "language paranoia" (Haviland, 2003). In one sense, language paranoia refers to the suspicion that someone speaking a language you don't understand must be talking about you; in another sense, it can simply mean that the "unintelligible" speaker is assumed to be acting inappropriately – goofing off in science class, for example⁵⁵.

Viviana switches into English, following Julia's lead, and reassures Julia (15, 17) that she meant no lack of respect by speaking Spanish in the presence of an English-dominant adult (cf. Zentella, 1997, pp. 86-87): the students were, in fact, on topic, but in Spanish.

⁵⁵ Haviland (2003) sees language paranoia in the United States as a corollary of referentialist language ideologies (Silverstein, 1998). He argues that, if a "shared Standard English" is seen as "referentially transparent," any departure from this Standard is, by varying degrees, "dysfunctional," "purposeless," "unintelligible," "useless," and "is perceived by definition as 'harassing' and 'insulting'" (Haviland, 2003, p. 772). Furthermore, through the semiotic processes that Irvine & Gal (2000) refer to as "iconic projection" and "fractal recursivity," these characteristics attributed to non-Standard languages and varieties are projected onto the people who speak them. Haviland (2003, p. 772) explains: "Speaking in non-English is potentially threatening (because it is unintelligible, and, thus, secret); speakers of non-English are therefore also potentially threatening (because they are insubordinate, uncontrollable, and secretive)."

Now, there is no way of knowing if Viviana was *really* concerned about Julia's reaction, or if "well it's/we discuss it in Spanish" (15, 17) was a rote face-saving move. Given that this conversation occurred in the spring, and Julia had consistently encouraged the students to use Spanish in the classroom throughout the year, it is hard to believe that Viviana thought Julia would respond negatively to her use of Spanish.⁵⁶ Either way, Julia picks up on the implications of Viviana's deferential, even embarrassed response to "I'm tryin to understand what you're saying" – "oh" – and quickly moves to disalign from Viviana's version of the situation. Julia begins her next four turns with markers of disaffiliation (*no, I'm not*) or contrast (*just*; cf. Goodman & Burke, 2010), and overlaps with Viviana, in lines 16 and 18, in her eagerness to set the record straight:

14 Julia: **no** you're fine
 16 Julia: [I'm **just** like
 18 Julia: [**no** that's- you can totally do that
 20 Julia: I'm **not**- I'm **just** like-

In referring to her lack of epistemic access with "I'm tryin to understand what you're saying," then, Julia is not orienting to any perceived *falta de respeto* (a personally offensive lack of respect) on Viviana's part, but to her own Spanish incompetence: it is her problem, not Viviana's. Through Julia's meta-commentary on her participation in the Spanish interaction (as a ratified overhearer or eavesdropper – though without being able

⁵⁶ It is somewhat easier to believe that, for Viviana, because of the participation framework of this interaction – bilingual students speaking Spanish in proximity to an English monolingual adult – it might have been related interdiscursively to other interactions, with similar frameworks, where she had received, or expected, such a negative response; see chapter five for a longer discussion of interdiscursivity in teacher-student interactions.

to see her, we cannot know which) she constructs a weak epistemic stance, avowing that the students' speech is almost, but not completely, inaccessible to her:

- 12 Julia: °I'm tryin to understand what you're saying°
 21 y'know 'cause I'm tryin to like up my Spanish?
 22 so I'm like can I te:ll what you're saying
 24 Julia: I can pick out parts but (.) not always

But, as she owns up to her relative ignorance, Julia is also telling Viviana (and the other students) something else: while “I’m like can I tell what you’re saying” (22) and “I can pick out parts but not always” (24) describe Julia’s *present* sense of herself as a Spanish novice and cultural outsider, “I’m tryin to understand” (12) and “I’m tryin to like up my Spanish” (21) refer to Julia’s aspirations for greater linguistic competence and cultural citizenship in the *future*; they tell the students something about Julia’s imagined future for herself, just as Julia’s rationale for, and framing of, the scientific journal activity tell the students something about her imagined future for them.

Just as crucially, however, Julia’s display of deference, of “not knowing, [and] of displaying respect by not needing,” or asking for, “[an] explanation” (Rymes, 2011, p. 211), is meant to give the students the space to which they are entitled as they negotiate their participation in socialization for scientific citizenship. Julia may or may not have overheard “parangaricutirimícuaro,” and, even if she did, may or may not have recognized it as off-topic Spanish language play. All the same, in telling the students “No, you’re fine ... you can totally do that,” no questions asked, and positioning herself as a novice in her construction of a weak epistemic stance, she shows the “trust in [their]

knowledge and behaviors ... to perform competently as ‘individual[s]’” (*ibid.*) that constitutes *respeto*, and opens the door for “productive heterogeneity,” rather than ontological conflict, in classroom discourse.

To conclude: as she did in the *oxidada* interaction, Viviana realizes that expert and novice roles have been reversed; this time, she seizes the opportunity to tease Julia:

20 Julia: I'm not- I'm just like-
 21 y'know 'cause I'm tryin to like up my Spanish?
 22 so I'm like can I te:ll what you're saying
 23 Viviana: @h↑↓u:hm

Viviana’s “@h↑↓u:hm” (23), a marker of information management, reflects her assimilation of the purportedly new information that Julia, though understanding very little, is actively trying to figure out what the students are saying in Spanish. The little laugh at the beginning of Viviana’s turn, and the slyness she conveys with her intonation, point back to her earlier uptake of “I’m tryin to understand what you’re saying” as a possible accusation of impropriety: “You can’t tell what we’re saying? Isn’t that *interesting!*” Notwithstanding Julia’s vehement denials of language paranoia, Viviana teases her by suggesting, indirectly, that a little paranoia might be justified. And then, as Viviana switches back into Spanish to continue the assignment with her partners, she indulges in a final bit of language play that lends a satisfying poetic symmetry⁵⁷ to the entire interaction, reintroducing the possibility of virtuosic Spanish performance, which she had abandoned after line 6 (“paranguricutiri↑mí (.) °guau^o”). This time around,

⁵⁷ Thanks to Norma Mendoza-Denton for this observation.

however, the language play occurs in an on-topic utterance – that is to say, one in which Viviana is engaged with the scientific journal articles in front of her:

24 Julia: I can pick out parts but (.) not always
 25 Viviana: ((to tablemates)) la mía en cada página tiene una foto
 grandotota
 ((mine on every page has a huge photo))

Instead of saying *grande* ('big'), or even *grandota* ('really big'), as she might have, Viviana uses the double augmentative, calling the photo *grandotota* ('really really big'). The form is conspicuous: when Viviana re-watched this conversation, she laughed and made fun of herself, repeating "*gran-do-to-ta!*" with machine gun-like, staccato prosody. From what I can tell, its inclusion here is important for two reasons:

(1) It reveals that socialization to show off in Spanish – which, I would argue, can be treated as a display of cultural citizenship, based on the presupposing indexical value of Spanish at VDS – is occurring in the context of an activity designed to socialize students for scientific citizenship; in line 25, we see the two processes of language socialization⁵⁸ intersect in a single utterance.

(2) While Viviana's utterance is not explicitly addressed to Julia, Julia is still standing at the table and apparently listening; thus, *grandotota* also comes across as a moment of language hazing, a friendly way of raising the bar, in terms of language socialization, for Julia – who, we know, aspires to speak Spanish and to

⁵⁸ Technically, it might be more accurate to call the journal article activity something like socialization for scientific *literacy*, since the students are supposed to be acquiring familiarity with the norms of a particular genre, rather than discrete text-level grammatical structures or lexical items.

be seen as a cultural ally, and who would understand *grande*, but maybe not *grandotota*. Viviana may take full advantage of the heterogeneous space that was established with Julia's display of *respeto* to pose a further challenge for Julia, the Spanish novice.

In an analysis of language play among Mexican newcomer science students at a Midwestern high school, Richardson Bruna (2009) urges us to consider the extent to which playful strategies are “structurally resonant”: that is, as linguistically and culturally diverse students draw on their bilingual competencies both for “at-ease making” (p. 172) and sense-making in science classrooms, how do their ways of doing so point to broader structural realities that make “crossing over” – i.e., from their “lifeworlds” to the world of academic science – seem easier or more difficult, more or less desirable, necessary or unnecessary? In light of the interaction just analyzed, it is tempting to think, for example, that Viviana and Manuel's Spanish language play might be, in part, a response to their uncommonly close encounter with the professional scientific register of English, with which they had been struggling audibly just minutes earlier (when they first received the articles). However, as the analyses throughout this study have demonstrated, answering “Why that now?” – or determining precisely in what sense a given utterance is structurally resonant – is not often so simple. Processes of language socialization, with different forms and differing degrees of citizenship as their imagined outcomes, are indeed multidirectional and simultaneous, and run up against each other, or intersect, in hard-to-predict ways, with hard-to-predict consequences.

Nevertheless, looking closely at individual classroom interactions, as I have done here, can give a glimpse of the moments that constitute such processes, and the identity formations that emerge from them over time, and, situated in ethnographic context, can contribute to a deeper understanding of “what is at stake,” as Heller (2011) says, for the participants.

4.6 Coda: Boundary shifting and the epistemics of cultural and scientific citizenship

Metaphors of borders and border crossings are frequently used to characterize the experiences of non-mainstream or bilingual students in science classrooms. For example, a leading scholar of cultural diversity and equity in science education writes:

From an anthropological perspective, learning science involves acculturating to Western science, while simultaneously integrating alternative views in students’ homes and communities ... Students cross borders from their cultural environments into the culture of Western science and school science. Students’ success in school depends largely on how well they learn to negotiate the boundaries separating multiple worlds. (Lee, 2003, p. 471-2)

My purpose here, however, following Scollon & Scollon (2007), has been to suggest that things are much more complicated. In each of the previous four interactions, boundaries did become visible, in the form of interactional asymmetries, but they were by no means as firmly established and immovable as the non-metaphorical U.S.-Mexico border with which many students had to contend. The boundaries among Julia and the students were, rather, emergent and susceptible to being shifted and redrawn, as the participants positioned themselves, and each other, in relation to *multiple* forms of citizenship, conceived here as participation and belonging in particular discourse communities. Importantly, the boundary work they did to reinforce, blur, or reroute these lines of

difference was contingent not only on who they perceived themselves, and others, to be in the context of a given interaction, but was connected to personal trajectories and processes of language socialization unfolding at higher timescales, projecting different configurations of group membership in imagined futures. I have argued that the participants' socialization for cultural and scientific citizenship, in an expansive learning environment, was particularly evident in, and dependent on, displays of epistemic access and primacy. However, the interactional asymmetries that came to light in such displays were due not just to participants' differential access to bodies of expert knowledge, but also to their status in relation to each other, the agency they did or did not exercise, and the ever-present demands of conversational enchrony (Enfield, 2011).

In this chapter, I have explored the interconnectedness of vertical and horizontal forms of learning in the Astronomy/Oceanography classroom, and have argued that it is useful to think about these processes as socialization for citizenship. Nevertheless, in theorizing cultural and scientific citizenship as dimensions of what it means to be accepted as a full member of society, and to participate fully in the life of society, I do not mean to equate them, nor to disregard the bedrock importance of legal citizenship. While specific articulations of cultural or scientific citizenship may have been more or less attainable for particular individuals, very different things were at stake for different people in the study, in given interactions *and* according to the outcomes of longer-term processes of socialization. My hope is that, as educators, researchers, and activists, by incorporating insights gleaned from careful attention to interactions such as those in this

chapter, we may move closer to understanding how it is that “the ultimate border – the border between knowledge and power – can be crossed only ... when the process of how knowledge is constructed and translated between groups located within nonsymmetrical relations of power is questioned” (González, 2005b, p. 42).

CHAPTER 5: THIS WORLD OF OTHERS⁵⁹

The truth is that we must never take for granted that what we take for granted is known to others.

Dell Hymes (1992, p. 3)

What is offered is not a set of knowledge claims to be tested but an invitation to see things from an alternative perspective.

Nel Noddings (2003, p. 32)

Julia told me that she was trying to get Ignacio and another girl to focus on their work the other day, and Ignacio said, "You don't know what's going on, miss." Julia: (with great emphasis and intensity) "I told them, 'I know I don't know what's going on, or what you guys are going through ... but I still need you to do your work.'"

Fieldnotes, 10/25/10

5.1 Trading places: Intersubjectivity and interdiscursivity in teacher-student relationships

Making do in the nexus of practice at Vista Del Sol involved using the linguistic and social resources at one's disposal to assert one's own identity, or sense of self, in aligning with and disaligning from various other people, or figures of personhood (Agha, 2007), who were somehow implicated in the same nexus. The students and Julia participated "in a world inhabited by Others, always perceived and understood as particular types of beings" (Duranti, 2010, p. 12), but made continual efforts to rework

⁵⁹ The title is borrowed from Duranti's (2010) explication of Husserl's ideas about intersubjectivity. In a list of what "intersubjectivity as an umbrella notion for anthropology" should include, Duranti writes: "The participation in a world inhabited by Others, always perceived and understood as particular types of beings ... This world of Others, apprehended as well as theorized through language and other semiotic means, is active and relevant even when the Others are not physically co-present" (p. 12).

and revise their own and others' understandings of the "types of beings" they were perceived to be, and also the beings they might become in the future – or, perhaps, the beings they might have become, had circumstances been different. In this study, there is ample evidence of the participants' agency to enact adequation and distinction, to sketch transient configurations of similarity and difference, at different moments and for different purposes (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). Equally compelling data, however, demonstrate that the nexus of practice itself, and the discursive formations within which it was situated, impinged upon the participants' ability to define for themselves how they would be seen and which itineraries of identity they might pursue. As Butler (1997) says, the subject positions from which the participants spoke were, to some extent, "constituted" by discourse at a distance from the participants. One might always, of course, protest being "named" as a particular type of being, but according to Butler's (*ibid.*, p. 33) view of the interpellation of subjects by discourses, it will not do any good: whatever you do, the force of interpellation is "indifferent to your protests," and "the name continues to force itself upon you, to delineate the space you occupy." To this way of thinking, even your agency in positioning yourself in relation to Others must be seen in light of the social positionality that has been, in large part, constructed for you.

My findings do not fit neatly with this rigid view of interpellation and the workings of discourse. The analyses here have indeed shown that Julia and the students were intensely aware of the boundaries imposed by their respective social positionalities, or the limits of what I called their "territories of the self," borrowing a phrase from

Goffman (1971, pp. 135-6), in chapter three. But even as they oriented to the Self-Other hyphen (Fine, 1994) and sought to shore it up in language-as-social-practice, their words cast a “sideward glance,” as Bakhtin (1984, pp. 196-197) says, at the words of Others, populating everyday speech with “digs” and “barbs” at Others, but also with self-repudiation, “reservations, concessions, loopholes, and the like.” At the risk of making much ado about tiny interactional phenomena, I have spent a good deal of time exploring the sideward glance, the moment of ambivalence that, in the midst of affirming the Self, takes on the Other’s perspective and betrays an unspoken desire to identify *with* the Other, to *be* Other, in an inescapably heteroglossic world where one’s own words are shot through with “alien accents.” It seems to me that the participants’ tactics – that is, for countering the strategies of their interpellation within particular discursive formations and regimes of knowledge and authority – relied on the sideward glance, and on their ability to recognize and seize upon what de Certeau (1984) called “opportunities” to play fast and loose with expectations, treating the boundaries separating types of beings as porous and ripe for crossing, blurring, or shifting.

In summing up what has come before, I want to advance a broader argument about intersubjectivity in student-teacher relationships and relationships among students. Intersubjectivity is often taken to mean a shared understanding of a state of affairs, achieved, for example, through specific conversational procedures for evaluating and performing repairs upon one’s own and others’ knowledge claims (cf. Schegloff, 1992). The sense of intersubjectivity I employ is quite different, however, and is inspired by

Duranti's (2009, 2010) reclamation of Husserl's ideas on the subject for the field of anthropology. For Husserl, Duranti (2010) writes, intersubjectivity does not refer to one person's ability to read another's mind, or to perform something like a Vulcan mind-meld with the other person. Rather, it describes "the possibility of substitution by means of *trading places*" with another person, or of being able to imagine how the world looks through the Other's eyes (Husserl, 1989, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 6, italics in original):

The idea is not that we *simultaneously* come to the *same* understanding of any given situation (although this can happen), but that we have, to start, the *possibility* of exchanging places, of seeing the world from the point of view of the Other (Duranti, 2010, p. 6).

The distinction may seem academic, but I think it is essential. In the epigraph to this chapter, Julia admits that she can never attain intersubjectivity with Ignacio and his tablemate, in the sense of *really* understanding "what's going on, or what you guys are going through." Yet in interactions such as the discussion of the "oxidated" piece of quartzite and the negotiation of Spanish use during the scientific journal activity (in chapter four), she is alert to the difficulty of seeing things "from [the students'] point of view" but nonetheless expends considerable effort in "trying to understand." As I argued in the previous chapter, Julia exhibits *respeto* by way of a deferential not-knowing, accepting that the boundaries between her and the students, while fluid, are real enough. At the same time, she aspires to be socialized (and the students take initiative in socializing her) to a degree of cultural citizenship that would allow her to embrace further the *possibility* of seeing the world from the students' point of view.

The students were sometimes attuned to Julia's efforts to "trade places," as when Alex reflected that Julia's "trying to understand" convinced him that she, unlike other white people (and teachers) he had encountered, was not racist. At other times, students exploited interactional opportunities to *invite* Julia to trade places, teasing her in ways that brought the Self-Other hyphen abruptly into view, threatening her sense of who she was as a teacher and cultural citizen-in-training. For example, after one of the star parties, Julia, who had given Ignacio a ride, felt bad about asking him to carry one of the heavy telescopes to her car, and tried to make fun of herself by growling "Slave!" in a way that (to her) suggested that she was making Ignacio Igor to her Dr. Frankenstein. (She told me afterwards that she and a college friend had used this joke by way of apology when either felt she was making an unduly onerous request of the other.) Ignacio responded, "It's ok, miss. I've been called a dirty Mexican before." Julia was immediately appalled that what she had considered an innocent joke had been taken up, even teasingly, as a racializing move, and fell over herself apologizing to Ignacio. Ignacio, a natural comedian, seemed delighted to have caught the normally scrupulous Julia at such a disadvantage, and continued to brush off her apologies, even the following day at school, until Julia finally burst into tears and he absolved her of any racist intent.

This incident made quite an impact on me, and as I thought about what to make of it, it occurred to me that Ignacio – who was probably as close to Julia as any of the students – was not accusing Julia of racism, but was teaching her a profound lesson about intersubjectivity by means of interdiscursivity. In other words, in saying "I've been

called a dirty Mexican before,” he linked the present interaction with Julia across time to other interactions, positing a particular interdiscursive relationship (Agha, 2007; Silverstein, 2005; Wortham, 2008) among them. From Ignacio’s perspective, we can guess, what happens between Julia and him at the star party is not *really* like other interactions when Ignacio has been called a dirty Mexican, but it bears a superficial resemblance to occasions when he has, possibly, been the target of hate speech. Thus, Ignacio is able to tease Julia by construing the present interaction interdiscursively as fundamentally like those other, hateful interactions, though, based on my experience with Ignacio and Julia, I doubt he really saw it that way. But, in jokingly reframing the interaction as an incidence of hate speech, he is also showing Julia that the world looks different through his eyes. They may both hear the same utterance (“Slave!”) but orient to it very differently, given their relative positioning in the field of racialized discourse that “constitutes,” in part, their subjectivities:

Each person has, from the same place in space and with the same lighting, the same view of, for example, a landscape. But never can the other, at exactly the same time as me (in the ordinary content of lived experience attributed to him) have the exact same appearance as I have (Husserl, 1989, quoted in Duranti, 2010, p. 6).

Only by virtue of Julia’s position as a speaking subject (being white, a legal resident of the U.S., a teacher, etc.), in contrast with Ignacio’s, is the tease possible; only in terms of the differences between her identity and Ignacio’s, and the discursive formation that shapes them both, is it comprehensible. Thanks to Julia’s social positionality, Ignacio reminds her, what she says and does can be heard in ways she does

not intend, even to the point where she is interpellated as a white racist. But we might just as readily argue (to push back against Butler) that only because of Julia's bravery in developing relationships with Ignacio and other students that go beyond her personal "comfort zone," such that certain students are emboldened to tease her about being racist, does she arrive at the point where she really is able to trade places with them, even momentarily, and feel for herself the dehumanizing sting of the racist arrangement that demeans them all (cf. Jensen, 2005; King, 1986/1963). The incident at the star party was harrowing for Julia, and probably, in some sense, for Ignacio – despite his unwillingness to let it go – if it did indeed index past racist events in his lived experience. Yet it also stands as an example of what it means for teachers to "live among vulnerabilities" (Baur, 1994, quoted in Rymes, 2001, p. 164) with their students, when "trading places" means being unable to forget about the structural realities that make us Selves and Others, in the very moment we realize the possibility of "seeing the world from the point of view of the Other" (Duranti, 2010, p. 6). As Rymes (2001, p. 164) says,

Hearing students tell about the kind of fear they live in ... and *empathizing* with them, really and dangerously entering their lives, makes it impossible to forget how stratified and unjust life is.

By the same token, we might ask if Ignacio's "invitation" to Julia is really so different from the many ways in which Julia invited students to trade places with her. Think, for example, of the debate between Julia and Camilo about the "planet eclipse" (in chapter four): it is a clever game, where Julia refuses to let on how seriously she is willing to take Camilo's claim, thereby inviting Camilo to trade places with her and

imagine how the world looks through the eyes of a particular type of Other: someone like Julia. Convincing Julia that his claim amounts to more than “myth and paranoia,” then, involves putting himself temporarily in her shoes and figuring out which way(s) of talking about the phenomenon in question are likely to be persuasive to someone in her position. Duranti (2009, p. 219) suggests that this process, repeated over time in numerous interactions, is exactly socialization, “the accumulated effect of a number of recurrent modifications ... in the ways in which novices are expected to relate to a particular phenomenon.”

This is true of both Julia and Camilo in the two interactions under consideration: each sees the possibility of exchanging places (Julia with Ignacio, and Camilo with Julia) and is able to do so, for a moment. But if we take a longer view, each is possibly on his or her way to *becoming* Other, inasmuch as changing participation in discourse communities points forward in time to changes in identity, to the possibility of relating to “this world of Others” on different footing. Of course, Julia is not turning into Ignacio, nor is Camilo turning into Julia. Rather, Ignacio’s perspective (or “appearance,” as Husserl says) is recruited into Julia’s trajectory of socialization for cultural citizenship, as she imagines trading places with him, and then returns to the world they both inhabit, on somewhat shakier, but promising, ground. Just so, Camilo sees that he has the possibility of substituting Julia’s perspective – the perspective of a scientific type of being – for his own, and modifies his orientation to the knowledge he possesses accordingly – in this case, to achieve a specific interactional aim. But Camilo is also, apparently, on his way

somewhere: not to becoming Julia, but to becoming his own scientific type of being, and without necessarily having to relinquish the “appearance” that affords him a different view of the discursive landscape he shares with Julia⁶⁰. The other analyses in chapter four (of Julia’s interactions with Abraham and Viviana) likewise demonstrate that novices do not just get out of the way and allow socialization to “work its magic” on them; in trading places, and imagining fuller participation in particular communities, they also capitalize on interactional asymmetries in order to negotiate their participation in socializing processes. For example, people positioned as novices in a particular situation may “flex” their expertise at unexpected times, extending to Others an offer to trade places – and, in doing so, to acknowledge the limitations of their own habitual points of view. In my understanding, this is part of the story of how Julia and the students figured out whom they were in relation to each other, as well as where they might be headed and whom they might become, over the course of the year.

As I continue to move backwards through the chapters, seeking to gain some purchase on the participants’ ideological becoming, I want to return to the idea of the sideward glance. Instances of the sideward glance are important because they turn our attention from the immediate context of the Astronomy/Oceanography classroom (or the basketball courts during a star party, or any of the places of the study) to the broader nexus of practice, seen as the convergence of “historical trajectories of people, places, discourses, ideas and objects” that “enable some action which in itself alters those

⁶⁰ Of course, it is unfortunately the case that relinquishing one’s native “appearance” has often been regarded as the whole point of education for so-called “non-mainstream” or “culturally deprived” students.

historical trajectories in some way” (Scollon & Scollon, 2004, viii, quoted in Scollon & Scollon, 2007, p. 615). In casting a sideward glance toward Others’ words, participants anticipated how their words would be received or taken up by Others, but also commented subtly on the personal and historical contingencies that were responsible for the emergence of boundaries in interaction.

Thus, in chapter three, we see Laura put on a humorous performance of young, Mexican masculinity, but follow it up with a classic sideward glance, asking Nadi if it’s hard to speak Spanish, and wondering aloud at her supposed lack of Spanish proficiency. This is what Bakhtin (1984) would call self-repudiating, double-voiced discourse: almost before the words are out of her mouth, Laura seems to anticipate Nadi’s response to her minor transgression, and reframes the goings-on as about the history of her failure to learn Spanish. We also get Alex, who provides self-directed commentary (“Oh, Mexican”) on his stylization of the way he thinks non-Mexican Others think he speaks, interrupting a collaborative questioning sequence about a fairly complicated scientific topic (which, recalling Rampton’s point about delicacy and indeterminacy, may or may not be significant in itself). Looking further back, at chapter two, we are faced with evidence of speech from Mexican-American students, directed at other Mexican-American students, that seems to index illegality and deportability, but must also account for the omnipresent, self-knowing *lols* and *XPs* in students’ responses to the fight; we hear Heriberto’s intimations that some behaviors might be considered un-Mexican, but must respect his stubborn refusal to endorse that position; we sympathize with John

Stamos and Nadi as they chafe at defining who they are in terms of how Mexican they appear to be, compared to intimate and less intimate Others.

And, throughout, we see Julia, trying desperately to stay afloat, just like the students, in the nexus of practice, the particular mess of contradictions where her historically contingent social positionality and the students' converge. The forms this convergence took were sometimes confusing, uncomfortable, and emotionally fraught for her. That being said, I hope I have also been able to express the underlying affection, trust, and sense of possibility that animated Julia's work, and was also visible in the students' willingness to enter into relationships of caring with her (and me, and each other) over time. Julia *worried* about the students: she worried about specific worrisome circumstances in their lives, of course – if someone's parents got deported, or someone had a car accident, or someone didn't show up to take the ACT – but she also worried about what the students' double-voiced discourse implied for their view of themselves, their peers, and their imagined futures. She feared that, in making do – in all the ways documented here, and many more besides – the students might actually be putting themselves down, or surrendering to the expressions of racializing discourse that were always working to constitute them as Other than the infinitely valuable human beings they were. Taking “horizontal” steps toward intersubjectivity, toward the possibility of trading places or seeing the world through the students' eyes, no matter how different that world appeared, was part of how she cared for them.

However, she was also keenly aware that, as a participant in the nexus of practice including the Astronomy/Oceanography classroom, she had the ability to influence the students' "vertical" trajectories (i.e., their academic and intellectual development), and she persisted in inviting the students to trade places with "them" – other Others, the arbiters of scientific knowledge to whom Camilo and Robert referred. This was another aspect of how she cared for the students, and how they came to know that she did: in fostering the students' intersubjective engagement with the world of science, through socialization into particular discourse norms, she let them know they were worthy of scientific citizenship in her eyes. But we cannot forget, as the analyses in chapter four testify, that "the possibility of substitution by means of trading places" for the students vis-à-vis Julia (or other scientific Others) was built up simultaneously, often in the same interaction, with the possibility of Julia's trading places with the students. In both cases, what the participants knew, what they were willing to display about what they knew, and what they knew or believed about what others knew – whether that knowledge came from NASA or from *la universidad de la calle y de la vida* ('the university of the streets and life'), as Heriberto listed his alma mater on his online profile – was at the heart of the matter.

5.2 Some implications for practice

In telling the story of my year with Julia and the students at Vista Del Sol, I have done what justice I could to the complexity of our conversations, and to the participants' ingenuity in making do in exceedingly tricky circumstances. I do not want to sacrifice

the level of nuance in the preceding discussions, nor to boil the meaning of this ethnography down to a few recommendations, when so much of the story defies any attempt to draw simple lessons or morals from the participants' words and actions. Nevertheless, I do think it is important to close by reflecting on what insights from this study might have to say about the work of teaching in, and preparing teachers for, racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse classrooms.

Keeping in mind Hymes's (1992, p. 3) admonition not to take for granted that others know what "we" take for granted, I will first respond to a question I was asked as I was writing about my research, which took me aback because I would have thought the answer was self-evident: Are the students of Mexican heritage in your study aware of what's going on politically with regard to immigration? The answer, if there is still any doubt, is an emphatic "Yes." Teachers, and everyone else, should know that students are certainly aware of the political realities that affect their lives and their families' lives, and shape the opportunities they have at present and in the future. In addition, students know very well that the political and social conditions that are responsible for the existence of illegality and deportability as transhistorical things-in-themselves (De Genova, 2005) also feed their on-the-ground, real-life experiences of discrimination, whether at the hands of fellow students, teachers, the police or Border Patrol, or other people in the community.

However, there are a couple of important caveats: first, not all students of Mexican (or any) heritage will relate to these political realities in the same way; some

will probably feel the pernicious effects of racializing discourse, and racist legislation, on a daily basis, while others will be much less likely to see such issues as having to do with them personally. Second, students may not act on their awareness of the political and social context in ways that are expected, easy to understand, or even internally consistent. Self-deprecating comments that seem to bubble up from a deep reservoir of pain may be characterized as meaningless joking; hateful speech may be directed at others but subsequently dismissed as unserious; conversations may veer off in unexpected directions, bringing racial or linguistic difference unpredictably to the fore; students may call others' actions "racist" at one time but deny that they were at another; possibly random or nonsensical disruptions of classroom business might or might not have something to do with longer-term processes of identification. While my study documents these behaviors in a particular classroom in southern Arizona, teachers in many other classrooms confront the question of how to understand, and what to do with, students' expressions of difference and discrimination in everyday interaction; moreover, teachers are also faced with the dilemma of how to respond when their own racial, cultural, or linguistic identities are drawn into the conversation – when students call them "racist," for example, or make pointed jokes at their expense. Careful, compassionate, and ethnographically informed listening, over many interactions with individual students, is required to begin to imagine how the world might "really" look – at a given moment, anyway – through a student's eyes.

“Ethnographically informed listening” leads me to another point I often take for granted (but probably should not), which is that the demise of racial science and the fragmentation of the culture concept among anthropologists have not, sadly, taken hold among many pre-service or practicing teachers. This is not a distinguishing feature of teachers; the same is probably true of most people in contemporary U.S. society. The fact remains that many teachers who work, or will work, with students from diverse racial, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds have somewhat reified and inflexible ideas about culture and race, often because they have not been forced to examine these concepts critically as part of their professional formation. Once in the classroom, however, teachers may employ a kind of ad hoc cultural analysis (Pollock, 2008), which can serve to cloak racializing attitudes in more socially acceptable terms (Ladson-Billings, 2006), to explain away students’ failure to learn, a lack of family-community engagement, or any number of other problems that can be blamed on “culture,” rather than seen as the school’s responsibility. On the other hand, some teachers (like Julia) are able to defer respectfully to students’ and community members’ expertise in particular areas, allowing for deeper cultural analysis, grounded in an appreciation for the relevance of people’s lived experience to their everyday activity and decision-making.

As we think about how to nurture teachers’ capacity to approach culture this way, the Hymesian vision of ethnography as a sense-making toolkit with tremendous potential for many different fields of practice, and not as the exclusive province of professional ethnographers, offers an alternative to the shallow form of cultural analysis described

above. This is not an original idea: entire books (e.g., Frank, 1999) have been written about how to equip teachers with the tools to “see” their classrooms ethnographically. But mere seeing and incorporating ethnographic observation into a *critical* practice of teaching that interrogates the sources of injustice and suffering in students’ lives, in and outside of school, are two different things. The latter is required for trading places – in the meaningful, boundary-challenging sense I have been discussing – to appear as a possibility in other nexuses of practice. Furthermore, I would argue that looking closely at stretches of classroom discourse, and seeking to connect the moment-to-moment linguistic facts to ethnographic insights gained from long-term immersion, is good practice for teachers as well as linguistic ethnographers.

In my experience, Julia and the students benefited from having the opportunity to relive certain conversations and to consider how they collaborated to achieve what they did, and what alternative possibilities might have been obscured (as when Julia realized, after the fact, that the students had been trying to teach her Spanish.) In an email to me, Julia commented, “I only wish it was standard practice to have researchers hanging with educators so [we] could see more of what's going on.” I am inclined to agree with her, but I also recognize that Julia was (and is) an uncommonly inquisitive and trusting teacher, and that, in any case, it is not possible to place an ethnographer in every classroom (though I would argue the study does demonstrate that teacher-researcher partnerships like mine and Julia’s can yield rare theoretical and practical insight). However, to return to my original point, it *is* possible to think seriously about how to

organize teacher preparation and professional development so that teachers can begin to fill the roles of critical ethnographer and sociolinguist in their own classrooms.

It is practically dogma among socioculturally-inclined educational researchers that students will do better in school, vertically speaking, if teachers find ways to use the students' existing linguistic and cultural funds of knowledge to "bridge" to academic content. Again, there is a rich literature (e.g., González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005) on how teachers can attempt to do this productively and respectfully, without appropriating cultural knowledge outright or making schools into more efficient sites of social reproduction. My findings, however, highlight *students'* agency in working to integrate elements of their "cultural" knowledge (traditional or otherwise) with other bodies of knowledge – not always in deliberate or planned-for ways, but often in response to the peculiarities of a given interaction, in dialogue with significant Others, and in conjunction with other processes of socialization. The students, by and large, did not seem to experience this encounter as an ontological conflict, but did need to be shown *respeto* in order to be able to explore the relationship between different knowledge sources and ways of knowing.

Similarly, although the classroom was an English-speaking space, according to the school, students used various tactics to put their bilingual and biliterate competence to work, with consequences for both vertical and horizontal forms of learning in the classroom. But here, as well, Julia's interest in Spanish, her willingness to assume a

novice Spanish learner identity, and her consistent public stance in favor of Spanish use, played a crucial role in countering some students' assumptions (remembering Viviana's brush with language paranoia) that the language was seen as inappropriate for certain in-school functions. Julia's engagement with Spanish spoke powerfully to the students about the kind of person she was, and the kind of person she hoped to be; her example underscores the symbolic and practical importance of finding ways to connect with students' home languages, even for teachers with very limited L2 ability.

Finally, as a linguistic anthropologist, I have directed my own sideward glance toward the world of science education in this study. Instead of thinking about the science-centered interactions among my participants simply in terms of "knowledge integration" or "conceptual development," through which novices get their topsy-turvy ideas about the universe sorted out, I have emphasized the extent to which such processes rely on language socialization, and interact with other processes that may introduce elements from "foreign" ethno-epistemic assemblages. What students bring to such interactions cannot always be integrated effortlessly with the scientific canon, but does have the potential to take conversations about science and the natural world in unforeseen directions that can enrich students' thinking about science significantly.

The form those conversations take is another matter entirely: existing research asserts that students' informal conversational style is often at odds with the ways of talking and writing that confer legitimacy and respect (and, to some extent, facilitate

scientific reasoning) in professional science (Gee, 2004); other researchers indicate that students' successful engagement with scientific knowledge relies on their incorporation of features of scientific discourse into conversations with peers (Roth, 2005), or focus on ways to aid students in mastering the nuances of scientific argumentation and making their thinking "visible" to themselves and others (Bell, 2004). Yet, still others suggest that students (especially students of color) may be subject to social sanction for appearing to appropriate scientific discourse, or scientific ways of being, too readily (Wortham, 2008); as I mentioned in chapter one, it has been shown that professional scientists' own processes of meaning-making are quite messy, interactionally speaking, and involve the progressive refinement of ideas that may appear initially as rather vague and context-specific formulations (Garfinkel et al., 1981; Latour & Woolgar, 1979; Ochs et al., 1996; Ochs & Jacoby, 1997). All of this is to say that the question of how we should encourage, and expect, students to "talk science" is exceedingly complex, and is deserving of further exploration. My discussion of cultural and scientific citizenship as intersecting, but not necessarily conflicting, dimensions of citizenship adds another level of nuance to this debate, and affirms the centrality of racial, cultural, and linguistic aspects of identity to students' science learning.

I have also asserted that expertise is dynamic and context-dependent, and has as much to do with how one represents what one knows as with the actual contents of one's knowledge. This is not to say that coming to a better understanding of how students develop ideas about the natural world, or training them to investigate claims about natural

phenomena systematically, are unimportant tasks for science education. Far from it: Julia would probably contend, and I would concur, that these are crucial tasks, particularly in the era of state-mandated “intelligent design” curricula and popular theories about the Mayan apocalypse, not to mention students’ practically unlimited access to pseudo-scientific information of dubious provenance on the internet.

My point has been, rather, that learning to talk science does not necessarily mean learning to relate to the world as a scientific person, but learning to imagine how the world looks through a scientific person’s eyes. One aspect of this process is learning to recognize the ways of talking, and the ways of being they index, that confirm membership in scientific discourse communities. Science education in practice is not just, or even primarily, about getting the facts straight, but, like the other concerns of this study, has to do with belonging, with particular conceptions of citizenship, with how we talk about what we know and what that says about who we are in relation to Others. In its unpredictability and creative potentiality, I have suggested, talk about science is related to more general processes of “making do” in classrooms and schools, in which teachers and students, using the materials at hand, “draw unexpected results from [their] situation” through “an art of being in between” (de Certeau, 1984, p. 30) that challenges, and seeks to shift, the boundaries between experts and novices, scientists and non-scientists, teachers and students, more and less “Mexican” people, selves and Others.

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