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Acquisition as Becoming:
An Ethnographic Study of Multilingual Style in *la Petite Espagne*

By

David Scott Divita

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Romance Languages and Literatures

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in Charge:

Professor Richard Kern, Chair

Professor Mairi McLaughlin

Professor Claire Kramsch

Professor Milton Azevedo

Spring 2010

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Abstract

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University of California, Berkeley

Professor Richard Kern, Chair

To date, most sociolinguistic research on style has attempted to map patterns of variation at levels of social aggregation that abstract away from the individual. In this dissertation, however, I take the individual as a point of departure, focusing on the ways in which her phenomenal experiences of a sociolinguistic landscape inform the styles that she constructs. To that end, I draw on seven months of ethnographic fieldwork that I conducted at a social center for Spanish seniors (i.e., people over the age of 62) in Saint-Denis, France. My research sample is comprised of women, aged 62 to 80, who participated in a wave of female migration from Spain to Paris during the 1960s to work in a burgeoning domestic service industry in the capital's most affluent neighborhoods. All of them arrived in France without speaking any French; now, more than 40 years later, they have acquired the language to comparable levels of proficiency, but they make use of their linguistic repertoires in idiosyncratic ways. My project explores the origins and expression of this variation as a means of getting at the idiosyncratic dimension of language acquisition and use.

As conceived in this project, language acquisition entails more than learning grammatical and lexical forms; it also describes the subjective process of becoming multilingual. To understand the mechanics of this process, I conducted comparative case studies of three individuals I observed in the field, juxtaposing discourse analysis of their language use with detailed reconstructions of their biographical trajectories. My analysis shows that, although these women have acquired French under the same social and historical conditions, they have done so in variable ways and to variable ends; they now engage differently in multilingual practices (namely, code-switching and bilingual discourse-marking) as a means of constructing styles that are both socially intelligible and individually marked. Through recourse to poststructuralist sociolinguistic theory, I illustrate how an individual's experience of a sociolinguistic landscape, as well as her perceptions of those experiences, not only inform the social meanings (such as the personae and stances) that she is given to construct, but also the very means through which she constructs meanings. My investigation of style among *multilingual* subjects underscores the ways in which an individual's memories, experiences and ideological associations, accrued over time, inform the linguistic practices in which she now engages.

For Jason

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Chapter 1

Introduction

In the title of this dissertation, I have used the term “becoming,” a progressive form of the verb that emphasizes the ongoing and non-finite aspects of the language learning process it describes. “*Becoming*” is imperfective; it has no beginning, and it has no end. It refers instead to a dynamic and oftentimes unpredictable unfolding that is void of teleology. I propose this concept here as an alternative to the metaphor of “acquisition.” Unlike its more widespread counterpart, “becoming” does not refer to the gain of an external (linguistic) object or the linear development of a determinate set of (language) skills. Rather, it highlights a different side of the process, capturing the socially contingent and subjective aspects of becoming multilingual.

This leads me to the second term in my title in need of clarification. Becoming “multilingual” entails learning how to construct intelligible social meanings, across contexts, from multiple linguistic resources. While some scholars use “bilingual(ism)” as a “shorthand” to refer to both bilingual or multilingual communities or individuals (Woolard, 2004, p. 90), others use “multilingualism” as an all-inclusive term to denote “the use of more than one language by a single individual or community” (Gal, 2007, p. 149). I have chosen here to use “multilingual(ism)” in part to distinguish my project from a line of research under the heading “bilingualism” that has, since its inception, been preoccupied with levels of linguistic proficiency when defining its object of focus. Despite the fact that my research subjects make use of only two languages (identified as “French” and “Spanish”), I describe them as multilingual as a means of foregrounding the affective, ideological, and historical dimensions of their linguistic practices—dimensions that have only recently been considered in social and anthropological approaches to situations of language contact. I reserve the term “bilingual” to describe formal phenomena in multilingual situations, such as bilingual discourse markers.

Although this project constitutes an attempt to understand language learning from a social and historical perspective, it is not about second language acquisition (SLA) alone. To get at the dimensions of “becoming” that I describe above, I focus on multilingual stylistic variation, thereby situating my research equally within the field of sociolinguistics. My primary interest in the subjective aspects of language learning and use—or, in other words, in the socially and historically situated individual as a language learner and user—has enabled me to forge a project across disciplinary boundaries and, I hope, to throw those very boundaries into question. The individual has often been overlooked in *both* SLA and sociolinguistic research that, traditionally, has sought to explain universal processes of acquisition or large-scale patterns of variation. Thus, I do not assume a clear distinction between the two fields or, indeed, between language learning and language use, and I conceive of proficiency in more complex ways than the mere mastery of grammatical forms. Following Harklau (2008), I embrace a new understanding of the concept as “a repertoire of multiple styles and registers that vary according to individual background, social context, and modality” (p. 28); I understand the development of such proficiency as a highly contextualized, sociohistorically situated process.

To investigate the process of becoming—and the practice of *being*—multilingual, I draw on seven months of ethnographic fieldwork that I conducted at a social center for Spanish seniors (i.e., people over the age of 62) in Saint-Denis, France. I focus on a research sample comprised of women, aged 62 to 80, who participated in a wave of migration from Spain to Paris during the 1960s to work in a burgeoning domestic service industry in the capital's most affluent neighborhoods. All of them arrived in France without speaking any French; now, more than 40 years later, they have acquired the language to comparable levels of proficiency, but they make use of their linguistic repertoires in idiosyncratic ways. I set out to understand why.

The heart of this dissertation comprises three case studies of individuals whom I encountered in the field. Each case study constitutes a chapter in which I juxtapose discourse analysis of the individual's language use with a detailed reconstruction of her biographical trajectory. This innovative configuration of data shows how individuals, who have become multilingual under the same social and historical conditions, do so in variable ways and to variable ends; they craft styles that depend not only on the social meanings that they are given to construct, but also on the memories and ideological associations they have accrued in and about the languages that they speak. My project is motivated by the following questions:

- In what ways do the linguistic practices of multilingual individuals foreground the idiosyncratic dimension of stylistic variation?
- What is the relationship between multilingual style and an individual's biographical trajectory?
- What does multilingual style reveal about the social and subjective aspects of language acquisition?

I have formulated these questions in light of an understanding of language as social practice; I have turned to anthropological methods of investigation to answer them, drawing in my analysis on poststructuralist sociolinguistic theory.

The women *du troisième âge/de la tercera edad*¹ who animate the following pages create social meaning through linguistic resources that they have accumulated across their lifespans. Because of their established “histories of engagement” (Kinginger & Blattner, 2008) with languages and language users, they constitute an ideal group for exploring the questions I've put forth. Hamilton (1999), who examines the “extreme variation” that exists among older speakers, advocates the use of case studies as a means of exploring their linguistic practices—methods, she writes, that “investigate in a more in-depth fashion the interrelationships among a variety of communicative behaviors or factors” (p. 8). Although she describes both the physical and cognitive nature of variation among older speakers, she nevertheless underscores the social nature of those differences as well, reflected to a large extent in individual ways of speaking. Hamilton's claim is later substantiated by Coupland (2007), who, in his analysis of (monolingual) stylistic practices, maintains that the subjective nature of stylistic variation cannot be accounted for by large-scale quantitative studies designed to identify widespread patterns of language use. Thus, whether analyzing monolingual or multilingual stylistic practices, one cannot ignore the importance of focusing on the individual within and alongside the

¹ Literally, these expressions mean “of the third age”; they are often translated into English as “senior citizens.”

communities in which she participates as a means of accounting for the highly contextualized—and contextualizing—impulse behind the construction of style. Indeed, older speakers in particular, with recourse to an expanded set of variables on multiple linguistic levels that have accrued social meaning over time, practice multilingualism in idiosyncratic ways that pull focus from the community towards the individuals who constitute them.

This dissertation proceeds as follows: in Chapter 2, I establish the theoretical framework for my project, providing an overview of the “social turn” within SLA, including sociolinguistic approaches to the field that consider the development of style among advanced-level language learners. I define the semiotic concept of indexicality, which will be fundamental to the discourse analytic approach I take to the data I have collected. I then describe five of the most prevalent types of social meaning that linguistic variables may index—identities and personae, interactional positions, stances and footing—and I go on to explain the variables (code-switching and bilingual discourse-marking) on which I focus in each of my case studies.

In Chapter 3, I discuss the qualitative research methods used to produce my ethnography and to situate my case studies within it. I also give a historical overview of the site where I conducted fieldwork—the Centro—and reconstruct through an analysis of archival documents the sociolinguistic landscape in which my research subjects became multilingual. I go on to describe the process through which I circumscribed my research sample and selected case studies. I finish by explaining my transcription and translation methods; I also address the influence of my own subject position on the data I collected as well as the analysis I make of them.

Each of the next three chapters constitutes the case study of an individual I observed in the field: Lina, Amalia and Benita. I begin these chapters with a brief introduction to the woman that it features, illustrating certain of her characterological traits through a specific event recalled from the field. I go on to reconstruct her biographical trajectory through narratives she recounted in interviews and conversations, paying particular attention to those that directly address language or language learning. In the third section, I discuss her linguistic attitudes, which I access through her metalinguistic comments as well as her linguistic practices. The final section focuses on her use of the multilingual variables I describe in Chapter 2; here, I establish links among her biography, her language ideologies and her multilingual style.

In Chapter 7, I outline Johnstone and Kiesling’s (2008) “phenomenological approach” to stylistic variation and highlight the contrasts and similarities among my case studies that such an approach has illuminated. I go on to consider my findings in light of previous research on Spanish immigrants in France that has explicitly addressed their language use. I conclude by pointing towards future directions of research that account for the subjective dimension of language acquisition and use alongside more traditional concerns with cognition and communities.

Chapter 2

A theoretical overview

2.1 Social perspectives on language acquisition

In a landmark 1997 article that appeared in *The Modern Language Journal*, Firth and Wagner put forth a “rallying cry” (p. 800) for alternative approaches to research in the field of SLA, which had until then focused almost exclusively on the universal, internal aspects of language acquisition. The authors proposed specific modifications to the epistemological and methodological parameters of SLA scholarship: an enhanced awareness of the contextual dimensions of language use; an increased sensitivity toward learners’ perspectives and experiences; and an expanded database for investigating theory (p. 804). Although Firth and Wagner sought to expand—not replace—the traditional foundations of SLA, their call to incorporate this social dimension incited contentious debates over the field’s boundaries and objectives. Skeptics of their attempts to understand the process of acquisition through the study of language use insisted that SLA, by its very definition, is concerned with cognitive, rather than social, phenomena (Kasper, 1997; Long, 1997). Such a reaction epitomized the conceptual narrowness against which Firth and Wagner had written, and it only fueled their subsequent efforts to champion avenues of SLA research that draw on social theory and that eschew a facile distinction between language acquisition and use (Firth and Wagner, 1997, 2007).

In a 2007 focus issue of that same journal, scholars of SLA discuss the changes that have transpired in the field since the publication of Firth and Wagner’s article. While many of them acknowledge that SLA’s dominant paradigm remains unchanged—as Firth and Wagner (2007) themselves remark: “The mainstream is in full flow” (p. 804)—they nevertheless trace a steady increase in approaches to SLA that address the social dimension of acquisition. Swain and Deters (2007), for example, outline the ways in which the sociocultural theory of mind and poststructuralist theory have begun to influence SLA research. Block (2003, 2007a), for his part, sees a burgeoning interest in identity questions as part of a broader trend within the field to take into account social phenomena. And Kramsch and Whiteside (2007) discuss the reconfiguration of principle constructs in SLA—such as “native speaker,” “language learner,” and “interlanguage”—that has been partly effected by the epistemological expansion Firth and Wagner advocated ten years earlier.

In addition to describing an object of focus that stretches beyond the frame of “traditional” SLA, these scholars note a shift in the field’s preferred methods of investigation—that is, classroom-based and experimental research. As researchers began to examine the social aspects of language acquisition more closely, they turned to qualitative forms of inquiry that take into account the individual—the erstwhile one-dimensional “language learner” problematized by Kramsch and Whiteside (2007)—as a historically and culturally situated subject who enters into a foreign semiotic system in idiosyncratic ways. Seen within this modified SLA, Kramsch and Whiteside (2007) explain, a language learner “not only accrues new linguistic knowledge, but also feels, thinks, behaves in new ways, and ... puts his or her various languages in relation to one another and in relation to his or her many roles and subject positions” (p. 918). As Kramsch & Whiteside’s analysis of multilingual interaction suggests, an individual is

perhaps more likely to experience such effects of language acquisition *outside* of institutional settings, which tend to be structured around ideologies of monolingualism—settings that, according to Firth and Wagner (1997), often obscure the social and historical dimensions of language learning.

2.2 Language acquisition in naturalistic settings

Many scholars interested in these aspects of SLA have indeed turned to qualitative methods of investigation that are often associated with other social sciences, such as anthropology and psychology. Their studies, however, which have made use of ethnographic practices including longitudinal participant-observation (Canagarajah, 1993; McKay and Wong, 1996; Miller, 2003; Pavlenko, 2005; Rampton, 1995, 2007) as well as the analysis of learner (auto)biographies and testimonies (Benson and Nunan, 2005; Kinginger, 2004; Kramersch, 2009; Pavlenko, 2001; Pavlenko and Lantolf, 2000; Schumann, 1997), continue to investigate institutional sites of language acquisition. Nevertheless, three studies in particular stand out for their application of such methods to language learning *outside* the classroom, drawing links between adult learners' biographies, their perceptions, and the social contexts in which they use their second language: Perdue (1993a, 1993b), Norton (2000) and Teutsch-Dwyer (2001).

Perdue's project (1993a, b), conducted by a team of researchers with support from the European Science Foundation (ESF), spans six years and explores the variable success rates—that is, the “degrees of language mastery” (p. 8)—of adult immigrant language learners. The study, which accommodates six native languages, five target languages, and ten interlanguages to ensure the possibility of making “systematic cross-linguistic statements” (Perdue, 1993a, p. xi), includes longitudinal case studies of four learners of each native language/target language pairing; it also takes into account these learners' language *use*, acknowledging that people acquire language “through everyday interaction . . . in a context characterized by social, educational and linguistic problems” (Perdue, 1993b, p. 1) and exploring the ways in which “acquisition is achieved in discourse activity” (p. 21). These objectives demand a qualitative approach to the study of language input, and thus ESF researchers analyze naturalistic and experimental interactions between language learners and native speakers. Although they put forth convincing arguments about the relevance of social context to language acquisition and about the value of considering language use, they do not, as Norton (2000) remarks, “focus directly on the relationship between identity and language learning” (p. 41). Biographical sketches of the informants are included in the books' appendix, but the particularities of their personal trajectories barely factor into the researchers' analysis.

Acknowledging this oversight, Norton (2000) focuses on language learners and identity in a longitudinal study of five immigrant women in Canada. Foregrounding the relations among gender, power and language, Norton illuminates her subjects' language-learning trajectories and their varied levels of proficiency. She attacks theories of individual learner differences that place a burden of responsibility for progress on the learners themselves without taking into account the power relations that constrain their access to the target language. Norton suggests replacing the notion of motivation with the metaphor of *investment*, the latter signaling “the socially and historically constructed relationship of learners to the target language, and their often ambivalent desire to learn

and practice it” (p. 10). Her data illustrate the ways in which such investments mediate the dynamic processes of identification that a learner undertakes in a second language through interaction with second-language speakers (p. 120).

Although Norton situates her project within a poststructuralist feminist framework, the notion of identity that is operationalized in her analysis resonates with structuralist overtones; she tends to describe identity in static, quantifiable terms as a kind of “product” or “possession.” Furthermore, Norton’s emphatic and recurrent invocation of agency suggests that the subjects in her study might transcend the constitutive role of discourse through mere acts of courage or will—a gesture that undermines her call to consider the effects of power relations on an individual’s access to possibilities of language learning. Block (2007a) notes that Norton omits an “essential ingredient” (p. 868) in SLA research that is concerned with identity: recordings of her subjects’ naturalistic language use. As a result, Norton has virtually nothing to say about the acquisition of linguistic forms; her project neglects to explore the ways in which identity is constructed through particular ways of speaking—a surprising omission for a self-proclaimed poststructuralist scholar. Within Norton’s model, identity is a relatively stable, perceptual phenomenon, an object that emerges from the self-reflection generated by diary-writing and interviews (Norton’s primary means of data collection), as opposed to a dynamic, relational process that functions through social interaction.

Teutsch-Dwyer (2001), drawing on a poststructuralist notion of identity more persuasively than Norton, details her 14-month case study of a 38 year-old Polish man, Karol, who immigrates to the United States in search of work without any formal exposure to English. Over the course of her project, Teutsch-Dwyer traces her subject’s acquisition of morpho-syntactic forms that mark temporality across recordings of his narratives in interviews and conversations. Focusing on the construction of gender roles, Teutsch-Dwyer illustrates the recursive relationship between his self-perceived and other-attributed identities, as well as the ways in which this relationship informs his language acquisition outcomes. As Karol first experiences an “undermining” of his masculinity in relationships with his brother-in-law and male boss and, subsequently, a “reconstruction” of masculinity in relationships with a group of female co-workers and a girlfriend, his access to and use of language is starkly affected. As Teutsch-Dwyer explains: “The gender role(s) that the learner chose to perform and the gender roles that he had been assigned due to fluctuating living circumstances may have had a significant influence on the acquisition process itself as well as on the outcomes of this process” (p. 176). Teutsch-Dwyer’s arguments about identity and language learning are more convincing than Norton’s precisely because she incorporates into her analysis a consideration of linguistic forms—even though her analysis, like Norton’s, betrays subtle influences of structuralism. For Teutsch-Dwyer, her subject does not actively *construct* his identities through motivated uses of form; rather, linguistic forms *reflect* her subject’s shifting identities. Moreover, the author’s discussion of a single case study throws into question the generalizable aspects of her research.

In spite of their slight limitations, these insightful studies combine various qualitative methods to examine the effects of social context on the processes and outcomes of SLA in naturalistic settings. Each one of them necessarily draws attention to the language learner as an individual, who, with his or her personal history, navigates and negotiates the experience of language learning in idiosyncratic ways. This body of work

suggests that the differences between learners' trajectories of acquisition and the levels of proficiency they ultimately attain might be explained through other means than the static tropes that have traditionally been used—motivation, affect and attitude (Birdsong & Paik, 2008; Ellis, 1994)—and the grammatical standards that have been applied.

2.3 Language acquisition and sociolinguistics

Drawing in part from methods and theory that undergird much sociolinguistic research, the above studies shed light on the process of language acquisition by examining variation as it relates to a confluence of individual, social and historical factors. Just as these studies blur the convenient distinction between language acquisition and use, they also challenge disciplinary boundaries between SLA and certain areas of sociolinguistic scholarship—namely, multilingualism (Auer and Wei, 2007; Heller, 2007; Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004). This contemporary domain of inquiry has been articulated through the same social turn I have described within the context of SLA—that is, the move to assume a social theoretical perspective and to ask questions that emerge from poststructuralist considerations of the relationship between language and identity.

This turn has marked a shift in focus away from the formal aspects of bilingualism addressed by scholars such as Poplack (2004) and Thomason (2001) towards the multilingual individuals who make use of those forms in socially meaningful ways; multilingualism is thus conceived as a social practice rather than a formalistic product. Probing this contrast, Heller (2007), for example, distinguishes between bilingualism and “bilingualism”; the latter term, placed pointedly in scare quotes, indicates a theoretical construct that “makes sense only within the discursive regime of the nation-state, with its homogenization and its equation of language, culture, nation, territory and state” (p. 341). The author takes pains to update this modernist notion by reorienting her analytic focus away from the perception of communities and identities as static objects towards bilingualism *tout court*, stripped of quotation marks—that is, towards the diachronic processes and synchronic practices that converge in multilingual settings, and which the bilingual individual must negotiate. Auer and Wei (2007) take a similar position in their introduction to the *Handbook of Multilingualism and Multilingual Communication*, in which they incite the “monolingual bias” (p. 1) that has long constrained thinking about language learning and use, addressing multilingualism as a “problem” in relation to a monolingual norm. Such perspectives problematize facile notions of multilingualism as the juxtaposition of monolithic, autonomous languages—in other words, as multiple monolingualisms—taking into account the cultural and historical particularities of language contact. As Garrett (2007) describes it, bilingualism “must be regarded as a dynamic, contingent phenomenon that takes quite different forms and trajectories in different sociocultural and sociohistorical settings, and that may be only a relatively fleeting phase in a community’s history or in the lifespan of an individual speaker” (p. 238). Such approaches to multilingualism conceive of the individual as a historically-situated social actor who engages in multilingual practices that are both personally and locally meaningful.

Although this social perspective has brought rich insight into the study of multilingualism, many SLA scholars continue to resist it, insisting that the contextualized study of language use reveals little about the process of acquisition. Their research, they

argue, is concerned with “bilingual development, that is, how someone *becomes* bi- or trilingual,” as opposed to “what it means to *be* bilingual” (Kramsch and Whiteside, 2007, p. 912). Long (1997), for example, taking aim at Firth and Wagner (1997), underscores what he sees as SLA’s primary objective: “SLA, as the name indicates, is the study of L2 *acquisition*, not (except indirectly) of ‘the nature of language’ in general or ‘most centrally the language use of second or foreign language speakers’” (p. 318). In a similar vein, Kasper (1997) reminds scholars who are tempted to incorporate social perspectives into their research that the “‘A’ (in SLA) stands for acquisition” (p. 310)—not, in other words, for use. Such criticism aims to define the intellectual terrain of legitimate SLA scholarship through animating the dominant, traditional views of the field.

However, as the three studies that I cite above illustrate effectively, languages are learned through social practice—indeed, language learning itself is a social practice—and language acquisition occurs in part through language use. In line with this body of scholarship, I argue here that the distinction between acquisition and use, between learning and doing, only serves the ontological interests of a narrowly conceived intellectual domain within linguistics—“traditional” SLA—that stands to be enhanced through an incorporation of the methods and theories employed in *other* areas of linguistic research, namely, *sociolinguistics* and, in particular, stylistic variation. Such a move presupposes a significant external component to language acquisition—a component drawn along social and historical lines that interacts with the cognitive phenomena that have, to date, been the primary focus of SLA research.

2.4 Acquiring style

Scholars of language acquisition who have drawn on sociolinguistic methods and concepts tend to consider variation in terms of evolving interlanguage (Han, 2004; Han & Odlin, 2005; Preston, 2000; Tarone 2007, Tarone and Liu, 1995; Young, 1999), or they have focused on the development of “sociolinguistic competence”—that is, the ability to use linguistic variables in appropriate contexts (Bayley and Regan, 2004; Dewaele, 2004a, 2007; Howard, 2006). In an introduction to a special issue of the *Journal of Sociolinguistics* dedicated to this very domain of inquiry, Bayley and Regan (2004) assert that proficiency in a foreign language necessarily entails developing an awareness of “native-speaker patterns of variation” (p. 325). In another article of that same issue, Mougeon, Rehner and Nadasdi (2004) voice a similar claim, identifying successful acquisition as “the speakers’ knowledge of the full range of native variants (and) their use of such variants at frequencies comparable to that of first-language speakers of the target language” (p. 409). These scholars form part of a small but robust body of research that focuses on the analysis of language acquisition through a variationist theoretical framework—what Bayley and Regan (2004) refer to as “mainstream sociolinguistics” (p. 324).

As the above definitions of sociolinguistic competence suggest, this group of SLA scholars has borrowed from “mainstream” sociolinguistics to illuminate areas of “mainstream” SLA (Firth and Wagner, 1997; Kramsch and Whiteside, 2007). In other words, they have made contributions to the field through recourse to a distinctly structuralist framework that correlates style—understood as a socially meaningful clusters of phonological and grammatical features—with situations of use. Following

Labov (1966), who first identified and studied sociolinguistic variation in his study of English in New York City, these scholars conceptualize style as a one-dimensional scale of formality along which speakers shift in response to their situational contexts. Howard (2006), for example, focuses on the use of liaison and /l/-deletion (i.e., [i] instead of [il] for third-person plural pronoun *ils*) among advanced learners of French; he conducts a quantitative study of their use of such variables before and after contact with native speakers in order to get at their development of sociolinguistic competence—or, as he puts it, their “quest to sound native-like” (p. 394). Dewaele (2004b), who studied the retention and omission of *ne* among advanced second-language French speakers, compared their use of the variable in different interview contexts with native and non-native interlocutors; although he identifies links between the speakers’ degrees of extraversion and their use of the informal variant (*ne* omission), he nevertheless concludes that it is not clear “when non-native speakers start copying linguistic usage of groups within the TL community they want to identify with” (p. 434).

As these studies suggest, researchers working on variation in SLA have tended to focus on linguistic variables in isolation, correlating their use or omission to static social contexts. Moreover, they have been motivated by a common assumption: language learners want to sound like native speakers. They have thus not taken the same social turn that I describe above—that is, they have yet to incorporate into their investigations specific considerations of the social meanings associated with linguistic variables, focusing instead on the situations of their use by imagined native speakers. And yet, a couple of decades after Labov (1966) first articulated his concept of stylistic variation, certain sociolinguists—just like certain scholars of SLA—began to challenge their field’s quantitative orientation and its preoccupation with demographic categories, turning to anthropological methods of inquiry that focus on the contingent nature of semiotic processes through which style is associated with social meaning. Eckert (2000, 2004a, 2004b), Eckert and Rickford (2001), Irvine (2001), Coupland (2001, 2007) and Rampton (1995, 2006), among others, began to approach variation from a social constructionist perspective, seeing style not as a mere reflection of its situation of use, but as a vital component in the creation of social meanings, such as identities, personae, stances, and footings, which I describe in detail below.

Eckert (2004a) has described this approach (of which she is considered to be one of the first and most prominent “architects” (Kiesling, 2009)) as the “third wave” of variation studies. The first wave, she explains, originated with Labov and relies on survey and quantitative methods to get at the relationship between variation and demographic categories; the second wave entails the incorporation of ethnographic methods to examine local manifestations of these large-scale categories, while still focusing on linguistic form. Third wave studies, firmly rooted in ethnography, take as their primary object of analysis the social meanings constructed through configurations of variables, as opposed to the variables themselves; as such, their *optique* is more holistic. As Eckert writes: “The meaning of variables is located not in the categories of people who employ them, but in the performance of identities that populate categories. This performance is a stylistic enterprise that employs linguistic variables as resources for constructing styles that come to be associated with individual or group personae” (p. 4). Individuals use a particular clustering of linguistic features in conjunction with other semiotic practices to create and index social meanings. “Styling,” then, might be thought of as a reflexive

process through which styles are crafted strategically to align with or subvert expectations about conventional ways of speaking (Coupland 2007; Heffernan, 2010).

Reconsidered in light of this third wave approach, sociolinguistic competence entails sensitivity to the contingent nature not only of linguistic *forms*, but to the social meanings that may be associated with those forms. To become sociolinguistically proficient, then, a language learner must do more than match variables to their contexts of use, as the idealized native speaker does; she must also learn to interpret and construct the variable meanings that those forms index. Studies of variation within SLA should thus take into account not only “issues of identity, attitudes and self-perception” (Dewaele, 2007, p. 233), but also the possibility that a multilingual individual might choose to construct social meaning through particular “non-native” uses of a language or through the multilingual practices of code-switching and code-mixing (Kramsch et al., 2008; Kern and Liddicoat, 2008).

To date, however, research on variation in SLA has been rooted in first-wave thinking. Within this structuralist framework, these studies have identified the typically inconsistent, not-yet-native variation among second-language speakers as a symptom of emergent interlanguage, dismissing the possibility that such variation might be a matter of choice and neglecting to consider the ways in which interlanguage is perceived by native speakers. An obvious conclusion of SLA studies constrained by such thinking is that second-language learners, whose speech reveals only small margins of stylistic flexibility, “have not yet identified ... [the] value of ... sociolinguistic variants and do not style-shift in a native-like way” (Dewaele, 2007, p. 234). However, the homogenous research subjects who populate such studies—that is, university-aged immersion or study abroad students—raise questions about the generalizability of any conclusions that have been drawn from them. Indeed, what about *other* populations in *other* settings? Scholars of SLA, like “third wave” sociolinguists, must apply ethnographic methods of investigation *across* contexts to illuminate the social and subjective dimensions of language acquisition. Bayley and Regan (2004) and Dewaele (2007), for example, call for the use of qualitative methods in SLA research as a means of complementing and contextualizing quantitative variationist work. Such methods, they argue, would serve as an invaluable means of getting at the experiences and perspectives of second-language learners that inform the processes through which they acquire language and that affect the ways in which they use it—the very methods that have been applied so successfully in third-wave approaches to sociolinguistic variation.

2.5 Indexicality and social meaning

All sociolinguistic research aims to understand the relationship between linguistic forms and social meaning. As Ochs (1992) writes, such meanings “are referred to as *social* meanings, in contrast to purely referential or logical meanings expressed by linguistic structures” (p. 338, italics mine). Whether or not scholars accept the functional dichotomy that Ochs sets up—Hasan (1992), for example, argues that “*all* meaning is social” (p. 79, italics mine)—they generally share the assumption that linguistic forms communicate more than referential content alone. Nevertheless, sociolinguists have differed in their approaches to these “n + 1-th-order” meanings (Silverstein, 2003) or “connotations” (Barthes, 1957), working within two dominant research paradigms (and,

more recently, through some combination thereof): the traditional, quantitative variationist paradigm and the qualitative, social constructionist paradigm. While scholars within the former domain of inquiry tend to see the links between form and meaning as direct one-to-one correlations, scholars in the latter domain see this relationship as indexical. For them, social meaning is created through an individual's use of particular forms in particular contexts; her ways of speaking *index* social meaning.

In his classification of semiotic forms, Peirce (1955) defines "index" as a sign whose meaning emerges from its relationship to a contiguous referent. Whereas an icon becomes meaningful through a relationship of similarity between sign and object, and a symbol becomes meaningful through a relationship of conventionality, an index becomes meaningful through a relationship of co-presence; it points to, or indicates, an aspect of context. Sociolinguists who draw on this notion of indexicality see the construction of meaning as a local and contingent process rather than a fixed and static one. Their meticulous investigations of social interaction reveal the semiotic processes through which individuals construct micro-contextual meanings in relation to macro-sociological categories. As Silverstein (2003) points out, indexicality "is central to analyzing how semiotic agents access macro-sociological plane categories and concepts as values in the indexable realm of the micro-contextual. Through such access their relational identities are presupposed *and* creatively (trans)formed in interaction" (p. 193). Indexicality accounts for the mutually constitutive relationship between semiotic agent(s) and the social meanings they construct in interaction; in Silverstein's words, this relationship is at once presupposed and actively formed.

Indeed, as Hanks (1996) takes pains to reiterate, indexicality depends on "a sociocultural framework in order to be applicable to actual language phenomena" (p. 120). Such frameworks—and the "instructions" on how to make sense of the meanings that constitute them (p. 47)—are inherently ideological; the indexical relationships between linguistic forms and social meaning are construed through socially distributed values and ideas *about* those relationships. In other words, these relationships are mediated by language ideologies (Gal, 1998; Kroskrity, 2000; Schieffelin and Doucet, 1998; Woolard, 1998). As Bucholtz and Hall (2005) write, indexicality functions in relation to ideological systems precisely because "associations between language and identity are rooted in cultural beliefs and values—that is, ideologies—about the sorts of speakers who (can or should) produce particular sorts of language" (p. 594). These "sorts of language," however, do not designate fixed meanings, but rather point toward wider indexical grounds in which speakers "make ideological moves" (Eckert, 2008, p. 464), capitalizing, in a sense, on the "fundamental indeterminacy" of the ties between linguistic forms and social meanings (Johnstone and Kiesling, 2008, p. 25). The ideological nature of semiotic relationships thus constrains the possibilities of meaning-making, as differentials of power inform the linguistic manifestations of social interaction (Bourdieu, 1991). Through calculated acts of agency, however, such relations may be contested or subverted (Butler, 1997). As Eckert (2008) states: "The use of a variable is not simply an invocation of a pre-existing indexical value but an indexical claim which may either invoke a pre-existing value or stake a claim to a new value" (p. 464).

The use of any linguistic variable (or configuration of variables) thus calls into play previous uses of that variable and its indexical ties to social meaning, just as it potentially inflects the future meanings that the variable (or configuration of variables)

will index. It is precisely the indeterminacy of meanings constructed through indexical relations—that is, the inherent meaning *potential* (Halliday, 1978; Zhang, 2008) of any given sign—that implicates a diachronic component into the investigation of social meanings as they are constructed through, and as they help construct, synchronic discursive practices. Such an invocation of historicity in sociolinguistic research necessarily implicates Bakhtin (1986), whose concept of dialogism addresses the social and historical nature of meaning-making. As he writes: “Each utterance is filled with echoes and reverberations of other utterances to which it is related by the communality of the sphere of speech communication... Each utterance refutes, affirms, supplements, and relies on the others, presupposes them to be known” (p. 91). For Bakhtin, language is dialogical because individuals make meaning by drawing on the ideological horizons of the communities within which they use it; semiotic processes thus entail a constant, recursive engagement between the individual and the social (read: ideological) that transforms over time.¹

As Agha (2003) writes, the value of a linguistic style or register is a “precipitate of sociohistorically locatable practices, including discursive practices, which imbue cultural forms with recognizable sign-values and bring these values into circulation along identifiable trajectories of social space” (p. 232). Variationist scholars who focus on indexicality, as Podesva (2006, 2008) observes, have begun to account for the historical dimension of these “sign-values” in a field that has long focused on synchronic language use (even if, at its inception, the variationist enterprise sought to tease out the relationship between language variation and change). In her research on yuppie styles in Beijing, for example, Zhang (2008) establishes links between a linguistic variable—rhotacization—its use (or denigration) by individuals in contemporary contexts, and its association with fictional representations of what she describes as “smooth” or “slick” characters. In order to understand the meaning of such a variable, Zhang argues, scholars must pay attention “to the historicity of sociolinguistic resources ... and adopt an approach to social meaning that attends to the social history of these resources” (p. 217). Likewise, Johnstone and Kiesling (2008), who investigate the meanings associated with a phonological variable in Pittsburgh (/aw/-monophthongization), conduct historical research into “sociolinguistic landscapes of the past” to get at the ways in which this particular variable has come to mean different things to different people (p. 25). Coupland (2007) also describes in broad terms the “fundamental historicity” of the “dialectical relationships between people, practices and language varieties” and emphasizes the effects that certain historical conditions might have on the individual: “We inherit linguistic varieties and their meanings from social arrangements that were in place during earlier time periods... There is therefore a sense in which social meanings for language variation are always out of date and needing to be reworked into contemporary relevance” (p. 104). In other words, variables may be re-signified through their appropriation and use by speakers across spatio-temporal contexts.

In light of this discussion, an integration of SLA and sociolinguistic research methods enables an understanding of the ways in which individuals interpret and create

¹ Scholars who have found Bakhtin’s framework useful in the investigation of social meaning have most notably drawn on his concept of “voice” (Blommaert, 2005; Coupland, 2007; Johnstone, 2000; Ochs, 1992).

social meanings in foreign codes—or indeed, through the use of multiple codes at once. To date, however, considerations of indexicality have remained virtually absent from SLA research, with the exception of a small body of work that frames acquisition as socialization—that is, a developmental process through which a novice acquires communicative competence that enables him or her to interact with others in a meaningful way (Baquedano-Lopez and Kattan, 2007; Garrett, 2007; Kramersch, 2002; Ochs, 1992, 2002; Sarangi and Roberts, 2002; van Lier, 2002, 2004). In their study of adult second-language speakers in oral gatekeeping exams, for example, Sarangi and Roberts (2002) illustrate the merits of taking indexicality into account. As they write, indexicality “helps us to understand how the process of language socialization is both a matter of interpreting and responding in the local production of talk and a matter of learning how to be and act in social situations more generally” (p. 200). Approaching SLA as socialization necessarily complicates the use/acquisition dichotomy and illuminates the “social and historical complexities of the acquisition process” (Baquedano-Lopez and Kattan, 2007, p. 90).

Unlike language socialization research, which is primarily concerned with language as a medium of participation in various social formations, my project focuses on the individual’s acquisition of socially meaningful forms and her engagement in multilingual practices—and understands both as part of the process of SLA. The notion of indexicality that undergirds much work on language socialization thus features prominently in my own analysis, as I trace the ideological and historical links that inhere between linguistic forms and social meanings in a situation of language contact. With that objective in mind, I turn now to the different but related kinds of social meaning that have most frequently been invoked in the sociolinguistic literature and that inform my analysis of data: identities and personae; interactional positions; stances; and footings.

2.5.1 Identities and personae

Within a social constructionist framework, the concept of identity has been defined broadly as “a semiotic process of representation” (Blommaert, 2005, p. 203), a “social positioning of self and others” (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005, p. 586), an “outcome of processes by which people index their similarity and difference from others” (Johnstone, 2008, p. 151), and a person’s “sense of place” in the social world (Eckert, 2004b). Drawing on these somewhat disparate definitions of the term, I have distilled the concept in such a way that it can be useful in my study of multilingual style: identity is a relational, perceptual process through which individuals create meaning about who they are. Identity informs *how* individuals create meaning, and it orients the ways in which they interpret it. But, of course, “who one is” (and who “others” are) can take a number of forms at any given moment. As Bucholtz and Hall (2005) write, identity, as it has been variably defined in the literature, “operates on multiple analytic levels at once” (p. 586): there are discursive and interactional identities, as well as identities associated with broad social categories.

In order to tease out these varied forms of identity and to specify what I will mean by that term in this project, it is helpful to consider a related concept: persona. Although “persona” and “identity” have often been used interchangeably within social approaches to language, I nevertheless distinguish between the two as a means of enhancing the

nuances of my analysis. If one thinks of “identity” as referring to macro-level, demographic categories such as age, gender, class and ethnicity, as it did at the inception of sociolinguistics in the 1960s, persona might be thought of, in Bucholtz and Hall’s (2005) terms, as a “locally-intelligible” type (p. 586) that is based on one of these “culturally elaborated” categories (Holland and Leander, 2004, p. 17). Identities and personae are thus closely related to one another, the latter comprising a sort of personally-inflected but locally-recognizable instantiation of the former. In a sense, then, “identity” is a useful construct insofar as it is conceived in relation to “persona,” as identities constitute the macro-categories out of which the micro-categories of personae are created. Podesva (2006) distinguishes between the concepts as a means of understanding how style functions: “Identity can ... be seen as a superset of persona; all personae are identities, but not all identities are personae” (p. 200).

A style is a way of doing something, a way to be; it constitutes “a socially meaningful clustering of features within and across linguistic levels and modalities” (Campbell-Kibler et al., 2006, cited in Moore and Podesva, 2009) that index, or are associated with, personae and identities. Styles become meaningful through a relation of distinction vis-à-vis *other* styles that carve up the sociocultural landscape into meaningful categories or types (Bourdieu, 1984; Irvine, 2001). As Eckert (2000) explains, styles emerge out of a “process of bricolage—an appropriation of local and extra-local linguistic resources in the production not just of a pre-existing persona but of new twists on an old persona” (p. 214), and they are created through configurations of both linguistic and social practices, such as negative concord and cruising in cars (Eckert, 2000), or the use of Th-Pro discourse markers (such as “anything” and “nothing”) and particular applications of eyeliner (Mendoza-Denton, 2008). While both the concepts of identity and personae have proven useful in studies of stylistic variation as social practice, the close analysis of situated discourse is more likely to uncover indexical associations between linguistic forms and personae, which bear more immediately on the construction and interpretation of meaning in interaction. As Podesva (2006) states: “Stylistic variation is more likely to index situationally founded personae than ideological constructs like identity categories” (p. 199). In my analysis, I focus primarily on the former.

2.5.2 Interactional positions

The concept of “position” was first proposed in discourse studies as an alternative to the more static sociological construct of “role” (Davies and Harré, 1990). A position refers to a speaker’s dynamic location in interaction, which emerges at a crossroads of large-scale discursive formations and small-scale interactive gambits. Language is always uttered from a particular subject position that is both socially and historically situated in discourse. As Weedon (1996) explains: “Language and the range of subject positions which it offers always exist in historically specific discourses which inhere in social institutions and practices and can be organized analytically in discursive fields” (p. 34). Through the act of positioning, one assigns “fluid ‘parts’ or ‘roles’ to speakers in the discursive construction of personal stories that make a person’s actions intelligible and relatively determinate as social acts” (van Langenhove and Harré, 1999, p. 27). These personal stories make sense in relation to larger “master narratives” that are invoked

through the animation of discourses with which they are associated (Benwell and Stokoe, 2006, p. 43). Positioning theory thus presupposes a shared sociocognitive framework among interlocutors in order for their words—and their actions *through* words—to be intelligible. It takes into account not only the sociohistorical context of interaction, but also the semiotic agency of individual speakers, who may assume or resist the subject positions that are available to them through particular ways of speaking. Taking or assigning a position constitutes a “strategic interactional move” (Ribeiro, 2006, p. 50), as it orients the joint creation and interpretation of meaning.

A primary difference between positions and personae or identities lies in the linguistic forms with which they are indexically associated. Sociolinguists tend to link personae and identity categories to the use of linguistic variables at the phonological and, less often, at the morpho-syntactic level. Positioning theory, on the other hand, provides a means of understanding social meaning in relation to discourse, in both senses of the term—as the large-scale linguistic regimes that shape social order (Jaworski and Coupland, 1999) as well as the small-scale, intersubjective talk in which individuals engage locally. In Ribeiro’s (2006) words, positions ultimately characterize a “speaker and hearer’s most prominent stances (or projected selves) *in interaction*” (p. 73, italics mine), such as the moves from novice to expert that are instantiated through conversational repairs in referring sequences (Schiffrin, 1994). Situating the speaking subject within a discursive frame, positions are thus closely related to other social meanings, such as identities and personae, just as they tend to be associated, as Ribeiro points out, with particular evaluative stances.

2.5.3 Stances

Stances, generally considered either epistemic or affective, are evaluative positions taken in interaction vis-à-vis oneself, one’s interlocutor(s), the content or form of speech, and/or the situation in which it is uttered (Englebretson, 2007; Jaffe, 2009). Stances are indexed by linguistic forms—such as adverbials, modals, evaluative adjectives and, as I will discuss in detail below, discourse markers—and they mediate the associations that inhere *between* such forms and larger social structures (Bucholtz, 2009, p. 165). While the first linguists to consider stance focused on lexical and grammatical items themselves insofar as they were thought to encode evidential and affective meanings across contexts (Biber and Finegan, 1989), more recent considerations of stance have incorporated the notion into a broader account of the phenomenon of evaluation—the “cover term for the expression of the speaker or writer’s attitude or stance towards, viewpoint on, or feelings about the entities or propositions that he or she is talking about” (Hunston and Thompson, 2000, p. 5).

In Du Bois’ (2007) terms, a “stance act” is a form of social action that incorporates positioning and alignment alongside evaluation (p. 163); in other words, stance-taking entails the concomitant activation of all of these forms of social meaning through an invocation of presupposed, shared value systems without which such meaning could not be made. According to Kiesling (2009), stance functions as the primary engine of indexicality insofar as it is the speaker’s foremost concern in social interaction: “Stance is the center of this process of indexicalization because it is not each individual linguistic and social practice that an interactant decides on, but what stance to take in a

particular situation” (p. 179). Habitual or repeated stances become associated with interactional positions and/or personae; over time, these stances come to index larger-scale social meanings such as identities that are tied to demographic categories through a process that Ochs (1992) has described as “indirect indexicality.” Linguistic forms such as tag questions or discourse markers thus directly index subjective orientations to a social interaction or situations (and not, say, the broader demographic category of “female”); through repeated use in such contexts, however, they may become associated with individuals as representative of social categories or types who are then assumed, through a process of recursive projection, to take such stances (Irvine and Gal, 2000).

2.5.4 Footing

Footing, as articulated by Goffman (1981), marks the positions or alignment that an individual takes through a particular utterance. Any change in footing “implies a change in the alignment we take up to ourselves and the others present as expressed in the way we manage the production or reception of an utterance” (p. 128). Over the course of interaction, individuals shift footing constantly as a means of creating and reflecting social meaning. Goffman articulated this concept as a challenge to the “global notion(s)” of speaker and hearer (p. 146). In order to create a structural basis for the micro-analysis of talk, he reconceived the conventional conversational dyad by proposing what he called “participation framework” and “production status.” The former is divided into ratified and unratified participants, bystanders and eavesdroppers, while the latter is divided into author, animator and principal.² As Goffman writes: “An utterance does not carve up the world beyond the speaker into precisely two parts, recipients and non-recipients, but rather opens up an array of structurally differentiated possibilities, establishing the participation framework in which the speaker will be guiding his delivery” (p. 137). Footings are thus the dynamic engagement of one (or more) of these interactive roles through the local level of the utterance. More dynamic—and more elusive—than interactive positions, footings refer “to the very micro interactional shifts” of which such positions are constituted (Ribeiro 2006, pp. 73-4). To illustrate this distinction, Ribeiro (2006) explains that a shift in pronoun use may mark a shift in footing—say, between author and animator—but not necessarily a shift in position.

2.5.5 Summary

While the above terms have been used in different ways within sociolinguistic and (to a far lesser extent) SLA research, I have attempted to clarify and distinguish them here in such a way that they may each be useful in the analysis of linguistic data, revealing various facets of the construction of social meanings through language as well as the influence of such meanings on the actual *use* of language. The constructs are by no

² Goffman (1981) breaks down the notion of “speaker” into the following roles or functions (which may be served concomitantly): the author, who composes or “scripts” the lines that are uttered (p. 226); the animator, who gives voice to the author’s words; and the principal, whose “position, stand, and belief” (p. 226) are attested in or through those words.

means mutually exclusive; on the contrary, their relations to one another form a concentric structure, with each successive layer of meaning building on the former or expanding its focus. Through the subtle alignments reflected in shifts of footing, to the evaluative orientations indicated by stances, to the dynamic subject positions instantiated through forms of discourse, to locally intelligible personae and demographic categories known as identities, speakers create and interpret meaning in interaction. The linguistic forms that an individual employs to these ends are as varied as the social meanings that they index.

2.6 Multilingual variables

To date, most variationist research has focused on phonological and, to a lesser extent, morpho-syntactic variables in monolingual settings. My project, which considers style in multilingual contexts, necessarily shifts its analytic focus from a segmental level toward a discursive one as a means of accounting for the multiple languages in an individual's—and a community's—repertoire. I investigate my subjects' engagement in the multilingual practices of code-switching and bilingual discourse-marking, both of which serve them in socially meaningful ways—the former through their recourse to ideological-historical meanings, the latter through their recourse to local interactive ones. To be sure, traditional studies of SLA, which have focused on the acquisition of autonomous linguistic systems, have not considered such active multilingual practices as a means to, and a reflection of, language learning. As I have conceived it in this project, however, language acquisition entails more than learning grammatical and lexical forms; it also describes the subjective process of becoming multilingual—a process of affective, ideological and historical dimensions. The linguistic forms that an individual comes to use, as well as the social meanings that she indexes, emerge from the semiotically complex situation of language contact in which this becoming occurs.

2.6.1 Code-switching

As a widespread multilingual practice, code-switching, the alternation of two or more linguistic varieties within the same conversation or speech event, has attracted the attention of linguists and anthropologists since the middle of the twentieth century (Woolard, 2004). Weinreich (1953), among the first scholars to study bilingualism as a systematic correlation of linguistic code to social function, imagined the ideal bilingual speaker as someone who “switches from one language to the other according to appropriate changes in the speech situation . . . but not in an unchanged speech situation, and certainly not within a single sentence” (p. 73). Since Weinreich's remark nearly 60 years ago, much research has continued to be informed by a “monolingual bias” that code-switching reflects a linguistic deficit (Auer and Wei, 2007, p. 1). Since the 1970s, however, sociolinguists and anthropologists have countered this position, drafting typologies of the phenomenon and seeking explanations for its functions from two main perspectives: the grammatical and the social. As Woolard (2004) points out, while many (psycho)linguists have been concerned with the grammatical constraints on code-switching (Poplack, 1980; Myers-Scotton, 1993a), linguistic anthropologists have been

concerned with the social meaning of code-switching—that is, “not constraints that work *against* but rather motivations *for* and functions of code-switching” (p. 74, italics mine).

Research on the social functions of code-switching has been informed by the disciplinary affiliations of the scholars who have undertaken it. Linguistic anthropologists Blom and Gumperz (1972), for example, proposed a distinction between situational and metaphorical code-switching: the former refers to a change in language that signals, or is caused by, a change in the speech situation (such as a change of interlocutors); the latter refers to a change in language that effects (or is effected by) changes of stance or interactional positions *without* any apparent change in the external context. In other words, metaphorical code-switching is socially indexical. Auer (1984), working from within a Conversation Analytic framework, articulated a third, discursive function of code-switching—the coordination and management of discourse on a micro-interactional level—to explain alternations of language that seemed to be socially unmarked. And Myers-Scotton (1993b, 2005) devised the Markedness Model, a universal framework for understanding language choice as a negotiation of the social rights and obligations activated in interaction through recourse to “normative expectations” for each interaction type (2005, p. 160).

The varied functions of code-switching highlighted here are not mutually exclusive; the choice of language can reflect an external change in a speech event at the same time that it invokes ideological associations of meaning and marks a shift in footing. Most scholars of code-switching agree that it “offers an extra tool in communication that is at the disposition of bilinguals and allows for greater nuances of expression including marking pragmatic functions, meaning (connotative and denotative), identity (psychological and social) and affect” (Dolitsky and Bensimon-Choukroun, 2000, p. 1255). In my analysis of the data that I collected for this project, I have found the concept of “metaphorical” code-switching to be the most useful, insofar as it calls into play the indexical relations between language choice and social meaning—relations that are ideologically infused and that have emerged over time—that became my object of focus in the field. Each of the approaches to code-switching that I review above draws in some way on this concept; the choice of language in a particular context points toward some social meaning, whether that meaning is located on discursive, interactional and/or communal planes. Indeed, writing from an anthropological perspective, Woolard (2004) points out that most research to date has shown that multilingual individuals create meaning through code-switching by invoking indexical relationships. However, she adds, “what is needed is more work that shows just how and when indexicality emerges, and when it is reaffirmed, amplified, reformulated, or even dissipated” (pp. 89-90).

Within traditional SLA research, which, as I have stated, has focused almost exclusively on experimental and classroom settings and has been largely informed by ideologies of monolingualism, code-switching has been seen (if it has been seen at all) through the “learner-as-defective-communicator mindset” (Firth and Wagner, 1997)—that is, as a means of side-stepping problems as opposed to solving them. Most studies, as Lin (2008) points out, focus on the “binary research question of whether it is good or bad to codeswitch in the classroom” (p. 282) without suggesting “ways forward for analyzing how code-switching practices can be further improved to achieve better pedagogical and social critical purposes” (p. 281). Nevertheless, a few scholars have recently

acknowledged code-switching as a “prise de parole du sujet sur ses langues”³ (Kramsch et al., 2007, p. 440) that constitutes a primary motivation for language learning amid 21st-century processes of globalization. Inside *and* outside of the classroom, code-switching serves strategic and personal functions for language learners and users. In naturalistic settings in particular, it is thus far more difficult to study the acquisition and use of a single language without taking into account the other languages in an individual’s repertoire—languages that the individual may not even experience as discrete entities—and how she makes use of them. As Bailey (2007) explains, the social implications for individuals who engage in multilingual practices such as code-switching “are not a function of the formal linguistic distance between forms but of the social histories that have infused forms with particular meanings and varying levels of prestige” (p. 356). For that reason, studies of language learning and use in naturalistic settings must address code-switching as a vital, dynamic component of the processes of language learning and meaning-making.

2.6.2 Bilingual discourse-marking

Discourse markers have been alternately referred to as pragmatic markers, discourse particles, pragmatic particles and pragmatic expressions. Regardless of their denomination, however, all of the terms designate a similar linguistic object: “elements that bracket units of talk” (Schiffrin, 1987, p. 31) and that function both cataphorically and anaphorically, looking “simultaneously forwards and backward” within a given text (Schwenter, 1996, p. 857). Discourse markers—such as French *voilà*, Spanish *o sea*, and English *you know*—are also phonologically independent, generally separated from the surrounding context by pauses or shifts in intonation, and they are syntactically flexible. Moreover, they are also derived from different grammatical categories, such as adverbs and verbs, and there is debate about whether or not they constitute a grammatical category in their own right (Fraser, 1990). Nevertheless, linguists agree that discourse markers serve distinct pragmatic functions, signaling how speakers intend an utterance to be interpreted—either their own or their interlocutor’s (Fraser, 1990, p. 387). Discourse markers can indicate shifts in topic, they can background and foreground information, and they can initiate and maintain turns of talk (Brinton, 1990, p. 46).

To date, most of the research on discourse markers has attempted to shed light on the diachronic process of grammaticalization through which lexical items with referential content—such as French *genre* (Fleischmann and Yaguello, 2004)—have undergone semantic bleaching and come to serve purely grammatical or pragmatic functions in certain settings. This enlightening body of work has focused on discourse markers and their immediate *linguistic* context as a means of understanding how a given discourse marker functions *across* contexts. A smaller number of researchers, however, have considered the variable use of discourse markers by *speakers* across contexts. Beeching (2002), for example, who has studied the gender distribution and social stratification of discourse markers in French, shows how groups of speakers—in this case, men and women—exhibit variable preferences for markers that hedge epistemic certainty (that is, that express “tentativeness”); as a result, she cautions against an exclusive mapping of

³ “as a means for the subject to harness his/her linguistic resources”

forms to functions: “When considering the significance of particular discourse features, their communicative function must be carefully examined and may be multi-layered or ambiguous” (p. 45). Likewise, Fuller (2003a, 2003b), in her comparison of the use of discourse markers by subjects in formal (interview) and informal (conversational) settings, provides evidence that “stylistic variation affects the use of discourse markers” (Torres & Potowski, 2008, p. 278), thereby corroborating earlier findings by De Fina (1997), who, in her study of discourse-marking in an Italian language classroom, argues that the use of markers depends on the roles speakers assume in interaction and that the “meanings and frequency of occurrence of markers vary in different social occasions” (p. 352). These studies problematize any facile correlation between the use of a discourse marker—or, for that matter, any linguistic form—and its function, in part through an expanded notion of context that extends beyond the realm of discourse conceived as talk-in-interaction. While scholars working within this framework have drawn on constructs such as “speaker roles” and “social occasions” to illuminate the general ways in which the use of discourse markers varies across settings and among groups of speakers, they have tended not to consider the socially and historically situated individuals who constitute those groups. For that reason, I propose a shift in orientation that protracts not from the setting or the group, but from the individual herself for whom discourse markers index particular social meanings.

Within studies of bilingual discourse markers, a few scholars have approximated the shift in perspective that I am describing.⁴ Instead of focusing on multilingual contexts as a means of teasing out the relationship between code-switching and lexical borrowing, as most of the research on this area has done (de Rooij, 2000; Goss and Salmons, 2000; Maschler, 2000a; Torres, 2002), they have drawn links between an individual’s discourse-marking practices and her identity motivations. Maschler (2000b), for example, compares the synchronic and diachronic use of discourse markers in English-Hebrew discourse by two women, one of whom immigrated to Israel in early adolescence, one of whom arrived as an adult in her twenties. The speaker who moved to Israel at a later age makes no recourse to Hebrew discourse markers when speaking English, even after ten years of living in Israel; the other speaker, who arrived in Israel as an adolescent, does. Maschler concludes that when “considering the ways a bilingual employs discourse markers ... it is also important to consider the speaker’s history of bilinguality and attitude towards the two languages” (p. 551). For her part, Mendoza-Denton (2008) looks at the variable use of “ethnic discourse markers” (p. 249)—that is, “Th-Pro” forms such as *anything*, *something* and *nothing*—among Latina adolescents in a California high school as a means of understanding how symbolic practices link individuals to social aggregates.

In different ways, Mendoza-Denton (2008) and Maschler (2000b) both take into account the use of discourse markers as part of an individual’s stylistic practice. Their analyses thus implicate the notion of choice, recalling a sentiment articulated explicitly by Stubbe and Holmes (1995) in their work on the use of discourse markers in New

⁴ Given their saliency and extra-syntactic mobility, discourse markers are one of the most common linguistic particles transferred across languages, and a small number of studies of code-switching have focused on their use in multilingual contexts (Maschler, 2000a, 2000b; Torres, 2002, 2006, Torres & Potowski, 2008).

Zealand English: “The speaker’s choice of a particular pragmatic device expresses both referential and affective meaning, both within the context of an utterance, and often as a wider social and stylistic marker too” (p. 64). These choices locate the speaker within a social landscape; they make sense through recourse to a shared system of meaning-making that can only be learned through participation in communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). In situations of language learning, then, discourse markers, with their consummately pragmatic functions, are most readily acquired through interaction with native speakers, and their use by second-language speakers is most readily studied in naturalistic settings. Not surprisingly, research within SLA that has looked at discourse markers in second-language discourse has correlated higher levels of proficiency and “integration” into the target-language community with higher uses of discourse markers in the target language (Hellermann & Vergun, 2007; Sankoff et al., 1992; Torres & Potowski, 2008). An individual’s proficiency in a language is thus tied not only to her “history of bilinguality,” but also to her level of sociolinguistic competence, broadly conceived in this project as the ability to construct personally-relevant, locally-recognizable social meanings through the exercise of choice.⁵

2.7 The individual

I do not mean to imply through the invocation of “choice” that an individual has access to an unrestricted set of social semiotic possibilities through language; such choices are no doubt constrained by the conditions of an individual’s biographical trajectory as well as a multitude of other contextual factors (cf. Bourdieu, 1977). Nevertheless, I argue that the semiotic choices that a person makes, both linguistic and non-linguistic, ultimately constitutes a style—or, at the very least, that it is interpreted as such by *other* individuals. As Johnstone (1996) explains, linguistic choices in particular serve as a means of self-expression, intervening between the “social fact” and the “linguistic outcome” (p. 186). My project, which focuses on individuals in naturalistic settings, is designed to get at the idiosyncratic nature of language acquisition and use as sociohistorically situated and personally meaningful *individual* phenomena. Positioned at a crossroads of SLA and sociolinguistics, my research embraces qualitative methods of investigation and a complex understanding of the semiotic processes that underlie linguistic variation. I take what Johnstone and Kiesling (2008) have called a “phenomenological approach” to the study of individuals and their patterns of constructing social meaning in multilingual discourse. As these scholars explain: “Such

⁵ As Tagliamonte (2006) has noted, discourse markers are “notoriously difficult” objects of study in quantitative variationist work, precisely because their non-application—that is, the places where they could have occurred but did not—are almost impossible to circumscribe (p. 103). She recommends studying them within specific contexts in which their use might be expected, such as certain narrative structures. Macaulay (2005), for his part, chooses to investigate the frequency of given discourse markers as opposed to their proportional distribution. In my study and interpretation of *bilingual* discourse markers, I draw from both of these perspectives; I consider my subjects’ use of them in as many contexts as possible, over time, and in conjunction with their use of other discourse markers.

an approach requires two kinds of work: case studies of individuals' sociolinguistic worlds as they experience them ... and historical research about the sociolinguistic landscapes of the past" (p. 25). I will address both of these "requirements" after an extended discussion of my methodological reasoning.

Chapter 3

Methods and context

3.1 The ethnographic enterprise

My research methods are informed by my understanding of language as social practice, as a medium for the creation of social meaning. The primary question motivating my project—how to explain the variation exhibited among multilingual individuals who have acquired language within similar sociohistorical conditions—demanded recourse to qualitative methods that take into account the highly contextual dimension of language use and social interaction. For that reason, I designed a longitudinal, ethnographic study, for which I collected data in the form of participant-observations, interviews, recorded conversations and archival documents. My understanding of language acquisition and use as interrelated, holistic phenomena required a close look at their relationship across a multiplicity of perspectives—the very definition of “triangulation” in the qualitative research paradigm (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 165). I thus entered the field with a set of orienting questions, knowing that I would revise them over the course of my project as I engaged in the inductive process of ethnographic investigation, and as I orchestrated the “reflective and dialogic interplay between theory and data” (Emerson et al., 1995, p. 167).

Adler and Adler (1998) have defined the main advantage of qualitative, and in particular, ethnographic, research as its pull on the researcher “into the phenomenological complexity of the world, where connections, correlations, and causes can be witnessed as and how they unfold” (p. 81). The complexity that one observes is semiotic in nature; it entails the use of indexical signs that invokes an “appropriateness-to” and an “effectiveness-in” particular contexts (Silverstein, 2003, p. 195)—contexts that can only be apprehended through interactive engagement with a research site and the subjects who populate it. By conducting ethnographic fieldwork over time, I was able to see patterns in the way individuals engage in multilingual practices to create social meanings—that is, in the way they make use of locally-meaningful indexical signs. Once I had come to know my subjects intimately through interviews and informal conversations, I was able to make links between their use of such signs and the particularities of their biographical trajectories.

On a broader level, analyzing my participant-observations and the “thick description” (Geertz, 1973) that characterized writing about them enabled me to understand how my subjects’ semiotic practices are shaped by ideological associations of code with meaning that are, in turn, tied to the historical situation of language contact in which they have emerged. I focus on code-switching and bilingual discourse markers as a means of teasing out the ideologically mediated relationship between linguistic forms and social meaning and of understanding the subjective processes through which those forms are acquired and used. Thus, my project could be inscribed within the nascent domain of inquiry labeled “linguistic ethnography” by a group of socio- and applied linguists working in Great Britain (Tusting & Maybin, 2007). As I conducted fieldwork and began to analyze data, I referred to recent articles on the topic as a guiding framework—in particular, those that appeared in a 2007 special issue of the *Journal of Sociolinguistics*. Analysis through linguistic ethnography “attempts to combine close detail of local action

and interaction as embedded in a wider social world,” just as any ethnography does, but it “draws on the ‘relatively technical vocabularies’ of linguistics to do this” (Creese, 2008, p. 233). My research shares the impulse behind linguistic ethnography to tie forms and uses of language to broader social structures. In addition, my concern for taking into account my (social and historical) position vis-à-vis my subjects and my site of investigation reflects linguistic ethnography’s particular interest in “how research is affected by the researchers’ biographical trajectories” (Tsitsipis, 2007, p. 629). I will return to this issue at the end of this chapter.

3.2 Case studies and ethnography

Before I began conducting fieldwork, I knew that I wanted to focus on individual stylistic variation, and I suspected that my thesis would ultimately comprise a set of case studies. “Intense, holistic description[s] and analys[e]s of a single entity, phenomenon, or social unit” (Merriam, 1988, p. 16), case studies enable researchers to focus on specific phenomena as they occur and unfold in natural settings and to account for the highly contingent nature of their objects of inquiry—in my case, the individual and her dynamic, idiosyncratic engagement in multilingual practices. As van Lier (2005) points out: “Many of the processes investigated in case studies cannot be adequately investigated in any of the other common research methods, such as laboratory experiments, cross-sectional process-product research (such as pretest-treatment-posttest measures), and direct testing” (p. 95). Thus, case studies prove to be a productive approach to qualitative data collection in SLA, in particular for the “growing number of scholars” in the field who “argue for a greater focus on the contextual basis of performance and the ecology of learning and performance more generally” (Duff, 2008, p. 27). Case studies are also a useful means of revealing the mechanics of stylistic variation, accounting for the individual and the “vagaries of interpersonal dynamics” (Harklau, 2008, p. 30) in which she engages, phenomena that are often rendered invisible in large-scale quantitative research. In his book-length investigation of style, Coupland (2007) writes that “case studies and the speech of particular individuals or interactional clusters of people [are] the main focus in style research,” (p. 27) precisely because they entail a sensitivity to context and an understanding of variation as a kind of stylistic “achievement” (p. 27).

Certain scholars, such as Dörnyei (2007) and Duff (2008), have identified ethnography and case studies as two distinct but related forms of qualitative research. Clarifying these terms as they relate to research in applied linguistics, Duff (2008) writes that case studies “focus on the behaviors and attributes” of individuals, while ethnography “aims to understand and interpret the behaviors, values, and structures of collectivities or social groups with particular reference to the *cultural* basis for those behaviors and values” (p. 34). While Duff defines case study research as a paradigm in its own right—in fact, the brief section in which she describes the two approaches is entitled “Case Study *versus* Ethnography” (italics mine)—her insistence on a demarcation between the two risks compromising both of them. Van Lier (2005) contends that case studies “focus on context” and “change over time” (p. 196), and that they are a kind of “contextualized research” (p. 205)—precisely the contingent, longitudinal qualities that characterize ethnographic research. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine focusing on an individual, as Duff writes, *without* considering that individual and his or her linguistic

practices, at least in part, as cultural products. The collectivities that form the object of focus in ethnographic research are made up of individuals (or individual cases), while the social meanings and ideological proclivities that inform an individual's language use do not hold currency *outside* of a collectivity. Over the course of my fieldwork, I began to understand that my case studies could not be extricated from the ethnographic context in which they emerged, just as my ethnographic study would be meaningless if it were not grounded in the observation and analysis of particular individual cases.

Nevertheless, the boundaries of an individual case are permeable—a case is defined in relation to other cases—and meaning emerges through this relatedness. For that reason, I designed a multiple case study in order to strengthen my claims that would result from it, “by creating potential for cross-case analysis and the identification of trends or patterns that transcend individual cases” (Harklau, 2008, p. 25). To be sure, I also employed this design as a means of preempting accusations that my findings are not generalizable (Coupland, 2007; Dörnyei, 2007; Duff, 2008). While my sample of subjects emerged fairly quickly after my entrance into the field, it was not clear which cases I would focus on until I began to transcribe and analyze my recorded data. Because my case studies were embedded in a larger ethnographic study—or rather, because they were ethnographic cases studies—my process of participant recruitment and selection differed from that typically used, as it did not involve “opportunistic convenience sampling” (Duff, 2008, p. 114) or the active recruitment of willing subjects through public advertisements. Instead, I approached the selection of my focal participants through what Dörnyei (2007) describes as a “flexible, ongoing, evolving process” (p. 126). Over time, as I came to know the subjects in my sample more intimately, in particular their individual ways of *being* multilingual as well as their personal trajectories of *becoming* multilingual, it became clear to me where to focus my ethnographic eye.

3.3 The historical context

This project grew out of a preliminary certainty that I wanted to investigate a site of French and Spanish language contact in Paris. Because socially oriented research in SLA has privileged classroom environments—in particular those in which students are second language-learners of English (Harklau, 2005)—and recent third-wave approaches to stylistic variation have focused almost exclusively on monolingual English communities (though, for an exception, see Mendoza-Denton, 2008), I knew that a project based in a non-academic European setting and drawing on anthropological methods of investigation would, *per se*, constitute an original attempt at understanding the mechanics of variation in language acquisition and use. I thus conducted focused internet searches at the initial stages of my research, whereby I discovered a small but productive group of European historians (Asperilla, 2007; Gauthier, 2008; Lillo, 2002, 2004; Oso Casas, 2004, 2005; Ribert, 2006; Tur, 2006, 2007) who have been writing about Spanish immigrants in France.

Professor Natacha Lillo, one of the most prolific of these historians and, herself, the daughter of a political refugee from Spain who arrived in France shortly after the Spanish Civil War, has written extensively on *la Petite Espagne*, a former neighborhood in the Plaine quarter of Saint-Denis, just north of Paris near the Stade de France. The neighborhood, a tight grid of narrow streets lined with squat two-story buildings, was

also known as the “quartiers des passages”¹ (Lillo, 2001, p. 107), and it quickly became the “noyau fondateur de la présence espagnole en banlieue nord”² (p. 107), serving as a destination for three successive waves of Spanish immigrants during the 20th century. The first of these surges occurred before and after the First World War, as (primarily male) Spaniards from the current regions of Extremadura and Castille y León,³ suffering from an agricultural crisis and the famine that resulted from it, migrated to the northern suburbs of Paris to work in the glass and iron industry that had taken root there at the end of the nineteenth century.⁴

The second wave of migration took place during and just after the Spanish Civil War, as Barcelona, one of the last major Republican holdouts, fell to Nationalist troops, and Franco, declaring victory, established the seat of his dictatorship in Madrid. An estimated 500,000 Spanish civilians and soldiers fled across the Pyrenees during the first months of 1939, forming the largest single exodus of refugees from Spain—a movement of such magnitude that it has been named by historians as the *Retirada* (“retreat” in Spanish) (Lillo, 2004). France was ill-prepared to accommodate this unprecedented and unexpected inundation of people, and many of them were thus placed temporarily in internment camps in Roussillon. Further north, *la Petite Espagne* saw a marked influx of immigrants, as Spaniards in Saint-Denis welcomed refugees from their families in accordance with a regional policy that limited protection to direct descendants or ancestors of those who were already established there (Lillo, 2004, p. 100). Political refugees continued to arrive in *la Petite Espagne* until the Second World War, most of them without the hope of returning to Spain as long as Franco remained in power, grateful to France for offering “moult possibilités de travail et d’ascension sociale”⁵ (Lillo, 2004, p. 158).

The last wave of immigrants—the so-called “immigrés économiques”⁶ (Lillo, 2004, p. 124)—came to France in the 1960s and early 1970s at the height of the *Trente Glorieuses*; their transnational movement was spurred by the disintegration of Franco’s autarkic ideals and his government’s decision to allow—indeed, to encourage—emigration as a means of fortifying Spain’s stagnant economy through wealth shared from abroad with family members who remained behind. As Oso Casas (2004) notes, in the early 1960s, the migration of Spaniards to France served the economic interests of both countries: “La migración española a Francia de los años sesenta y setenta fue instrumentalizada ... en el marco de un proyecto político, de desarrollo económico y de ‘movilidad social’, tanto por parte del país emisor ... como del receptor, la Francia

¹ “neighborhood of alleyways”

² “the founding nucleus of the Spanish presence in the northern suburbs”

³ The autonomous community of Castille y León was formed in 1983 through the unification of the provinces of Castilla la Vieja, from which the majority of immigrants hailed, and León.

⁴ Lillo (2004) cites anecdotal evidence that these factories sent recruiters to Extremadura.

⁵ “many possibilities of work and social ascension”

⁶ “economic immigrants”

posbética” (pp. 157-158).⁷ The unidirectional traffic in human capital thus benefited France, whose rapid economic growth during the *Trente Glorieuses* created the need for a larger workforce that its own citizens were not willing to fulfill, as well as Spain, whose emigrants were expected to send back money from abroad, thereby contributing to the economic boom—the *milagro español*⁸—that took place between 1959 and the end of the dictatorship in 1975.

Today, participants in this wave of migration have been rendered socially “invisible” through processes of integration and displacement by more recent, non-European incomers (Delgado Gómez-Escalonilla, 2002). Nevertheless, they arrived in Paris in large numbers, settling far beyond the borders of the Plaine to inhabit neighborhoods in northern and eastern Paris. Although many of them migrated with the intention of returning to Spain within a few years, they often prolonged their stay indefinitely once they had experienced the living and working conditions in France. As Lillo (2002) writes, these immigrants often found themselves caught “entre la pression de l’État franquiste pour qu’ils maintiennent leurs liens avec l’Espagne, et l’incitation de la part de l’administration française pour qu’ils prolongent leur séjour”⁹ (p. 85).

Like their predecessors in the 1920s and 1930s, a majority of third-wave immigrants came from rural settings with little, if any, formal education; however, two major differences distinguished them. For one, they were able to save large sums of money once in France, due to the high wages they earned there relative to Spain and the widespread social services from which they benefited. For most of them, such financial flexibility ensured annual visits to Spain, and eventually many of them invested in Spanish real estate—often in or near their *pueblos* of origin—while continuing to live and work in Paris (Lillo, 2004, pp. 134-5). Second, this third wave of immigrants was partially comprised of poor, single women in their early 20s, who came to the capital in search of economic and social independence (Oso Casas, 2004). I will return to this unprecedented phenomenon presently.

3.4 Site and subjects

Upon reading Lillo’s book *La Petite Espagne de la Plaine-Saint-Denis: 1900-1980* (2004), which was based on research she conducted for her doctoral thesis, I became interested in this small corner of the Paris suburbs as a potential site of ethnographic study. Although I learned through further investigation that only a few Spaniards live there now, as most of them have traveled paths of social mobility to more comfortable neighborhoods in and around Paris—or indeed, back to Spain—I was nevertheless surprised to discover that the Spanish government still owns a plot of land that it purchased there in 1926. This half-acre of unpaved gravel, now surrounded by

⁷ “Spanish migration to France in the 1960s and 1970s was instrumentalized... within the framework of a political project, of economic development and of ‘social mobility,’ as much by the country of origin as by the host country, post-war France.”

⁸ *Spanish miracle*

⁹ “between pressure from the Francoist State for them to maintain their ties to Spain, and encouragement from the French administration for them to prolong their stay”

small businesses that are owned by North African and Cape Verdean immigrants, houses two organizations that stand as testimony to the predominately Spanish population who once lived there, and that continue to serve them and their descendants in different ways: the *Hogar de los Españoles* (hereafter referred to as the “Hogar”) and the *Centro Social Cristino García* (hereafter referred to as the “Centro”).

The Hogar, which Lillo describes as a “vestige de l’ancien société de secours mutuel”¹⁰ (p. 145), is now the seat of a cultural organization whose members include over 250 families of Spanish origin. Founded in 1926 as the social arm of a religious organization that had been established on the terrain, the Hogar occupies two of the three large buildings on the site: the former parish, which now functions as a multi-purpose recreation room, and a dilapidated, cavernous theater, part of which has been converted into a tapas bar that is open to the public on weekends. Both of these buildings were built over 80 years ago, shortly after representatives of the Church bought the land on behalf of the Spanish government in order to establish a religious presence in the Plaine that would ensure its adherents’ loyalty to their home country. The Hogar, in addition to operating the bar and café, however—“sortes de substitutions laïques à la messe célébrée autrefois en ces lieux”¹¹ (p. 146)—organizes Spanish cultural events throughout the year, including Carnival in March and the *Fête de l’Amitié* in June, as well as weekly flamenco classes for children.

The Centro, meanwhile, sits along the back of the lot on the ground floor of a two-story building that was constructed between 2003 and 2005 with funds from the Spanish *Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos Sociales*.¹² The Centro serves as a day-time social center for retired Spaniards—that is, people over the age of 62, who are residents of France and who can prove their Spanish citizenship by showing a *documento nacional de identidad* (DNI). Functioning as a “centre d’accueil de jour”¹³ (Lillo, 2004, p. 161), the Centro offers recreational activities such as Internet courses and weekly *salones de baile*, and it also houses a restaurant-café and hair salon—all intended as a kind of social intervention on the part of the Spanish government to serve its aging citizens abroad, who, now retired from the workforce, are at risk of social isolation (Gasó, 2007; Muñoz, 2007). Gabriel Gasó, the director of the *Fédération d’Associations et Centre d’Emigrés Espagnols en France* (FACEEF), which, along with three related organizations, is headquartered on the second-floor of the Centro’s building, explained to me in an interview that the impulse for the Centro was primarily demographic, its construction meant as a response to the “constat du vieillissement de la communauté.”¹⁴ Acknowledging that the role played over forty years ago by third-wave emigrants was crucial to its economic development and social image, and that now, these emigrants are members of the “tercera edad,”¹⁵ the Spanish government, through its embassy in France

¹⁰ “a vestige of the former social services organization”

¹¹ “a sort of secular substitution for the masses that were once celebrated on this site”

¹² Ministry of Work and Social Affairs

¹³ “daytime community center”

¹⁴ “an official report on the aging members of the community”

¹⁵ The terms “tercera edad” (Sp.) and “troisième âge” (Fr.) first appeared in the 1960s as a means of naming a demographic category comprised of people around the age of 65 or older. According to Muñoz (2007), this expression was first employed as an alternative to

as well as the *Ministerio* mentioned above, has sought to prevent the risks of “precariedad, marginación y exclusión social”¹⁶ (Viega et al., 2000, p. 4) by providing a place to congregate for its senior citizens in the Paris region.

Although the Hogar and the Centro share the same terrain, their membership and organizational policies remain entirely separate. As explained to me on a number of occasions by members of both associations, the former, which has been present on the site since the 1920s and which organized a successful protest against the Spanish state when it wanted to sell the land to the city of Saint-Denis in the 1980s, operates with a purely voluntary board of directors and generates revenue solely through the annual dues of its members. The dilapidated state of the Hogar’s two buildings, which have never been renovated, reflect the precarious financial and administrative state of the organization, whose governing board is notoriously disorganized. The Centro, on the other hand, occupies relatively pristine quarters built less than a decade ago with funds from the Spanish government, which today covers its annual operating budget of 140,000 euros; moreover, members of the Centro do not pay any dues. Many of the people I spoke with lamented the tense relationship that now exists between the two organizations; this surprised me, as the Hogar and the Centro appeared from my perspective to function cooperatively—an impression that was most likely engendered through their geographic proximity and the fact that they share historical roots and a common purpose—that is, as Gasó (2007) and Ribert (2007) have described it, the celebration of Spanish culture, the facilitation of social interaction among and between generations, and the transmission of memory.

As a contained social organization with specific requirements for membership, the Centro provided me with a partially controlled population of individuals who had participated in the same sociohistorical movement—namely, the third wave of Spanish immigration to France that began as early as 1959 and lasted around 12 years. I suspected that I would encounter individuals at the Centro “con el culo entre dos sillas”¹⁷ (Oso Casas, 2004), who, as long-term, late-stage language learners and users, had experienced complex linguistic trajectories in a situation of French-Spanish language contact and had engaged in multilingual practices across their adult lifespans. I thus decided to conduct my fieldwork there.

On a preliminary visit to the Centro, I met with Maria, its managing director, and explained in broad terms what I was interested in researching: the relationship between individuals’ use of French as a second language and the personal, social and historical conditions in which they learned it. Maria responded that I would be welcome to come to the Centro as much as I liked, but that she couldn’t guarantee that I would find what I was looking for, or that people would be willing to talk with me. The Centro had recently been featured in a documentary about *la Petite Espagne*¹⁸ (on which Professor Lillo served as an assistant), as well as a museum exhibit on Spanish immigration that had

the terms “old” (*vieux*) and “elderly” (*personnes âgées*) because of its less negative, neutral connotations.

¹⁶ “precariousness, marginalization and social exclusion”

¹⁷ “with their bottoms between two chairs”

¹⁸ Sensier, S. (Director). (2006). *Petite Espagne* [Documentary]. France: Yenta Productions.

been installed in the cavernous theater space at the Hogar; as a result, members were growing weary of public interest in their story. Moreover, she added, they rarely spoke French while they were at the Centro, and she was doubtful I would find the kind of multilingual data that I was hoping to collect. Maria nevertheless assured me that almost all of the Centro's members had come to Paris in the 1960s and that, even if they did not generally speak French at the Centro, they necessarily did so *outside* it, and to varying degrees of proficiency.

Maria also sketched profiles of the Centro's members, explaining that, although there were over 1,300 official members, most of whom live in the departments of Seine-Saint-Denis and Ile-de-France, there were about seventy to eighty members who might be considered "regulars." These people come to the Centro on average three or four times per week to take part in the organized activities that are offered there: courses in Internet, theater, dance, painting and Spanish language, an arts and crafts workshop, weekend dances and cultural excursions led by Josep, the Centro's social director. Because participation in these activities is contingent upon an annual "first come, first served" sign-up period, she explained, the people who do them constitute a core of members; having attended the Centro since its opening in 2005, most of them now know each other quite well.

At the end of January 2008, I began visiting the Centro on a daily basis, attending each of the organized activities as a means of getting to know their regular participants. Armed with my research questions about language and identity, and in spite of what Maria had told me, I was eager to witness interesting forms of code-switching and other multilingual practices among the people I encountered. Within a few weeks, however, two things became starkly evident: the majority of exchanges that take place within the institution's organized spaces do, indeed, occur in monolingual Spanish; in addition, these spaces are distinctly gendered.

While there is no official language policy at the Centro, the interactions that take place there seemed to be governed by an unwritten rule: members use Spanish with one another, but they readily accommodate non-Spanish-speaking individuals (grandchildren, neighbors) by switching into French. As one woman explained to me when I asked her why she criticized a Spaniard for speaking French during the Internet course, she said: "Hay que hablar español; aquí estamos en España!"¹⁹ While men and women seemed at first to abide by this "rule" equally, they nevertheless do so within very different domains. Although a couple of men attend the painting workshop and theater course, participants in the *lengua castellana* course and the arts and crafts workshop are exclusively female. Men at the Centro tend to congregate at a group of five or six tables in the café—a space demarcated behind three trellises that create a kind of transparent wall—where they play various card games while drinking beer. Over the course of my fieldwork I asked a number of people about this segregation of sexes, and my informants usually responded by citing the mentality of their generation and culture: with the exception of the Internet class, men see the Centro's organized activities, largely artistic enterprises, as distinctly feminine. Although women sometimes complain about this polarization—in particular, as it results in a disproportionate ratio of women to men at the weekly dance *salón* on Sundays—many of them nevertheless value their spaces at the

¹⁹ "you have to speak Spanish; here, you're in Spain!"

Centro for enabling a kind of social interaction that would not be possible in mixed company.

It is precisely the dynamic, varied nature of their interactions that drew me to the women at the Centro, and I decided early on in my fieldwork that I would focus on them. Not only were they more immediately accessible through the Centro's organized activities, but their particular story had also become an object of scholarly interest among a small number of European historians, sociologists and linguists, including Asperilla (2006, 2007), Lagarde (1996), Lillo (2004, 2007), Oso Casas (2004, 2005, 2007), Taboada-Leonetti (1987) and Tur (2006, 2007). These scholars focus on female participants in the third wave of Spanish immigration to France precisely because their stories constitute an unprecedented social phenomenon. With virtually no access to possibilities of social or economic mobility in their country of origin, many of these women saw emigration as a potentially profitable, if emotionally painful, option. They decided to leave Spain for Paris, where they were certain to find work in a domestic service industry among bourgeois households eager to distinguish themselves from lower socioeconomic groups by appropriating the social practices—namely, the employment of live-in servants—that had once been associated with the aristocracy (Oso Casas, 2004). Soon after they arrived in the capital, they entered established social and labor networks through which they found work as *bonnes à tout faire* or apartment building *concierges*,²⁰ earning four to five times their salaries in Spain. Thus, these young women chose to endure often traumatic personal hardships in pursuit of social mobility and economic independence which were not available to them in Spain; they left behind a socioeconomic system structured around male privilege, a system that they now readily deride through their criticism of the men who attend the Centro with the sole purpose of playing cards for hours on end.

By the late 1960s, the number of Spanish women in France had almost grown to equal that of men; about 70% of the Spanish women employed in Paris worked in domestic service, primarily as *bonnes à tout faire*, cleaning women or apartment building *concierges* (Asperilla, 2007; Tur, 2007). Their arrival in the capital coincided with a slowly growing movement of middle-class French women into the workforce. As Oso Casas (2004) observes: “Las mujeres españolas reemplazaron a las francesas, que se insertaban progresivamente en un mercado laboral más cualificado, en aquellas tareas reproductivas despreciadas socialmente: limpiando y cuidando niños y ancianos”²¹ (p. 18). Some of the women in my project spoke of the admiration that they initially felt for French women, whose relative social and economic independence promised possibilities

²⁰ *Bonne-à-tout-faire* was a popular term for the usually unmarried domestic employees who were responsible for a number of household duties—including cooking, laundry and childcare—in exchange for lodging (a *chambre de bonne* on the top floor of the building) and a monthly wage. *Concierges*, who were oftentimes married and had children, worked as managers of residential apartment buildings, usually accepting a small apartment and salary as remuneration.

²¹ “Spanish women replaced French women, who were inserting themselves progressively into a labor market that demanded more (non-domestic) qualifications of them, performing socially-devalued domestic tasks such as cleaning and looking after children and the elderly.”

of autonomy that had theretofore been inconceivable. One of them reported that, shortly after she arrived in Paris, she had several late-night talks with other Spaniards about the origins of what they perceived as French female *savoir faire*, and about how they could cultivate it themselves.

In spite of the “double discrimination” (Asperilla, 2007, p. 43) that they experienced as both immigrants and women, many female Spaniards thus saw their migration to Paris as an “aventure”²² (Tur, 2007, p. 70). As Asperilla (2007) writes, settling in Paris as single women “[elles] vivaient une certaine libération personnelle en échappant au contrôle morale qu’exerçaient l’Église et la Phalange dans leurs villages”²³ (p. 43). Their migration constituted a “proyecto de independencia personal”²⁴ (Oso Casas, 2004, p. 39), facilitated in large part by the gradual social changes in France that culminated in the events of 1968. Thus, they embarked on what many of them thought would be temporary sojourns abroad, believing that the economic and social independence they acquired in France would hold currency in their country of origin when they returned. Oso Casas (2004) describes the “paradoja de la diáspora española en Paris”²⁵ (p. 203), which is also embodied by many of the women I met in Saint-Denis: they made choices regarding their existence in France that they believed would ensure their social ascent in Spain. However, after years of adaptation to their host country, many of them realized that they did not want to leave; the Spain they had left behind had become unrecognizable to them during the *Transición Española* following Franco’s death, and they could not imagine giving up the independence they had come to enjoy in Paris.

By the late 1970s, domestic service had grown increasingly rare in the capital’s most bourgeois neighborhoods; live-in employees were eventually replaced by part-time “señoras de limpieza”²⁶ as younger generations of the upper middle class sought new means of social differentiation, such as international travel (Oso Casas, 2004, p. 83). By then, most of the women in my research sample had held a number of jobs both in and outside of domestic service—“la stratégie du pluri-emploi”²⁷ as Oso Casas (2007) has called it—and they had established social and professional networks through which they gleaned a sense of autonomy that they believed they would have to forfeit if they returned to Spain.

3.5 The sociolinguistic landscape

The scores of Spanish women who participated in this wave of migration to Paris settled primarily in a few concentrated neighborhoods and became eminently visible figures. The *bonne à tout faire* materialized in the French imaginary, inspiring popular representations of the Spanish female immigrant that exaggerated her linguistic

²² “adventure”

²³ “experienced a certain personal freedom by escaping the moral control exercised by the Church and the Falange in their villages (in Spain)”

²⁴ “personal project of independence”

²⁵ “paradox of the Spanish diaspora in Paris”

²⁶ “cleaning women”

²⁷ “the strategy of multi-employment”

deficiencies and cultural particularities and that circulated among various sectors of French society. In 1964, for example, Rembauville-Nicolle published the *Guide bilingue ménager: À l'usage des employées de maison espagnoles et de leurs employeurs*.²⁸ Although the author describes her book as a practical guide for both French women and their Spanish employees, the scenarios and illustrations that she includes in it are clearly designed to amuse the Parisian bourgeoisie. As she cautions her reader at the beginning of the introduction:

Si vous ne connaissez pas les Espagnols ni l'Espagne, si vous n'aimez pas ce pays, ou si vous n'avez pas de sympathie naturelle pour l'âme hispanique, si vous êtes enfin une Française trop raisonnable, trop logique et de tempérament triste, surtout ne prenez pas d'Espagnole à votre service! Dans le cas contraire, accueillez-la chez vous avec chaleur. (p. 20)²⁹

Rembauville-Nicolle warns her French-speaking readers against employing Spanish *bonnes* unless they have “a natural sympathy” for Spaniards. Although the author does not define the qualities that make up the “Spanish soul,” she implies that there are certain “French” characteristics—logic, reason and melancholy—that it lacks. Aware of the dangers of such simplistic dichotomies, Rembauville-Nicolle goes on to caution her reader against relying on facile stereotypes about Spanish women: “Tous les Espagnols ne sont pas bruns ni toreros ni chanteurs de flamenco. Mais presque tous sont gais de nature, vifs et enjoués. Ils savent rire et profiter de la vie sans amertume”³⁰ (p. 20). Nevertheless, the eccentric, simplistic *bonnes* who populate her guide embody the essentializing discourses that she criticizes. Her introduction is followed by brief chapters in both French and Spanish that exaggerate the difficulties that might be anticipated due to the linguistic and cultural shortcomings of a Spanish employee: *Servir à table/Servir la mesa, Généralités sur la cuisine française/ Generalidades sobre la cocina francesa, Comment accueillir quelqu'un à la porte/Como acoger a alguien que llama a la puerta*.³¹ Sporadic illustrations punctuate Rembauville-Nicolle's text and point up the *bonne's* incompetence; one image, for example, shows a dark-haired maid as she burns a shirt with an iron while a group of firemen look on.

A year later in 1965, Bouvard published a dictionary entitled ‘*Madame n'est pas servie*’: *Dictionnaire des patrons et des domestiques*,³² which targets employers of domestic servants of all nationalities, but includes a number of specific terms that

²⁸ *Bilingual domestic guide: For the use of Spanish employees and their employers*

²⁹ “If you don't know Spaniards, or if you don't like Spain, or if you don't have any natural sympathy for the Spanish soul, if you are merely a French woman who is too reasonable and logical and who has a sad temperament, do not bring a Spaniard into your home! If, on the contrary, you don't feel this way: welcome her into your home warmly.”

³⁰ “Not all Spaniards are dark-skinned, bullfighters, or Flamenco singers. But most of them have a happy, lively and jovial character; they know how to laugh and take advantage of laugh without any bitterness.”

³¹ *Serving at table; Generalities on French cooking; How to welcome someone at the door*

³² ‘*Madame is not served*’: *A dictionary for employers and servants*

reference Spanish women. Under *F*, Bouvard includes *Flamenco*, which he defines as the “façon particulière qu’ont les domestiques espagnoles de frapper régulièrement du pied pour manifester leur mécontentement”³³ (p. 77); under *S*, he lists *Sieste*, explaining that “les bonnes espagnoles et les mauvas portugais l’ont ammenée en 1961. Personne ne s’en est relevé depuis. Surtout pas eux”³⁴ (p. 179). Like Rembauville-Nicolle, Bouvard writes with the authority of someone who has employed foreign women and can offer advice about cohabitating with them. His tone is knowing and exasperated; Bouvard assumes that his reader has experienced the inevitable frustrations that come from employing foreign servants, and the humor in his text emerges from exaggerated representations of the *bonne à tout faire* as lazy and incompetent.

In yet another tongue-in-cheek book framed as a practical resource and designed for consumption by the Parisian bourgeoisie—*Conchita et vous: Manuel pratique à l’usage des personnes employant des domestiques espagnoles*³⁵—Fasquelle (1968) addresses her reader, a female French employer of a generic Spanish *bonne* represented by the figure of “Conchita”: “Chaque chapitre vous donne les mots et les phrases espagnoles indispensables pour vous faire entendre de votre bonne, et la guider, et la conseiller, jusqu’à en faire—ce qui est le rêve de toute maîtresse de maison: une perle!”³⁶ In her introduction, Fasquelle explains that she has drawn on experiences with her own “Conchita” to ensure the book’s accuracy and usefulness: “Je vais vous raconter mes aventures ... et comment nous sommes parvenues à nous entendre malgré ‘l’infranchissable barrière linguistique’, avec quelques efforts de part et d’autre, mais surtout de ma part, je dois l’avouer en toute modestie, car [elle] ne ‘mord’ pas au français”³⁷ (p. 10).

Placing “insurmountable linguistic barrier” in quotation marks, Fasquelle alludes to the popular nature of this assumption while suggesting at the same time that it is little more than an *idée reçue* whose validity she throws into question. Although she frames Conchita’s aversive relationship to French in animalistic terms through her use of the verb *mordre*, Fasquelle nevertheless seems aware that such a metaphor is problematic; she thus places the verb in quotation marks to mitigate its illocutionary force. Regardless of such gestures, however, the figure of Conchita that she presents is based on broad, simplistic notions about Spain and Spaniards. Conchita is “de nature plutôt liante” and “[elle] adore bavarder”³⁸ (Fasquelle, 1968, p. 124); furthermore, “[elle] aime les fêtes par

³³ “Particular way that Spanish servants have of regularly tapping their feet as a way of expressing their displeasure”

³⁴ “Spanish *bonnes* and bad Portuguese brought it in 1961. No one has gotten up from it since. Especially not them.”

³⁵ *Conchita and you: Practical guide for the use of people employing Spanish servants*

³⁶ “Each chapter provides you with indispensable Spanish words and phrases so that you can make yourself understood by your *bonne*, and guide her, and advise her until you make of her—the very dream of every housewife: a pearl!”

³⁷ “I’m going to tell you about my adventures... and how we came to understand one another despite ‘the insurmountable linguistic barrier,’ with a bit of effort from both of us, but mostly from me, I must admit in all modesty, because (she) does not ‘bite into’ French.”

³⁸ “of a sociable nature (who) adores to chat”

principe (c'est dans le caractère espagnol)"³⁹ (p. 128). As the paradigmatic embodiment of the Spanish *bonne*, Conchita is as cheerful and chatty as she is illogical and passionate—an image that circulated not only through the books of advice that I mention above, but also through comic strips, films and television programs produced during the same period (Tur, 2007).

The new cohabitation of Spanish women and French families that inspired these texts required individuals to resort to unfamiliar strategies of communication, and it frequently engendered misunderstandings for which the *bonne* was held responsible. As Tur (2007) writes: "Son incapacité à parler correctement le français ... nourrira désormais toutes les représentations de Conchita"⁴⁰ (p. 74). All of the resources I have cited, for example, devote at least one section to the pitfalls occasioned by the use of the telephone, addressing the Spanish *bonne's* lack of etiquette as well as her lack of proficiency in French. As Bouvard (1965) writes: "Si ... vous entendez susurrer dans votre récepteur: 'La Madame elle est partie...', n'en concluez pas pour autant que le bébé de votre correspondant s'est saisi de l'appareil. Ce sont la plupart du temps des domestiques espagnols qui sont au bout du fil"⁴¹ (p. 190). While Rembauville-Nicolle (1964) includes in her book an illustration with the caption *Répondre au téléphone – Contestar al teléfono*, in which a Spanish *bonne* holds up the telephone to a talking canary, Fasquelle (1968) explains to her reader that she resolved problems of miscommunication on the telephone by asking her friends to pronounce their names with a Spanish accent: "J'ai dit à mes amis intimes d'espagnoliser leur prénom et de se limiter à l'énoncer à (la bonne); ainsi lorsqu'elle m'annonce que Maria ou Marcello ont appelé, je m'y retrouve à peu près"⁴² (p. 134). If Conchita utters anything beyond monosyllabic affirmations, she is depicted as an infantile woman who cannot assimilate the intricacies of the French language. "Si on insiste sur l'incapacité de Conchita à parler le français, il ne fait aucun doute que la maîtresse de maison française pourra, elle, s'exprimer dans un espagnol parfait, même si elle ne l'a jamais appris, à l'aide du seul guide ménager"⁴³ (p. 74). It is the French employer, then, who must ultimately make an effort both to communicate in Spanish and to teach her employee rudimentary French; Conchita, although she is fun-loving and chatty, lacks the intellectual capacity and the motivation to master a second language. Spanish is thus perceived as less rich, less complex than French, ideologies that are recursively projected—both by French and Spanish women—onto the individuals who acquired them as native languages (Irvine & Gal, 2000).

³⁹ "Loves parties out of principle (it's in the Spanish character)"

⁴⁰ "her inability to speak French correctly... contributed to representations of Conchita"

⁴¹ "If... you hear someone whisper into the receiver: 'The madame, she is out...', don't conclude in the least that your correspondent's baby has taken the telephone. It's usually a Spanish servant on the other end."

⁴² "I told my intimate friends to Spanishize their first names and to only use that form with my (*bonne*); thus, whenever she tells me that Maria or Marcello has called, I'm able to figure out what she means more or less"

⁴³ "If one insists on Conchita's inability to speak French, there is no doubt that the French housewife can express herself in perfect Spanish—even if she has never learned it—with the help of a domestic guide alone."

As I got to know the women regulars at the Centro through our interactions and interviews, I realized the extent to which these representations had shaped their language-learning trajectories and the shared narratives that now situate them in relation to larger historical processes. Whether or not they had worked as *bonnes à tout faire*, or building *concierges*, or as seamstresses in Parisian *ateliers de costura*—and most of them had worked in one or more of these capacities—they saw their biographical trajectories as constituting, or at least as positioned in relation to, the common, specifically gendered narratives of migration that circulate among and about third-wave Spanish female immigrants. Through their identification with a common narrative that is entwined with the same large-scale social, economic and historical threads, the women on whom I focused constitute a community of sorts, defined through other means than national affiliation or linguistic practices alone. The Centro facilitates this sense of community through the recognition and concomitant neutralization of these threads; indeed, the women see themselves as different from both their French and Spanish counterparts—outsiders on both sides of the Pyrenees—but at the Centro, that difference is precisely what makes them similar to one another. As Amalia, one of my case studies, once explained to me: “Au Centre, je suis moi!”⁴⁴ This sense of distinction, which is shared by the other women at the Centro, is reflected in their use of language. After spending over forty years in France, they now speak both French and Spanish in distinct ways from one another, depending in part on their particular language-learning trajectories and the ideological associations they have accrued over time.

3.6 Research sample and selection of case studies

My sample of subjects is comprised of twenty-two women who attend the Centro on a regular basis. The women range in age from 62 to 80, and, with the exception of the oldest individual, whose parents were political refugees, they all immigrated to France in the 1960s in their early to mid-twenties. While they come from almost every region in Spain—including Cataluña and Galicia—a majority of them hail from Castilla-La Mancha and Extremadura, and today they all live in Paris or its northern suburbs. Once I had gotten to know them through observing and participating in the Centro’s organized activities, I began to spend time with them *outside* these spaces (including outside the Centro, at cultural excursions and over meals in some of their homes, for example), recording their informal conversations with one another, as well as with other people. After three months of fieldwork, I asked them individually if they would participate in loosely structured interviews so that I could learn the particular details of their biographical and linguistic trajectories, and glean their language attitudes and levels of proficiency. I called these interviews *conversaciones* as a means of diminishing their perceived formality, and, while all of the subjects agreed to take part in them, they did so with varying degrees of openness. The *conversaciones* lasted between thirty minutes and three hours depending on my subjects’ willingness to talk about what were often very personal and traumatic experiences. Regardless of their length, however, all of them were an invaluable means of understanding the ways in which my subjects positioned themselves vis-à-vis common narratives, as well as the particular social meanings

⁴⁴ “at the Centro, I can be myself!”

relevant to them, both within the local context of the Centro and the larger sociohistorical context of migration.⁴⁵ Furthermore, because each of my subjects, on my request, spoke French for at least half of the *conversación*, the recordings provided me a means of assessing, in qualitative terms, their level of proficiency in the language.

While at first blush it appeared that people at the Centro tacitly agree to speak Spanish there whenever possible, the more time I spent with my subjects, the more I began to observe regular, if subtle, uses of French—in particular among those women who are married, or had been married, to French men, and who told me that they now prefer speaking French to Spanish. It also became clear that French, although used far less than Spanish at the Centro, functions as a kind of ambient resource, as all of the individuals I encountered there speak it with at least nominal proficiency. Observing who made use of this resource—and who did not—became a significant aspect of the time I spent in the field, and it ultimately led me to choose the three women who would become my case studies—Lina, Amalia and Benita. As I show over the course of the next three chapters, these women draw from a shared repertoire of linguistic resources in distinct ways as a means of constructing multilingual styles.

The analyses that follow are grounded in my extensive participant-observations, detailed in nearly 750 pages (236,000 words) of field notes, as well as over 200 hours of audio-recordings (made of conversations, interviews and courses at the Centro) and the 280,000-word corpus of data that I transcribed from those recordings. Analyzing this data, I show how the women in my study, in spite of the fact that they began learning and using their second language under the same sociohistorical conditions, became multilingual in idiosyncratic ways; they code-switch (or do not) and use bilingual discourse markers differently from one another. Nevertheless, they have several biographical details in common: they were born during or just after the Spanish Civil War; they stopped attending school as adolescents; they immigrated to France in the early 1960s; they were married there and eventually decided to stay. Moreover, they all learned French in informal settings, often under conditions of duress; today, they are more or less equally proficient in the language, even if their feelings about speaking it—and their attitudes about *how* to speak it—are informed by different linguistic ideologies. This last fact is reflected in the ways in which they now make use of their languages in both monolingual and multilingual discourse, and it motivates the following questions as a means of explaining the variation between them: where do their biographical trajectories diverge? What strategies did they employ to learn French, and what attitudes do they now reveal about this process? How do they position themselves vis-à-vis common narratives about Spanish migration to France? Bearing these questions in mind, I take each case study in turn, dividing them into four distinct but related sections: a general introduction; a biography that foregrounds the individual's linguistic history; a general discussion of the individual's language attitudes and use; and an analysis of transcripts that exhibit the individual's creation of idiosyncratic, multilingual styles.

⁴⁵ To be sure, I observed the men at the Centro alongside the women; I also conducted interviews with a handful of them as a means of gaining a different, comparative perspective on the questions that interested me in the field.

3.7 Transcription and translation

For the first three months that I conducted fieldwork, I transcribed everything that I recorded at the Centro. Through this process, I was able to shift and refine my analytic focus in the field, first homing in on a group of women (who came to constitute my research sample) and then on specific individuals within that group (the three women who became my case studies). As Ochs (1979) points out, “transcription is a selective process reflecting theoretical goals and definitions” (p. 44). Given the holistic, inductive nature of ethnographic research, however, it was partly *through* the act of transcription that I refined my objectives. Although I have heeded Ochs’ advice to “be conscious of the filtering process” (p. 44) that transcription requires, I do not rely exclusively on her conventions. Instead, I turn to Bucholtz and Hall (2008), whose discourse analytic approach to language use in interaction informs their process of transcription in ways that reflect the most current practices in the field of sociolinguistics. (See Appendix A for a key of transcription conventions.)

As much as possible, I account for non-linguistic details in my transcriptions as a means of contextualizing my subjects’ use of language. The claims that I make about the social meanings associated with their code-switches and bilingual discourse markers emerge from the various sources of data that I mined over time—and of which my transcriptions are only one component. Each of my case studies is constructed primarily through a corpus of such transcriptions, which serve as detailed representations of the interactions and situations that they are meant to capture. As is sometimes the case with multilingual data composed of closely related languages, it is not clear at some points in my recordings whether my subjects are speaking Spanish or French—the negative *non/no*, for example, pronounced with a slightly nasalized vowel, could belong to either language. Although some scholars, such as Woolard (1999) and Woolard & Genovese (2007), have focused on the intentional use of such ambiguous forms—which they term “bivalent”—in the creation of social meaning, I have eschewed an exploration of them here, primarily because of the infrequency with which they appear in my data.

Nevertheless, almost none of the transcripts included in this dissertation are monolingual. As a means of indicating the switches in code that occur in them—from either French to Spanish or Spanish to French—I switch from roman to italic type, reserving the former for the interaction’s “matrix” language (Myers-Scotton, 2005) or “base” language (Grosjean, 2010), which I have determined by considering quantitatively the use of a particular language in a given interaction. Among my research subjects, the language that fulfills this role often remains the same across contexts (thereby implicating the notion of language preference in the construction of multilingual style), but this is not always the case. In every instance, I have attempted to represent the interaction as it transpired; I therefore leave unaltered any utterance that might be described in other circumstances as “ungrammatical.” I have used two main forms of transcription: block quotes, which emphasize the content of my subjects’ speech, and scripts, which foreground the interactive nature of their speech *as discourse*. In either case, I translate these texts in their entirety after presenting them as they originally occurred, conveying as accurately as possible their register and tone, and including only the most fundamental transcription symbols.

3.8 My position

Ethnographers engage with a site from a subject position that is socially and historically informed; they describe and interpret from this position, and they must account for its influence on the ethnographic enterprise. As Duranti (1997) states: “An ethnography is an interpretive act and as such should be turned on itself to increase the richness of description” (p. 95). This self-reflexive “turn” is effected through the ethnographer’s constant and critical consideration of the subjective aspects of social interaction, through the awareness that his or her acts of description represent choices, and that these choices reflect both the unfolding particularities of the field and his or her motivated engagement with it. At different moments over the course of my fieldwork and my analysis of data, I have been aware of different “facets of (my) identity” (Schiffrin, 2006) becoming more salient than others: my gender, my age or my nationality. I am attuned to the ways in which these characteristics may have affected my methods of data collection, as well as the data itself. As Emerson et al. (1995) write, “data are never pure” (p. 167), and I try to account for this throughout my analysis. In other words, I think about my thinking, to modify a phrase from Preissle (1999, p. 654), and about the highly contingent ways in which my fieldwork unfolded. I consider how it might have evolved differently if it had been undertaken by another ethnographer. As a result, I inscribe myself into the analysis whenever my subjectivity seems to inform the data collected (and this is almost always)—especially those instances where I focus on the social meanings created through interactions in which I participated. As my project focuses to a large extent on language use in multilingual contexts, I am particularly sensitive to the linguistic choices made by individuals—including me—and the possible meanings those choices create.⁴⁶

I wanted to conduct research in a site where I would not have access to my native language, where I would be required at all times to use one—or both—of my “foreign” tongues. I suspected that such a position would afford me particular insight into my own process of becoming multilingual. Outside of English, I could more readily compare my attitudes toward French and Spanish as they related to my different experiences of learning and speaking them. I began studying French in middle school when I was 12 years old; I now teach it at the university level and am sometimes mistaken for a native speaker. As for Spanish, I initially studied it as a pastime during a summer in college, reading a grammar book that I found in my sister’s closet and participating in conversation exchanges with a Spanish neighbor. Although I now speak both languages with native fluency, I am generally, though not always, more comfortable in French. Nevertheless, the linguistic choices that I made in the field were informed less by my insecurity than by my desire to accommodate my interlocutors. When people at the Centro saw that I was male and relatively young, they seemed to grant me a certain authority that they associated with the use of French. My status was further accentuated by the fact that I was clearly an outsider—not an American so much as a non-Spaniard (they rarely alluded to the fact that I am from the United States). I knew that such a

⁴⁶ I should add that these choices were not always “free.” As I stated previously, during the interviews that I conducted, I asked each woman if we could speak French exclusively for a while to ensure that I would have enough data to assess her proficiency in the language.

confluence of factors was likely to influence their choice and use of language with me; I thus made a concerted effort to initiate my interactions in Spanish, as this was the language that most people seemed to prefer (at least while they were at the Centro), while letting them know that I also speak French. Over time, I established communicative patterns with the individuals I interacted with most frequently, using Spanish or French exclusively, or code-switching between languages to varying degrees and in variable ways—patterns established through tacit arrangements informed only partially by my desire to accommodate what I presumed to be their linguistic preferences. While some individuals complimented my proficiency in Spanish, others remarked that I seemed more comfortable speaking French and made attempts to accommodate *me*.

Conducting research in both French and Spanish also threw into relief the different ideologies I espouse about the people who speak them. I recall feeling relieved on several occasions as I walked away from the Centro at the end of a long day, my head throbbing from the impressive volume with which many of the Spaniards spoke. (Indeed, early in my fieldwork, one of my subjects told me with a smile as she pointed to a television set and a group of beer-drinking men playing *tute* in the Centro's café: “¡Nos gusta gritar!”⁴⁷) Climbing the escalator to the RER platform at La Plaine-Stade de France, I would find myself surrounded by the soft, hushed tones of groups of French *cadres* who were waiting for the train. This sudden move between languages would often throw me off guard. Instantly—and for only an instant—I would slip into a space in which I could no longer recognize words in any language, into a space, perhaps, *outside* of language, estranged even from English. Those moments were rare, and I savored them. Somehow, I believe, they enabled me to gauge my dynamic, affective stances toward the languages in my own repertoire, to experience in myself the very thing I was attempting to trace in the field.

Throughout her book *The Vulnerable Observer*, Behar (1996) acknowledges the importance of reflexivity while pointing to the delicate balance between taking one's subjectivity into account and interpreting the practices of others. As she asks: how does one “write subjectivity into ethnography in such a way that you can continue to call it ethnography” (p. 7)? Over the course of this project, I have tried to do exactly that: account for my presence in the field and my influence on the process while maintaining the integrity of my ethnographic research *qua* ethnography. This has entailed keeping a constant and primary focus on my subjects themselves and developing a sensitivity to the subtle changes in our relationship across contexts and over time. Through the meticulous practice of field observations and note-taking, I was able to trace the ripples of influence effected by my movement through the field, measuring them at different moments and in different places, preserving all the while a global focus on the field itself.

⁴⁷ “We like to yell!”

Chapter 4

Lina: a case study

4.1 An introduction

On my first visit to the arts and crafts workshop, Lina hands me a pair of scissors and a two-year old issue of *Marie Claire*, telling me to clip anything that I find strange or mysterious. “Me gustan las cosas raras,”¹ she explains, as she flips through a pile of magazines that have clearly been picked over before. Pilar and Anna, the only others present, scan magazines of their own; today they have begun to make collages in preparation for an exhibit at the Centro that will take place in a few months. “¿Como éste?”² I ask, showing Lina a sparkling, diamond-studded watch in an advertisement for Cartier. She shakes her head and clicks her tongue; the watch isn’t strange enough. “Lo que sale del *ordinaire*,”³ she insists in a soft voice, her switch into French underscoring the exaggerated strangeness she is seeking and its undeniable absence from the image I have shown her. “¿Cosas raras!”⁴

Slightly abashed by Lina’s rejection, I return to my tattered copy of *Marie Claire* in search of something more suitable; when Lina remonstrates the other workshop participants, I am relieved. She frowns in disappointment as Anna proffers an image of a desert palm tree: “Mírame las cosas con ojos de artista!”⁵ And when Pilar leaves a jagged edge on her cut-out of a gold bracelet, Lina unleashes general words of criticism aimed at all of us: “Cortáis como la *tondeuse de gazon*!”⁶ Indeed, I soon learn that such gentle but firm reproaches are Lina’s pedagogical trademark; as the workshop’s volunteer instructor, she often admonishes her students to pay closer attention to theme and technique, playfully exaggerating her frustration.

I toss aside *Marie Claire* and reach for a Spanish magazine I don’t recognize, opening it at random to an advertisement for sliced ham that features a colorful image of a cartoon pig; I smile at Lina and ask, ironically, if this is strange enough. Anna and Pilar chuckle while Lina sets down her scissors and points to a pile of collages in the middle of the table. “Mira,”⁷ she says, as she begins to sort through the latest examples of her work, holding each one up in turn, improvising a title and commenting on what makes it unique. I am instantly amazed by what she shows me; Lina’s collages are nothing like the amateur projects I have envisioned—jumbled compilations of images like I had once made in primary school. Instead, they are thematically and visually complex, almost all of them featuring evocative, sometimes unrecognizable images of the female body: faces, lips, torsos, hands and legs—parts that Lina has amputated from print models and pasted in surreal configurations against ethereal backdrops.

¹ “I like strange things”

² “Like this?”

³ “What is out of the *ordinary*”

⁴ “Strange things!”

⁵ “Look at things with the eyes of an artist!”

⁶ “You all cut like *lawnmowers*!”

⁷ “Look”

“Cada uno cuenta una historia,”⁸ she explains, pausing to display her favorite piece, in which a ring of oversized hands surrounds a woman’s face, appearing to caress and smother it at the same time. “Se puede llamar ‘Las manos indiscretas,’”⁹ she says impulsively, explaining that the hands in the collage attempt to restrain the woman but that she remains unfazed, her fixed, steely gaze focused squarely on the viewer. “Como si le quisieran acaparar, y ella es indiferente.”¹⁰ When I tell Lina that I find the image frightening, she smiles and nods; when I ask her to elaborate on the intention behind it, however, she merely shrugs her shoulders and directs my attention to another collage.

This interaction marked my first attempt at encouraging Lina to take a more critical stance toward her artwork, but she offered little more than a succinct description of it in response. I wondered if this was due to her lack of critical vocabulary or to the personal nature of the themes that she seems to explore in her work—the tension between dominance and submission, resistance and surrender, that shapes the relationship between men and women. Only once, during our final recorded interaction, did Lina make an explicit link between her art and her personal life, when I asked her specifically about her repeated use of sharp, pointed triangles that she refers to as “picos.”¹¹ Lina explained that they represent “el mal que (los hombres) me *hacen*—o-o el mal que me *han hecho*,”¹² widening the scope of her indictment through her blatant shift in temporal perspective from the present to the present perfect:

voilà, pues, yo qué sé?—es verdad, mi marido—con mi marido,
no me ha faltado nada, pero era él que mandaba, era él que tenía
la cartera, era él que mandaba, y había que ser así, y-y en un cierto
sentido he sido siempre una mujer sometida, que no me he atrevido
abrir la boca

that’s right, so, what do I know?—it’s true, my husband—with
my husband I didn’t need anything, but he was the one in charge, he was
the one with the wallet, he was the one in charge, and that’s the way it
had to be, and-and in a way I’ve always been a submissive woman, I
never dared open my mouth

Our exchange that afternoon marked the only moment that Lina associated the expressive content of her artwork with her personal experience, citing her relationship to her husband and, in particular, its suppressive power dynamic, as the primary source of her artistic inspiration. Lina’s comment, in which she describes herself as a subjugated woman (“una mujer sometida”) who would not dare “open her mouth,” belies the authority that she displays as an artist commenting on her work—or, at the very least, renders more complex the *meaning* of that authority to Lina, as well as the personal stakes of its enactment and recognition. The more time I spent with her, the more I began to understand how deeply this notion of authority—that is, in her case, the power and influence she draws through the public recognition of her artistic expertise—informs the personae she constructs through particular multilingual practices.

⁸ “Each one tells a story”

⁹ “This one could be called, ‘The Indiscreet Hands’”

¹⁰ “As if they wanted to corner her, and she is indifferent”

¹¹ “points” or “peaks”

¹² “the bad things that (men) do to me—or—or the bad things that they have done to me”

As I was admiring “Las manos indiscretas” that first day in the workshop, Anna caught my eye, sighed, and pointed toward Lina: “¡Es artista!”¹³ she said, shaking her head in admiration. Such comments from the women in the workshop, which are not uncommon, reflect their orientation to the institutional role and persona that Lina assumes as an instructor and artist. Through Lina’s frequent reminders about “cosas raras”¹⁴ and the importance of technique, she draws on and creates the authority associated with teachers and artistic experts, establishing her students’ objectives—that is, seeing the potential strangeness in everyday objects and honing the techniques of cutting and composition—and, more generally, defining what constitutes art. Although she doesn’t articulate the figurative intentions behind the compilation of particular “cosas raras,” Lina nevertheless encourages the women in her workshop to imitate her style, which they do unquestioningly. Indeed, over the course of the six months that I participated in the workshop, I, too, learned to appreciate and emulate the unique aesthetic that informs Lina’s work, identifying manifestations of the “strange” in the mundane and composing collages primarily out of human figures.

In addition to her interactive tactics, Lina also establishes authority through her style of dress and the off-handed way in which she *does* collage. Indeed, as Eckert (2004) points out, linguistic variants do not function in isolation; rather, “language is part of a broader semiotic system that includes such things as clothing, territory, musical taste, activities, and stances” (pp. 5-6). It is not surprising then that Lina, unlike the other women at the Centro, wears what might be thought of as unique, “artistic” clothing: conspicuous pastel blazers, often over tee shirts emblazoned with butterfly-shaped, iron-on extracts of her collages, and her favorite pair of jeans, which flair slightly at the heel and bear colorful embroidered flowers along the hips and calves. Her curly, dyed auburn hair falls to her shoulders, and on Fridays, for the arts and crafts workshop, she pins it back with a barrette. When she composes a collage, Lina plucks one image at a time from a pile amassed by her students, first swiping it with a glue stick and then flattening it with the heel of her palm, even before she has composed the collage in its entirety. Her methods, which seem almost perfunctory, reveal a modest confidence in her work, and she rarely relinquishes control of the glue stick. Instead, she engages her students in a somewhat patronizing collaboration, entreating them for suggestions on how to compose the images they have selected, while rarely heeding their advice. In spite of her quietly controlling technique, Lina nevertheless gives her students full credit for their work, ensuring that they sign and entitle it, and heaping exaggerated praise on them when their collages are finished and framed. On more than one occasion, I heard students joke that Lina is a good instructor because she does most of the work for them.

The authority that Lina and her students associate with her role in the workshop is reinforced by her creative activity in other spaces at the Centro; she also performs with the theater group, paints and writes poetry. Moreover, Lina’s artwork—notably her collages and the greeting cards she makes out of her poems—has accumulated a certain cachet among members of the Centro, many of whom clamor to buy it discretely. On several occasions during the arts and crafts workshop, I observed Lina surreptitiously accept cash in exchange for her artwork. She frequently bemoaned the fact that she was

¹³ “She’s an artist!”

¹⁴ “strange things”

unable to do so conspicuously, convinced that her covert business would prove more lucrative if only the Centro's administration would allow her to conduct it openly.

Nevertheless, Lina's eagerness to circulate her work seems to reflect more than just economic self-interest; while she garners attention through the authority she has established as an artist, she also depends on such recognition to substantiate her claims to authority. In the workshop, the criticism that she offers her students is interspersed with loaded self-assessment that appears designed to incite praise for her art. These subtly manipulative gambits surface in more stark ways outside of the arts and crafts workshop, where Lina's confidence is displaced by self-effacing timidity. In other spaces at the Centro, where Lina no longer commands authority through the position of instructor, she assumes a markedly deferential role vis-à-vis the Centro's administrative staff as well as her peers; her demeanor changes noticeably. Before the weekly theater workshop, for example, as people mill about the classroom, Lina hovers awkwardly near a wall, shifting her weight now and then, avoiding eye contact but smiling diffidently when she senses that someone is looking at her. Once the class begins, however, Lina is the first to volunteer to perform an improvised sketch; likewise, at the end of the *Lengua castellana* course, she often asks to read one of her poems out loud.

Although it is sometimes difficult to reconcile Lina's self-described "timidez" with the emotional resonance of her artwork, her creative activity nevertheless seems to function as a means of articulating and expressing voice—that is, a point of view on her life, past and present (Blommaert, 2005)—that is ultimately intended for public evaluation and consumption. The relations among Lina, her artwork and her public are thus motivated by personal needs as well as economic ones. Whenever she feels that she has been denied the recognition that she and her art deserve, she decries the oversight as pettiness. After the annual *Día del libro*¹⁵ celebration, for which she wrote almost all of the sketches that were performed by her fellow classmates, Lina railed against the Centro for neglecting to acknowledge her contribution both in the printed program and during the performance itself. Not surprisingly, Lina used the arts and crafts workshop as a place to vent her frustrations. She decried the small-mindedness of the theater director and the Centro's staff, garnering commiserative feedback from her students. Mila willingly joined in, lambasting the Centro's administrators and participants for their individualistic nature—"aquí cada uno va de lo suyo, hija"¹⁶—thereby aligning herself with Lina and indirectly affirming the arts and crafts workshop as a uniquely collaborative space *within* the Centro.

Indeed, Lina seems to relish her position as instructor in part because it allows her to construct and oversee this social space in which the relationships and practices that take place *outside* of it can be criticized or contested. The workshop has become, in a sense, a privileged site where she and her students can speak freely about the Centro or even themselves, certain that their thoughts and ideas will be kept confidential. On a quiet Friday afternoon after I had been visiting the workshop for nearly two months, Anna

¹⁵ The *Día del libro* celebration, a commemoration of books and rights of authorship, occurs annually on April 23, the date that both Shakespeare and Cervantes died. The Centro marks the occasion by presenting a performance of sketches, poems and prose pieces written voluntarily by its members.

¹⁶ "here, everyone looks out for number one, honey"

commented on the unseasonably warm weather, inciting a brief discussion about the vulnerable state of the environment and about mortality, a topic that Lina had addressed before. “Se cree que después de la muerte no hay nada, pero tengo la impresión de que algo hay; de algún sitio venimos, y a algún sitio vamos,”¹⁷ she said. Anna’s eyes widened as she responded: “*C’est vrai, Lina? Tu crees en cosas?*”¹⁸ Lina paused for a moment, leaned over to us, and revealed in a whisper that she is clairvoyant, that her husband had worked as a professional medium before his death, and that it had taken her years to come to terms with her own gift—her “don.” That afternoon, as we continued to make collages, Lina claimed to contact the spirit of my dead grandmother; later, she informed Anna that her daughter’s infertility was caused by a cyst that her doctor had overlooked. (I analyze excerpts from this exchange in Section 4.4.1.) Lina would never have made such assertions outside the arts and crafts workshop; in fact, she had me promise that I wouldn’t mention our conversation to anyone else at the Centro: “David, no le digas a nadie de lo que hablamos, eh? Aquí te toman por bruja.”¹⁹

The unique qualities that define the arts and crafts workshop in relation to other social spaces at the Centro are reflected in the linguistic practices in which its participants engage. Almost all of the women, who are bilingual, use French in conjunction with Spanish, either code-switching lexical items or whole phrases, or translating from one to the other; in some cases, they use French categorically in multilingual conversation. The workshop, where such varied practices take place, thus appears impervious to some of the language ideologies that circulate elsewhere at the Centro, which both privilege the use of Spanish (“¡porque somos españoles!”) and disparage as laziness the common tendency to mix languages. Lina, as the workshop’s figure of authority, sanctions the multilingual flexibility of her workshop’s participants through the linguistic practices in which she herself engages. Indeed, the complex personae that Lina constructs as an artist and a medium, as a teacher and a student, differ markedly from one another, but the characterological traits of which they are partly composed—assertiveness and shyness, authority and deference—are indexed through her choice of language and her particular manner of code-switching. Lina generally prefers to speak Spanish, and she almost always chooses to do so when she is certain that her interlocutor has at least a passive understanding of the language; this does not, however, prevent her from drawing on French as a strategic resource, using her second language in socially meaningful ways in conjunction with, and in relation to, her native language. To get at the origins of these meanings for both Lina and the people with whom she interacts, I will now take a diachronic look at her acquisition of French, as well as the larger personal, communal and historical trajectories in which that acquisition has been embedded.

¹⁷ “People think that after death, there isn’t anything, but I have the feeling that there is something; we come from somewhere, and then we go somewhere”

¹⁸ “*Is that true, Lina? Do you believe in things?*”

¹⁹ “David, don’t tell anyone what we’re talking about, ok? Here, they’ll think you’re a witch”

4.2 A biography

Lina was born in Pontevedra, Galicia, about 50 kilometers north of the Portuguese border, in 1944. The youngest of six children, she spent her childhood living with her grandparents, as her mother and father did not have the means to support her. She recalls spending her youth running around barefoot with her friends and brothers as though they were “des gitanes”²⁰: “on n’allait pas à l’école, on allait se baigner, on volait des pommes au curé... on faisait une bande—une bande de voyous.”²¹ At the age of 11, like many of the people in her socioeconomic class and generation, Lina left school to begin working. As she explained:

j’ai quitté l’école pour travailler, je vendais des oeufs, je
faisais le marché ... je préférais faire le marché, gagner
un petit peu d’argent pour m’acheter des chaussures, parce
que j’avais pas de chaussures, je marchais pieds nus ou
alors avec des espadrilles ... mon premier paire de chaussures,
j’ai acheté quand j’avais onze ans, et j’ai dormi avec, je ne
voulais pas les enlever de mes pieds, eh? ((laughs))²²

I left school to work, I used to sell eggs, I worked at the market ...
I used to prefer working at the market, to earn a little bit of
money to buy myself some shoes, because I didn’t have any shoes,
I used to walk barefoot, or with espadrilles ... I bought my first
pair of shoes when I was 11, and I slept with them on, I didn’t
want to take them off my feet, eh? ((laughs))

While entering the labor market necessarily foreclosed on the possibility of further formal education, it nevertheless introduced into Lina’s life a small margin of pecuniary flexibility that she had not experienced before, and that she now recalls with amused detachment as she laughs at her exaggerated affinity for a pair of shoes. But ever since Lina began working, she has associated “el trabajo” with both economic advantage and personal sacrifice. On a number of occasions, she told me that she regrets having left school at such an early age—“lo que en esta vida me pesa es no haber ido a la escuela”²³—despite the fact that the social and economic conditions of her childhood left her no other choice. Her parents didn’t see any practical benefit to an extended education, nor could they afford to pay the fees required to attend secondary school within the education system under Franco. Furthermore, as Lina explained, they had long been anticipating the meager financial contributions that she would make to her family once she began to work.

Throughout her early teenage and adolescent years, Lina held a string of tenuous and unsatisfying domestic service positions around Santiago de Compostela, cleaning homes and watching over children who were sometimes not much younger than she. For

²⁰ “gypsies”

²¹ “we didn’t go to school, we used to go swimming, we used to steal apples from the priest... we were a gang—a gang of hoodlums”

²² Most of the monolingual French excerpts from Lina that I have cited in this paper were taken from a recorded conversation we had one afternoon in the arts and crafts workshop, during which I asked Lina if we could speak French exclusively.

²³ “what I really regret in my life is not having gone to school”

a poor, young woman who had not yet learned a trade, there were few opportunities available to her. And yet, no matter how much or how hard she worked, she could not extricate herself from the economic misery that marked her childhood, caught in a cycle of poverty that was enabled, and, as she sees it, intentionally generated, by the political apparatus of Francoism. Moreover, during her adolescence she fell in love with her first cousin, and she knew that their relationship would never be sanctioned under the conservative social purview of National Catholicism. Lina pointedly invokes “el cabrón de Franco”²⁴ for the lack of economic opportunities available to her in Spain, and, ultimately, for leaving her with no other choice but to migrate to another country.

Lina had heard stories of women, often without much experience, who found work in Paris for salaries up to four to five times higher than those they earned in Spain. She recalls being impressed by an acquaintance who had left Galicia to work in Paris but returned to Spain regularly on vacation, transformed by stylish clothes and a newfound confidence: “Tenía una amiga que se había venido a Francia. Entonces se iba de vacaciones tan bien vestida, nos creemos que se ganaba millones a montón.”²⁵ Motivated by the promise of employment as well as social liberty, Lina eventually decided to leave Galicia for Paris at the age of 20, determined to get settled in the city, stockpile a small amount of money and then send for her lover to join her. Although she had planned to accompany her acquaintance back to Paris, she ended up traveling alone, meeting other young women along the way and following a trajectory that, by then, had been well-established by other Spanish migrants. Arriving in the capital, she made her way to the Spanish church on the Rue de la Pompe in the 16th *arrondissement*, where she lodged for a few days while the church’s staff found her employment as a live-in maid—a *bonne à tout faire*—assuming a wide variety of domestic responsibilities in a newly minted bourgeois household.

Although Lina was excited by the economic prospects of moving to France, her arrival in Paris was nevertheless marked by a profound sense of loneliness and isolation. As she recalled years later in a poem entitled “El inmigrante”:

España ... que a veinte años abandoné para inmigrar
a tierras extranjeras
Cuando llegué a Francia, qué sola me sentí
No había nadie esperándome
Qué pena más grande!
Dejaba detrás de mí a mis padres
Y los bellos momentos que con ellos viví...

Spain ... that I abandoned at the age of twenty to
immigrate to foreign lands
When I arrived in France, I felt so alone
There was no one waiting for me
What deep sorrow!
I left behind my parents
And the beautiful moments that I experienced with them...

²⁴ “that bastard Franco”

²⁵ “I had a friend who had gone to France. She used to come back so well-dressed that we thought she must be earning millions.”

It is difficult to reconcile Lina’s invocation of familial “bellos momentos” with the portrait of a harsh and domineering father that she sketched in other conversations. Nevertheless, her poem, written nearly 35 years after her arrival in Paris, clearly constructs her experience of migration as a traumatic rupture between a familiar past and an unfamiliar present. Her decision to leave is framed as one of sacrifice: Lina disembarks in Paris, alone and unknown, having “abandoned” her homeland—a homeland against which she rails in other contexts—and her purportedly halcyon existence in Spain in order to pursue social mobility.

Lina indirectly attributes this initial sense of alienation to her inability to speak French. She recalls visits to a bakery shortly after her arrival, when, to pay for a baguette, she would extend an open palm full of coins because she wasn’t familiar with French currency and couldn’t understand the language of interaction. “Yo me ponía las monedas así en la mano,” she said, extending her arm, “y una vez me estafaron.”²⁶ During these initial, troubling interactions, first with merchants and later with employers, Lina experienced the vulnerability associated with linguistic exclusion. She recognized the personal and social stakes of learning French to avoid being exploited and to fortify the economic possibilities that motivated her to immigrate in the first place. She thus made every effort to learn the language as quickly as possible.

When I asked Lina about how and when she acquired French, she replied that she did so rapidly and “sin ir a la escuela.”²⁷ Shy but resourceful, she drummed up a collaborative strategy with a Spanish friend that enabled her to interact with French-speakers in such a way that she could avoid speaking:

(1)

- 1 Lina: (aprendí) enseguidita=
=porque después conocí a una amiga
y ella lo: hablaba
porque no le d-daba vergüenza
5 pero a mí
me daba vergüenza
si hablabas mal
se reían
y tú ya no repetías la cosa
10 David: sí
Lina: pero lo comprendí enseguidita=
=entonces yo le decía=
=lo que la gente quería decir
y ella lo hablaba
1 Lina: (I learned) right away
because then I met a friend
and she spoke it
because she wasn’t embarrassed
5 but me
I used to get embarrassed

²⁶ “I used to put the coins in my hand like this, and once they took advantage of me”

²⁷ “without going to school”

- if you spoke badly
 they would laugh
 and you wouldn't repeat what you had said
- 10 David: yes
 Lina: but I understood it right away
 so I used to tell her
 what people had said
 and she would speak

Lina attributes the rapid rate at which she acquired French to the kinds of strategies she describes here that enabled her to avoid her weaknesses (speaking) while capitalizing on her strengths (listening) in interaction. Although she believed that learning French would ensure her economic and social mobility, this did not alleviate the anxiety and shame she often experienced on her path of acquisition. As she recalls in the above excerpt, people frequently mocked her for speaking poorly, and she was silenced by their laughter—"ya no repetías la cosa" (line 9). During the beginning stages of her acquisition of French, then, Lina had to negotiate the tension between her desire to learn the language (along with the conviction that such knowledge would bring her access to employment opportunities and thereby justify her decision to migrate) and the shame sometimes evinced through her attempts to do so with individuals whose objectives were not associated with language learning or instruction. The complex dynamic that governed the interactions between Lina (with her particular history, character and affect) and the individuals she encountered in her daily life, sometimes enabled, sometimes constrained the possibility of her testing and mastering useful forms of colloquial speech.

Of course, strategies like the one Lina describes above only proved useful in certain settings. While she was at work alone "en el servicio," she could not rely on such collaborative tactics, and before she was able to communicate at a rudimentary level in French, she fell prey to people eager to capitalize on her linguistic vulnerability. Lina told me about one such instance, when the employer at one of her first domestic service jobs refused to provide her with meals:

(2)

- 1 Lina: estuve también trabajando de criada=
 =en una casa=
 =que me mataba de hambre,
 no me daba de comer @@@...
 5 y cómo no sabía hablar,
 para decir a estas sinvergüenzas,
 hacía régimen @
 David: qué horror
 Lina: sí sí
 10 David: de no poder hablar con ellos de:
 Lina: sí
 por no saber hablar
 hemos pasado mucha miseria
 hemos comido pan de la basura aquí en Francia.
- 1 Lina: I was also working as a maid
 in a house

5 and I was dying of hunger
 they wouldn't give me anything to eat @@@@...
 and because I didn't know how to speak
 to tell those shameless jerks
 I went on a diet @
 David: how awful
 Lina: yes yes
 10 David: not to be able to speak to them
 Lina: yes
 because we couldn't speak
 we endured a lot of misery
 we ate bread out of the garbage can here in France

Lina posits a causal link between Spanish immigrants' inability to speak French and their profound destitution—"por no saber hablar, hemos pasado mucha miseria" (lines 12-13). The levity with which she recounts this anecdote, peppering it with a joke about dieting and a couple bursts of laughter, underscores the psychological distance between the moment recalled and the moment of narration. Now, over forty years after she found herself hungry and unable to defend herself to her employer, Lina speaks French with remarkable colloquial fluency. Her laughter thus seems to mark a distanced, almost vindicated stance on this recollection of vulnerability—a stance now afforded her through her status as a multilingual woman.

Indeed, the narratives of Lina's peripatetic work history—which spans stints of various lengths in private homes, a toy factory and, finally, a clothing atelier, where she learned to sew—shift in tone once Lina learned to speak French well enough to interact with her employers. She described one such interaction that occurred a few years after she had been working in Paris:

(3)

1 Lina: trabajé en una casa (0.5) de alta costura
 y me fui a presentar
 porque lo leí en el periódico
 y me dice,
 5 "tiene Usted diplomas."
 y yo le dije
 "no, mis diplomas son"—
 hablaba un poquito de francés—
 "mis diplomas son mis manos,
 10 Usted me pone a la maquina,
 y verá como yo trabajo"
 y le dio la risa
 (0.8)
 y trabajé para un año @@

 1 Lina: I worked in a fashion house
 and I went to introduce myself
 because I read about it in the newspaper
 and he tells me
 5 "do you have any diplomas?"
 and I said to him

“no, my diplomas are”—
 I spoke a little bit of French—
 “my diplomas are my hands,
 put me at a machine,
 and you’ll see how I work”
 and he laughed at me
 (0.8)
 and I worked for a year @@

In the above anecdote, Lina interrupts her own reported speech to explain that she was now able to respond in French to her potential employer—“hablaba un poquito de francés” (line 8)—a necessary explication not only because her retelling takes place entirely in Spanish, but also because it is this very fact that alters the dynamic of power in the exchange. Lina answers the question about her training and education, a potential deal-breaker in an exclusive “casa de alta costura” and a long-standing point of personal contention, by referencing her extensive experience through a metaphorical trope—“mis diplomas son mis manos” (line 9)—and claiming that the quality of her work speaks for itself. All the manager needs to do, she explains, is give her an opportunity to show him her skills, and he will offer her the position whether or not she has a diploma. Although Lina employs the deferential third-person pronoun “Usted” (line 10), echoing her interlocutor’s use of it in his previous turn (line 5), she nevertheless boldly recommends that he allow her to prove her worth as a seamstress in the declarative phrase of lines 10-11: “Usted me pone a la máquina y verá como yo trabajo.” It is this cheeky gambit, I surmise, that incites her potential employer’s derisive laughter; as she explains: “Le dio la risa” (line 12). But it is Lina, in fact, who laughs last, capping her brief anecdote with her own burst of laughter when she states that she ended up working in the atelier for over a year; she attributes the confidence she exhibited in the interview, and her successful interactive strategies, to her ability to speak French.

Lina’s emergent proficiency in the language, and her recognition of the social capital this afforded her, coincided with her professional development as a seamstress, first in the small workshop of an acquaintance, then in a cramped manufacturing warehouse, and later in the *haute couture* atelier that she describes in the excerpt above. It was there that Lina refined her technical skills and began to experiment with design. After a year, though, she began to wonder if the experience she had accrued might serve her in other ways; as she explained: “Estaba harta de que me explotaran.”²⁸ With the help of one of her husband’s clients, and in exchange for the services he offered as a medium, Lina obtained a “carta de artisan,” as she calls it, which enabled her to work legally as an independent seamstress. She and her husband opened a workshop of their own which they ran out of their apartment in Ménilmontant, eventually hiring eight employees and securing a number of regular clients. Lina found this kind of work liberating for the autonomy it provided her: “Tú eras tu propio patrón; nadie mandaba a ti.”²⁹

Although she defines her “oficio” (occupation) as couture, Lina found that her independent work also functioned as a means of creative expression that she hadn’t before associated with it. To be sure, Lina had long honored her artistic impulses; for a number of years she had been writing poetry, first inspired to do so as a means of coping

²⁸ “I was sick of them taking advantage of me”

²⁹ “Because you were your own boss; no one could tell you what to do”

with her husband’s infidelity. Now she dreamt of designing clothes, drawing creative satisfaction out of her everyday work. Unfortunately, her husband fell ill with lung cancer, and their business began to disintegrate. Lina was forced to spend her time and money looking after him and their toddler. By the time her husband died a couple of years later, Lina abandoned the workshop and settled for whatever small, independent jobs she could find, first as a seamstress and later as a medium, supplementing her income with *allocations familiales* from the French state.

For Lina, learning to speak French was undeniably tied up with her burgeoning self-sufficiency as a woman, an immigrant and an employee—a self-sufficiency that was certainly constrained by a number of other factors, including her relationship to a domineering husband and her limited range of employment opportunities as an uneducated immigrant. Nevertheless, the narrative Lina constructs about her arrival in France and the personal and professional trajectories that unfolded there is marked by a modest pride in her own resourcefulness, in her ability to learn through doing. On a number of occasions, Lina reiterated: “Todo lo que sé, me aprendí sola,”³⁰ and she feels gratitude to France for enabling this:

(4)

1 Lina: moi je vous dis franchement
 j’adore plus les Français que les Espagnols,
porque les Espagnols
 ils ne m’ont rien donné.
 5 rien du tout
 tout ce que j’ai appris
 j’ai appris la couture ici
 David: ouais
 Lina: tout, tout, tout
 10 je le dois: (1.1) à la France

1 Lina: I can tell you frankly
 I love the French more than Spaniards
because Spaniards
 they didn’t give me anything
 5 nothing at all
 everything I learned
 I learned sewing here
 David: yeah
 Lina: everything, everything, everything
 10 I owe (1.1) to France

The combination of gratitude (toward France) and resentment (toward Spain) expressed by Lina echoes the sentiments of many of the women I interacted with during this project. While “les Espagnols” denied her an education and access to social mobility, “la France” at least provided the conditions of possibility for the pursuit of such mobility, as long as Lina actively pursued it through learning—learning a trade as well as a language. Indeed, Lina seems to equate speaking French with the other skills she acquired after arriving in France—sewing, painting, clairvoyance—and today her relationship to the language still

³⁰ “I taught myself everything that I know”

resonates with the utilitarian nature of its origin; in other words, her multilingualism serves practical needs more than it does affective ones. Despite her self-professed shyness, Lina learned to speak French well enough to avoid being exploited by her employers, and, eventually, to help her establish a base of French-speaking clients first in her independent business as a seamstress, and, later, as a psychic and medium. Learning French and becoming multilingual were thus vital components of Lina's personal trajectory and professional development.

4.3 Language attitudes and use

Over the course of my fieldwork, I observed Lina use Spanish whenever her interlocutor had at least a passive understanding of it. Indeed, this was the language she spoke consistently with me on almost every occasion that we interacted, even when I addressed or responded to her in French. Despite this obvious preference for her mother tongue, however, Lina appears equally comfortable speaking her second language. The shame and self-consciousness that marked her first attempts to learn and use it have, over time, given way to an easy self-assurance. She willingly participates in social settings in which she must interact in French, leading another arts and crafts workshop at a nearby French-speaking senior center, and she readily accommodates the non-Spanish speakers who occasionally appear at the Centro.

When Lina switches between languages, she does so effortlessly. At one point during a conversation we had in French, for example, a woman came in to the arts and crafts workshop unexpectedly and began speaking to us in Spanish.³¹ After interacting with her briefly, Lina turned to me to resume our conversation and asked off-handedly: “on parle en français ou en espagnol?—bah, c'est pareil.”³² Such a metalinguistic comment suggests that, for Lina, Spanish and French are now interchangeable, or at least that she is proficient enough in both of them to use either instrumentally. Indeed, Lina writes poetry and greeting cards in the two languages, as her mood or the market demand; furthermore, I never once heard her animate ideologies that privilege one language over another in particular settings or modes.

On a phonological level, Lina's French is clearly non-native, bearing phonological traces often associated with Spanish-speakers (Lagarde, 1996)—namely, the variable use of apico-alveolar /r/, the voicing of word-final /n/, and /ə/ realized as /e/. However, she also incorporates a number of informal, colloquial features that reflect the non-institutional settings in which she learned it. At emphatic moments Lina crowns declarative phrases with falling intonation and the discourse marker “quoi” (Beeching, 2007; Chanet, 2001); she also makes use of simplified interrogatives, informal lexical items and subject doubling (Coveney, 2003; Nadasdi, 1995). The linguistic alienation that Lina described upon first arriving in Paris eventually ceded to a rudimentary self-sufficiency in French that served her in the workplace and, later, to an advanced proficiency defined by the strategic employment of stylistic variables.

³¹ Most of the French excerpts from Lina that I have cited in this paper were taken from a recorded conversation we had one afternoon in the arts and crafts workshop, during which I asked Lina if we could speak French exclusively.

³² “Are we speaking French or Spanish?—it's the same”

As for Lina's Spanish, it also bears the traces of someone who has spent an extensive period of time—in her case, 44 years—living bilingually, between and among languages as they have been associated at different moments in her life with work, family and various social milieus. When speaking Spanish, she occasionally code-switches into French, either uttering entire turns in the language or borrowing lexical items (from specific domains such as couture—“*épingle*,” “*modèle*”) and wholesale idiomatic expressions (“*j'ai le trac*”; “*tengo un trou de mémoire*”). Structurally, her Spanish exhibits an over-generalized use of the present perfect, most likely influenced by the *passé composé* in French (Lagarde, 1996). It is also heavily marked by French discourse markers, such as *c'est ça, tu vois*, and, as I will discuss below, *voilà*.

In spite of the multilingual parity suggested by Lina's remark above—“bah, c'est pareil”—she does not wholly or always differentiate the languages in her repertoire, a fact revealed through the creative ways in which she enacts her multilingualism, indexing stances and constructing personae through the use of *both* languages in a single interaction. Lina's personal and professional trajectories have entailed learning to be multilingual in socially meaningful ways that, for her, are tied up with questions of authority, recognition and economic mobility. She has developed a sociolinguistic competence of which she now seems only vaguely aware. Reflecting on her language use, Lina states off-handedly, “mezclamos,”³³ referring to code-switching and code-mixing alike; through her use of the first-person plural verb form, she identifies such practices as shared resources among other Spanish immigrants in France. Unlike many of her peers, however, Lina's metalinguistic commentary bears no trace of the shame evinced from speaking language in non-standard ways. She merely attributes her tendency to code-switch to the amount of time she has spent in France and to her age, which has caused her to “forget” some of her mother tongue.

And yet, Lina doesn't always mix languages. In her poems, sketches and greeting cards she keeps Spanish and French separate, which suggests that different ideologies govern her use of language in oral and written modes. For Lina, writing is associated with school, and, as such, it should adhere to more rigid standards of correctness. While she no longer exhibits any self-consciousness about *speaking* Spanish or French, she nevertheless does so about *writing* the languages. To address her insecurities, Lina participates in the Centro's weekly *Lengua castellana* course to acquire the skills that she was unable to develop during her short time at primary school in Spain. The course, which is described in the Centro's brochure as a forum for “perfecting” one's written Spanish, offers a rudimentary introduction to the basic literacy skills that the students lack. Most of the women who attend the course acknowledge openly that they have had a limited amount of schooling, and they refer to it bluntly as “la escuela”—that is, primary school.

Lina, an avid writer of theatrical sketches and poetry, sees the course as a direct benefit to her literary art, insofar as it helps her draft the texts she includes in the birthday and greeting cards that she sells covertly at the Center. Indeed, Lina considers the marketability of her written work to be tied in part to its grammatical accuracy. Furthermore, sensitive to the demands of her small but loyal market, Lina translates almost all of her work, and she carries homemade business cards in French: “Lina;

³³ “we mix them”

Artiste, Peintre, Poète; Fait tableaux pour Baptême, communion, nouveau né.”³⁴

Whenever anyone strays unexpectedly into the arts and crafts workshop or accompanies one of its regular attendees, Lina finds an opportune moment to display examples of her cards in Spanish, assuring her potential client repeatedly that she has equivalent versions in French.

Writing in French, or translating from Spanish into French, Lina often enlists her son, Daniel, as proofreader. As she told us one afternoon during the weekly arts and crafts workshop, her persistent grammatical mistakes often incite his playful criticism:

(5)

- 1 Lina: los tengo en francés,
bueno-hago faltas
pero después
mi hijo me las corrige—
- 5 David: hm
Lina: y a veces me riñe.
“ah, tantos años que vives en Francia,
y no sabes!”
- David: @@
- 10 Lina: digo-((clicks tongue))-“pero no he ido a la escuela como tú”
Anna: claro
Lina: @@@@
Mila: *bah oui*
Anna: *bon*
- 15 Nicole: allí estamos todos
- 1 Lina: I have them in French
well-I make mistakes
but then
my son corrects them—
- 5 David: hm
Lina: and sometimes he scolds me
“ah, you’ve lived in France so many years,
and you don’t know”
- David: @@
- 10 Lina: I say “but I didn’t go to school like you”
Anna: right
Lina: @@@@
Mila: *well, yeah*
Anna: *yep*
- 15 Nicole: we’re all in the same boat

In the above excerpt Lina playfully animates her son’s gentle scolding, causing me to laugh and the others to nod in recognition. When Daniel equates her length of residency in France with an expected level linguistic proficiency—“ah, tantos años que vives en Francia y no sabes” (lines 7-8)—Lina readily protests: “Pero no he ido a la escuela como tú” (line 10). The three women present in the workshop concur in turn (lines 11, 13 and 14), underscoring the widespread familiarity of the exchange that Lina stages. Not only

³⁴ “Lina: Artist, Painter, Poet; Makes paintings for baptisms, communions, newborns”

do they comment on the obvious link between making mistakes—“faltas” (line 2)—in their second language and their lack of schooling, but they also point to the possible tensions undergirding their relationships with their children, all of whom in this case were educated in France and speak French as a native language. Anna’s summary “bon” (line 14) resonates with a final, fatalistic tone, suggesting a now customary resignation to their predicament that is familiar to all of the women present. Indeed, Nicole’s final comment, “allí estamos todos” (line 15), alludes to the universal nature of the situation that Lina describes.

The women also share the experience of living between and moving across languages—an experience they sometimes reflect on explicitly. One afternoon during the arts and crafts workshop, Lina read out loud one of her poems that she had translated into French, inciting a discussion among the women about the difficulties of such cross-linguistic work:

(6)

- 1 Lina: o sea, te v—te voy a decir una cosa,
a lo mejor ella comprende ((*indicating Mila*))
porque también e-es poeta=
=y escribe poemas
- 5 David: hm
Lina: a veces se me viene a la cabeza el poema en francés—
David: hm
Lina: y lo escribo, a mi manera
después xx—
- 10 Mila: sí pero luego lo traduces=
=y ya no te cae igual
Anna: sí
Lina: y después—
y a veces
- 15 Anna: sí
Nicole: *ouais*
David: cambia, claro
Lina: me viene solamente—
sí a veces cambia
- 20 Anna: claro x en francés
Mila: sí
Lina: y a veces me viene el poema a la mente en español.
Nicole: *c’est pas pareil*
Lina: pero a veces me viene el poema en francés—
- 25 Mila: tú en tu cabeza,
tú lo piensas a lo mejor en francés=
y pega
Lina: y éste—
Mila: pero luego lo quieres traducir en español
y ya no pega
- 30 Anna: sí sí
Mila: pues
ya no rima la cosa.

tiene que rimar.

- 1 Lina: well, I'm—I'm going to tell you something
maybe she'll understand (*indicating Mila*)
because she's also a poet
and she writes poems
- 5 David: hm
Lina: sometimes the poem comes to me in French
David: hm
Lina: and I write it in my own way
then xx—
- 10 Mila: yes but then you translate it
and it doesn't come out the same
Anna: yes
Lina: and then—
and sometimes
- 15 Anna: yes
Nicole: *yeah*
David: it changes, of course
Lina: it only comes to me—
yes, sometimes it changes
- 20 Anna: of course x in French
Mila: yes
Lina: and sometimes the poem comes to me in Spanish
Nicole: *it's not the same*
Lina: but sometimes it comes to me in French
- 25 Mila: you, in your head
maybe you think about it in French
and it sticks
Lina: and this—
Mila: but then you want to translate it into Spanish
and it doesn't stick anymore
- 30 Anna: yes yes
Mila: then
it doesn't rhyme anymore
it has to rhyme

As Lina and Mila describe the acts of writing and translation, they position the written work itself—in this case, a poem—in the grammatical role of agent; the poem as subject, then, acts upon them as objects. Lina repeats: “Me viene ...el poema” (lines 6, 18, 22 and 24); Mila remarks: “No te cae igual” (line 11), “ya no pega” (line 30), “ya no rima la cosa” (line 33). The deferential position they take towards the written work reflects, again, both deep-rooted ideologies that privilege written over oral form—indeed, perceptions of “correct” writing still hold an elusive mystique for Lina and Mila, who continue to pursue it nevertheless through their participation in the *Lengua castellana* course—as well as their lack of critical vocabulary to describe poetry and the ways in which it might be enhanced through translation. Mila, for example, attributes the lack of equivalency across languages in part to the difficulties of retaining a rhyme scheme, without which a poem ceases to be a poem: “Ya no rima la cosa; tiene que rimar” (lines 33-34).

Lina, nevertheless, perhaps through her experience as a translator of her own work, has learned to draw on the act of translation itself as a strategy in the construction of social meaning. Often when she translates or refers to translation, Lina indexes the stances—namely, authoritative and deferential—that are associated with the discursive positions and local personae that she enacts at the Centro. As an analysis of recorded data will illustrate, Lina marks the frequent shifts she must make *between* languages, thereby explicitly staging the act of translation as a means of shoring up authority and legitimating the personae that she performs as instructor or medium. To shed light on her construction of social meaning in multilingual contexts, however, I will first explore Lina’s use of a specific French discourse marker—*voilà*.

4.4 Multilingual style

4.4.1 *Voilà*

In the predominately Spanish speech of the women I observed at the Centro, it was not uncommon to hear French discourse markers such as *tu vois*, *bon* and *c’est ça*. Lina stood out among her counterparts as one of the most frequent borrowers of such particles when she was speaking Spanish, utilizing one in particular—*voilà*—in ways both discursively and socially meaningful. In Lina’s discourse, *voilà* often appears turn-initially, but she also embeds it in longer utterances or uses it as a turn in its own right. As Hansen (1997) states, *voilà* generally seems “to have no clear preference as to position, although it may be that different positions are responsible for subtle changes in meaning or function” (p. 156). As Lina uses it, *voilà* does indeed seem to serve multiple discursive functions: it draws attention to a preceding or a forthcoming utterance; it casts a summary valence on an utterance that has directly preceded it; it marks causality between two events; and it asserts conviction.

In addition to reflecting on the content of discourse, however, *voilà* also shapes its form; the individual who utters it lays claim to a right to speak through the epistemic certainty that the marker conveys. As Grenoble and Riley (1996) remark, *voilà* not only organizes the progression of discourse, but it also ensures that interlocutors “[build] the frame of reference of the discourse and [aid] in [its] local cohesion and global coherence” (p. 838). For Lina, then, who frequently uses *voilà* in Spanish-dominant discourse, this particle indexes the authoritative stance she takes vis-à-vis the content of, and participants in, the interaction at hand, drawing on both its discursive functions as well as the social capital associated with French in the sociohistorical context in which she borrows it. Through her use of *voilà*, Lina thus activates broad associations of language and power that enable the dynamic, local interactions in which she positions herself as an instructor, a medium or an expert.

The following two exchanges are taken from the audio recording I made on my initial visit to the arts and crafts workshop. Although I took note of Lina’s frequent use of *voilà* at that time, it wasn’t until a few months later, when I observed her use it during a Tarot reading and séance at her apartment, that I began to draw connections between this specific discourse marker, her personal history and the question of authority. In the first excerpt, Lina and Anna are searching for images to use in a collage commemorating Anna’s granddaughter’s upcoming first birthday:

(7)

- 1 Lina: ves
siempre la cosa es que
te-te inspira la poesía
David: sí, sí
- 5 Anna: claro, claro, claro
David: mariposas=
=pájaros
Lina: *voilà*
Anna: xxx y ella=
=como es una niña
- 10 David: es bonito sí
Anna: *elle a* once meses hoy—
onze mois—
once meses hoy
- 15 Lina: *viola*=
=bueno pues=
=ésta ya está hecha también
- 1 Lina: look
the thing is always that
poetry inspires you
David: yes, yes
- 5 Anna: of course, of course, of course
David: butterflies
birds
Lina: *voilà*
Anna: and she
because she's a girl
- 10 David: yes
Anna: *she's* eleven months today—
eleven months—
eleven months today
- 15 Lina: *voilà*
fine then
this is also finished

At this point in the workshop, Anna, Pilar and I are the only people present. Through her use of the discourse marker “ves” (line 1), Lina draws our attention to the general comment she will make about how one should draw inspiration from a written text (“la poesía” (line 3)) as one searches for images to use in collages. For this particular project, Lina has drafted a poem addressed directly to Anna’s granddaughter that she intends to paste in the bottom half of the collage. Through our emphatic agreement with Lina’s remark in lines 4 and 5, Anna and I affirm its validity and assert our burgeoning proficiency in the collage-making process, orienting ourselves to Lina’s expertise. When I offer specific examples of objects that might suit this particular project—“mariposas” and “pájaros” (lines 6 and 7)—Lina both legitimates my suggestion and asserts her authority through the use of “voilà” (line 8). Anna then aligns herself with me, upholding the examples I have offered by explaining that, because her grandchild is a girl—“como

es una niña” (line 10)—and only eleven months old (lines 12-14), butterflies and birds are appropriate images to include. Lina, uttering “voilà” for the second time (line 15) in response to Anna’s remark, now legitimates *her* contribution and stakes out a position of authority through recourse to the particle’s evidentiary valence. Lina then switches to Spanish, indicating a shift in footing to comment on a different collage that has already been completed. As this excerpt shows, Lina’s use of *voilà* not only helps her enact the authority befitting of an artist-instructor, but it also enables her to steer the flow of discourse, capping her interlocutor’s turns retrospectively and enacting shifts in conversational focus.

In the second excerpt from my first visit to the workshop, Lina helps Romain, Pura’s four year-old grandson, make a bouquet-shaped collage for his mother. Romain does not speak Spanish, but his grandmother claims that he has a passive, if begrudging, understanding of it. His activity is the focus of the exchange below, and although he does not participate in it verbally, he is nevertheless hard at work cutting out images to be used in the collage. At the beginning of the excerpt, Lina remarks on the flower he has just finished cutting:

(8)

- | | |
|----|--|
| 1 | Lina: oh qué bonito
<i>bon</i> , pues
trae un papelito blanco de allí
que—que vamos a hacer un— |
| 5 | un ramo para tu mamá (1.7)
<i>voilà</i>
oh qué bonito
para que v-vea que fuiste tú
que lo has colorado |
| 10 | que lo has recortado...
y después aquí le-le pones=
=“ <i>maman je t’aime</i> ”—
allí de este lado eh, |
| 15 | Pura: Romain.
no quieres más agua?
Lina: <i>voilà</i> eh
<i>alors</i> dime
<i>où est-ce que je colle—</i>
<i>cela je la colle où,</i> |
| 20 | Pura: allí
Lina: <i>voilà</i> .
<i>parce qu’il faut que ta maman</i>
<i>elle sache que c’est toi,</i>
(2.7) |
| 25 | <i>voilà</i>
(3.3)
<i>voilà</i> |
| 1 | Lina: oh how pretty
<i>fine</i> then |

5 take a little piece of white paper from over there
 because—because we’re going to make a—
 a bouquet for your mother (1.7)
voilà
 oh how pretty
 so she can see that you’re the one
 who colored it
 10 who cut it out...
 and then here write to her
 “mom, I love you”
 over there, on this side, eh?
 Pura: Romain
 15 you don’t want any more water?
 Lina: *voilà* eh?
 so tell me
 where do I glue—
 where should I glue this?
 20 Pura: over there
 Lina: *voilà*
 because it’s important that your mother
 that your mother knows it’s you
 (2.7)
 25 *voilà*
 (3.3)
voilà

When the women in the arts and crafts workshop encourage Romain to show Lina his handiwork, they refer to her as “la profesora” and “la maestra,” explicitly naming the role they see her playing in this context, and thereby calling forth expectations about the interactive practices in which they will engage. Lina readily performs as teacher, instructing Romain throughout the exchange. First, she asks him in Spanish to take a blank piece of paper (“trae un papelito blanco” (line 3)) and write a French inscription in the margin of the collage (“aquí le pones ‘maman, je t’aime’” (lines 11-12). Then, on the heels of his grandmother’s question in Spanish (“¿no quieres más agua?” in lines 14-15), Lina switches to French to ask him for input on where to paste some of the images he has clipped, thereby distinguishing her query from Pura’s (“cela je la colle où?” (line 19)). Over the course of this brief excerpt, Lina uses *voilà* five times as she oversees Romain’s progress; she intersperses compliments—“oh qué bonito” (lines 1 and 7)—with gentle directives, all the while maintaining an authoritative stance vis-à-vis his work, the other adults who are present and the collage-making process more generally. Indeed, she insists twice—first in Spanish, then in French—on the importance of Romain’s mother knowing that he is the sole creator of the artwork, and, indirectly, on the importance of Romain being able to lay claim to such authorship through his active involvement with Lina as her student.

Lina draws on the authority indexed through her use of *voilà* outside of the arts and crafts workshop as well, indirectly legitimating the persona she enacts as a psychic and medium. About four months after I began conducting fieldwork, Lina invited me and Amalia “as friends” to her apartment, where she promised to conduct a séance and psychic reading on our behalf. The following exchange takes place at the beginning of the Tarot reading she gave me, shortly after we arrived:

(9)

- 1 Lina: o sea-euh
cómo explicarte.
de tonto no tienes un pelo
(1.5)
- 5 euh:—
David: “de tonto no tengo un perro?”
Lina: ah es un:—
Amalia: *que tu n'es pas bête du tout*
Lina: *voilà*
- 10 David: ah ah ah ah ah
Lina: *c'est-à-dire*
que puedes llegar muy lejos
si-si tu lo tienes—
eh-eh o sea
- 15 si tu te lo propones de decir
“no dejo que nadie me pise”
pues llegas a las metas que te has-que te has—
(2.1)
- David: m
- 20 Lina: cómo se dice.
Amalia: *que tu t'es fixé—*
Lina: *voilà*
David: *ouais ouais*
- 1 Lina: I mean
how do I explain it to you?
you're not an idiot at all
(1.5)
- 5 euh:—
David: “I'm not any more of an idiot than a dog?”
Lina: ah it's a:—
Amalia: *that you're not stupid at all*
Lina: *voilà*
- 10 David: ah ah ah ah ah
Lina: *that is*
that you will go very far
if-if you keep it—
I mean
- 15 if you keep telling yourself
“I'm not going to let anyone get in my way”
then you'll arrive at the goals that you've-that you've—
(2.1)
- David: m
- 20 Lina: how do you say it?
Amalia: *that you've set for yourself—*
Lina: *voilà*
David: *yeah yeah*

In the excerpt above, Lina uses a common refrain in Spanish to explain her reading of the cards that I have drawn from the deck: “De tonto no tienes un pelo” (line 3). After I repeat her utterance with an interrogative intonation, indicating that I haven’t understood (line 6), she pauses for a moment when she is interrupted by Amalia, who translates the adage into French, the language that we generally speak with one another and that she knows I prefer to Spanish (See Chapter 3, Section 8). On the heels of Amalia’s discursive intervention—“que tu n’es pas bête du tout” (line 8)—Lina utters a crisp “voilà” (line 9), both signaling and creating the authority associated with her identity as a psychic, which she is enacting here, through her ratification of Amalia’s turn. When I acknowledge that I have understood, Lina expands her commentary even further, indicating this shift in footing through the use of another discourse marker in French, “c’est-à-dire” (line 11), before telling me that, as long as I do not let anyone stop me, I will achieve whatever goals I set for myself. Before she finishes her prediction, however, she stumbles over her final relative clause, repeating herself in line 17 (“que te has—”). She then refers explicitly to her disfluency and simultaneously entreats Amalia for further assistance by asking “¿cómo se dice?” in line 20. Amalia steps in once again, finishing Lina’s utterance in French—“que tu t’es fixé” (line 21)—to which Lina once again responds “voilà” (line 22). Having thus enlisted Amalia for help, Lina has called into question the very authority that enabled her to conduct the Tarot reading in the first place, and that she then reclaims through recourse to this linguistic variable.

During the six months that I visited the arts and crafts workshop, most of the women made use of French discourse markers—such as *tu vois* and *c’est ça*—at least once in a while, but none of them used *voilà*, suggesting, perhaps, an awareness on some level that this particular variable, and the social meanings it conjures in this particular context, somehow *belonged* to Lina. And yet, Lina herself does not use *voilà* (or any French discourse markers for that matter) in other contexts that are structured around differentials of power that exclude her from a position of authority. A week after the *Día del libro* celebration, Pablo, the theater instructor, asked his students to sit in a circle and offer feedback about the performance they had given, as well as the rehearsal process that led up to it. After six of her colleagues described the triumph of overcoming their nerves, Lina offered similar feedback:

(10a)

- 1 Lina: yo—ffff—muy nerviosa
xxxxx
pero nerviosísima.
pero: (.7) pienso que (1.1) progresé bastante. (1.1)
- 5 pienso que sí
porque: soy muy tímida eh:
y me costaba mucho caro: lanzarme. (1.1)
pero en-encontré maravilloso
una—
- 10 cómo se dice?—
una cosa que-que no olvidaré
las mujeres que se sienten—
euh::—
cómo se dice el *trac* en español?—

15 *le trac*—
 (1.2)
 Pablo: nerviosismo
 Lina: es algo—
 algo que te lleva—
 20 ¿?: la angustia
 Lina: algo maravilloso...

1 Lina: me—ffff—really nervous
 xxxxx
 but really really nervous
 but I think I made enough progress

5 Lina: I think so
 because I'm very shy
 and it took a lot for me to put myself out there
 but I-I found it marvelous
 a—

10 Lina: how do you say it?—
 a thing that—
 that I'll never forget
 the women feel—
 uh, how do you say *nerves* in Spanish?—

15 Lina: *nerves*
 (1.2)
 Pablo: nerves
 Lina: it's something
 something that takes away your—

20 ¿?: anxiety
 Lina: something marvelous

This excerpt begins with Lina echoing her colleagues' sentiments about their feelings before and after the performance. Only once does Lina make recourse to an expression in French—"le trac" in lines 14 and 15—asking off-handedly for a translation from one of her colleagues ("¿cómo se dice?" in line 14). When the instructor suggests "nerviosismo" (line 17), Lina continues her utterance, almost as though she hasn't heard him; in another context, however, one might imagine her affirming his input with *voilà* the way she does when Amalia intervenes during the Tarot reading. But here in the theater workshop, where Lina is a student and Pablo is the instructor, Lina cannot lay claim to the authoritative stance indexed by this particular linguistic variable and through the choice to speak French in this context.³⁵

When Pablo asks Lina how it felt to see her texts performed on stage, Lina points out that the class has yet to thank her for the sketches she contributed to the performance, inciting an eruption of vociferous protest from her colleagues. Pablo interrupts their objections, brushing aside the issue of recognition to ask how Lina felt about the process of writing and about watching her writing performed on stage:

(10b)

³⁵ Nevertheless, her lack of acknowledgement of Pablo's input might also be read as a subtle contestation of his authority.

21 Pablo: qué sientes eh: en cuanto a:
 (1.5)
 es decir—
 fuera de este terreno de: los créditos

25 y::-eh:-el reconocimiento y tal
 qué sientes del—del proceso
 en el que tú te hayas imaginado (0.9) una escena
 al momento en que tu lo has visto
 qué te ha pasado en todo, en todo—?

30 Lina: bueno a mí tengo un-un—
 lo puedo llamar un don
 cuando escribo una pieza
 parece que ya veo cómo lo van a hacer.
 cómo se tienen que hacer

35 eh: después también hay otra cosa,
 que lo puedan hacer de una manera diferente,
 sigue siendo la misma pieza. ...

Pablo: es decir,
 eh: (2.0) tú sientes que:

40 los textos han sido enriquecidos
 por la participación del grupo

Lina: sí porque lo repito
 perdonadme
 euh—a nuestra edad

45 mm (1.1) es duro
 y lo-lo han hecho
 como si tuvieran veinte años
 todas

21 Pablo: what do you feel as far as—
 (1.5)
 I mean—
 outside of this area of credit

25 and—and—euh—recognition and everything
 what do you feel about the—about the process
 in which you imagined a scene
 and then you saw it
 how did you experience that over all, over all?

30 Lina: well I have a-a—
 I could call it a gift
 when I write a play
 it seems like I already see how they're going to do it
 how they have to do it

35 but then there's something else
 and they can do it in a different way
 but it remains the same play...

Pablo: you mean,
 euh—you feel

40 that the texts were enriched
 through the participation of the group
 Lina: yes because I repeat
 excuse me
 euh—at our age
 45 mm—it’s hard
 and they did it
 as though they were twnty years old
 all of them

Pablo’s tactic acts as a conciliatory overture in its appeal to Lina’s expertise and her singular experience among her colleagues as an actor *and* writer. And yet, Lina still makes no use of the linguistic variables that serve her in other contexts in which she creates social meanings by indexing her authority and expertise, even though her last utterance in the excerpt above (lines 42 to 48), which begins with an affirmative “sí” in response to Pablo’s assertion, effectively positions her *outside* the group in such a way that she can legitimately make comments *about* it. The absence of *voilà* at these discursive turns suggests at the very least a difference in the social meanings that Lina feels authorized to construct³⁶; such variation may be tied to significant differences in context—here, namely, the gender and status of her interlocutor, Pablo, who, in spite of the subtle shifts in power effected through particular turns of discourse in the interaction, maintains his positions of authority as the male class instructor, and, I would add, in general very rarely code-switches himself.³⁷

The indexical meanings of *voilà* emerge through its relation to the multilingual context in which Lina uses it—and not just any multilingual context, but to this particular multilingual context that is shaped by very particular social and historical circumstances. Indeed, the authoritative connotations of *voilà* do not emanate solely from Lina’s use of it in an institutional role, but also from the associations that this French particle conjures through its contrastive relationship to Spanish. Thus, Lina activates a first-order pragmatic valence of the discourse marker, as well as a magnified symbolic meaning that is created by embedding *voilà* in predominately Spanish discourse. In order to appreciate the personal and historical dimensions that bear on the use and meaning of this linguistic variable, one need only imagine how its symbolic meaning might be altered or lost altogether in a monolingual context—if, say, in Spanish, Lina were to use the functionally similar discourse markers *eso* or *eso es* (Vann, 2007), or if, when speaking French, she were to use *voilà*.

As I have shown through my analysis of Excerpt 9, Lina, as a psychic and medium, establishes credibility through the same kinds of interactive strategies that she uses as an instructor. It is thus not surprising to see a preponderance of the French discourse marker *voilà* in what is primarily Spanish conversation when Lina is

³⁶ Of course, as I state in Chapter 2, it is impossible to circumscribe an individual’s non-use of a discourse marker. Thus, I arrive at this interpretaton of Lina’s use of *sí*—that is, her non-use of *voilà*—by considering in as much detail as possible the contextual parameters in which her discursive choice is embedded.

³⁷ I surmise that Pablo’s primarily monolingual linguistic practices are informed largely by the role he plays at the Centro as an instructor of both theater and the Spanish language.

performing as medium, either actively by conducting a psychic reading or *séance*, or passively through reflection on her experiences as a psychic or on the psychic profession more generally. As any linguistic style, or way of speaking, is composed of multiple variables (Coupland, 2007; Eckert, 2004), Lina uses *voilà* in conjunction with a number of other linguistic and non-linguistic features that help shape meaningful personae in local contexts. Thus, as a Spanish-speaking medium, Lina uses *voilà* along with other code-switches into French, but she also explicitly and strategically *indexes* such switches through pointed metalinguistic commentary. It is this particular discursive feature that I will now address.

4.4.2 Metalingual strategies

During a quiet Friday afternoon about two months after I began my fieldwork, Lina, Anna and I were the only three people present in the workshop, and I decided to take advantage of our intimate setting to conduct informal interviews with them. After I asked them to tell me about arriving in France in the 1960s, Lina began to speak about her husband, telling us that he left Galicia to join her in Paris shortly after she arrived, and that he worked for years as a medium out of their apartment in Ménilmontant. This marked the beginning of a lengthy conversation about the nature of the paranormal and Lina's experiences with it through her own psychic gift, which she discovered when she experienced a traffic accident while riding a public bus in Paris. After we had been discussing this for nearly twenty minutes, Lina's tone and demeanor shifted as she began to *use* the psychic powers she had been describing. I wrote about this transformation in my field notes:

A few times I looked over at Lina as she began to contact the other *domaine*, and she seemed a bit performative—not so much that it made me suspicious, but in a way that distinguished her manner from anything I had seen before. Her brow furrowed, she shifted her eyes left and right without raising her head from the magazine in front of her, listening intently, she claimed, to the voice of my grandmother that was coming to her in Portuguese. (4/25/08)

As she slipped into the role of medium, Lina's physical changes were reflected in her use of language; she began to draw on a particular feature that enacted discursively the mediation that she was performing as medium—that is, the metalinguistic reference to translation and the act of mediation itself.

The following lengthy exchange takes place about thirty minutes after Lina has purportedly contacted my grandmother and discussed with Anna her daughter's infertility, stating decisively that she “sees” a benign cyst that the doctors have overlooked. Lina goes on to explain that people with health problems are increasingly relying on mediums instead of more conventional practices of diagnosis:

(11a)

1 Lina: ahora ya empiezan xx
 a creer un poquito (0.8) ves?
 a trabajar un poco
 avec les médiums

- 5 David: m
 Lina: porque si por ejemplo=
 =una persona (1.5) hace todos los exámenes necesarios.
 y los médicos no ven nada,
 pues—
- 10 *alors*—
 e-es eh em—
 es que en español lo olvido
c'est dans un autre domaine
- David: m
- 1 Lina: now they're beginning
 to believe a bit more, you know?
 to work a bit more
with mediums
- 5 David: m
 Lina: because if for example
 a person does all the necessary medical exams
 and the doctors don't see anything
 then
- 10 *well*
 its euh, em—
 it's that in Spanish I forgot
it's in another domain
- David: m

The content of Lina's reflexive comments on mediums and their social utility frequently come back to the issue of credibility, as they do here at the beginning of this excerpt. Lina assures Anna and me that many people who have been let down by inconclusive or unsuccessful medical practices have turned to mediums to determine health problems and devise unconventional strategies of treatment. Her first code-switch in line 4—"avec les médiums"—foregrounds this perhaps surprising turn to the paranormal; Lina thus assures Anna that her faith in alternative approaches to diagnosis is not necessarily uncommon, perhaps suggesting through her use of French that it is shared by people outside the relatively small community of Spanish-speakers of which they form part.

Lina's second code-switch in line 10, the French discourse marker "*alors*," functions as a hedge, reiterating the Spanish counterpart "pues" that it follows, and preceding her audible hesitations—"euh, em"—in line 11. Instead of immediately following her string of disfluencies with the utterance "*c'est dans un autre domaine*," she precedes her culminating remark with a metalinguistic reference to her verbal stumbling that pins its cause to her linguistic amnesia (indeed, on many other occasions I heard Lina lament that she seemed to be forgetting more and more Spanish), and anticipates the forthcoming switch into French. On several occasions Lina used this term in French—"domaine"—to refer to a field of knowledge that can only be accessed through psychic intuition, marking the lexical item in such a way that mirrors its referent's remote relationship to the familiar. Again, her code-switch magnifies the iconoclastic force of her statement, foregrounding it from the Spanish in which it is embedded. She mediates verbally the switch from one language to another, explicitly staging the cross-linguistic moves, as well as the potential strategies deployed, by a multilingual individual. In her

moment of forgetting Spanish, she turns to French, but she also exploits this turn to create symbolic meaning that is tied to the content of our exchange.

A few minutes later, when Lina asks me how I feel about working with seniors, her use of an interrogative marks our shift into a discourse genre that might be associated with psychic readings:

(11b)

- 15 Lina: y estás contento de haber hecho=
este viaje aquí.
David: sí=
Lina: sí
David: sí @@
- 20 me sorprende (1.1) cada día un poco más=
lo que encuentro
Lina: claro
David: bueno
Lina: bah
- 25 sobretodo si ellos son así-así
la-la gente de-de-de la tercera edad—
David: m
Lina: claro, e-es un poquitito:—
Anna: especial
- 30 Lina: *voilà* (1.2)
y a la edad—
David: en qué sentido? (1.8)
“especial” en qué sentido?
- 15 Lina: and are you happy that you took
this trip here?
David: yes
Lina: yes
David: yes
- 20 every day I’m surprised (1.1) a bit more
by what I find
Lina: of course
David: well
Lina: bah
- 25 especially if they’re like this
seniors
David: m
Lina: of course, it’s a bit—
Anna: special
- 30 Lina: *voilà* (1.2)
and at the age—
David: in what sense? (1.8)
“special” in what sense?

This stretch of conversation turns on our discussion of the differences between seniors and adolescents, specifically on how my project would have been different had I chosen to study the latter instead of the former. When Lina asks me if I’m glad to have come to

Paris and, more specifically, the Centro, I tell her that I am, explaining that I'm consistently surprised by what I find there. Lina affirms this answer with an emphatic "claro" in line 22, explaining that seniors are a very particular bunch of people; her search for a specific adjective to describe them, however, is interrupted by Anna, who, in line 29, offers "especial." To confirm her finding the *mot juste* and to maintain an authoritative stance in the exchange that she appears to be commandeering, Lina utters a quick "voilà" on the heels of Anna's discursive intervention. I seize on their vague description, asking them to elaborate what they mean by "special":

(11c)

35 Lina: hombre=
=euh=
=a lo mejor=
=por ejemplo=
=si hicieras el—
40 tu-tu *estage*
con gente joven
David: m
Anna: no es igual que con la gente:
David: claro
Lina: bah
45 *c'est-à-dire*—
Anna: la mentalidad no es la misma.
Lina: *voilà, euh* (1.2) *peut-être*
a lo mejor
te-te-te euhm—
50 cómo se dice en español?—
Anna: x otra cosa
Lina: a lo mejor
ça te rapporte avantages euh nuestra edad,
quizá en cierto sentido,
David: m
55 Anna: sí
Lina: well
35 euh
maybe
for example
if you had done the—
your-your *internship*
40 with young people—
David: m
Anna: it's not the same as with people—
David: of course
Lina: bah
45 *that is*—
Anna: the mentality isn't the same
Lina: *voilà euh* (1.2) *maybe*
maybe

- 50 you-you-you euhm
 how do you say it in Spanish?
 Anna: x something else
 Lina: maybe
 our age *brings you certain advantages*
 maybe in a certain sense
- 55 David: m
 Anna: yes

Lina clearly holds a premium on this stretch of discourse, beginning her explanation with the discourse marker “hombre” before offering what she refers to as an example—“por ejemplo” (line 37)—to illustrate her point. Once again, Anna interrupts, offering the contingent, resulting clause to the SI + imperfect subjunctive fragment that Lina proffers in lines 38-40: “si hicieras el—tu-tu *estage* con gente joven.” It is not until Anna intervenes a second time in line 46 that the difference between young and old populations is defined in more specific terms: “La mentalidad no es la misma.” Lina, through the use of another French discourse marker, “c’est-à-dire,” sets up and foregrounds Anna’s remark; here, at last, is the primary difference between seniors and adolescents that, as they see it, has informed the course my project has taken in a positive way, as Lina will point out a few turns later. Not surprisingly, Lina caps Anna’s pithy observation with an authoritative “voilà,” followed by a hedge in French—“peut-être” (line 47)—that casts a retroactive mitigating shadow on Anna’s contribution. Lina reiterates this uncertainty in Spanish by continuing her turn with “a lo mejor” (line 48), followed by yet another stutter and the metalinguistic question “¿cómo se dice en español?,” giving voice to a self-directed interrogation that indicates to both Anna and me that her hesitation should be attributed to yet another metalingual entanglement. Anna takes for the third time a collaborative turn (that is unfortunately incomprehensible on the recording), but here it is rejected by Lina, who, without even acknowledging it, picks up her previous turn by repeating her hedge (“a lo mejor” in line 52). Instead of finding a Spanish expression through circumlocution, Lina code-switches to French for the first part of her utterance: “*Ça te rapporte avantages, nuestra edad*” (line 53). Making one final hedge, “quizá en cierto sentido,” Lina forecloses on any further elaboration of her statement, a discursive move corroborated by Anna, who utters an affirmative “sí” (line 55).

The interaction then takes a turn into the psychic realm, as Lina draws on her powers of clairvoyance to “see” the course my future is going to take:

(11d)

- Lina: la, la carrera que—
 en-en-en que consiste
 tu-tu oficio?
 tu
- 60 David: en qué—
 sí, bueno euh—
 formo parte de la Universidad de California euh—
- Lina: sí
- David: y estoy haciendo una tesis—
- 65 una tesis—uh, en lingüística.
 yo trabajo con la lengua más que-que otra cosa.
 la lengua y la historia,

y la identidad—la identidad—identidad
 y—y la lengua
 70 y todo eso
 el bilingüismo,
 el multi-plurilingüismo,
 Lina: pero eh eso=
 =te va a abrir puertas hacia: el futuro enormes,
 75 o no.
 porque yo te veo=
 =que quieres llegar—
 cómo—cómo explicarte—
 que puedes llegar muy lejos,
 80 y tu estás seguro=
 =que—que es el buen camino para ti.
 David: m
 Lina: que—que tendrás *avenir* en—
 con lo—con ese oficio.
 85 David: m: (1.2) si yo creo, yo?
 Lina: sí
 David: bueno espero
 (2.3)
 lo creo?
 90 Lina: porque nunca vi a una persona
 que tuviera todas las puertas abiertas
 David: m
 Lina: cómo explicarte?
 David: m
 95 Lina: hay person—
 he encontrado personas que—
 que tiene un—
des blocages—
 David: m
 100 Lina: que no llegan nunca al termo
 de—de lo que se interponen—
 David: m
 Lina: pero sin embargo=
 =tú—eh, eh—no hay muro que te resista
 105 David: @@@
 Lina: the, the studies that—
 of—of—of what consists
 your occupation?
 your—
 60 David: of what—
 yes, well
 I'm a part of the University of California
 Lina: yes

65 David: and I'm doing a thesis—
 a thesis—uh, in linguistics
 I work with language more than anything else
 language and history
 identity—identity—identity
 and—and language
 70 and everything
 bilingualism
 multi—plurilingualism
 Lina: but that
 is that going to open big doors to your future
 75 or no?
 because I see you
 that you want to go—
 how do I explain it to you?—
 that you can go far
 80 and you're sure
 that this is the right path for you?
 David: m
 Lina: that—that you'll have a *future*
 with this—with this occupation?
 85 David: m: (1.2) if I think I will?
 Lina: yes
 David: well, I hope
 (2.3)
 if I think I will?
 90 Lina: because I've never seen someone
 whose doors were all open
 David: m
 Lina: how do I explain it to you?
 David: m
 95 Lina: there are people—
 I've met people who—
 who have a—
who are blocked
 David: m
 100 Lina: who never finish up
 what they start out on
 David: m
 Lina: but nevertheless
 you—eh, eh—there's no wall that resists you
 105 David: @@@

The metalinguistic question that Lina poses twice in the lengthy excerpt above—“¿cómo explicarte?” (lines 78 and 93)—shifts focus from the formal lexical objectives of the question “¿cómo se dice?” to a broader, discursive level that, while taking linguistic form into account, also incorporates an interpretive dimension that calls on Lina's skills as a medium. But the question about how to *explain* something, in particular something that has just been stated in a particular way, is still tied both times to a code-switch into French. In line 83, Lina employs the word “avenir” to invoke the stakes of my career choice; in line 98, she uses “des blocages” to name what differentiates me from other

people she has worked with. These reflexive questions about explanation are not meant to evince any response from me or Anna. Rather, they function discursively, pushing the interaction forward in such a way that Lina maintains a hold on its unfolding; they also function symbolically, as Lina works to construct a credible and authoritative persona as clairvoyant, seeing things that others cannot, and mediating between realms—“domaines”—that others cannot access. She stages the act of mediation, creating a discursive reflection of the mediation she is performing *as medium*. While her metalinguistic comments mediate stretches of discourse and imbue her subsequent code-switches with social meaning, she herself mediates between the realm of the supernatural and the here-and-now, between what she sees in the future and what she sees in the present.

4.5 Conclusion

Within the particular social and historical conditions in which she enacts her multilingualism, Lina draws on broad ideological associations between language and status that inflect the social meanings—that is, the stances and identities—that she constructs locally. The multilingual practices in which she engages—her use of a French particle in predominately Spanish discourse and her use of self-reflexive metalinguistic commentary, for example—articulate discursive and social meanings tied to her personal history while drawing on the *communal* history in which those practices emerge. To a certain extent, Lina still associates French with economic mobility, evidenced directly by her insistence on the potential profitability of her French-language products (as an artist) and services (as a medium), and indirectly through the multilingual stylistic choices that she makes as an artist and medium which claim authority and demand credibility. In contrast to Amalia, the case study I will address next, Lina’s ties to the French language are more utilitarian than they are affective. Nevertheless, like the other women in my study, her acquisition of French entailed far more than the development of grammatical and sociolinguistic competence in the language alone; it involved learning how to *be* multilingual in personally, socially and historically meaningful ways.

Chapter 5

Amalia: a case study

5.1 An introduction

It's exactly five o'clock, and I am trailing behind Amalia as she darts out the doors of the Centro and calls to me over her shoulder. "Viens," she cries out, "je ne veux pas rater le bus!"¹ Today she has invited me to see her work in the sculpture studio at the *Ecole des Beaux-Arts de Saint-Ouen*, and she wants to make sure that we arrive before her colleagues finish their weekly aperitif. As we make our way towards the bus stop, Amalia prattles on about the shortcomings of the Centro's painting instructor, who, at the beginning of that afternoon's workshop, told Amalia that there was too much orange in her landscape and then, an hour later, told her that there was not enough. Amalia insists that such inconsistency is a sign of incompetence. "C'est pas con, ça?"² Before I can respond, however, she holds up her arm and orders me to stop. "Attends!"³ she says, turning to pluck a copy of *Zone-93*, a weekly real estate and advertising magazine, from a plastic case that is nailed to a wall. "C'est quoi, ça?"⁴ I ask. "Mon horoscope,"⁵ she says with a grin. She shoves the magazine into her purse and turns to scurry down the street.

The bus pulls up just as we arrive at the stop, and we huddle behind a crowd of passengers who have been waiting for it. Amalia and I are the last two people to board, and there is barely enough room for us to push past the driver. "Oh là,"⁶ I say under my breath. Amalia catches my eye and then shouts to the other passengers with exaggerated indignation: "Avancez! Avancez, s'il vous plaît! Il n'y a pas assez de place pour nous!"⁷ A few of them look at her irritably, but the crowd shifts to let us pass. "Tu adores jouer *la pequeña vieja loca*,"⁸ I tell her, switching to Spanish so that the people around us won't understand. Amalia emits a loud, long cackle that causes me to laugh along with her. "*La pequeña vieja loca*," she says, once she catches her breath; "mais qu'est-ce que tu penses de moi?"⁹

This interaction took place five months after I began conducting fieldwork, and it was not the first time that Amalia asked me explicitly what I thought of her. Her reflexive comments frequently punctuated our conversations, imposing a momentary shift in our interactive roles and foregrounding the original motivation behind our relationship. While such questions reflected Amalia's curiosity about my perspective, they also pointed to her ulterior awareness that I was, indeed, *thinking* about her as both an acquaintance and an object of research. Amalia, a widow without any children, had more free time than my other subjects, and thus I spent more time with her—and thinking about her—than

¹ "Come on, I don't want to miss the bus!"

² "Isn't that stupid?"

³ "Wait!"

⁴ "What is that?"

⁵ "My horoscope?"

⁶ "Oh my"

⁷ "Move back! Move back, please! There isn't enough room for us!"

⁸ "You love acting like *a crazy old lady*"

⁹ "A crazy old lady"; "but what do you think of me?"

anyone else. Because of this, Amalia eventually considered herself to hold a privileged position in regard to me. On a number of occasions, for example, she took it upon herself to mediate my introduction to people at the Centro, often teasing me in such a way that reflected the ease with which we related to one another but also the difficulty of navigating the shift between professional and personal relationships. “Viene como juez,” she said with a wink to one of the card-playing men who asked what I was doing there, “para criticarnos.”¹⁰ Amalia rarely explained my presence without recourse to a first-person plural pronoun (“nous,” “nosotros”) that named a group of people as the object of my interest. The “us” to whom she alluded shifted in referential scope depending on the context in which she used it; sometimes it identified the specific people present, or the members of the Centro more generally, or even, in certain cases, the whole population of migrants who left Spain for France in the 1960s. At the heart of this plural pronoun, though, remained Amalia, who revealed a keen sense of herself as a participant in my project through her eagerness to assist me (by presenting me to people both at and outside the Centro) and her direct enquiries into my findings (in particular as they related to her).

Over the course of my fieldwork, as Amalia and I began to cultivate a friendship, I had the sense that she was becoming increasingly self-conscious as a research subject, testing—or, indeed, playing with—the prerogatives of the role in a way that no one else did. During our first one-on-one conversation, for example, which took place over lunch at her apartment, Amalia offered me an aperitif—some dry sherry and a pre-packaged assortment of chips and pretzels, which she referred to playfully as “la petite caca.”¹¹ I laughed at her bluntness and assured her that the “caca” tasted fine; “j’espère que tu n’enregistres pas,” she laughed.¹² I leapt up to check my iPod, which I had placed on a table across the room. “Oui, ça enregistre,” I said, “mais c’est pas grave.”¹³ Amalia didn’t seem to mind. Later during my fieldwork, however, she requested a few times that I turn off the recorder, pointing her index finger toward my iPod and shaking her head with dramatic intensity until I assured her that the microphone had been disconnected. On each of these occasions, I was surprised by the seemingly innocuous nature of Amalia’s “revelations” once the recording device had been shut off: a detailed description of the modern apartment she had just bought in Valencia, for example, or information about her deceased husband, Henri, that she had already told me.

Such self-referential gestures both ratified Amalia’s inhabitation of a role and revealed the self-awareness that seemed both symptom and cause of her inclination towards performance. “Je ne suis pas comme les autres,”¹⁴ she liked to tell me; other times, she measured her individuality in terms of craziness: “Je suis folle, moi,” she would say with a smile; “je ne suis pas normale.”¹⁵ Such frequent claims to singularity revealed Amalia’s desire for distinction, a distinction that she cultivated through the self-conscious performance of character traits, such as free-spiritedness and irreverence, that aimed to differentiate her from the people with whom she interacted. Amalia’s hearty

¹⁰ “he has come as a judge...to criticize us”

¹¹ “the little caca”

¹² “I hope you’re not recording”

¹³ “Yes, it’s recording, but it doesn’t matter.”

¹⁴ “I’m not like other people”

¹⁵ “I’m crazy”; “I’m not normal”

laughter in response to my observation that she loves to “play” the part of a “pequeña vieja loca,” suggests that she does indeed make deliberate attempts to perform recognizable social types—an irascible, loud, unpredictable old lady, for example—that set her apart from those around her; it also suggests that she engages in such social gambits willfully and that she takes pleasure in doing so. What distinguished Amalia most from the other women I encountered—aside from the actions that aimed in part to qualify her as unique—were the self-awareness and concomitant reflexivity that enabled such actions in the first place.

In spite of the cultivated individualism that distinguished her from the other women in my study, Amalia’s biographical trajectory was shaped by many of the same social and historical phenomena that affected them; she participated in the same wave of migration from Spain to France, motivated by similar factors. However, unlike most of the women I interacted with, Amalia married a Frenchman as opposed to a Spaniard, and she did so relatively late, when she was in her early 30s. Moreover, Henri, her husband, was 23 years older than she, and they never had children. Amalia often highlights these details in the narratives she recounts about her life, keenly aware that the choices she has made now distinguish her from her peers at the Centro. She often attributes the singular shape her life has taken to her deceased husband, who, through his age, experience and “French-ness” provided her access to different, more egalitarian possibilities of womanhood than if she had married “un Español machista,” as she once said, like many of the Spanish women she knew. (See, for example, my discussion of Amalia’s relationship to Henri in Section 5.2.)

Although Amalia credits Henri for mediating her access to forms of social mobility that would not have been available to her otherwise, she nevertheless experienced a personal revitalization after his death in 2003, when she enrolled in an art course at the *Ecole des Beaux-Arts* near her apartment in Saint-Ouen. As a means of coping with her grief, Amalia began to explore her artistic talents through various media: painting, sculpture and installation, developing a contemporary, individual style that her instructors praised and encouraged. “J’ai commencé à faire des sculptures et j’étais quelqu’un d’autre,” she told me.¹⁶ True to form, Amalia assumed an artistic identity to idiosyncratic extremes, experimenting with media and styles to create an eclectic body of work that is impossible to classify. The first time I entered Amalia’s cramped one-bedroom apartment—“mon musée,” as she refers to it proudly—I was overwhelmed; her living room is crowded with various forms of artwork: terra cotta figures, paintings, tableaux made out of paper and plaster, a two-meter tall grasshopper illuminated from within by a light bulb, and a life-sized paper mâché representation of Pepita, the protagonist in a best-selling work of historical fiction about the Spanish Civil War—all of which she has created in the past six years.

At the Centro, Amalia is not as widely recognized for her creativity as Lina, whose expertise is institutionally legitimated through her role as instructor of the arts and crafts workshop. But Amalia is far from troubled by this lack of public recognition; confident in her talent, she considers her creative activity to be more than a hobby, pursuing it both at the Centro and outside it. The first time that I met her, Amalia told me at length about her current exhibit of sculptures at the Porte de Clignancourt *Office du*

¹⁶ “I started making sculptures, and I became someone else”

tourisme, coyly revealing that her instructor at the *Ecole des Beaux-Arts* advised her to set the price of her pieces at 5,000 euros each. In spite of the subtle pride with which she spoke about the cost of her works (none of which sold), Amalia is generally far less concerned than Lina about the commercial potential of her creative interests. On a few occasions Amalia pointed this out, claiming that her motivations to produce art were more altruistic than Lina's. She once confided in me that she thought Lina's collages were too commercial and that they lacked vice.

Although Amalia considers Lina to be a friend, she nevertheless shared with me these critiques of her work during one of our private conversations. An outspoken woman, Amalia was generally hard pressed to conceal her unfavorable opinions of some of her colleagues at the Centro, decrying their actions as pretentious or accusing them of being too dependent on their husbands, qualities that she finds difficult to tolerate. She once told me that she felt superior in relation to such women (“je me sens supérieure, moi!”¹⁷). Fiercely proud and protective of her independence, touting her resourcefulness and brazenly claiming that she doesn't need anyone or anything to survive, Amalia often sees herself as the object of other people's envy—other people who, she claims, have not had the courage to be as autonomous as she, who see her independent streak as the symptom of an inflated ego. Many times during our interactions, Amalia invoked the envy she has perceived in acquaintances, friends and family over the years, spewing rancorous tirades against those who have treated her unfairly because of her character and the social mobility that she has pursued.

Amalia, who thus seems to experience her relative uniqueness as both a mark of distinction and a social stigma, must actively construct her individuality through a concatenation of narratives, stances and linguistic practices; the ways in which she enacts her multilingualism are thus unlike those of most of the women in my study. Today, for example, Amalia prefers to speak French instead of Spanish, finding that French comes to her more easily and that it facilitates more fluid expression and language play. She attributes this preference to the length of time she has spent speaking the language—“Le français je l'ai parlé 46 ans, l'espagnol je l'ai parlé que 22!”¹⁸—and to the way in which she learned it—that is, from Henri. While Amalia's spoken French bears traces of interference from Spanish, she nevertheless speaks with the prosody of a native speaker, and she has adopted stylistic variables, such as schwa-tagging, that index local place and familiarity (Carton, 1999; Hansen and Hansen, 2003). To be sure, her Spanish has also been affected both phonologically and morpho-syntactically by its contact with French (Lagarde, 1996). Thus, when Amalia speaks either language today, one cannot readily discern her national origin or affiliations. When I pointed this out to her one afternoon, she was surprised, saying that she had never thought in those terms before. After considering my observation for a moment, she said: “Quand tu es là, on pense que tu es étrangère, et quand tu es ici, on pense que tu es étrangère. Donc tu es ni d'ici, ni de là-bas. C'est bizarre.”¹⁹ Far from experiencing such displacement as a cause of anxiety, however, Amalia punctuated her insight with a hearty laugh. Indeed, “étrangère” seems

¹⁷ “I feel superior!”

¹⁸ “I've spoken French for 46 years; I only spoke Spanish for 22 years!”

¹⁹ “When you're there, people think you're a foreigner, and when you're here, people think you're a foreigner. So you're from neither here nor there. It's strange.”

an apt status for someone whose independence and sense of distinctiveness have constituted a driving force in her biographical trajectory.

5.2 A biography

Amalia was born in Córdoba in 1938 during the Spanish Civil War. Her father, a successful businessman, managed a small manufacturing company that employed a number of townspeople; her mother stayed at home, raising her daughter and two sons with the help of Amalia's live-in grandmother. A singular traumatic event marked Amalia's childhood shortly after she turned six: her father's unexpected decision to abandon his family. Amalia blames her domineering grandmother—"une grand-mère typique andalouse habillée en noir avec les cheveux blancs,"²⁰ as Amalia's friend once described her—for alienating her father and forcing him to give his wife an ultimatum. As Amalia explained: "Mi padre le dijo (a mi madre) 'tienes que escoger entre yo y tu familia' y mi madre escogió a su familia, porque no podía abandonar a su familia."²¹ Amalia's mother refused to turn away the family's aging matriarch, no matter how insufferable her demeanor, and despite the social and financial difficulties that such a decision was sure to entail.

Although Amalia's father stayed in Córdoba after he left, he refused to help Amalia's family financially. Amalia's mother thus navigated a dramatic alteration of social roles as she entered the workforce and began supporting her children as a single woman "dans le nettoyage, la dentelle, comme femme de chambre."²² Amalia's family experienced a marked shift in status that affected their self-perception and social interactions. Amalia continued to attend school until the age of 13, but, stigmatized by her father's abandonment, she felt isolated from the other girls and became easily distracted: "j'étais très—comme j'ai dit—très sensible, très fragile moralement, avec toute l'histoire de la maison, mon père, des trucs et machin... je me sentais très—pas méprisée—mais très comme ça, à l'écart."²³

Amalia's feeling of singularity, however, did not emanate solely from her demoralizing home life and the ways in which her peers treated her because of it. She also made a conscious effort to reject what was expected of her by convention, cultivating a sense of individuality that distinguished her from the girls around her. When she was eight years old, for example, she attended a nationalist parade in honor of Franco, who was making a visit to Córdoba. When Amalia's teacher instructed her class to wave their miniature Spanish flags upright and with enthusiasm, Amalia refused, holding her flag at her side and wagging it intermittently:

quand on m'a donné le drapeau parce que Franco il venait, qu'il fallait que je fasse comme ça ((holding her arm up and waving it

²⁰ "a typical Andalusian grandmother, dressed in black with white hair"

²¹ "My father said to her: 'you have to choose between me and your family' and my mother chose her family, because she couldn't abandon her family"

²² "in cleaning, lace work and as a maid"

²³ "I was very—as I said—very sensitive, very fragile psychologically, considering the whole story about my home, my father and stuff... I felt very—not despised—but very much like that, isolated"

back and forth)) et j'ai fait comme ça ((holding her arm down at her side and twitching her wrist)), j'ai dit "ils vont penser que je suis une idiote—un enfant idiot" ... tu sais les enfants, des fois tu les fais faire une chose, ils sont—j'avais huit ans, mais je pensais déjà qu'ils allaient penser que j'étais idiote parce que—parce que je n'avais pas envie de faire ça, je comprenais déjà

when they gave me the flag because France was coming, and I was supposed to go like that ((holding her arm up and eaving it back and forth)) and I went like this ((holding her arm down at her side and twitching her wrist)), I said "they're going to think I'm an idiot—an idiot child" ... you know, kids, sometimes you make them do something, they're—I was eight years old, but I knew already that they were going to think that I was an idiot because—because I wanted to do that, I understood already

Refusing to wave the flag along with the other children, Amalia was not making a political statement so much as a personal one, staking a public claim to her individuality by imitating what she imagined to be the actions of a mentally retarded girl. In her own way, Amalia embraced and personalized the distinction that was imposed on her by circumstance.

Within the classroom as well Amalia resisted the constraints she felt in the role of student:

la façon de travailler à l'époque, on se mettait tous à lire ensemble—on lisait tous ensemble—et quand on donnait une leçon qu'on te faisait travailler de mémoire, apprendre quelque chose—qu'on était tous assis, on te disait tel ou tel, on se levait, on répondait, et moi, je me levais, je ne répondais rien parce que je n'avais pas ouvert mon livre, mais ça ne fait rien—celles qui venaient derrière, elles allaient toutes me siffler

the way of working at the time, we all started reading together—we all read together—and when they gave us a lesson that they made us work on by memory, learning something—we were all seated, they said this or that, we would get up, we'd answer, and I would get up, I wouldn't say anything because I hadn't opened my book, but it didn't matter—the ones who were behind me, they all used to hiss at me

Defying the pedagogical methods employed by her instructors, Amalia experienced intellectual as well as social exclusion. Although she remembers taking pleasure in more creative school activities such as making sketches for biology lessons, the practice of rote memorization that constituted most of her education left her uninspired and restless. By the time she was a teenager, Amalia was eager to leave school, and there were virtually no other options available to her than that of entering the workforce:

nous n'avons pas pu faire autre chose parce qu'à treize ans, à quatorze ans, il fallait que tu travailles, je suis pas de—je suis de la ville, je ne suis pas de la campagne—mais c'est fini, il n'y avait plus rien à faire qu'apprendre un métier parce qu'après tu ne pouvais pas avoir une carrière, tu ne pouvais pas avoir d'argent, c'était pour les privilégiés, et si tu sortais un peu de la ligne, tu

étais fusillé, il ne fallait pas que tu sortes

we couldn't do anything else, because at thirteen, at fourteen, you had to work, I'm not from—I'm from the city, I'm not from the country—but it's over, there wasn't anything else to do other than learn a trade because otherwise you couldn't have a career, you couldn't have any money, it was for privileged people, and if you got out of line just a little bit, you were shot, you couldn't get out of line

Amalia thus followed a trajectory similar to that of most women in her socioeconomic class and generation, leaving school at the age of 13 to learn a vocational skill alongside a local artisan. She became an apprentice in the workshop of a well-known seamstress, and, within a couple of years, began working for small businesses as well as private individuals.

Amalia spent her adolescence working in Córdoba, helping support her family with the meager wages that she earned. In spite of her steady employment, however, Amalia and her family teetered on the brink of poverty, unable to reacquire the social status that they lost when Amalia's father left. Like the other women in my study, Amalia began to consider leaving Spain out of necessity; as she explained to me bluntly: “He tenido que salir de mi casa para poder comer.”²⁴ But in addition to the economic opportunities she expected to find in France, Amalia was also aware that she would benefit from more social liberty there. She had come to value the sense of independence that she had garnered as a talented seamstress, and, marked by what she termed her father's “betrayal,” she was determined not to depend on anyone for her livelihood. A headstrong, self-sufficient woman, Amalia found the social and political climate of 1950s Spain to be suffocating: “On pouvait pas parler, on pouvait pas ouvrir la bouche.”²⁵ She wanted to escape the sociopolitical apparatus of Francoism, which stymied members of the working class by ensuring through its education system that they remain ignorant but faithful to the state (Grugel & Rees, 1997). Amalia was thus motivated to leave Spain not only out of necessity, but also by a desire for the social mobility and autonomy that were inaccessible to her there.

Shortly after her arrival in Paris, Amalia began working as a *bonne-à-tout-faire* for a bourgeois family in the 15th *arrondissement*—a position that she held for almost a decade. With pride, she recalls saving enough money to buy an apartment for her mother and grandmother in Córdoba after less than four years of working in France: “Moi, je suis partie à Paris, et quatre ans après—même pas—j'étais propriétaire d'un appartement, sans docte, sans père, sans mari, sans fiancé, j'étais très fière.”²⁶ While Amalia experienced the economic benefits of migration almost immediately, she found the personal and social consequences of her displacement difficult to navigate. Coming from Spain, a country that was seen by many in France as socially and politically backward, Amalia could not easily effect the self-sufficiency that she admired in her French counterparts. Amalia was forced to contend with the stereotypical representations of female Spanish immigrants that circulated in France at the time: well-intentioned but

²⁴ “I had to leave my house in order to eat”

²⁵ “we couldn't speak, we couldn't open our mouths”

²⁶ “I left Paris, and four years later—not even—I owned an apartment, without a degree, without a father, without a husband, without a fiancé, I was very proud”

dense, promiscuous women whose personal and professional conduct reflected the moral standing of the families for whom they worked (see Chapter 3, Section 5). Like many of the women in my study, Amalia found that her tenuous social position made her an easy target of economic and physical exploitation: “Je suis venue à Paris, et parce que je me suis pas laissée faire, parce que quand tu—on te voit mignonne jolie, les patrons ils veulent te baiser, la première chose qu’ils veulent voir (c’est) combien tu vas—ils vont te prendre; si ce n’est pas de ton corps, c’est de l’argent.”²⁷ Although her employers were primarily concerned with finding ways to take advantage of her both financially and physically, Amalia refused to assume the deferential demeanor that was expected of her; nevertheless, as a non-French-speaking woman, her possibilities of resistance were severely constrained.

Amalia, like Lina, saw learning French as a means of ensuring that she would not fall prey to the kind of mercenary, chauvinistic employer she describes above. Although her *patrons* spoke rudimentary Spanish, Amalia insisted on learning French while she worked for them, recognizing the symbolic capital—and the economic and social possibilities associated with such capital—that she would accrue once she did so. She spoke about her decision to learn French to me and Colette, the older of the two daughters she took care of, with whom she remains friends today:

(1)

- 1 Amalia: je vais te dire une chose.
c’est simple.
j’avais soif d’apprendre le français.
- Colette: oui
- 5 Amalia: je me couchais à lire (0.9) chez toi (0.8)
je me couchais (0.6) dans—dans ma maison
je me mettais à lire
et à cinq heures du matin
j’étais en train de lire
- 10 je me disais “mais pourquoi je vais dormir
je vais avoir mal à me réveiller et à me lever.”
j’ai continué à lire jusqu’à sept heures—
- Colette: ouais
- Amalia: j’ai continué à lire
- 15 Colette: ouais
- Amalia: je me passais des nuits entières en train de lire—
quoi?—
le français
c’était pas l’espagnol=
- 20 c’était le français—
pour apprendre
et je x, je x, je x

²⁷ “I came to Paris, and because I didn’t let myself be taken advantage of, because when you—they see that you’re cute, pretty, the bosses want to have sex with you, the first thing they want to see is how much you’re going—they’re going to take from you; if it’s not your body, it’s money”

je comprenais pas
 je x
 25 j'ai pu comprendre
 parce que je ne suis pas allée à l'école eh?

1 Amalia: I'm going to tell you something
 it's simple
 I was thirsty for French

Colette: yes
 5 Amalia: I used to go to bed and read (0.9) at your home (0.8)
 I used to go to bed (0.6) in—in my home
 I used to start to read
 and at five o'clock in the morning
 I was still reading
 10 I used to say to myself "but why am I going to sleep
 I'm going to have a hard time waking up and getting up"
 I kept at it until seven o'clock

Colette: yeah
 Amalia: I kept reading
 15 Colette: yeah
 Amalia: I spent entire nights reading—
 what?—
 French
 it wasn't Spanish
 20 it was French—
 to learn
 and I x, I x, I x,
 I didn't understand
 I x
 25 I could understand
 because I didn't go to school eh?

Amalia frames the French language as an object of desire that she pursued through the only means available to a woman with her educational background and in her position: reading whatever material she could find. This was the only activity over which she could exert complete control, protected from the vicissitudes of, and power differentials inherent in, social interaction. In the above excerpt, Amalia, within the span of a few turns of discourse, uses the verb *lire* on five occasions (lines 5, 7, 9, 14 and 16), suggesting both the quantity of time she spent engaged in the activity as well as the symbolic value she places on it as a means of language acquisition. But even though she studied French on her own through the diligent reading of texts—a difficult task, as she acknowledges above, precisely because she hadn't studied the language in a formal setting ("je ne suis pas allée à l'école" (line 26))—she also acknowledged elsewhere that she learned French through the act of speaking it. During our first interview, when I asked her how she acquired the language, she made no mention of reading; instead, she replied, "comme tu l'entends—de parler avec mon mari, avec les gens."²⁸

Long before she met her husband, however, Amalia had developed oral proficiency in French as a means of influencing the power differential that structured her

²⁸ "the way you hear it—from speaking with my husband and with other people"

relationship to her employers. She recounted an anecdote in which she asked for a raise from Colette’s parents after earning the same salary for nearly five years: “J’étais uh à toucher trois cents francs—des années des années des années—moi j’en avais marre de gagner que 300 francs, et un jour j’ai dit ‘bon écoutez, hein, euh—quand même—augmentez-moi un petit peu.’”²⁹ As Amalia’s reported speech suggests, and as she confirmed when I asked her about it directly, Amalia used French to confront her employers about the fact that they had not given her a raise after years of employment. Acquiring linguistic proficiency in the language, Amalia defied the stereotype of the monolingual *bonne à tout faire*, upsetting the relational dynamic between her and her employers, who, in the end, offered her a raise of 100 francs.

In spite of the financial stability and linguistic proficiency that she garnered through her job with Colette’s family, Amalia began to feel restless after working for them for nearly ten years. “J’avais ras le bol,”³⁰ she said, citing the social and political upheaval of 1968 but also the vicissitudes of her personal life as causes of her dissatisfaction. After suffering from back problems and calling off a marriage engagement to an Italian in 1970, she decided to return to Córdoba indefinitely. She had saved more money than she had ever imagined possible, and she believed the wealth she had amassed in France would translate into social mobility back in Spain. After just a few weeks in Córdoba, however, she began to miss Paris: “Je m’étouffais là-bas en Espagne!”³¹ she explained. Amalia made plans to return to France, and, in the meantime, she studied French on her own, trading her sewing skills for conversation with a childhood friend who had learned French in a seminary. Amalia’s departure nine months later marked a vital *second* migration in her biography—this time motivated by choice rather than necessity. Shortly after she arrived in Paris in late 1970, she cobbled together enough work to get by as an independent seamstress and cook, and she met Henri, a Frenchman who was 23 years older than she. They were married a year later and stayed together until his death in 2003.

Henri grew up in Paris in a family of “libre-penseurs,” as Amalia proudly describes them and, although he knew some Spanish, he rarely spoke it: “Il en avait honte.”³² For Amalia, Henri played a number of roles—“c’était mon père, c’était mon mari, c’était mon amant”³³; she referred to him as both her “bras droit” and her “maître,”³⁴ and he was nothing like the machista Spanish men she had known in Córdoba and in expatriate circles in Paris. As Amalia saw it, the qualities that she admired in Henri were part and parcel of his French upbringing; she summarized what made him different from other men she had known, saying simply: “Il me respectait mes idées à moi.”³⁵ Henri was cultivated and well-read; he taught Amalia about politics and social mores, and she often described their relationship in terms of teacher and student. “On a vécu trente

²⁹ “I was getting 300 francs—for years and years and years—and I was tired of making only 300 francs, and one day I said, “hey, listen, um—come on—give me a little raise”

³⁰ “I was fed up”

³¹ “I was suffocating back there in Spain”

³² “free-thinkers”; “He was embarrassed of it”

³³ “he was my father, my husband, my lover”

³⁴ “her right arm”; “her master”

³⁵ “He respected my own ideas”

ans ensemble et il m'a appris le respect des autres, il m'a appris de ne jamais être en retard quand j'ai rendez-vous, il m'a appris à être tolérante."³⁶

In addition to the cultural and intellectual nature of her exchanges with Henri—indeed, *through* those very exchanges—Amalia also refined her French language skills. Henri, whom Colette once described as “un vrai titi parisien,”³⁷ taught Amalia a wide repertoire of colloquial expressions and playful turns of phrase. “La langue s’apprend au lit,”³⁸ she once told me, invoking the language-learning potential of cross-linguistic romance. It was also through Henri that Amalia solidified her identity as a Parisian, establishing a role as his wife in various social milieu around Paris and settling into an apartment, first in the capital, and later in Saint-Ouen, where they lived until his death. Having cultivated her French in large part through her relationship to Henri, Amalia acquired ideological associations of the language with familiarity and intimacy—associations that now inform the patterns that structure her participation in multilingual interaction. Such affiliations to person and place, accruing over decades, now shape the ways in which Amalia embodies her multilingualism, as she draws on particular stylistic resources to create social meaning.

5.3 Language attitudes and use

In most contexts, Amalia prefers French to Spanish. On one occasion, for example, she told me about the difficulty she often has falling asleep at night, recounting a humorous anecdote about her recent attempt at taking a sleeping pill. “Chaque nuit,” she began, “quand j’abandonne le terrain...”³⁹ When I chuckled at the vivid way in which she expressed the mundane activity of going to bed, she interrupted her narrative to comment on my appreciation of her colorful way of speaking. “Tu aimes ma manière de parler?”⁴⁰ she asked. “J’adore,”⁴¹ I said. “Tu ne peux pas faire ça en espagnol,”⁴² she stated with a smile, offering proof of her declaration by testing the expression in Spanish: “‘*Cuando abandono el terreno*’—non, c’est pas pareil!”⁴³ Such metalinguistic commentary provides incontrovertible evidence of her attitudes towards French and Spanish and what she sees as the possibilities of self-expression that are enabled for her (or not) by each language. Amalia maintains that French is more supple than Spanish; as she illustrates above, her translations of fluid, if florid, expressions in the former often result in clunky, unsatisfying approximations in the latter.

Amalia’s creative use of French reflects her advanced level of proficiency in the language. Although she has never studied it formally, she nevertheless makes use of what have been described by Armstrong (2001) as native-speaker variable patterns: the

³⁶ “We lived 30 years together and he taught me to respect other people, he taught me never to be late when I have an appointment, he taught me to be tolerant”

³⁷ “a real Parisian guy”

³⁸ “Language is learned in the bedroom”

³⁹ “every night, when I abandon the terrain...”

⁴⁰ “Do you like the way I speak?”

⁴¹ “I love it”

⁴² “You can’t do that in Spanish”

⁴³ “‘*When I abandon the terrain*’”—no, it’s not the same”

deletion of word final liquids in clusters ([kat] instead of [katχ]), the epenthesis of phrase-final schwas—or schwa-tagging (“mon cousin de *Madrid*” [ma dridə])—and the devoicing of final high vowels, for example. Amalia also exhibits variable *ne*-deletion and variable liaison. But in spite of the stylistic agility that she displays in French, Amalia nevertheless betrays her non-native status through certain phonological and morphosyntactic influences from her first language, such as the occasional use of apico-alveolar [r] and the categorical use of *avoir* as an auxiliary verb for intransitive and pronominal verbs in the *passé composé* (“j’ai allée” instead of “je suis allée”; “je m’ai couchée” instead of “je me suis couchée”). As for Amalia’s Spanish, it is marked by features stereotypically associated with Andalucía—namely, *seseo* and weakened syllable-final [s] (Hualde et al., 2001; Penny, 2000)—as well as phonological and morphosyntactic influences from French, including velarization of word-final [n], as well as a generalized use of the present perfect at the expense of the preterit—features that Lagarde (1996) has observed elsewhere in the French of Spanish speakers.

The languages in Amalia’s repertoire have thus been shaped through their contact with one another over time and in accordance with Amalia’s immediate communicative needs, as well as the more durative aspects of her self-perception—most significantly, perhaps, her desire to be distinctive from those around her. Indeed, Amalia often activates variables in her multilingual repertoire that index her singularity in local contexts—whether it’s a French feature associated with shifts in formality, such as deletion of *ne* (Armstrong, 2001; Coveney, 2002; Gadet, 2007); geographical place or familiarity, such as schwa-tagging (Hansen and Hansen, 2003); or a feature in Spanish, such as vowel lengthening, exaggerated prosodic contours or falsetto, associated with *drama* and heightened expressivity (Podesva, 2008). For Amalia, all of these variables perform useful semiotic functions.

Over the course of our time together, Amalia revealed through metalinguistic commentary the language ideologies that inform her multilingual practices. The first time we met one another at the Centro, for example, I gave her an official consent form and asked her to read it at home. After telling me that she was happy to do so, we continued our conversation in Spanish. When she handed back the signed form the following day, however, she apologized, saying that she would have spoken more correctly if she had known I was interested in language and bilingualism. “Normalmente no hago caso,”⁴⁴ she explained. I assured her that I was most interested in “natural” conversation, and that there was no need for her to alter her way of speaking.

This was the only time I heard Amalia refer to “correct” forms of speech and her ability to use them at will. During our subsequent exchanges, she betrayed a general lack of adherence to ideologies about standard language and correct usage, code-switching unself-consciously in many different contexts. A few times she interrupted conversations to comment that she was unaware of which language she was using with her interlocutor. One afternoon shortly after I began fieldwork, I chatted with her in the painting studio just as the workshop was getting underway. While discussing her cousin’s impending visit from Madrid, we switched between Spanish and French without any immediately apparent motive:

(2)

⁴⁴ “Normally, I don’t pay attention”

- 1 David: *son de Madrid ellos?*
 Amalia: *sí ils sont de Madrid.*
hablamos—
qué estoy hablando=
- 5 David: *euh les deux*
 Amalia: *je ne me rends pas compte des fois=*
=quand je suis en train de—
 @[@
- 10 David: [@@
c'est pas grave
- 1 David: *are they from Madrid?*
 Amalia: *yes they're from Madrid*
we're speaking—
what am I speaking
- 5 David: *uh both*
 Amalia: *sometimes I don't realize*
when I'm the middle of—
 @[@
- 10 David: [@@
it doesn't matter

When Amalia and I began the conversation from which this excerpt is taken, we were alone in the painting studio, speaking mostly French. As the other workshop participants arrived and began to set up their workspaces, however, Amalia greeted them in Spanish and began to use Spanish with me. In the above exchange, I try to follow her lead, asking her a question about her cousins—“son de Madrid ellos?” (line 1). Amalia, however, answers in French; she then shifts footing to display and comment on her confusion over language choice—a confusion that she explains through her assertion that she is often not aware of which language she is using when she is focused on an activity. As if to acknowledge the seeming absurdity of such a revelation, she laughs; assuming her stance on both the proposition and the discursive shift that she has imposed on our interaction, I laugh along with her.

For Amalia, such moments of confusion are far outnumbered by explicit declarations of her preference for one code to another—that is, for French to Spanish. During our first recorded interview about a month after I began conducting fieldwork, Amalia and I spoke almost entirely Spanish, the language we had been using with one another at the Centro. When I asked her if we could momentarily switch to French, however, her response took me aback:

(3)

- 1 David: *podemos hablar un poquito de francés?*
 (2.6)
me siento más cómodo en francés sabes.
- 5 Amalia: *y yo=*
=porque no me hablabas en francés
<si a mí me cuesta tanto hablar en español

- David: *no te das cuenta?>*
 David: *no sabía=*
 10 *=porque hablas mucho español*
mucho
- Amalia: *mais non.*
mais non.
c'est parce que je suis obligée
à cause de—de vous
 15 *de—de*
- David: *((smiling voice)) de “vous”?*
 Amalia: *de toi et les autres*
 David: *non!*
parlons français alors
- 1 David: *can we speak a little bit of French?*
(2.6)
I feel more comfortable in French, you know
- Amalia: *and me*
 5 *why didn't you speak to me in French*
if I have such a hard time speaking Spanish
don't you realize?
- David: *I didn't know*
because you speak Spanish a lot
 10 *a lot*
- Amalia: *but no*
but no
it's because I have to
because of—of you
 15 *of—of—*
- David: *((smiling voice)) of “you”?*
 Amalia: *of you and everyone else*
 David: *no!*
let's speak French then

At this early stage of fieldwork, I assumed that most of the women in my study generally preferred to speak Spanish. I was thus surprised to learn not only that Amalia prefers to speak French, but also that she struggles at times with Spanish and believes that her difficulties are evident in conversation. Through her unexpected response to my proposition, Amalia constructs an oppositional dynamic between her and the people who oblige her to adhere to monolingual Spanish—a group indexed by her use of the second-person plural pronoun “vous” (line 14), which subsumes me. Her reaction, however, suggests less a reluctance to speak Spanish than a resistance to the social obligation for her to do so. As she said later in our conversation: “J’ai un très grand problème quand je suis obligée de parler l’espagnol... je parle espagnol quand je vais là-bas, parce que je—je suis obligée, je suis dans un Centre espagnol, et j’ai pas bonne mine de parler le

français.”⁴⁵ Indeed, at the Centro, where a majority of people use Spanish most of the time, speaking French is often interpreted as the lack of “bonne mine” to which Amalia refers above.

Nevertheless, the instructor in the painting workshop is a monolingual French-speaker, and Amalia is often enlisted to translate the banter and jokes that the workshop’s participants relay to one another in Spanish:

alors elle me dit Esperanza, elle me dit “oh, mais toi, c’est toi qui parles le français bien, c’est toi qui dois parler le français, les histories,” je dis “non, quand même, tout le monde parle le français comme moi,” mais moi, j’ai un tabou, parce que... parce que je fais la—comment dire—la prétentieuse à la française

so Esperanza says to me, she says, “oh but you, you’re the one who speaks French well, you’re the one who should speak French, the stories,” I say “no, really, everyone speaks French like I do,” but I have a taboo, because... because I look—how do you say it?—pretentious when I’m speaking French

According to Amalia, her colleagues readily acknowledge that she is more proficient in French than they are; however, the very characteristic that distinguishes Amalia from her peers is also cause for stigmatization. Within the context of the painting workshop and the Centro more generally, Amalia frames the act of speaking French—or, more precisely, the act of speaking French *well*—as taboo, a betrayal of the linguistic and historical background of the Centro and its participants. While at first she denies the fact that her linguistic proficiency sets her apart from her peers (“tout le monde parle le français comme moi”), Amalia goes on to reveal the impulse behind her insistence that her French is no better than anyone else’s: she does not want people to think that she is pretentious.

Amalia’s remark about pretension reveals some of the language ideologies that structure her interactions at the Centro and that inform the linguistic choices that she makes more generally. Over her lifespan, Amalia has built up a set of affiliations with French and Spanish through the intersection of her biographical trajectory and the large-scale situation of language contact in which it unfolded. Speaking French with Henri for over thirty years, Amalia shored up associations of that language with cultural enrichment, political debate, and, on a personal level, the unfettered expression of “(ses) idées à (elle).” As a result, Amalia’s use of French with individuals who are equally capable of interacting with her in Spanish tends to index the familiarity and intimacy she feels towards her interlocutor.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ “I have a huge problems when I have to speak Spanish... I speak Spanish when I go there, because I—I have to, I’m in a Spanish Center, and it doesn’t look good if I speak French”

⁴⁶ Our own negotiation of language choice during our first interview both reflected and enacted a shift in the tone of our relationship. Shortly after our switch to French and the discussion that ensued in which we revealed our mutual alignment toward that language in relation to Spanish (see Excerpt 3), Amalia segued into an unexpected topic of conversation: her vast experience with gay men and the fact that they always seem to adore her. Although I did not reveal to her then that I am gay, I did so a couple of weeks

The stylistic fluidity that Amalia displays when speaking French—in particular, her deployment of specific variables that index both geographical place and familiarity—contrasts with her general use of Spanish, in which she employs variables that mark regional affiliation as a means of distinguishing herself from her interlocutor. When I observed her interacting with her Valencian neighbors in Spain, for example, I was impressed by her exaggeration of the stereotypically Andalusian features of her Spanish—that is, aspirated /s/ and more extreme intonation contours. “J’accentue,” she told me with a smile when I asked her about it later; “c’est une tactique.”⁴⁷ Amalia intentionally draws on the languages and stylistic variables in her repertoire as a means of creating social meaning in interaction. Through recourse to such linguistic practices as code-switching and bilingual discourse-marking, Amalia articulates social meanings that both reflect her *personal* history and emerge from the *shared* history that enabled those practices in the first place. As my analysis of her use of the discourse marker *non mais attends* will illustrate, Amalia draws on broad ideologies associated with language choice to inflect the social meanings that she constructs locally in interaction.

5.4 Multilingual style

5.4.1 *Non mais attends!*

Amalia, like Lina, uses a particular discourse marker—*non mais attends*—across French, Spanish and multilingual interaction. Throughout the recordings I made of her in various settings, she utters this phrase or a variation thereof—*attends*, *mais attends*, *non mais eh attends*—to initiate turns of talk or to frame the turns of talk in which she embeds it. While *non mais* indexes her oppositional stance, *attends* stakes a claim on the subsequent turn of conversation. But Amalia rarely aims her disapproval at the individual(s) with whom she is interacting; rather, she tends to articulate a contrary stance vis-à-vis a non-present party or an idea that has become the focus of discussion. Thus, the ambiguous function of this discourse marker, which articulates disagreement while creating alignment with the other individuals present, enables Amalia to position herself in *opposition* to someone or something without risking offense to any of her interlocutors; in other words, it operates as a face-protective means of displaying the persona of a defiant, freethinking woman.

Amalia not only uses this particular discourse marker at moments of interaction in which she and her conversational partners share critical opinions about the content of their talk; she also utters it to capture the attention of her interlocutors before offering an explanation or recounting an anecdote intended to clarify a discursive or social position. As Andersen (2007) points out, the imperative nature of this discourse marker attracts attention to what has been, or is about to be, said; it often interrupts an interlocutor or prevents an interlocutor from interrupting. For Amalia, who often uses *non mais attends* in response to laughter, it also seems to signal a “breakthrough into performance” (Hymes, 1975). This pragmatic particle thus functions in different but related ways depending on the immediate discursive context in which it is embedded: it foregrounds a

later. Amalia responded that she had suspected as much, and that she had wanted me to know that she was not at all bothered by it.

⁴⁷ “I accentuate”; “it’s a tactic”

forthcoming contribution, highlighting it within a flow of discourse; it announces a performative turn that positions her interlocutors as audience; it creates discursive tension that reflects Amalia's feistiness, whether or not her contribution contradicts what has been put forth by others (cf. Waltereit, 2002).

To illustrate the multiple ways in which *non mais attends* functions for Amalia, I turn now to specific interactions in which I observed her use it. In the following exchange, which took place over lunch in Amalia's apartment, she begins to tell Colette and me about the ways in which her family life affected her performance as a student in elementary school:

(4)

- 1 Amalia: en Espagne j'ai travaillé très mal=
=parce que (1.4) je m'appuyais pas tellement
j'étais trop sen—
Colette: à l'école ça ne m'étonne pas
- 5 @[@
David: [@@@
Amalia: je suis—
non mais attends—
j'étais très sensible
- 10 Colette: m
Amalia: il y a eu des chouchous partout
Colette: m
Amalia: ...et moi ça j'ai souffert de ça
- 1 Amalia: in Spain I worked really badly
because (1.4) I didn't apply myself very much
I was too—
Colette: at school I'm not surprised
- 5 @[@
David: [@@@
Amalia: I am—
no but wait—
I was really sensitive
- 10 Colette: m
Amalia: there were teacher's pets everywhere
Colette: m
Amalia: ...and I suffered because of that

Colette interrupts Amalia to tease her about the difficulties she had staying focused in elementary school, commenting that she does not find Amalia's admission surprising. Her laughter indexes the playful motivation behind her utterance; by joining in, I show my alignment both with her remark and the discursive stance that it indexes. Amalia, however, continues speaking ("je suis—" (line 7)), interrupting her utterance with "non mais attends" (line 8), not to disagree with what Colette has just said, but to inflect her subsequent turn—an explanation for her lack of concentration. Amalia then refers to her sensitivity and the preference her teachers showed for their favorite students (the "chouchous" mentioned in line 11). Incising her turn of talk with this pragmatic particle, Amalia highlights the explicative nature of her subsequent utterance while creating the persona of a frank and forthright woman. Colette, who picks up on this, stops laughing

and displays her attentiveness by nodding and uttering an empathetic “m” in lines 10 and 12.

Later during that same lunch, Colette asks if Amalia spoke with her parents at the funeral of her partner Chantal a few months earlier. In response, Amalia employs the discourse marker *mais attends* before describing and imitating Colette’s father, Amalia’s former employer:

(5)

- | | |
|----|---|
| 1 | Colette: tu as parlé avec eux un peu?
Amalia: avec eux=
=avec ton père oui=
=((whispering)) oh là— |
| 5 | non mais attends attends
il était assis=
=j’étais derrière=
=((indicating Colette)) et son père a fait comme ça
((looks down, sighs heavily)) |
| 10 | Colette: il en avait marre
Amalia: il en avait marre |
| 1 | Colette: did you speak with them a bit?
Amalia: with them
with your father yes
((whispering)) oh my |
| 5 | no but wait wait
he was sitting down
I was behind him
((indicating Colette)) and her father went like this
((looks down, sighs heavily)) |
| 10 | Colette: he was sick of it
Amalia: he was sick of it |

In response to Colette’s question about her parents, Amalia imitates Colette’s father during the funeral. Prefacing her reenactment with the pragmatic particle “oh là” (line 4), Amalia sets up the expectation that Colette’s father acted in a surprising or unconventional way. She goes on to interrupt her turn with “non mais attends attends” (line 5), marking her segue into performance as she sets the stage—“il était assis, j’étais derrière” (lines 6-7)—and then reenacts Colette’s father’s bored, exaggerated sigh. Responding to Amalia’s pantomime, Colette offers an explanation for her father’s demeanor—“il en avait marre” (line 10); Amalia, affirming Colette’s assessment, repeats her phrase verbatim: “il en avait marre” (line 11).

To similar but heightened discursive ends, Amalia also employs this discourse marker when she is speaking Spanish. Indeed, the tension both created and indexed by such bilingual discourse-marking legitimates the frequent claims Amalia makes about her nature as an independent woman who does not hesitate to voice her opposition to convention. To wit, on one occasion she recounted an experience she had over thirty years earlier at the Spanish embassy in Paris shortly after her marriage to Henri. She had gone there to change the name on her passport, but when she arrived, a young, male functionary mistakenly informed her that she would have to forfeit her Spanish

nationality because she had married a Frenchman. Upon hearing this, Amalia was shocked. When the embassy employee tried to assuage her by remarking how privileged she was to have lived in Paris for so many years, she became enraged. As the recording begins, Amalia recalls her reaction to the functionary's comment:

(6)

1 Amalia: yo lloraba
mi marido estaba conmigo
digo “dónde está el privilegio,
yo no veo privilegio ninguno
5 es para Usted!
<que le han dado una carrera
un papá detrás
que le han dado de comer
que ha venido con un trabajo”>
10 no(n) *mais eh attends*
que tienes que tener una voluntad
para no caer en el-la-
cómo se dice?
dans les pièges
15 en francés lo digo mejor
las trampas
de los patrones,
de los hombres,
sobretudo los patrones
20 cuando te ven bonita joven graciosa
y quieren—quieren llevarte a la cama
y tienes que luchar con ellos
porque no quieres—
vamos hombre—
25 eso es un privilegio?
tener que salir de su casa para poder comer

1 Amalia: I was crying
my husband was with me
I say “where is the privilege
I don't see one single privilege
5 it's yours
who were given an education
with daddy behind him
who were given food to eat
who came with a job”
10 no *but wait*
and you have to have the will
not to fall in the—the—
how do you say it?
in the traps
15 in French I can say it better
the traps

of the bosses
 of the men
 but especially the bosses
 20 when they see you young, funny
 and they want—they want to take you to bed
 and you have to struggle with them
 because you don't want—
 come on—
 25 this is a privilege?
 to have to leave home to be able to eat

In this excerpt, Amalia recalls her emotional response to the functionary's remark. Her reported speech, which begins in line 3 (“digo—”), ends when she interrupts her narrative by code-switching into French (line 10); at this point, it is no longer clear to whom her speech is directed—her interlocutor in the narrative, or to me, to whom she is recounting it. Amalia's use of a French discourse marker—“no(n) mais eh attends” (line 10)—which is embedded here in monolingual Spanish discourse, highlights the oppositional tension between her and the embassy employee. Her use of French interrupts the narrative flow that she has established in Spanish; it thereby magnifies the oppositional stance that she displays towards the situation and its protagonists.

At the time of the recording, Amalia and I have not yet established French as our code of preference; her use of French here nevertheless invites my alignment with her vis-à-vis the functionary's thoughtlessness. Her second code-switch in line 14—“dans les pièges”—is framed by a metalingual question (“cómo se dice?”) and an explanation (“en francés lo digo mejor”); again, it interrupts the flow of monolingual discourse to index, but also create, our alignment as French-speakers—or as Spanish-speakers who share a common resource: French. Amalia goes on to translate her code-switch into Spanish—“las trampas”—suggesting that her use of French here is not so much a means of expressing a lexical item that she has forgotten in Spanish, but rather of foregrounding French in this context as a code of distinction that positions us vis-à-vis the insensitive Spaniard.

In line 24, Amalia makes use of a Spanish discourse marker—“vamos hombre”—that serves a similar function to “attends”—that of indexing her disapproving stance on what she sees as the functionary's ignorance. Following Torres (2002), who has studied English discourse markers in Puerto Rican Spanish, I argue that Amalia's use of “attends” alongside an equivalent *Spanish* marker (which I have heard her do in other contexts) underscores the *French* marker's wider functional range here; it enables Amalia to evoke and magnify an antagonistic tension that is a fundamental part of her narrative: within the exchange itself between her and the official representative of a government institution, but also, and more generally, between a Spaniard who left Spain by choice (the functionary) and a Spaniard who had no choice but to leave (Amalia).

Amalia also uses *attends* in Spanish as a response to laughter from her interlocutor(s) and as a means of marking a shift into performative—that is, self-dramatizing, often humorous—discourse. The following excerpt took place in the arts and crafts workshop at the Centro about two months after I began attending it. Amalia invited me to visit her in Valencia; I assumed that she was referring to the city, but, in fact, she had meant the Autonomous Community, as her house is an hour south of the capital in a town called Oliva:

(7)

1 David: Valencia me encanta
Amalia: Valencia?
Valencia no es
es Oliva eh,
5 *attends*
no es Valencia=
=es Oliva=
=Oliva es muy bien
pero la playa
10 la playa
((closes eyes, leans head back))
ahhhhh
>la playa dulce<
David: @@
15 Amalia: non *mais attends*
>la playa dulce<
porque [hay=
David: [sí
Amalia: =hay playas en Andalucía
20 en Málaga
que son muy malas

1 David: I love Valencia
Amalia: Valencia?
it's not Valencia
it's Oliva, eh?
5 *wait*
it's not Valencia
it's Oliva
Oliva is really nice
but the beach
10 the beach
((closes eyes, leans head back))
ahhhhh
>the sweet beach<
David: @@
15 Amalia: no *but wait*
>the sweet beach<
because [there are=
David: [yes
Amalia: =there are beaches in Andalucía
20 en Málaga
that are really bad

Amalia's first code-switch into French, the discourse marker "attends" (line 5), grabs my attention through its imperative mood and highlights her subsequent clarification that her apartment is not in the city of Valencia. Trying to convince me to visit her, Amalia conjures the beach near her apartment; in an exaggerated pantomime, she closes her eyes

and leans back her head, emitting a long sigh (line 12) as though she were lying on the beach she is describing. When she calls the beach “dulce” in line 13, I laugh, inciting her use of “non mais attends” (line 15) before she repeats the expression verbatim—“la playa dulce” (line 16). She goes on to explain matter-of-factly that there are other beaches in Spain that are not as pleasant.

Because *attends* both creates tension and foregrounds performance, Amalia also uses it in other situations to be playfully antagonistic. One afternoon, about four months after I began my fieldwork, I talked with Amalia in the painting studio as she worked on one of her landscapes. About 90 minutes into our conversation, Juan wandered in unexpectedly. Amalia told me that Juan is one of the few male regulars at the Centro whom she likes, and I observed them on other occasions interacting with one another in a light-hearted, chiding manner. When this lengthy excerpt begins, Juan has just greeted us with a warm “hola” and is looking over Amalia’s shoulder to see the progress she has made on her painting:

(8a)

- 1 Juan: esta mujer es la más artista de las artistas
Amalia: *tu parles=*
=ne te moque pas de moi eh.
- Juan: ah no:::
- 5 Amalia: *parce que—*
tu sais—
ça va xx
- Juan: diga=
yo te voy a decir una cosa
- 10 tu eres muy orgullosa de lo que haces,
y no importa lo que dice la gente.
y se acabó.
- David: m
(2.7)
- 15 Amalia: ((referring to her painting)) *il est plus rouge quand même*
David: tiene mucho talento no?
Juan: sí hombre
para mi tiene talento
- Amalia: *tu parles eh,*
- 20 *ne vous moquez pas de moi eh!*
je vais me mettre en colè:re
où elle est—
où elle est ta femme.
- Juan: *ma femme e::lle est divorcée de moi* (1.3)
- 25 estoy buscando a otra
mira a ver si me encuentras algo por ahí alguna vez
- Amalia: [@@@
Juan: [@@@
Amalia: *non mais—*
- 30 *on rit pas de ça*
de le divorce—((she almost dips her brush into her Perrier))

je-je l'ai trempé mon pinceau là dans—
 Juan: eh no no te—
 nunca es tarde si la dicha es buena eh?
 35 he dicho eh?
 Amalia: qué—qué loca
 Juan: un cambio de agua también no nos viene muy mal eh?
 Amalia: sí claro que sí
 sí por qué no

 1 Juan: this woman is the most artistic of all the artists
 Amalia: *you're full of it*
don't make fun of me, eh?
 Juan: ah no:::
 5 Amalia: *because—*
you know
it's going x
 Juan: hey
 I'm going to tell you something
 10 you are very proud of what you do
 and it doesn't matter what people think
 and that's it
 David: m
 (2.7)
 15 Amalia: ((referring to her painting)) *it's more red anyway*
 David: she's has a lot of talent, no?
 Juan: yes
 as far as I'm concerned she has talent
 Amalia: *you're full of it eh*
 20 *don't make fun of me eh!*
I'm going to get angry
where is she—
where is your wife
 Juan: *my wife has divorced me* (1.3)
 25 I'm looking for another one
 let's see if you can find me one around here at some point
 Amalia: [@@@
 Juan: [@@@
 Amalia: *no but—*
 30 *we shouldn't laugh about that*
about divorce—((she almost dips her brush in her Perrier))
I—I dipped my paintbrush there—
 Juan: hey don't don't—
 it's never too late eh?
 35 I say eh?
 Amalia: what—what a crazy person
 Juan: a change of water isn't such a big deal eh?
 Amalia: yes of course
 yes why not

In this excerpt, Amalia magnifies the playful tension in their interaction through her insistent use of French in response to his initial use of Spanish; she first deflects a

compliment—“ne te moque pas de moi” (line 3)—and then chastises him good-naturedly for speaking lightly about divorce (lines 30-31). She also uses French to ask about Juan’s wife, enacting through her question a playful accusation of Juan’s supposed indiscretion: engaging in teasing banter with another woman in his wife’s absence. In response, Juan jokes that his wife has divorced him and that he is now looking for a replacement (lines 24-25). Amalia laughs; when Juan joins in, however, she interrupts their momentary alignment with the discourse marker “non mais—” (line 29), signaling an oppositional shift in footing to Juan’s flippant treatment of marriage. Amalia then refers explicitly to the activity at hand, pointing out that she had almost rinsed her paintbrush in her glass of Perrier (line 32). Juan continues his playful line of conversation about looking for a new wife, at which point Amalia switches to Spanish, marking a conciliatory shift in tone by describing herself as “loca” (line 36). The flirtatious antagonism of the exchange has given way to mutually positive alignment.

As the exchange continues, Amalia goes on to compliment Juan in Spanish, remarking that it is unfortunate he does not participate in some of the Centro’s creative activities (lines 40-41, below):

(8b)

- 40 Amalia: es una pena=
=que este hombre no se meta a hacer escultura
- Juan: que no—
que no sé
que no valgo
- 45 Amalia: no digas tonterías
- Juan: no valgo coño
- David: [no
- Amalia: [que dice que no vale
te haces cada cosa menos de nada
- 50 hay cada—m—
bueno—yo sé
- Juan: yo valgo: para nada
ahí me quedo.
- Amalia: yo sé de lo que yo hablo
- 55 Juan: ahí me quedo.
me voy con mi esposa a ver si—
- Amalia: yo veo otro
- Juan: voy a ver si se ma ha ido de casa mi mujer
- Amalia: sí claro
- 60 se va a ir
adónde va a ir la pobre (0.6) sin su esposo
- Juan: allí “la pobre” dices
vamos
- Amalia: claro
- 65 *non mais eh* [*attends*
- Juan: [sí
las mujeres tenéis lo que queremos
- Amalia: claro

Juan: ((to me)) es verdad o mentira?
 70 David: @@
 Amalia: sí sí tenemos lo que queréis
 Juan: sí
 el hombre es el pobre más [desgraciado que hay en la tierra
 Amalia: [tenemos lo que nos quieren
 dar los hombres
 75 Juan: el hombre es como el perrito ése
 que se le educa
 siéntete
 ven pa' acá
 eso es el hombre
 80 Amalia: @@
 ay qué bueno
 40 Amalia: it's a pity
 that this man doesn't do sculpture
 Juan: no way—
 because I don't know—
 because I'm worthless
 45 Amalia: don't say ridiculous things
 Juan: I'm fucking worthless
 David: [no
 Amalia: [so he says he's worthless
 you do everything so quickly
 50 there's every—m—
 fine-I know
 Juan: I'm not worth anything
 and that's it
 Amalia: I know what I'm talking about
 55 Juan: and that's it
 I'm going with my wife to see if—
 Amalia: I see something else
 Juan: I'm going to see if my wife has left my house
 Amalia: yes of course
 60 she's going to go away
 where's the poor thing going to go (0.6) without her husband
 Juan: so "the poor thing" you say
 come on
 Amalia: of course
 65 *no but eh* [wait
 Juan: [yes
 you women have what we want
 Amalia: of course
 Juan: ((to me)) is it true or not?
 70 David: @@
 Amalia: yes yes we have what you want
 Juan: yes
 man is the poorest, and most [disgraced there is on Earth

- Amalia: [we have what men want to give us
 75 Juan: man is like that little dog
 who is taught
 sit
 come here
 that's men
 80 Amalia: @@
 ay that's good

When Juan disapprovingly repeats Araceli's reference to his wife as "la pobre" in line 62, Amalia first utters an affiliative "claro" in line 64 before shifting stances unequivocally in her subsequent turn with "non mais eh attends." The playful tension with which they began their interaction is momentarily reignited through Amalia's use of this pragmatic particle to dis-align herself from Juan; in fact, this constitutes her only code-switch into French after she switched to Spanish at the beginning of their conversation. As I have previously discussed, this pragmatic particle tends to display Amalia's oppositional (and sometimes haughty, sometimes playful) propriety in the face of what she sees as questionable values or comportment—a stance that is magnified here through her switch in codes (line 65). Juan responds by shifting the conversational focus from himself and his wife to male-female relationships more generally, invoking the notion of "pobreza" (line 73) and likening men to obedient dogs (lines 75-79). Amalia laughs in reply (line 80); their playfully tense exchange culminates in her explicit acknowledgement of his humor in line 81: "qué bueno."

Embedding *non mais attends* within Spanish or multilingual discourse, Amalia interrupts its flow and foregrounds her subsequent turn. The antagonistic tension created by this discourse marker is magnified by its nature as a code-switch, even though Amalia rarely articulates direct contradiction to the individuals with whom she is interacting. Rather, she tends to proffer a clarification or an expansion of what she has already said, or she shifts into performance. Indeed, the fact that Amalia makes use of this pragmatic particle *across* languages suggests its vital role in her construction of social meaning partly through code choice. This particular discourse marker reflects and creates both discursive and social tension that positions Amalia in *opposition* to individuals or ideas, a vital stance for her as it forms a key part of the persona she constructs as a freethinking woman.

5.4.2 Choosing codes

As the above exchange illustrates, Amalia draws on broad ideological associations to index discursive and social meanings in local interaction. During the *séance* in Lina's apartment, for example, Amalia employed variable forms of multilingualism over the course of our afternoon together. While our immediate context remained constant—that is, we stayed in the same location, mutually engaged in the same activity—Amalia nevertheless enacted shifts in topic, interactional alignments, stances and personae through recourse to her multilingual repertoire of variables and practices. The following comparative analysis of her multilingual discourse at three different moments during the *séance* illustrates the ways in which she creates such social meanings through the broad level of code choice, drawing on the ideological friction that emerges from the relationship *between* French and Spanish.

As I have previously stated, our interaction took place over the span of a few hours, and our conversation covered a range of topics from the activity at hand, as Lina read Tarot cards for me and then Amalia, to nostalgic personal narratives that were induced by Lina as a means of clarifying her “readings” of our present states. When the following excerpt begins, Lina has been conducting my Tarot reading for nearly an hour, while Amalia has sat quietly at the table, interjecting occasional comments and jokes. Amalia is still reluctant to allow Lina to give her a reading; she insists that she’s skeptical of what Lina will say—not because she doesn’t have faith in the paranormal, but because she believes that her deceased loved ones will contact her directly if they have something to tell her. I must also mention that Amalia has worn to the séance an oversized, mustard-colored, knit sweater that belonged to her husband and that she showed me a few weeks earlier in her apartment. I noticed the garment when I met up with her at the bus stop in Saint-Ouen on our way to Lina’s home. At the time I didn’t say anything, but I assumed that she had worn it for superstitious reasons. As it turns out, she had.

The recording begins as Lina shuffles the deck of Tarot cards and tells Amalia that her husband’s spirit is now among us:

(9)

- 1 Lina: oh
(2.1)
tiens
está tu marido eh A.
- 5 Amalia: où
Lina: *a tu lado*
Amalia: *yo lo sé*
yo lo he traído
Lina: *no*
- 10 *traído no*
Amalia: *sí*
Lina: *acaba de bajar*
Amalia: *lo he traído yo*
y se lo he dicho esta mañana (.) de venir
- 15 (3.0)
tu no sabes eso?
que se lo he pedido esta mañana de venir?
Lina: *pero no ha venido esta—*
Amalia: *ha venido más tarde*
- 20 *tiene recursos*
Lina: *porque me—*
Amalia: *ha cogido el autobús con retra—@@@@*
David: *por eso: llevaste el—*((I indicate her sweater))
Lina: *—me falta*
- 25 Amalia: *por qué te crees que lo he traído*
David: *sí claro*
Amalia: *tú lo has comprendido?*
David: *m-hm*
Amalia: *sí?*

30 David: *en el momento en que yo te vi sí*
Amalia: *lo has comprendido*
David: *sí*
Amalia: merde
c'est pas vrai

35 David: je suis aussi intelligent que toi A. [@@@=]
Lina: *o—bon ponemos éste*
Amalia: [non=]
[=tu es plus que moi

40 David: [=@@@@
ah non c'est pas vrai
Lina: *no encuentro—es igual*
ponemos éste
(2.1)

Amalia: non mais
45 tu as compris ça?
Lina: alors
vamos a—posas una question
Amalia: merde
(2.6)

50 Lina: *posas una question sobre:—*
Amalia: [putain eh—]
David: [.h]
Lina: [voilà *sobre*] *esa persona que [veamos enferma=]*
Amalia: [c'est pas vrai]

55 Lina: =eh?
sobre la persona que veamos enferma
[*que no se*] *inquieta=*
Amalia: [oh la vache]
Lina: =*para [saber un poquito quien es]*

60 Amalia: [c'est super eh ahhhhhhh!]
Lina: voilà *dé siete—[dé—voilà]—las=*
Amalia: [@@@]
David: [@@@]
Amalia: non mais ça vaut le [coup eh,=]

65 Lina: [*así mira*]
Amalia: =des gens comme ça
Lina: *las embarrajas así*
Amalia: que tu n'as pas beaucoup m-besoin de parler
pour qu'ils comprennent tout=
70 =c'est merveilleux
c—
Lina: *las embarrajas*
David: x ouais
Lina: voilà

75 Amalia: c'est ceux qui me plaît.

=des gens comme ça.
Lina: *y xx vas a dar siete*
y vas a pensar en tu mamá—
David: m-hm
80 Amalia: fantastique

1 Lina: oh
(2.1)
hey
your husband's here eh A.

5 Amalia: where
Lina: *by your side*
Amalia: *I know*
I brought him

Lina: *no*
10 brought no
Amalia: *yes*
Lina: *he just came down*
Amalia: *I'm the one who brought him*
and I told him this morning (.) to come
15 (3.0)
you don't know that ?
that this morning I asked him to come
Lina: *but he didn't come this—*
Amalia: *he came later*
20 *he has his ways*

Lina: *why—*
Amalia: *he took this bus a bit la--@@@@*
David: *that's why you wore—*((I indicate her sweater))
Lina: —I need

25 Amalia: *why do you think I brought it ?*
David: *of course*
Amalia: *you understood that ?*
David: m-hm
Amalia: *yes ?*

30 David: *the second I saw you yes*
Amalia: *you understood that*
David: *yes*
Amalia: *shit*
it's not true

35 David: *I'm as smart as you are A. [@@@@=]*
Lina: *o—fine let's put this one*
Amalia: [no=]
[=you are more than I am
David: [=@@@@@
40 oh no that's not true
Lina: *I can't find—it doesn't matter*
let's put this one
(2.1)
Amalia: no but

45 Lina: you understood that ?
Lina: so
we're going to—ask a question
Amalia: shit
(2.6)
50 Lina: *ask a question on :—*
Amalia: [fuck eh—]
David: [h.]
Lina: [right on] *this person that* [we see is sick=]
Amalia: [it's not true]
55 Lina: =eh ?
on the person who we see as sick
[so that he doesn't] worry=
Amalia: [oh my]
Lina: =so [*we know a little bit who it is*]
60 Amalia: [it's great eh ahhhh !]
Lina: *voilà take seven—[take—voilà]—the=*
Amalia: [@@@]
David: [@@@]
Amalia: no but this is worth [it, eh,=]
65 Lina: [=like that look]
Amalia: =people like that
Lina: *you shuffle them like this*
Amalia: that you don't have to say a lot
for them to understand everything=
70 =it's great
it—
Lina: *you shuffle them*
David: x yeah
Lina: *voilà*
75 Amalia: they're the ones I really like.
=people like that.
Lina: *and xx you're going to give me seven*
and you're going to think about your mother—
David: m-hm
80 Amalia: fantastic.h

Until this moment, about an hour into the recording, we have all three been speaking Spanish with infrequent code-switches into French. However, when Lina tells Amalia in Spanish that her husband's spirit is present (line 4), Amalia responds “où?”, in French, seeming to index through this first code-switch the distanced, skeptical stance that she is taking vis-à-vis Lina's declaration. Amalia then insists in Spanish that Henri is present because she has brought him herself, which Lina denies repeatedly in lines 9-10, 12 and 18. Their oppositional volley culminates with Amalia's comment that Henri arrived by taking the bus (“ha cogido el autobús—” (line 22)), a remark that causes her to laugh. I interrupt her to point out that I've noticed that she has worn Henri's mustard sweater to the séance, despite her vociferous skepticism. Amalia is floored; while Lina counts Tarot cards, Amalia and I continue our exchange in Spanish. She asks me three times if I've *really* understood why she has worn Henri's sweater today (in lines 25, 27, 29); I assure her that I have, although I don't state explicitly why. Once I've convinced Amalia that I

I've seen through her superstitious tactics, she switches into French with the expletive “merde” (line 33), resigning herself to having been “found out” and choosing to speak French for the rest of the exchange; I follow her lead. While Lina continues to set up the Tarot cards, speaking Spanish to herself, Amalia and I continue on in French, a choice that both constructs and reflects our alignment towards one another and frames our conversation apart from the immediate activity.

Our switch to French here draws on the symbolic value of this language for Amalia in relation to Spanish—a value that she revealed over the course of our relationship. French became our main language of communication once we had gotten to know one another and confessed that we generally prefer speaking it to Spanish. And, indeed, this affective value is reflected in the *content* of our exchange as well, as Amalia invokes the value of knowing people who understand her implicitly; as she says in lines 64 and 66, “ça vaut le coup, des gens comme ça.” Lina, excluded from our exchange, attempts to interrupt us with French discourse markers “alors” (line 46) and “voilà” (lines 53, 61 and 74). But we don't acknowledge her. Still surprised by my insight into her choice of clothing, Amalia continues mumbling expletives of surprise—“merde” (line 48) and “putain” (line 51)—and she emits an exaggerated sigh in line 58. Before I re-orient myself completely to the Tarot reading, Amalia utters one last evaluative comment—“fantastique” in line 80—with a slightly extended release of the word's final schwa, a semiotically potent variable for Amalia that I will come back to presently.

The switch of codes that Amalia and I make in this excerpt functions both discursively and socially. On one hand, Amalia's use of French in relation to Lina's insistent use of Spanish enables her to initiate and maintain a parallel conversation with me that is clearly distinguished from the activity in which the three of us are participating. On the other hand, our use of French also draws on ideological associations of familiarity and intimacy—associations that Amalia has shared with me on previous occasions and that she accrued over time primarily through her relationship with her French-speaking husband and his family.

It is almost an hour later when the next excerpt begins, and Amalia has still not agreed to a reading from Lina. When Lina chides her for being unreasonably stubborn, Amalia invokes her mother by way of explanation. Drawing again on multilingual resources, Amalia constructs a persona as an assertive woman in contrast to the figure of a helpless Spanish immigrant:

(10)

1 Amalia: mi madre era humana al punto de ser tonta
y yo refuso parecerme a mi madre
yo refuso porque no quiero que un tío
porque le he dado cincuenta: centimos
5 que me diga que soy *une pouffiasse*
que je suis une merde
yo no acepto eso de la gente
tu ves lo que te quiero decir?
y no acepto xx que me ataquen
10 porque me parezco a mi madre
porque mi madre era demasiado—
ahora cuando digo “perdón—“

digo “bueno euh”
 cuando x pasar adelante
 15 digo “*excusez-moi—euh bon—*”
 yo no quiero—
 yo quiero—
 me toca a mi pasar
 paso yo
 20 yo no quiero parecer a mi madre
 era demasiado
 ha sido una víctima
 ayer estuvimos hablando de eso con Corina
 mi madre era una víctima una víctima una víctima
 25 de la mano de su madre (.)
 y de la gente (.)
 yo he visto a mi madre—
 se lo [han comido]
 Lina: [voilà porque—porque]
 30 *voilà*
 porque era demasiado buena
 Amalia: mi padre le dijo
 “tienes que escoger entre yo
 y tu familia”
 35 y mi madre escogió a su familia
 porque no podía abandonar a su familia

 1 Amalia: my mother was kind to the point of being crazy
 and I refuse to be like my mother
 and I refuse because I don’t want some guy
 because I’ve given him fifty cents
 5 to tell me that I’m *a slut*
that I’m a piece of shit
 I don’t accept that from people
 do you see what I mean ?
 I don’t accept xx that they attack me
 10 because I’m like my mother
 because my mother was too—
 now when I say “excuse me—”
 I say “fine um”
 when xx to pass in front of someone
 15 I say “*excuse me—um fine—*”
 I don’t want
 I want
 if it’s my turn to pass
 then I pass
 20 I don’t want to seem like my mother
 she was too
 she was a victim
 yesterday we were talking about this with Colette

25 my mother was a victim a victim a victim
 at the hands of her mother
 and of people
 saw my mother
 they [ate her up]
 Lina: [right because—because]
 30 right
 because she was too good
 Amalia: my father said to her
 “you have to choose between me
 and your family”
 35 and my mother chose her family
 because she couldn’t abandon her family

In lines 5 and 6, Amalia uses French to animate the epithet of a generic “tío”—“que soy una pouffiasse, que je suis une merde”—both setting this bit of text apart from its discursive context, but also, symbolically, calling on her ideological associations of French in this gendered exchange that is structured around an imbalance of power. Here, Amalia voices in French the derogatory comments that position her as a sexualized object—comments that she has told me she heard many times after arriving in France. But a few utterances later, she counters the image of a vulnerable Spanish female by animating an imagined exchange between herself and a hypothetical stranger she wants to pass on the street. In line 15 she says “digo ‘excusez-moi—euh bon’,” revealing through this second code-switch the complex set of associations tying her self-perception as an assertive woman to her use of French—the language in which she was subjugated after arriving in France, but also the language that enabled her access to forms of power that ensured she would not end up “una víctima” (lines 22 and 24) like her mother. Amalia’s code-switching creates social meaning through dynamic ideological associations tied to the languages in her repertoire. Here, Amalia uses French not only as a discursive resource that foregrounds fragments of reported speech—a function that Zentella (1997), among many others, has associated with code-switching—but also as a symbolic resource whose meaning cannot be completely ascertained without understanding the larger social and historical context in which she acquired French—a context that she shares with her interlocutor, Lina.⁴⁸

In this final excerpt from the séance, the content of which I mentioned in Section 5.2, Amalia stakes a similar identity claim as in excerpt 10—that of an independent, assertive woman—through a narrative she recounts about asking her employer for a raise. This time, however, her interactive gambit is entirely in French, including her fragments of reported speech:

(11)

1 Amalia: regarde qu’est-ce qu’elle m’avait dit Colette
 (0.8)
 j’étais uh à toucher trois cents francs
 <des années des années des années>
 5 moi j’en avais marre de gagner que 300 francs,

⁴⁸ I would also like to point out Lina’s use of *voilà* in lines 29 and 30. As I discuss in Chapter 4, Lina uses this French discourse marker to establish and reflect the authority that she requires to legitimate her work as a professional clairvoyant.

et un jour j'ai dit « bon écoutez hein,
 euh—quand même—augmente-moi un petit peu »
 et combien—y avait au moins
 tre-trois cent cinquante—au moins cinquante francs de plus
 10 et elle me dit Colette.
 “mais tu es folle?
 tu te rends compte que j'ai entendu mes parents
 (0.6)
 discuter de ton salaire=
 15 ils allaient t'augmenter à quatre cents
 et tu étais si idiot que tu as demandé que trois cent
 cinquante”
 @@[@@]
 David: [@@]
 20 Amalia: et leur fille
 mais tu sais—
 il l'a vue hier
 David: ouais
 Amalia: il l'a vue
 25 elle était de mon côté

 1 Amalia: look what Colette told me
 (0.8)
 I was uh getting three hundred francs
 for years and years and years
 5 I was sick of getting only 300 francs
 and one day I said “fine listen, uh
 uh—come on—raise my salary a little bit”
 and how much—there was at least
 three-three hundred fifty—at least fifty francs more
 10 and Colette told me
 “but are you crazy ?
 do you realize that I heard my parents
 (0.6)
 talking about your salary
 15 they were going to raise it to 400 francs
 and you were such an idiot that you only asked
 for three hundred fifty”
 @@[@@]
 David: [@@]
 20 Amalia: and their daughter
 but you know—
 he saw her yesterday
 David: yeah
 Amalia: he saw her
 25 she was on my side

While Amalia's anecdote is entirely in French, it is nevertheless important to consider the possibility that this is a semiotically strategic choice. Indeed, to understand the symbolic meaning that she may be attempting to convey, one might ask: why is she *not* using

Spanish, especially if here, as in excerpt 10 where she did use Spanish, she invokes her resistance to the stereotype of a vulnerable young Spanish woman in Paris? Perhaps this is because the anecdote she recalls occurred in France, in French, after she had acquired the language with enough proficiency to ask her employer for a raise; or perhaps it is because Amalia associates with her acquisition and use of French the independence of which she is so proud and which she frequently invokes to explain the course her life has taken. The evidence of forthright individualism that Amalia offers in the excerpt would indeed suggest the latter possibility.

Regardless, Amalia remarks that she learned years later that Colette's parents were willing to pay her more than she had asked for. Animating Colette's speech, Amalia calls herself an "idiote" (line 16); this time, however, the epithet comes in jest from an intimate, younger woman and is cause for self-deprecating laughter. After all, Colette was "on (Amalia's) side" (line 25). Referring to the relationship between Colette and her father, Amalia makes a singular use of word-final schwa—"fille" [fijə]⁴⁹—which recalls her use of that same variable at the end of Excerpt 9, when she utters "fantastique" [fātastikə]. Citing Carton (1999), Hansen and Hansen (2003) point out that epenthetic schwas have been associated with nonchalant, working-class speech and are today salient in the familiar French spoken in Paris, where they often function as discourse markers in informal or warm interaction. Amalia (in some contexts) considers herself Parisian, and she proudly describes her deceased husband as a classic *titi parisien*. It is thus not surprising that she makes use of this variable more so than any other woman in my research sample, and that she makes use of it *here* to index her positive stance on the intimacy displayed by my recognition of her superstitious tactic.

5.5 Conclusion

Through a concatenation of variables on multiple linguistic (and non-linguistic) levels, as well as her choice of code in particular contexts, Amalia (re)constructs the interactive stances and personae that reflect her self-perception as a free-spirited and freethinking woman. Amalia's desire to project such a persona has emerged over the course of her biographical trajectory, and she has learned to achieve its expression in part through her strategic use of the variables and languages in her repertoire. For Amalia, claims to independent-mindedness are effectively legitimated through her assumption of an oppositional stance vis-à-vis the individuals, ideas and practices that have become the focus of interaction; thus, she actively creates social tension through the use, among other linguistic features, of the French discourse marker *non mais attends*. In Spanish or multilingual discourse, the social meaning of this pragmatic particle is inflected by the ideological associations of French that it activates within the local and historical situation of language contact in which Amalia uses it. To be sure, the oppositional tension on which Amalia relies to display her independence also serves her in the construction of another persona that functions within a similar relational dynamic—namely, that of the coquette. Her choice to code-switch into French with Spanish-dominant bilingual men, for example, often stages a spirited play between proximity and distance; with French-dominant men like me, however, her linguistic choices index *different* social meanings,

⁴⁹ "daughter"

signaling or constructing intimacy. The language ideologies that Amalia harbors have been shaped over years of becoming multilingual and practicing multilingualism in contexts defined through a confluence of local and historical phenomena. Unlike Lina, whose relationship to French has remained primarily, although not wholly, utilitarian, and unlike Benita, my next case study, for whom ideologies of monolingual purity eclipse the inclination to create social meaning through multilingual practices, Amalia has accrued deeply affective ties to her second language that influence when, with whom, and how she now uses it.

Chapter 6

Benita: a case study

6.1 An introduction

On an overcast Friday afternoon at the end of April, I rush to meet up with a small group of people from the Centro who are standing in front of the *Musée d'Art moderne de la Ville de Paris*. Huddled at the foot of the steps leading up to the museum's entrance, they listen respectfully to Josep, the Centro's 39 year-old activities director, as he prepares them for what they will see inside. I am surprised to encounter a preponderance of unfamiliar faces among the 15 people present, so I decide to approach Benita, whom I have observed for a couple of months in the Centro's *Lengua castellana* and theater workshops, and whom I interviewed three weeks earlier. As I sidle up next to her, Benita smiles and taps my elbow, greeting me in her resonant Castilian: "Buenos días, David, te esperábamos!"¹ This marks the third time that I have participated in the Centro's monthly cultural outings, and Benita is one of the few individuals who has been present at each of them.

Towards the end of the tour, after we have made our way through galleries that feature works by Picasso, Braque, Modigliani and Warhol, Josep leads us downstairs to one final exhibit—a series of three rooms housing permanent installations by the French artist Christian Boltanski. "Os va a gustar,"² he assures us on our descent to the museum's basement, adding mysteriously that we are likely to "find ourselves" in the exhibit we are about to see—"Les abonnés du téléphone,"³ a dimly lit, square-shaped room lined with mahogany bookshelves full of nearly 3,000 telephone directories from around the world. In the middle of the exhibit, two tables invite museum patrons to browse the directories in search of their names or those of acquaintances. As we crowd into the room, Josep tells us what he sees as Boltanski's objective: a staging of the tension between personal and collective identity through the creation of a global archive made up of individual names—or, at least, of the names of individuals who own telephones. When Josep explains that the directories are arranged in alphabetical order by country (in French), and that they date from the year 2000, the members of the Centro rush the shelves labeled "Espagne." I described this scenario later in my field notes:

After we entered the room, people ran to the "Espagne" section, blocking "États-Unis" in such a way that I couldn't reach the San Francisco phone book. (I, too, felt the impulse to "find myself.") Josep told the group that he had found his name the last time he came to the museum, and so he is a permanent part of the exhibit. Meanwhile, Piedad stood on a stool to fish out the Almería book and then made jokes when she couldn't find herself. Eventually, she did. Julia took the Valencia phonebook to look for her brother. Everyone, with the exception of Benita, swarmed the directories from Spain. (4/18/08)

¹ "Hello, David, we've been waiting for you!"

² "You're going to like it"

³ "Telephone subscribers"

While her peers pore over the directories from various regions in Spain, Benita heads offhandedly towards the adjacent bookcase, tracing her index finger along the shelf marked “France” until she comes across the directory—Seine-Saint-Denis (93000)—that includes her telephone number in La Courneuve. She takes the book down from the shelf and carries it to one of the tables, looking up her name alongside her companions. “Boh,” she says with a shrug when she finds it, looking at me and smiling as she flips the book closed.

Benita’s reaction to the installation did not surprise me; earlier during our visit to the museum she explained to me her pragmatic approach to artwork: if she likes something, she likes it, and if she doesn’t, she doesn’t. Nevertheless, her choice to peruse the French phone directory instead of the Spanish one from her home province of Valladolid revealed her similarly pragmatic outlook on her status as a Spanish immigrant in France. The matter-of-factness with which she found her name and shut the directory reflected not only her attitude towards the exhibit, but to the complex act of locating herself in relation to a national or identitary group. During one of our conversations, Benita summed up this attitude by referring to the fluid affiliations she experiences when watching soccer matches:

des fois, ils viennent l’équipe de-de-d’Espagne à jouer avec la France au foot ... j’aime beaucoup le foot, ils jouent les deux, et je me suis dit toujours, “je veux que ça soit l’Espagne qui gagne, mais si c’est la France, ça ne me dérange pas” ... parce que j’accepte, parce que je suis entre les deux, et à la fin je me dis, ou je me suis dit toujours, “bah, je connais mieux les joueurs français que les Espagnols, puisque tout le temps j’entends parler des-des-des joueurs français” ... et c’est toujours pareil, même s’il y a une petite tendance d’aller de l’autre côté des Pyrénées⁴

sometimes, the team from-from-from Spain comes to play soccer with France ... I love soccer, they both play, and I always say to myself, “I want Spain to win, but if France wins, that’s okay with me” ... because I accept, because I’m between the two, and in the end, I say to myself, or I’ve always said to myself, “well, I know the French players better than the Spanish ones, because I’m hearing about the French players all the time” ... and it’s always the same, even if I have a little tendency to go with the other side of the Pyrenees

Unlike most of the people I met at the Centro, whose allegiance to Spain remains resolute, Benita is just as likely to display an attachment to her country of origin as to the country where she has lived for over forty years. Whereas Amalia has developed a primary affiliation to France, Benita maintains a sense of belonging to *both* places, even if, as she states with a smile, she often feels a slight preference for her native country.

From the outset of my fieldwork, Benita acted as a willing source of factual information on the dictatorship in Spain and the waves of migration that it caused to countries in both Europe and Latin America. Over time, I realized that her primarily

⁴ Almost all of Benita’s citations in French are taken from the part of our interview that was conducted in that language.

intellectual approach to these historical events reflect not only a level of cultural literacy that far surpasses that of her peers at the Centro (indeed, Josep once remarked that he considered Benita “muy culta”⁵), but also a measure of distance that she feels between her own experience of migration and the narratives that circulate about other Spaniards who came to France during the same time period. “Mi caso es un poco especial,”⁶ she told me a number of times, differentiating herself from the other women at the Centro to whom she often referred in the third person: “no ves los problemas de la gente que se ha venido aquí porque no comía bien en España?”⁷; “ils ont souffert en Espagne, et ils ont souffert en France, mais en France ils s’en sont sortis, ils ont remonté la pente, ils ont remonté la faim.”⁸

Whereas Amalia cultivates distinction through the performance of eccentric personae (as well as frequent references to her eccentricity), Benita distinguishes herself by emphasizing the primary and atypical details of her biography. As I will discuss below, Benita immigrated to Paris to join her husband, the son of political refugees, who had lived there since he was eight years old; as she often points out, her experience of migration has differed from that of the others because she did not grow up in extreme poverty like most of them, and she did not head to France in search of employment. Indeed, Benita never worked after arriving in Paris because her husband was already established professionally, and there was no need to supplement his income.

Perhaps because of the relative ease with which she settled in France, Benita does not idealize the place she left behind in the 1960s. Although she describes her childhood and adolescence in generally positive terms, she also readily invokes the hardships wrought by dictatorship—namely, poverty and censorship. Unlike many of the others at the Centro, Benita speaks openly about such painful realities, underscoring the fact that her family’s social status and political affiliations prevented her from experiencing them. During one of our conversations, she challenged me to imagine living under the extreme conditions she described:

tú te imaginas lo que es una dictadura?, porque Estados Unidos es un país libre, lo mismo que aquí (en Francia)—no, nadie ... nadie se da cuenta de lo que es una dictadura desde lejos, no se ve ... bueno, yo nunca he sufrido, porque en mi casa ya no hacían política ... en mi casa nadie tuvo nunca problemas

can you imagine what a dictatorship is?, because the United States is a free country, the same as here (in France)—no, nobody ... nobody realizes what a dictatorship is from afar, you can’t see it ... well, I never suffered, because in my house we weren’t political ... in my house nobody ever had any problems

Coming from a family of Nationalists, Benita did not “suffer” from the dictatorship as she says above, but she did witness firsthand the misery it caused among most of the

⁵ “very cultured”

⁶ “My situation is a bit different”

⁷ “can’t you see all the problems of the people who came here because they couldn’t eat in Spain?”

⁸ “they suffered in Spain, and they suffered in France, but in France they overcame it, they got back on their feet, they got over their hunger”

individuals in her *pueblo*. Consequently, she told me, she has a distinct aversion to what she considers the amnesiac nostalgia often expressed by some of her peers at the Centro. When describing the collection of wistful scenes that Lina produced for the *Día del Libro* celebration, for example, Benita rolled her eyes and chuckled: “Se pone siempre a lo trágico, Lina!”⁹ On another occasion, she dismissed one of Lina’s poems, “El inmigrante” (which I address in Chapter 4), in such a marked way that I wrote about it in my field notes: “Benita shrugged off such yearning for the past, for a time and a place that once was, saying, ‘we’re all here now; we’ve left all that behind’” (4/9/08). Benita tied her lack of nostalgia to the singularity of her circumstances—in particular, to the fact that she did not come to France to work as did most of the other women at the Centro. As she said once during the *Lengua castellana* course: “Yo no tengo ninguna nostalgia de España. Cuando voy, voy y me la gozo; y cuando vengo aquí, vengo y me la gozo... Pero el caso es que no he trabajado—no tengo la misma situación.”¹⁰

Nevertheless, Benita began a written composition about her *pueblo* by invoking the “ausencia relativa”¹¹ that has come to define her relationship to Spain. While she does not romanticize her place of origin (her composition goes on to describe the various plants and crops that grew there after she states matter-of-factly that “en un pueblo los paisajes van unidos a las personas y a las situaciones y actividades de cada uno”¹²), she still acknowledges the dynamic nature of her identification with it—an identification that began to shift as she created a home for herself and her two children in Paris. Benita describes her absence from Spain as “relative” because, like almost all of the women in my study, she has continued to make annual visits to her *pueblo*; from the perspective of an expatriate, she has witnessed the changes it has undergone as Spain emerged from dictatorship to become an economic and social counterpart to the nation-states of late-modern western Europe. Benita’s pithy but insightful collocation—“relative absence”—reflects both her sensitivity to the pluralizing effects of transnational migration (“je suis entre les deux,”¹³ as she said when explaining her equal interest in French and Spanish soccer teams) and her awareness that the experience of such effects differs, however subtly, *between* individuals.

To be sure, the national affiliations and legal status of Benita’s son and daughter both reflect and influence her own sense of belonging to both sides of a national border. Her children grew up speaking Spanish with her and French with her husband; they have both remained in the Paris region (Benita lives with her daughter in La Courneuve), and neither of them has any interest in relocating to Spain. Nevertheless, Benita’s son chose to become a Spanish citizen during his adolescence to avoid conscription in France, and Benita’s daughter accompanies her on annual visits to Valladolid, where, according to Benita, she speaks “perfect” Spanish. As Benita explained to me: “Mes enfants, ils sont

⁹ “Lina always winds up with tragedy!”

¹⁰ “I have no nostalgia for Spain; when I go, I go, and I enjoy it, and when I come back here, I come back, and I enjoy it... but the thing is, I’ve never worked—I don’t have the—um—the same situation”

¹¹ “relative absence”

¹² “in a village, the people, their situations and activities are inseparable from the countryside”

¹³ “I’m between both of them”

au milieu de la France, et de l'Espagne—les deux—et il n'y a pas de problème.”¹⁴ Benita has used language to achieve and pass on this sense of belonging to two nations and cultures at once; through her meticulous acquisition of French and her methodical transmission of Spanish, she has legitimated claims to belonging on both sides of the Pyrenees, not only for herself but also for her children.

Indeed, Benita's linguistic attitudes, including her marked adherence to ideologies of correctness and her aversion to all forms of language-mixing, are imbued with her characteristic pragmatism and governed by an unquestioned faith in their transparency. Buoyed by this conviction in her beliefs, Benita frequently models and arbitrates usage. Whether she is taking part in the *Lengua castellana* course or engaging in a conversation that has nothing to do with language, Benita often invokes the importance of using correct grammar and of keeping Spanish and French separate—a maxim instilled in her by her husband—and she chastises her peers for not doing so. Moreover, Benita's pedagogic impulses are not restricted to the domain of language use and usage; she also edifies her colleagues on the background and historical context of the authors they read in the *Lengua castellana* course, or she recommends different turns of phrase for the scenes in the theater workshop. She is, in many senses, a teacher *manqué*, the very persona that she most consistently creates through particular linguistic practices (such as her strictly monolingual use of the discourse markers “te imaginas” or “tu t'imagines,” which I will discuss below).

In the courses she takes in the Centro, Benita respects her instructors' authority but nevertheless feels confident enough to challenge them when she thinks that they have given inaccurate information—especially when that information is historical in nature. During our visit to the *Musée d'Art moderne*, for example, Josep suggested that all of Western Europe experienced a similar crisis during the *entre-deux-guerres* that affected the art produced across the continent. Benita, however, contested such a parity of France and Spain, insisting that the social and political climates of the two nation-states were markedly different well into the 1970s. Josep explained that he hadn't been referring to social conditions, but rather to more general trends that affected everyone living during that period. Benita, however, refused to concede. Her own experience as a Spanish immigrant led her to believe otherwise, and her sense of propriety compelled her to speak up about it.

Benita was indeed one of the most forthcoming participants in my study, volunteering to sit for an interview even before I had the chance to ask her. More than anyone else—with the exception of Amalia—she expressed an interest in my research and my reasons for undertaking it. But while Amalia's investment in my project reflected, I think, her personal affinity for me, Benita's curiosity reflected her general interest in history and politics, as well as her desire to share that interest with other people. Not surprisingly, she began our first recorded conversation with a lengthy overview of twentieth-century Spain, drawing on her husband's experience as a political refugee to illustrate what she referred to as a typical case of migration. After a considerable amount of prodding, however, Benita began to tell me about her own

¹⁴ “my children are between France and Spain—both of them, and there's no problem with that”

biographical trajectory, warning me that its idiosyncratic contours were likely to skew the data that I was collecting.

6.2 A biography

Benita was born in 1940 in San Román de Hornija, a town of around 1,500 inhabitants that lies in a flat, dry plain in the province of Valladolid. For most of her childhood she enjoyed a privileged social status relative to the economic immigrants she interacts with today at the Centro. Benita's father, a successful agriculturist, employed a number of local laborers; her mother was a schoolteacher. During her childhood, Benita and her younger brother were raised in part by a live-in nanny, and her family employed at least one *sirvienta de casa*. Nevertheless, such domestic luxuries did not last long into Benita's adolescence, as her family began to feel the effects of living under Francoism. Although Benita's parents maintained their professional positions, as well as the social status that it garnered them, they were still forced to make sacrifices in response to increasingly grim socioeconomic conditions that affected all but the wealthiest Nationalist families in dense urban areas.

For Benita, this meant leaving school at the age of twelve in order to help her mother at home when her family could no longer afford to employ domestic servants. During one of our interviews, Benita discussed the painful consequences of living under dictatorship:

siempre hubo una sirvienta en casa porque teníamos a los obreros, y había mucho trabajo y—pero una época en que no teníamos a nadie porque se habían ido, o no encontramos o no sé qué—y dijo mi madre: “Benita, que se quede en casa” y se acabó

there was always a servant in our house because we had workers, and there was a lot of work and—but there was a time when we didn't have anyone because they had left, or we didn't find anyone or I don't know why—and my mother said: “Benita has to stay home” and that was it

In spite of the readiness with which Benita associates such personal repercussions with the sociopolitical apparatus of Francoism, she nevertheless holds her mother accountable for the decision to remove her relatively early from the very school where she taught. The abruptness with which she describes her departure from primary school—“se acabó”—hints at the trauma left in its wake. When I asked her at what age, exactly, she stopped attending school, Benita interrupted me tersely:

(1)

1 David: tú fuiste a la escuela=
=hasta la edad [de—
Benita: [hasta los doce años=
=sí
5 mis-mis amigas=
=todas fueron hasta los catorce...
pero mi madre me necesitaba en casa.

- 1 David: you went to school
until the age of—
Benita: until the age of twelve
yes
- 5 my-my friends
they all went until the age of fourteen...
but my mother needed me at home

Benita invokes the injustice of her stunted education by relativizing it vis-à-vis that of her peers who were allowed to spend two years longer in school than she. A few turns after this exchange, she mentioned her younger brother, who was encouraged by her parents to continue his studies as a means of ensuring his professional stability: “Pero mi hermano a los diez años empezó a (hacer estudios), y no los dejó hasta-hasta dieciséis años después... Es ingeniero agrónomo, y yo en casa, lavando y fregando.”¹⁵ Benita admits with a measure of bitterness that she has never forgiven her mother for denying her education, especially since her family had the means to do otherwise in spite of their diminished wealth. When I asked her with some surprise about the paradox of her schoolteacher mother making such a decision, Benita interrupted me a second time: “¿Tú te crees que es normal...? Mi madre dijo: ‘Se queda en casa y ya está.’”¹⁶ Invoking this (ab)normality, Benita frames her mother’s decision as an incomprehensible offense, especially in relation to the different treatment that she gave Benita’s brother. Her senses of loss and injustice are thus unquestionably tied up with her identity as a woman. She alluded to this correlation during another conversation about the poet Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, when she invoked the importance of nurturing a girl’s intellectual potential and the corollary dangers of not doing so: “Si no se cultiva de hija, nada le sirve. A veces los talentos se malogren antes de salir.”¹⁷

A voracious autodidact, Benita overcame her scholastic fate by making a concerted effort to continue learning on her own through whatever means possible. She was fortunate to have a wealthy aunt in the city of Valladolid, who gave her books and showed her the province’s capital; she also had an encouraging grandfather, who nurtured her curiosity about language through word games and regular queries about Spanish grammar. Indeed, Benita’s grandfather, who lived with her family until his death in 1961, played a powerful role in her upbringing, instilling within her a thirst for cultural and historical knowledge and an awareness that such knowledge could be acquired outside of a classroom. “Yo me crecí siempre con él,”¹⁸ Benita told me, recalling the playful way in which he would ensure that she remained critically engaged with her surroundings:

cuando empecé yo a salir—pero me lo hizo siempre cuando yo era mayor también—cuando iba a algún sitio, tenía que contarle desde que salía de casa hasta que volvía, si eran 24 horas como si era una semana, tenía que contarle todo, yo-yo le decía que había

¹⁵ “but my brother started studying at ten, and he didn’t finish until sixteen years later... he’s an agricultural engineer, and I was at home, washing and scrubbing”

¹⁶ “do you think that’s normal...? My mom said: ‘she’ll stay home and that’s that’”

¹⁷ “if it’s not cultivated from the time she’s a girl, it’s of no use; sometimes talent is spoiled before it has a chance to come out”

¹⁸ “he was always around while I was growing up”

estado al cine, que había visto una película así o al teatro, o a ver un museo, o a tal iglesia que había éste u el otro, y me decía: “bueno, y qué más? Tú has visto esto, yo no lo he visto, y nos quedamos igual,” y yo le decía, “no, porque yo podré explicarle a Usted todo lo que he visto, éste y el otro, y el otro, o qué me hace de-de saber y de conocer todo eso, y Usted no lo sabe,” y al final, se levantaba, se iba riéndose porque eso era lo que quería oírme decir, que saliendo así yo aprendía cosas

when I started to go out—but he used to do it to me when I was older, too—whenever I would go somewhere, I used to have to tell him about everything from the moment I left the house until I came back, if I’d been gone 24 hours or a week, I used to have to tell him everything, I-I told him that I’d been to the movies, that I’d seen a film or that I’d been to the theater, or to a museum, or to some church or another, and he used to say to me: “so? what else? you saw this, I haven’t seen it, and we’re the same,” and I used to say to him, “no, because I’m able to tell you everything that I’ve seen, this or that, or the other thing, or what it means to me to know or be acquainted with all this, and you can’t,” and in the end, he would get up and walk away laughing because that was what he wanted to hear me say, that going out like that, I had learned things

In spite of her reluctant departure from school, Benita, through her grandfather’s encouragement, began to develop a sense of agency about scholarship and to associate learning with experience.

Even after she left school, Benita maintained a sense of herself as student by sating her ravenous appetite for reading—“yo no fui mucho a la escuela, pero mi vicio toda mi vida ha sido leer”¹⁹—and, somewhat paradoxically, by acting as a teacher to the people around her. She recalls making a concerted effort to speak “correct” Spanish when she stopped attending school. As illustrated by the reported speech in the excerpt above, Benita insisted on using the formal second-person pronoun “Usted” with her grandfather, while many of her peers would have used the informal “tú.” When I asked her about this, she explained that she has always held very traditional, conservative ideas about language, even as a teenager: “Yo era una persona de otra época.”²⁰ One afternoon while we walked from the Centro to the RER station at Plaine-Saint-Denis, she told me that her family recognized her facility with language and often sought her counsel on linguistic matters. As I wrote in my field notes later that day: “Even though she was surrounded by doctors, lawyers and well-schooled relatives while she was growing up, Benita was still known by her family as the one who had all of her grammar in order” (3/19/08). This public recognition of her linguistic prowess validated Benita’s self-perception as an authority on language, and it encouraged her to assume the role of “teacher,” which I observed her do on a number of occasions. Like many of the women at the Centro, I, too, received instructions from Benita on ways that I could improve my Spanish: watch television, surf the Internet, buy the weekend edition of *El País*, and read as much as possible.

¹⁹ “I didn’t go to school much, but my whole life reading has been my vice”

²⁰ “I was someone from another era”

Such was the invaluable advice that Benita received from her husband Paco, a childhood friend whom she met at church in their *pueblo*. The son of political refugees, Paco fled Spain with his parents in 1938 but maintained contact with Benita. During Benita's adolescence, they started a correspondence, began a courtship and eventually married in 1968, when Benita was 28 years old. By then, Paco had lived in Paris for nearly twenty years; he had developed "una mentalidad francesa," according to Benita, and embodied what she considered "el bilingüe perfecto": he spoke Spanish and French equally well, and he felt at home in both cultures.

During our first interview, Benita responded to my initial query about her childhood by telling me about her husband's migration during the Civil War—first to Barcelona and then to Bordeaux. Her investment in the singularity of her experience vis-à-vis that of the other individuals at the Centro informed her initial gestures as a research subject; she displaced her own biographical narrative with her husband's, assuming that his was the "history" that interested me. When I called her attention to this, Benita explained the differential nature of her experience by invoking the proficiency in French with which she arrived in Paris. Because she had acquired some of the language before immigrating, she explained, she avoided many of the problems encountered by her peers: "Yo no he tenido ningún problema."²¹ Nevertheless, I eventually coaxed out of her personal narratives about language learning and use that tell a slightly different story. When I asked her to recall specifically how she had acquired French, Benita shifted the focus of our interview from the factual details of her husband's migration to the emotional difficulties of her own.

Before Benita moved to France to join her husband, she began to learn French by reading magazines that he sent her from Paris:

yo siempre me ha gustado leer, y mi marido—antes de saber yo leer en francés—yo tenía un diccionario español-francés, francés-español—me había abonado a *Paris Match* y-y a *Elle*, la revista *Elle*, las dos revistas—los dos años qui fuimos novios, me abonó, y yo los recibía en España ... y poco a poco yo aprendí a leer francés antes de hablar

I've always liked reading, and my husband—before I knew how to read in French—I had a Spanish-French, French-Spanish dictionary—he gave me a subscription to *Paris Match* and-and to *Elle*, the magazine *Elle*, the two magazines—for the two years that we were engaged, he subscribed me to them, and I used to get them in Spain ... and little by little I learned to read French before speaking it

Benita's penchant for reading—her "vice"—enabled a preliminary, literary acquisition of French through loosely organized "lessons" in which Benita would summarize in Spanish the articles she had read in French as evidence that she had understood them. Paco had witnessed firsthand the linguistic distress endured by his parents after they arrived in France, and he wanted to protect Benita from a similar fate. In addition, as Benita told me with a smile, he wanted to ensure that she would not return to Spain once she had joined him in France, where she was likely to feel linguistically and culturally isolated: "Nunca me forzó a aprender... Me decía, 'tengo miedo de que algún día digas "basta!" y te vayas

²¹ "I've never had a problem"

a España.”²² Nevertheless, it was clear through Benita’s anecdotes that her husband did not refrain from giving her stern advice about learning and using language, even if he did not correct her overtly. By the time she arrived in Paris, Benita had developed an advanced level of reading proficiency, but she was unable to utter any phrases in French beyond “bonjour” and “merci.” Thus, her husband taught her to say “yo no compro pan” (“I’m not buying any bread”), which approximates phonetically “je ne comprends pas” (“I don’t understand”), so that Benita could defend herself in quotidian transactions in which she found herself confused. When I asked her if she made use of this device, she shook her head; even armed with this bit of French, she was too afraid to leave her apartment during her first few months in Paris. Benita preferred instead to accompany her husband on outings during which he could incorporate lessons on vocabulary with their everyday tasks.

Unlike most of the women in my study, Benita did not work outside of the home; her acquisition of French was thus not conditioned by the stringent demands of employment, perhaps enabling her to subscribe to the strict ideologies of linguistic correctness that her husband propagated. For Lina and Amalia, the French language was inextricably tethered to the pursuit of social mobility and economic security upon arrival in their host country. For Benita, who had married an established bilingual man, it promised a measure of social acceptance that would compensate for the hardships of her transnational displacement. Invoking what she describes as the reserved nature of the French, Benita articulated what has become her primary sociolinguistic strategy: approaching them in their own language to increase the likelihood of affiliation with them. In a course that she took at a public senior center in La Courneuve, Benita interacted with a particularly prickly Frenchwoman whom, over time and through a calculated effort, she was able to “conquer” by asking her to correct any mistakes that she made in French and by charming her with metalinguistic humor. “Poco a poco me la he ido conquistando,” she said, “y yo mismo le he dicho, euh: ‘*Vous avez la chance parce que—de parler français.*’”²³ In order to win over her reserved, French peer, Benita resorted to her preferred sociolinguistic gambit, carefully choosing which language to speak and strategically displaying her respect for correct usage.

Benita’s sense of distinctiveness—that is, her insistence on the singularity of her biographical trajectory—informs her choice of codes and how she uses them. Her particular form of Castilian and prescriptive recommendations index her linguistic and, by extension, her social distinction—a distinction that is manifested as both difference and excellence (Bourdieu, 1984). Although her husband died in 2001, Benita frequently invokes his influence on her as both a teacher and a student, steering the process through which she became multilingual. The linguistic ideologies that Benita now exhibits—indeed, that she now claims explicitly to respect—may have originated in an appreciation for grammar that she cultivated in her childhood, but they evolved into a kind of ethos as she matured, structuring the linguistic and identity practices in which she now engages as a multilingual woman.

²² “He never forced me to learn anything... he used to say to me, ‘I’m afraid that some day you’re going to say “I’ve had enough!” and that you’ll go back to Spain”

²³ “and I told her, um, ‘you’re lucky because—for speaking French”

6.3 Language attitudes and use

After my first few visits to the Centro's theater workshop, I remarked in my field notes that the "Éluard woman" spoke the "clearest" Spanish of anyone I had encountered (3/5/08).²⁴ While attending rehearsals for the *Día del libro* performance, I found Benita's monologue and poem recitation surprisingly easy to follow, in spite of the somewhat arcane vocabulary and syntax that they contained. "One funny thing about the Éluard woman," I wrote in impressionistic terms, "is that her Spanish is so much clearer than everyone else's; she articulates almost every letter precisely and speaks with an even rhythm" (3/12/08). When I finally had the chance to talk with Benita informally outside of the Centro during an afternoon excursion to the *Musée Guimet* in Paris, I immediately asked her where she was from; her response, "Valladolid," made me smile.

The capital of *Castilla la Vieja* and the residence of Castilian royalty until the middle of the 16th century, Valladolid retains its mythical cachet as the origin of modern *castellano* and the place in Spain where one can hear the most "pure" Spanish. Indeed, the day before the above exchange took place, the general director at the Centro, Maria, animated such ideologies by comparing the Spanish in Valladolid to that spoken in her native Seville; in Valladolid, she told me, people do not drop intervocalic /d/ in past participles as they often do in southern Spain (i.e., "hablado" pronounced [ablao]). Although Benita agreed that Valladolid Spanish is the most correct in the country, she nevertheless conceded that people there do sometimes drop intervocalic /d/ when they are speaking quickly or informally (and, indeed, on a number of occasions I observed her produce this variant). However, Benita added that she often commiserates with people in her *pueblo* about how many Spanish speakers outside of Valladolid tend to pronounce the language carelessly, neglecting, for example, to distinguish between the palatal lateral approximant and the voiced palatal fricative—that is, between [ʎ] and [j] ("pollo" and "poyo").

Benita's sense of linguistic propriety has thus been shaped by a confluence of factors: an awareness of ideologies that link her geographical origin with particular ways of speaking; a childhood interest in Spanish grammar (and her family's recognition and support of that interest); and an adherence to the linguistic practices propagated by her husband, the paradigm of "perfect bilingualism." Her self-perception as an authority on language, in particular vis-à-vis the other women in the *Lengua castellana* course and at the Centro more generally, informs many of her interactions with them. As I have stated, she often criticizes their use of Spanish or French, as well as their tendency to mix the two languages when speaking with multilingual interlocutors. Indeed, during our conversation about Valladolid that I cite above, Benita told me that most of the people at the Centro speak Spanish poorly, and that she feels obligated to correct them when they mix in French words or expressions without knowing it. In the language course, she perceives her role as an unofficial assistant, encouraging her peers to engage in the same linguistic practices as she through the explicit propagation of her notions of correctness. As she told me during our first interview:

tú has visto todas las personas con las que hablas aquí?, todo

²⁴ I did not yet know Benita by name, but she had approached me in the café to show me her copy of "Bonne justice," a poem by Paul Éluard that she was memorizing for an assignment in a course at another senior center.

el mundo mezcla palabras de francés, y eso se han corregido, desde hace tres años que estoy con todas ellas, les he dicho: “habéis olvidado el español?, no os da vergüenza que habéis olvidado el español?,” y entonces poco a poco han cogido la—poco a poco yo les he ido diciendo: “hablamos español, habla español; hablamos francés, habla francés”

have you seen all the people you talk with here?, everyone mixes French words, and they’ve started to correct that, it’s been three years that I’ve been with them, and I’ve said to them: “have you forgotten Spanish?, aren’t you ashamed that you have forgotten Spanish?,” and so little by little they’ve taken the—little by little I’ve been saying to them: “if we’re speaking Spanish, speak Spanish; if we’re speaking French, speak French”

In the above citation, Benita casts her reprimand broadly, indicting “everyone” (“todo el mundo”) for their reprehensible linguistic practices while recognizing the gradual progress that they have made in the three years that she has been attending the course. The counsel she offers her peers at the Centro trades on notions of responsibility and shame—responsibility for maintaining proficiency in one’s native language and shame for neglecting to do so, regardless of the social and historical conditions that have imposed multilingualism. As a result, her input is not always well-received. When Carmen, a student in the language course, complained that her written Spanish suffered from her uncertainty about verbs, Benita retorted under her breath that learning such decontextualized forms would be of no help until Carmen began to read regularly. She offered similar advice to Mila, who articulated her primary obstacle to correct spelling as the identification of word boundaries: “Y no te sirve leer, leer, leer, leer?”²⁵ Benita asked. And when Rosario, during yet another class, admitted that she has never liked reading and writing, Benita characterized her situation succinctly as “una lástima.”²⁶ Through such unsolicited evaluations and critiques, Benita enacts and affirms her role as a local authority on language. And never once during my fieldwork did I witness Benita explain the reasoning behind her rigid prescriptions, even when I pressed her to do so; such ideas seemed inherently natural to her, hardly in need of clarification or defense.

As I have already stated, Benita believes that reading is the most effective means of acquiring, maintaining or improving linguistic proficiency. In addition to insisting on its value as a means to “correct” language learning, Benita also criticizes her peers’ attempts to acquire literacy skills in Spanish *through* their knowledge of French. When Pablo presented the students a poem by Lope de Vega, explaining the necessary elisions for them to create eleven-syllable verses, Paulina, a regular student in the *Lengua castellana* course, asked him the French term for the metrical measure that he was describing in Spanish:

(2)

1 Paulina: ya lo sé=
=pero:: no lo había hecho nunca (.)
Pablo: ah [bueno

²⁵ “and it doesn’t help you to read, read, read, read?”

²⁶ “a shame”

5 Paulina: [cómo se dice en francés esto—
des pieds [ou:
 Anna: [ou *des mains* @@@
 Paulina: no hay tantos pies en una:—
 Mila: las sílabas—las sílabas
 Paulina: no
 10 Benita: y si estás haciendo el español=
 =por qué quieres aprenderlo en francés?
 Paulina: porque como xxxx
 Felicia: porque no lo comprende...
 Paulina: cómo se dice en francés
 15 para ver que tengo una idea

 1 Paulina: I know that
 but I've never done this before (.)
 Pablo: oh [okay
 Paulina: [how do you say that in French—
 5 *feet* [or:
 Anna: [or *hands* @@@
 Paulina: aren't there so many feet in o:ne—
 Mila: syllables—syllables
 Paulina: no
 10 Benita: and if you're doing Spanish=
 =why do you want to learn it in French?
 Paulina: because xxxx
 Felicia: because she doesn't understand...
 Pauline: how do you say it in French
 15 to see if I have an idea?

Paulina arrived in France in 1936 at the age of 8, and she has spent most of her adult life speaking French; she attends the language course because she wants to recuperate the Spanish that she has lost since her childhood. When Pablo explains in Spanish the metrical structure of the poem, Paulina, eager to see if she has understood the concept correctly, asks him for the equivalent French terms (lines 4 and 14). Her query, however, is not well-received by some of her classmates. After Paulina offers “*des pieds*” as the French equivalent, Anna teases her with a *jeu de mots* that plays on the polysemy of the word, saying “*des mains*” (“hands”). Paulina, who does not join in Anna’s laughter, continues to work through the meaning of the instructor’s technical lesson—“no hay tantos pies en una:—” (line 7)), when Mila intervenes to suggest that the term she wants is “sílabas” (line 8). After Paulina rejects Mila’s suggestion, Benita interrupts to ask why Paulina wants to know an equivalent French term if she attends the course to learn Spanish (lines 10-11). Framed as a question, Benita’s remark positions Paulina as a deficient Spanish-speaker and student, and it reflects her negative stance on the use of French as a means to learning Spanish. Unfortunately, the recording is garbled, and I am unable to decipher Paulina’s response; Felicia’s turn, however—“porque no lo comprende” (line 13)—suggests that it was proffered in self-defense.²⁷

²⁷ When I asked Paulina about this exchange after class, she explained that she used to help her daughter with her French homework when she was in high school, and that she

Benita, whose primary language has remained Spanish, nevertheless speaks and reads French fluently; like the other women in my study, she thus draws on a repertoire of linguistic practices that reflect in part the personal and historical conditions in which she became multilingual. While she refuses to engage in translational exercises that use French as a point of departure, as seen in the excerpt above, she nevertheless locates points of comparison between Spanish and French in order to illustrate their homologous complexity and to display her aesthetic appreciation of them. During a session of the *Lengua castellana* course, when Pablo was discussing the silent “h” in Spanish orthography, Benita offered her opinion on the notion of utility and linguistic form:

(3)

- 1 Pablo: hay que remitirse-remitirse=
 =a de dónde viene la palabra=
 =para saber si lleva “h” o no.
 aunque no tenga ninguna utilidad
 5 se usa porque [(1.2) viene de un origen]
 Benita: [pero tiene la utilidad por] la belleza del idioma
 Pablo: *voilà*
 Benita: es—es—
 tenemos el ejemplo del francés,
 10 lo de “farmacia”
 es “p-h” (0.8) *en France*
 o sea que—
 pero es—está bien la “f”—
 es la “f”
 15 y nosotros es la “h”
 lo que a veces ocurre lo mismo
- 1 Pablo: you have to refer
 to the origin of the word
 to know if it takes “h” or not
 even though it doesn’t have any purpose
 5 it’s used because [(1.2) it comes from an origin]
 Benita: [but its purpose is for] the beauty of the
 language
- Pablo: *voilà*
 Benita: it’s—it’s—
 we have an example in French
 10 like “pharmacy”
 it’s “p-h” (0.8) *in France*
 or rather—
 i-it’s really “f”—
 it’s the “f”
 15 and we have the “h”
 which sometimes happens the same way

had learned some poetic terminology in the process. Paulina added that linguistic mappings such as the one illustrated in this excerpt serve her as language-learning strategies.

When he begins to explain the historical nature of such confusing orthographic representations, Pablo acknowledges their lack of usefulness: “Aunque no tenga ninguna utilidad, se usa porque—” (lines 4-5). Benita, however, interrupts him before he can finish his explanation, identifying this feature as a “belleza del idioma” precisely because it is tied to the language’s origins and diachronic evolution, which Pablo has invoked. According to Benita, although the mute “h” no longer serves a practical function, it still forms part of the unique composition of the language and should therefore be appreciated from an aesthetic point of view. Pablo agrees with her, code-switching in line 7 with the French discourse marker “voilà.” Benita goes on to cite an equivalent example in French, in which the phone [f] is represented orthographically as “ph.” Her explanation, which associates the written “ph” with France and the silent “h” with “nosotros”—that is, Spanish speakers—conflates language use with national affiliation, an unsurprising proposition from Benita, who harbors such deep-rooted feelings about linguistic purity and the need to keep languages autonomous.

To be sure, Benita’s understanding of language as an aesthetic object informs the ways in which she assesses not only her peers’ linguistic performance, but also her own. Although she sees herself as a paradigmatic speaker and writer of Castilian, she is less confident in her French language skills, readily invoking the frequency with which she turns to her daughter with spelling questions or her ongoing struggle to approximate native pronunciation. “Con el francés me esmero,”²⁸ she said once during the theater workshop after an unexpected code-switch by Pablo incited a metalingual conversation about the difficulty of speaking French. Responding with an unexpected code-switch herself, Benita exclaimed with exaggerated frustration: “J’ai fait tout le possible pour bien parler, mais l’accent, alors il n’y a rien à faire—rien à faire!”²⁹ In spite of the fact that she takes great pains to speak French well, Benita’s efforts to imitate native pronunciation are nevertheless futile; certain aspects of her French invariably betray her status as a non-native speaker: occasional pronunciation of [ə] as [e]; absence of voiced fricative [ʒ]; pronunciation of word-final [ə]. And yet, she speaks French as conscientiously as she speaks Spanish, carefully and consistently articulating the high, front rounded vowel [y] and uvular [ʁ]—two of the most difficult phonetic variables for native Spanish-speakers to produce (Lagarde, 1996).

In spite of Benita’s awareness of her imperfections as a French-speaker, she nevertheless feels comfortable appraising other non-native speakers of French. On a number of occasions, she told me that she found my pronunciation impressive, and she inquired after the education system in which I learned the language. Benita was less effusive about my Spanish, although she did tell me a few times that she thought I spoke well, even if it was clear that I felt more comfortable speaking French. During a brief conversation that I recorded in my field notes, I told Benita that I had a difficult time speaking Spanish without code-switching at least occasionally into French. “Me cuesta mucho—”³⁰ I began to explain when she interrupted me. “Je sais,” she said, “et pour ça je

²⁸ “with French I try my hardest”

²⁹ “I did everything I could to speak well, but the accent, well, there’s nothing to be done—nothing to be done!”

³⁰ “it’s hard for me”

vais parler français parce que je parle espagnol trop vite pour toi”³¹ (4/2/08). Benita had accurately perceived some of my anxieties about speaking Spanish, but her efforts to accommodate me by switching to French seemed somewhat exaggerated. I tried to convince her that I felt comfortable speaking Spanish in spite of my occasional lapses in understanding; I also told her that I was eager to use Spanish with people at the Centro who preferred it to French. Nevertheless, she continued to interrupt some of my conversations by uttering turns in French that were directed at me, or by translating from Spanish into French information that I had already understood.

At times I had the impression that Benita was merely using these occasions to put her multilingualism on display. She seemed to believe that her linguistic practices, which instantiate her strict beliefs *about* language, made her an ideal research subject in a project about multilingualism. Although it was a source of mild irritation to me, the self-conscious way in which she chose codes for our interactions reflected both a sensitivity to the possible needs and preferences of her conversational partners, but also a conviction in the responsibilities that should be assumed by someone with her level of multilingual proficiency. Benita saw it as her duty not only to speak language correctly by avoiding code-switches within the bounds of an interaction, but also by initiating social exchanges in the preferred code of her interlocutor. As I will discuss below, the multilingual practices in which she engages reflect this sense of obligation.

6.4 Multilingual style

6.4.1 Choosing monolingualism

Although she is multilingual, Benita subscribes to very strict ideologies of monolingualism—that is, the notion that a language constitutes a discrete, autonomous system, and that any violation of the boundaries between languages (through the kinds of multilingual practices that I have been discussing in this thesis) reflects carelessness, deficient language acquisition or a general lack of respect for language (see Auer and Wei, 2007; Derrida, 1998; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004). Such ideologies necessarily inform the kinds of linguistic practices in which Benita engages, as well as the social meanings that she constructs and reconstructs over time. Conversely, both the form and the content of Benita’s utterances, in particular in the *Lengua castellana* course, activate the ideologies to which she adheres, and with which she has become associated by her peers at the Centro. To appreciate the potency of the social meanings that Benita constructs, one need only observe the ways in which her peers call upon her expertise, or in which they dismiss her eagerness to display it. On more than one occasion, for example, I heard Mila ask her questions about correct spelling and word boundaries. But when Mercedes received a glowing compliment from Pablo after reading out loud the corrections she made on her composition, for example, she turned to Benita with a smile and said: “tú no sabes todo, eh?”³²

³¹ “I know”; “that’s why I’m going to speak French, because I speak Spanish too quickly for you”

³² “you don’t know everything, eh?”

Benita is not the only individual I encountered in the field whose attitudes toward multilingualism are founded on widely accepted notions of monolingualism. During a number of informal interactions with men and women at the Centro, my introduction as a linguistic researcher elicited apologies about incorrect use or other negative self-assessments. Benita, however, was by far the most vocal and extreme opponent to what she perceived as linguistic carelessness—in particular, code-switching. Whereas Lina and Amalia, among others, revealed through their linguistic actions a willingness to exploit the semiotic potential of their multilingual repertoires, Benita’s sense of linguistic propriety trumped, or preempted, any inclination she may have had to capitalize on *her* multilingualism in a similar way. As a model and arbiter of usage, as well as a conscientious consumer and disseminator of historical and cultural knowledge—self-perceptions that have taken shape across her lifespan, motivating, in part, the social meanings she tends to construct—Benita cannot indulge in any form of multilingualism that does not conform to her (monolingual) ideological bent. Thus, Benita chooses *not* to do exactly that which Lina and Amalia do within their shared range of socially and historically contingent, linguistic possibilities. It is through these choices, in this context, that Benita creates intelligible social meanings.

While I have a smaller corpus of recorded data from Benita than I do from Lina and Amalia, I nevertheless spent a commensurate amount of time with her, both within and outside the Centro. Most of the recordings, which I took during organized activities and interviews, are in Spanish; however, Benita does, on occasion, code-switch into French, though never for longer than a single turn of conversation. In addition, I recorded her speaking French exclusively for about thirty minutes during one of our two interviews, after I asked her to switch from Spanish. In spite of this limited amount of recorded data, I am nevertheless able to discern patterns in Benita’s stylistic practices through the triangulation of these recordings with my observations and field notes.

Somewhat like Lina and Amalia, Benita often interjects into her utterances metalingual questions—“¿cómo decir(te)?”—that function discursively. These phrases serve her in part as interactional place-holders, indicating to her conversational partner(s) that she has not completed her turn and that she is searching for a particular word or phrase. They also, however, frequently specify their intended target—indexed by the indirect object “te”—and precede general statements of fact that explain or elaborate the content of Benita’s utterance. Thus, “¿cómo decirte?” also functions socially, reflecting and establishing an interpersonal dynamic in which Benita, the speaker, positions herself as a unofficial pedagogue vis-à-vis her interlocutor. A few examples taken from the data illustrate Benita’s activation of this particular social meaning. During one of our interviews, for example, she explained her traditional tendencies, stating: “Yo era una persona de otra época, incluso aquí eh—¿cómo decirte?—los españoles hemos cambiado mucho.”³³ She also resorted to this discourse marker when describing how she conscientiously approaches French people on their own terms: “Tienes que llegar a ellas con sus mismos medias y no hacerte de complejo, no ir en plan de—¿cómo decirte?—de

³³ “I was someone from another era, including here, eh—¿cómo decirte?—we Spaniards have changed a lot”

decir ‘no sé hablar, y no sé expresarme.’”³⁴ And talking about her hard-working grandfather, she said: “Era un labrador que al principio trabajando de—¿cómo decirte?—trabajando muchísimo llegó a dar carreras a sus tres hijos.”³⁵

Like Lina, Benita utilizes such metalingual devices to create and index authority through the reiteration, clarification or expansion of interactional content, but she does so only within the bounds of monolingual discourse. Thus, when she is speaking French, she interjects “comment dire?” without a subsequent switch into Spanish, as might be expected given her slightly lower level of proficiency in the language and the pragmatic effects that Lina, for example, causes through similar switches in code. In French, Benita’s interjections are couched categorically in pronounced hesitations—“euh”—as she seems to search for a lexical item or expression that she does not know or has forgotten. When discussing Pablo’s method for devising the *Día del Libro* performance out of Lina’s disconnected sketches, for instance, she said: “Il ne peut pas contrarier à tout le monde, il va—il va—euh—comment dire?—euh rassembler tout ça pour qu’il y ait quelque chose de sérieux.”³⁶ When describing favorite activities from her childhood, she made a similar pragmatic move: “On sautait à la corde, on se mouillait les pieds, on faisait-on traversait le-le-le euh-comment dire?-le-le-le-le petit cours d’eau.”³⁷ Likewise, Benita used this expression when speaking explicitly about herself: “Moi, je suis quelqu’un qui—euh—comment dire?—euh je-je-je-je j’aime pas être enfermée.”³⁸ Each time that Benita makes recourse to “comment dire?,” she stalls on the lexical items that both precede and follow it; her hesitations are pronounced. For that reason, although she still continues her utterance by introducing new information, this pragmatic particle in French nevertheless seems to have a more discursive function than a social one, as it tends to hold her turn in interaction rather than index her epistemological authority.³⁹

While Lina’s metalingual discourse markers tend to signal a forthcoming code-switch, thereby adding a semiotic layer to the construction of her persona as a professional medium (as I discuss in Chapter 3), for Benita, such code-switches would undermine the legitimacy of her claims to linguistic authority. Her ideological proclivities constrain her use of *¿cómo decirte?* and *comment dire?*, and she thus embeds them consistently in monolingual discourse. Only once, during a conversation *about* French people, did I observe Benita use one of these discourse markers with a subsequent code-

³⁴ “you have to approach them on their terms and not feel self-conscious about it, not to approach them with the intention--¿cómo decirte?—of saying ‘I don’t know how to speak, and I don’t know how to express myself’”

³⁵ “was a farmer who, in the beginning, working as-as-as--¿cómo decirte?—working a lot, was able to give his three children an education”

³⁶ “he can’t upset everyone, he’s going—he’s going—euh—comment dire?—euh put everything together so that he can have something—something serious”

³⁷ “we used to jump rope, we used to dip our feet, we used to—we used to cross the-the-the euh—comment dire?—the-the-the the little stream”

³⁸ “I’m someone who—uh—comment dire?—uh—I—I—I don’t like to be locked up”

³⁹ I have considered a number of factors to arrive at this interpretation of the differential meaning of semantically equivalent discourse markers across languages: the valence cast on Benita’s French as L2 speech, for example, and the fact that she has expressed awareness at other times of her lower level of proficiency in the language.

switch into French. Describing French people in general terms, she said: “Son muy—¿cómo decirte?—*ils sont très fiers*.”⁴⁰ Perhaps the topic of Benita’s utterance, along with the knowing smile with which she animated it, enabled her to violate the strict rules that govern her use of language without throwing into question the linguistic authority on which she draws to construct social personae.

On rare occasions, Benita does switch between Spanish and French, but she resorts to particular pragmatic measures when she does so. In almost every instance of code-switching that I recorded or observed, she indexes—and legitimizes—her engagement in this multilingual practice through an explicitly metalingual reference to it; that is, her infrequent code-switches from Spanish into French are either preceded or followed by an explicit reference to the fact that she is animating language typically spoken by people of French nationality: “Como dicen los franceses.”⁴¹ Conflating again language use with national affiliation, marking a stark distinction between a third party (“the French”) and an implied collective first-person (“we, the Spaniards”), Benita frames her code-switches as translingual citations so as not to undermine her authority as a language expert by engaging in multilingual practices that she regards as improper. Calling upon this distinction between France and Spain, and, by extension, between French speakers and Spanish speakers, Benita evokes the Centro’s members’ sociohistorical relationship to, and geographical presence within, the French nation-state, thereby legitimating a linguistic tactic that she would otherwise dismiss. In the excerpt below, Benita draws on this particular resource during a conversation in which she tells me about an exhibit of Goya’s etchings that she has recently seen:

(4)

- 1 Benita: mira el otro día=
fui a-a-al *Grand Palais*,
a ver las exposiciones de-de Marie Antoinette.
- David: *oui*
- 5 Benita: y había una cola:—
había unos cartelitos allí=
=decía “*file d’attente: une heure trente*.”
así que dije—
“me voy en frente al *Petit Palais*.”
- 10 y había olvidado que había una exposición de Goya.
- David: ah
- Benita: *des gravures*
una maravilla—una maravilla
porque yo había visto unas cositas por aquí=
15 =unas cositas por allá
pero ver la colección completa,
- David: sí
- Benita: eso-eso es—
c-cómo dicen—
20 *hallucinant*

⁴⁰ “because they are very—¿cómo decirte?—they are very proud”

⁴¹ “as French people say”

como dicen los franceses [@@@]
 David: [ouais]

1 Benita: look the other day
 I went to-to-to the *Grand Palais*
 to see the Marie Antoinette exhibit

David: yes

5 Benita: and there was a line—
 there were little signs there
 that said ‘*waiting line: 90 minutes*’
 so I said
 ‘I’m going across the way to the *Petit Palais*’
 10 and I had forgotten that there was a Goya exhibit

David: ah
 Benita: *etchings*
 wonderful—wonderful
 because I had seen some of the things here
 15 some of the things there
 but to see the whole collection—

David: yes
 Benita: that-that is—
 h-how they say—
 20 *mind-blowing*
 as the French say [@@@]

David: [yeah]

In this brief exchange, which took place primarily in Spanish, Benita’s use of French is limited to specific instances: to name the buildings in Paris that form the background of her narrative (lines 2 and 9); to relay the text of a sign that was written in French (line 7); to identify the exhibit with the French word that had been used at the Centro by Josep in advertisements for his organized visit—“*des gravures*” (line 12); and to describe the effect of the exhibit with an adjective borrowed from French: “*hallucinant*” (line 20). While the first three instances of code-switching either name objects or animate text originally in French, the fourth emanates entirely from Benita. Within the strictures of the linguistic ideologies to which she subscribes, she is responsible for justifying its presence in her otherwise Spanish discourse. Through recourse to a metalingual phrase that I heard her utter on other occasions of self-motivated code-switching—“*como dicen los franceses*” (line 21)—Benita does exactly that.

Only once did I observe Benita switch into French without making an explicit metalingual reference to the fact that she had done so. In the excerpt below, she tells me an anecdote about her mother during the early years of Franco’s dictatorship:

(5)

1 Benita: pero cuando llegó la guerra (1.4)
 a mi madre la quisieron llevar prisionera (.)
 porque había bordado la-la bandera de la República (1.6)

David: ok

5 Benita: @@@@ [has—
 David: [no hay lógico
 Benita: *tu as compris quelque chose?*=

David: *oui oui—sí—oui*
 Benita: =es difícil de comprender
 10 David: mm—
 Benita: porque—
 sólo porque hay una persona (.)
 en una época—
 que no era la misma
 15 que tienes en la actualidad (.)
 ha bordado una bandera—
 qué tendrá que ver?

 1 Benita: but when the war happened (1.4)
 they wanted to take my mother prisoner (.)
 because she had embroidered a Republican flag (1.6)
 David: ok
 5 Benita: @@@@ [have you—
 David: [there's no logic
 Benita: *have you understood something?*=
 David: *yes yes—yes—yes*
 Benita: =it's hard to understand
 10 David: mm—
 Benita: because—
 only because one person (.)
 during a time—
 that wasn't the same
 15 that you have right now (.)
 embroidered a flag—
 what does that have to do with anything?

Benita's code-switch in the above excerpt—"tu as compris quelque chose?" (line 7)—comes on the heels of an interrupted turn in which she laughs and appears to begin the same question in Spanish: "has—" (line 5). After I index my alignment with her stance on the topic by interjecting a comment ("no hay lógico" (line 6)) about her anecdote, Benita switches into French to ask me if I have understood the inanity of the social policies during Franco's dictatorship. In part, this code-switch seems meant to accommodate me, as I have indicated to her during previous interactions my general preference for French. The referential meaning of her utterance, an enquiry into whether or not I have understood the preposterous policies her anecdote describes, thus plays on my linguistic predilections to create and reflect our shared alignment vis-à-vis the political content of our exchange. Indeed, given the topic of our conversation, Benita's use of French at this point also marks a shift in footing that foregrounds her perspective on the topic, leaving no question about her take on such policies. Answering the query she has put forth in her subsequent turn and switching back to Spanish, Benita states explicitly that it is difficult to make sense of a political regime that renders illegal seemingly insignificant acts such as embroidering a flag (lines 11-17).

6.4.2 *Te imaginas or tu t'imagines*

Given Benita's strict adherence to ideologies of monolingualism, it comes as no surprise that she does not engage in the same kind of bilingual discourse-marking as Lina and Amalia. Only on one occasion did I observe her use a French discourse marker when speaking Spanish—an uncharacteristic “oh là là!” uttered in playful exasperation during the *Lengua castellana* course—and, conversely, although I have only a limited amount of recordings of her speaking French, at no point in them does she use a Spanish discourse marker. Nevertheless, whether she is speaking French or Spanish, Benita makes use of one discourse marker in particular—“te imaginas” in Spanish or “tu t'imagines” in French—in a variety of interactional situations, creating equivalent semantic and pragmatic meanings across languages. Whereas Lina and Amalia's bilingual discourse markers play off of the social meanings constructed through the act of code-switching, Benita's monolingual discourse markers seem to function analogously in both languages, indexing stances and contributing to the durative social personae she displays without drawing on the symbolic tension often engendered through code-switching. This may have something to do with the nature of this particular discourse marker—that is, according to Schwenter (1996), its morpho-syntactic structure and concomitant translatability. And, indeed, it begs the following question: to which other tactics does Benita turn to construct the kinds of complex social meanings that Lina and Amalia create through the act of code-switching?

Benita uses “te imaginas” or “tu t'imagines” strategically to index her stance on the topic of conversation, framing it as improbable or incredulous; furthermore, as these discourse markers take the form of a question, they indirectly impose this stance on Benita's interlocutor(s) (Andersen, 2007). Thus, she not only evaluates the social and cultural practices encoded in the content of the exchange, but also the values displayed by her conversational partner, who is situated in such a way that s/he must stake a position vis-à-vis that content which may or may not align with Benita's. During one of our interviews, Benita told me about a meeting for Spanish Socialists that she had recently attended, at which a woman stood up to talk about living under dictatorship:

(6)

- 1 Benita: y había una señora que:—
que se levantó,
y dijo todo lo que había sucedido en España—
su padre estuvo seis años prisionero=
5 =por sus ideas políticas—
es terrible
tú te imaginas lo que es una dictadura?
David: no—
no sobretodo—
10 bueno sobre[todo
Benita: [no—
porque Estados Unidos es un país libre
1 Benita: and there was a woman who:—
who got up
and said everything that had happened in Spain—
her father was in prison for six years=

5 =because of his political ideas—
 it's terrible
 can you imagine what a dictatorship is?
 David: no—
 no especially—
 10 well espe[cially—
 Benita: [no—
 because the United States is a free country

Benita's discourse marker "tú te imaginas" caps her brief narrative about a woman whose father was imprisoned for his political beliefs during the dictatorship and triggers her question to me about whether or not I can imagine living under such conditions; through its clearly negative evaluative stance, it imposes a felicitous response. In part to protect face—both Benita's and my own—I align myself with Benita by responding that I can't, in fact, conceive of such misfortune; this is the answer that she expects me to give, evidenced by her interruption of my turn with a curt "no" (line 11), and an explanation why: "Porque Estados Unidos es un país libre" (line 12).

On yet another occasion, Benita recalls with amusement the difficulties she and her fiancé experienced trying to stay in contact with one another while living in different countries. Through her use of "te imaginas," she both indexes her evaluative stance and positions me, her interlocutor, in a particular way:

(7)

1 Benita: de aquí no podían llamar al extranjero
 así que [él] no me podía llamar
 David: [ah]
 Benita: yo iba a la ciudad de al lado,
 5 porque en mi pueblo no había teléfono
 iba a la ciudad de al lado—
 y le llamaba por teléfono
 David: sí.
 Benita: @@@ te-te imaginas?
 10 David: sí sí
 1 Benita: from here you couldn't call abroad
 so [he] couldn't call me
 David: [ah]
 Benita: I used to go to the next town over
 5 because in my town there was no telephone
 I used to go to the next town over
 and call him on the telephone
 David: yes
 Benita: @@@ can-can you imagine?
 10 David: yes yes

Benita repeats twice that she had to travel to a neighboring town in order to contact her husband by telephone (lines 4 and 6) as her own *pueblo* did not have one. Her reiteration of this fact points to the humorous incredulity with which she now recalls it—an affective stance that is further indexed by a burst of laughter and her use of "te imaginas" in line 9. Again, I respond as she expects, displaying through my affirmative response—"sí sí" (line 10)—my alignment with her vis-à-vis the content of her anecdote.

Likewise, Benita uses “tu t’imagines” when she is speaking French, either to put forth a question or to cap a proposition; in both cases, her use of this discourse marker anticipates positive alignment from her interlocutor, as it does in Spanish. In the following excerpt, Benita responds to my query about whether she could ever return to live in her native *pueblo*:

(8)

1 David: cette decision de-de retourner
c’est pa:s (1.6)
pour toi [c’est pas—
Benita: [non pour—
5 pour aller vivre
c’est fini eh?
[oh non non non non]
David: [c’est pas la réalité pour toi]
Benita: écoute
10 tu t’imagines que je retourne au village?
David: non.

1 David: this decision to return
it’s not (1.6)
for you [it’s not—
Benita: [no for—
5 to go live
it’s over eh?
[oh no no no no]
David: [it’s not reality for you]
Benita: listen
10 can you imagine me returning to the village?
David: no

Benita is emphatic in her response to my question about returning permanently to San Román de Hornija, indexing through a series of discursive maneuvers the impossibility of such a proposition: her use of the tag-question “eh?” (line 6); her rapid-fire sequence of the negative “non” (line 7); her turn-grabbing “écoute” (line 9)—all of which precede her use of “tu t’imagines,” followed by a relative clause. This string of pragmatic particles not only propels the exchange forward, but it also leaves no doubt about Benita’s negative stance on my proposition, the repudiation of which she expresses through multiple means. She crowns the exchange with a question that is framed by “tu t’imagines” (line 10), and that then passes on to me the obligation to evaluate what she has put forth. Responding with the anticipated “non,” I do exactly that.

In yet another example in French, Benita uses “tu t’imagines” as a tag-question. Here, we are discussing our preferences for watching films in their original language of production:

(9)

1 Benita: j’aime beaucoup=
=toujours—toujours le cinema.
mais j’aime beaucoup les films—euh (.)
en V.O.

- 5 David: oui bien sûr
Benita: les films américains,
il faut qu'ils soient—euh
en V.O. parce que:
- David: oui
- 10 Benita: écouter à Johnny Depp parler français
[tu t'imagines?
David: [@@
je-j'aime pas du tout
- 1 Benita: I always love—
always—always the movies
but I really like films—uh—
in the original
- 5 David: yes of course
Benita: American films
they have to be—uh
in the original because
- David: yes
- 10 Benita: listening to Johnny Depp speak French
[can you imagine?
David: [@@
I-I don't like that at all

Discussing her preference for films in their original version, Benita begins by setting up an explanatory clause—“il faut qu'ils soient—euh—en V.O. parce que—” (lines 7-8)—and then following my affirmative interjection (“oui” (line 9)) with a hypothetical example: “écouter à Johnny Depp parler français...” (line 10). Presumably, the preposterous nature of such a proposition merits no explicit elaboration, and Benita does not provide any; instead, she punctuates the unfavorable image with “tu t'imagines,” the discourse marker that presumes a forthcoming articulation of alignment from her interlocutor. In this instance, I index my shared stance by stating that I also dislike the idea of Johnny Depp speaking French—or, more generally, films that are not in their original version: “je-j'aime pas du tout” (line 12).

6.5 Conclusion

By using “te imaginas” or “tu t'imagines,” Benita indexes her judgment of whatever social and cultural values are manifested in interaction, at the same time that she demands that her interlocutor stake a similar evaluative claim on the object of critique. Whether in Spanish or French, Benita employs this discourse marker as a means of imposing values on her conversational partners by drawing them into alignment with her. Thus, not only does she perceive herself as an arbiter and model of language use, but she also extends her pedagogical authority to cover a broader swath of social, cultural, and political practices. Benita's self-perception as a paragon and teacher both draws on and reinforces the composite of ideological meanings that she has accrued across her lifespan and that constellate around a notion of propriety about language, and about the

beliefs and practices that are encoded *in* language. While she code-switches only rarely, she does so in a very particular way that displays her multilingual acuity without mitigating the legitimacy of her claims to linguistic correctness. It is not surprising, then, that Benita does not borrow discourse markers across languages as Lina and Amalia do, creating social meaning instead through other means. Within the local context of the Centro, Benita's un-engagement in multilingual practices should be read as a choice; through *not* switching languages—and, more importantly, through her explicit references to such a fact—she lays claim to authority, legitimating the persona she creates as a teacher, who disseminates both knowledge and values.

Chapter 7

Multilingualism and the individual

7.1 Introduction

According to Johnstone and Kiesling (2008), it is through an individual's "phenomenal experience" of a sociolinguistic landscape that indexical relations between linguistic forms and social meanings become semiotic possibilities for her (p. 29). In their discussion of the indeterminate meaning of a phonological variable in Pittsburgh (/aw/-monophthongization), they write:

Different people experience the sociolinguistic world differently. Some people's experience of local forms and their indexical meanings is relatively regimented by widely circulating meta-pragmatic practices that link forms and social meanings in the same way, repeatedly, for many people... Other people, though, may draw on more personal experiences to interpret form-meaning links, or they may not create such links at all. (pp. 6-7)

Because the social meaning of linguistic variables can vary depending on how members of a community "experience the sociolinguistic world," Johnstone and Kiesling recommend studying such meanings from the experiential perspectives of the individuals who create them. This approach demands a turn to both qualitative and archival research methods that address the indeterminacies of language use in context as well as relevant "sociolinguistic landscapes of the past" (p. 25).

That is precisely what I have done in this project. Over the course of the preceding three chapters, I have plumbed the biographies of three women who have been affected by similar sociohistorical processes. Through highly focused case studies, I have contextualized their narratives about language and language learning and foregrounded the relations among language, power and social mobility that many of these narratives entail. Juxtaposing their biographies with discourse analysis of their language use today, I have illustrated how their histories of language acquisition have informed the multilingual practices in which they now engage. This innovative configuration of data has illuminated how an individual's *experiences*, as well as her perceptions of those experiences, not only influence the kinds of social meanings that she constructs, but also the very means through which she constructs meanings. My phenomenological approach to style has enabled me to highlight the subjective dimension of language acquisition and use, thereby complementing more traditional research that models sociolinguistic variation at the level of the community.

And yet, by focusing on the individual, I have not meant to abstract away from the community; rather, I have attempted to reconfigure its role within the variationist enterprise. As Gardner-Chloros (2009) writes, research on multilingualism is particularly adept at showing how the individual "is articulated with the social" through the linguistic practices in which she engages (p. 18). Indeed, individuals are inextricable from the social aggregates through which they move and in relation to which they construct both conventional and idiosyncratic styles; one cannot consider the individual without also taking into account the communal in all its varied forms. As Johnstone (2001) writes in

an entry entitled “Individual” that appears in a collection of *Key Terms in Language and Culture*:

Thinking about variation from the individual outward rather than from the social inward means thinking about how individuals create voices by selecting and combining the linguistic resources available to them, resources which may be relatively codified, shared and consistent or which may be highly idiosyncratic, identified with particular situations or people rather than with groups. (p. 123)

For a style to be intelligible, it must be recognizable; “idiosyncratic features” always cluster with “relatively codified” ones within a given voice. Both are significant, but within my case studies I have focused on the former, illuminating the relationship between an individual’s history of experience—and experience of history—and her particular ways of speaking. Analyzing these case studies side-by-side has elucidated the varied ways in which individuals draw from a shared set of linguistic resources, based in part on their subjective experiences of common sociohistorical processes.

7.2 Experience and becoming

Lina, Amalia and Benita all participated in an unprecedented wave of female migration from Spain to Paris in the 1960s, arriving in France as monolingual Spanish speakers eager to learn French for different reasons. Over time, their burgeoning proficiency in the language entailed the development of stylistic practices that were tied to their experience of the social and historical conditions in which it occurred. These experiences accrued over time, forming their biographical trajectories and informing the social meanings that they now index in interaction. Their acquisition of a second language thus entailed more than the development of grammatical or even sociolinguistic competence; it also involved becoming multilingual in individually meaningful ways as they navigated a sociolinguistic landscape.

In Chapter 3 (Section 5), I analyze archival documents, including bilingual dictionaries designed for consumption by the French bourgeoisie, to reconstruct this landscape and the popular representations of Spanish female immigrants who inhabited it. These representations circulated as my research subjects arrived in Paris, forming part of a discursive field in relation to which they forged biographical trajectories that affirmed, exploited or contested them. Because Spanish women were often portrayed as deficient speakers of French (and Spanish), whose lack of competence for language learning placed a burden of communication on their native-speaker interlocutors, the women in my study were forced to acquire French under conditions in which their access to it was constrained and their failure was presumed unavoidable. Women responded to these conditions differently, determining their degree of “investment” (Norton, 2000) in French through assessing a multitude of variables that changed over time: the projected length of their stay in Paris, their affective ties to French people and other Spaniards abroad, and their often peripatetic professional trajectories. Many of the women informed me in interviews that, upon settling in the capital, they realized the autonomy they had envisioned before emigrating from Spain was tied in part to their ability to communicate in French. Carmen, for example, one of the women I met at the Centro, first became interested in French through her participation in the *Confédération Générale du Travail*

(CGT), a national federation of trade unions, while working in a factory near Saint-Denis. As she explained: “Quand on ignore le français, quand on ne peut pas parler, quand personne ne t’explique rien, quand tu ne peux pas protester, tout ça c’était formidable pour eux (the employers) ... et si l’ouvrier est presque analphabète, tant mieux.”¹ Thus, many women became at least orally proficient in French as a means of ensuring that they would not be exploited at work. Moreover, many of them associated the French language with cultural refinement and social progressivism; French had a symbolic value that Spanish did not, and their ability to speak it distinguished them from Spaniards who did not leave Spain. One afternoon during the arts and crafts workshop, Amalia and Mila commiserated over the frustration they often feel upon returning to Spain, where they are sometimes perceived as inferior Spaniards in spite of the fact that they were born there and contributed to the *milagro español* from abroad. Animating her response to Spaniards who have forgotten the conditions of poverty that incited her to leave or who have criticized her for staying abroad, Mila explained: “Les digo, ‘tú no tienes la cultura de yo, porque yo tengo dos—la francesa y la española, y tú no más que tienes una, así que yo sé más que tú’.”²

As for Lina, Amalia and Benita, they have moved through this sociolinguistic landscape in ways both common and particular, charting paths shaped by historical phenomena as well as their experience and perception of those phenomena. To be sure, they draw from a common set of linguistic resources on multiple levels (phonological, morpho-syntactic, lexical and discursive) that have become infused with semiotic potential through the sociohistorical particularities of their situation. But insofar as Lina, Amalia and Benita each acquired French for different purposes—purposes that shaped their emergent multilingualism and that inform how they now practice it—their relationships to the sociolinguistic landscape have necessarily varied.

For each of these women, the reasons for which she acquired French have influenced the ways in which she has come to use it as part of a larger repertoire that also consists of Spanish. Benita, for example, chooses not to code-switch as a means of indexing her authority on language; this choice reflects her self-perception as an expert on grammar and is further substantiated through her use of (monolingual) discourse markers, namely *te imaginas/tu t’imagines*. These particles position her interlocutors in such a way that they must align themselves with her to protect and save face (Goffman, 1967), thereby acknowledging the very authority that has enabled her to utter them. Lina, as I explain in the case study that focuses on her, also lays claims to authority, but because hers is tied to paranormal and artistic rather than linguistic expertise, she often code-switches in situations in which the choice of a particular language serves to magnify that expertise—when she offers her French poetry to a potential French-speaking client, for example, or when she channels a formerly French-speaking spirit during a séance. Her use of the French discourse marker *voilà* in Spanish-dominant conversation calls partly on large-scale ideological associations of French vis-à-vis Spanish to articulate

¹ “when you don’t know French, when you can’t speak, when no one explains anything to you, when you can’t protest, all that was great for *them* ... and if the worker is almost illiterate, so much the better”

² “you don’t have the culture that I do, because I have two—French and Spanish—and you only have one of them, so I know more than you do”

authoritative stances. As for Amalia, her sense of authenticity trumps any of her other characterological traits, as reflected in her persistent invocations of it. The French discourse marker that she utters most frequently in Spanish conversation—*attends*—demands her interlocutor’s attention and frames her forthcoming contribution as both performative and noteworthy; it also indexes, through her switch in codes, the oppositional stance that it effects. Amalia often code-switches as a means of thwarting common assumptions about the deficiencies of people who do, but also, and more significantly, she consistently resorts to French in certain contexts as a means of establishing or indexing intimacy.

In spite of the differences among them, the stylistic configurations exhibited by these three women nevertheless reflect those of the other individuals in my research sample, who configure their shared languages and the variables that constitute them in locally meaningful ways that are tied to their shared historical context. What, then, of Spanish women immigrants *outside* the Centro? To assess the possibility of generalizing my observations from beyond the group of women I observed in Saint-Denis, I turned to the work of European scholars specializing in Spanish immigration, including Asperilla (2006, 2007), Lagarde (1996), Lillo (2004, 2007), Oso Casas (2004, 2005, 2007), Taboada-Leonetti (1987) and Tur (2006, 2007). While many of them have focused on female Spaniards in France from a variety of illuminating perspectives, only a couple of them have incorporated detailed analyses of their linguistic practices.

Oso Casas (2004), for one, conducted fieldwork in 1998-99 with 44 Spanish women who arrived in Paris in the 1960s. In her study, Oso Casas emphasizes the importance of one’s “strategies of social mobility,” which she defines as “el papel [que recupera el] actor social en los movimientos de población y en su experiencia social”³—in other words, strategies conditioned by an individual’s perceptions of social reality (p. 213). Based on the interviews she conducted, Oso Casas divides her research subjects into two groups: those who remained driven by the pecuniary ambitions that brought them to France and who rarely interacted with French speakers once they arrived, and those who adapted their migratory strategies to the vicissitudes of their situation abroad, eventually pursuing a more “normalized” existence in their host country that involved learning its language (p. 196). Within Oso Casas’ sociological framework, language use figures as a reflection of the particular perspective, either instrumental or integrative, that a woman assumed. An individual in the latter group made efforts not only to acquire French as a means of “socialization” (p. 64), but also to preserve her Spanish; an individual in the former group refused to invest time in learning French, relying instead on a functional “jerga dialéctica”⁴ (p. 193) that circulated among other Spaniards abroad.⁵

Lagarde (1996), for his part, studied Spanish immigrants in Roussillon from an explicitly linguistic perspective. In his monograph, which is based on interviews with 28 informants, he describes the features of a contact language that he has termed

³ “the role assumed by the social actor in both large-scale movements of populations and in her own social experience”

⁴ “dialectal jargon”

⁵ Both Oso Casas (2004, 2007) and Lillo (2004) discuss *fragnol* (formed from *francés* (Sp.) and *español* (Fr.)), a variety of Spanish that includes lexical items, such as “pubela” (*poubelle*) y “chambra” (*chambre*), borrowed from French.

“melandjao,” which is composed of Castilian grammar and French lexical items, and whose very name “révèle explicitement le mélange, c’est-à-dire avant tout l’interférence entre ces codes qui brouillent, se parasitent l’un l’autre”⁶ (p. 9). However, Lagarde’s exhaustive description of the phonological and morpho-syntactic features of *melandjao* does not so much suggest an autonomous language in its own right so much as French influenced by contact with Spanish. Although he does not delve deeply into his informants’ biographies, Lagarde nevertheless highlights the unstable nature of *melandjao*, claiming that it varies “selon l’idiolecte”⁷ (p. 306)—that is, according to the individual who is speaking it. Lagarde thus inadvertently highlights the link between a shared situation of language contact, with all of its sociohistorical particularities, and an individual’s idiosyncratic use of language(s): “Il n’en est pas moins certain que ... la chronologie des arrivées, l’origine géolinguistique des immigrants, le milieu sociolinguistique d’accueil constituent autant de facteurs susceptibles de conditionner les performances linguistiques” (p. 282).⁸ According to Lagarde, then, a number of social and linguistic factors converge to lend shape to an individual manifestation of *melandjao*; thus, what he describes as variation might, from another perspective, be understood as style.

7.3 A multilingual perspective

Like the individuals who populate these two studies, the women I met in Saint-Denis chose to immigrate to Paris in pursuit of social and economic opportunities that were not available to them in Spain. They may not have intended to stay abroad permanently, but they are still in France today, over 40 years later, and they are all multilingual.⁹ Although Oso Casas and Lagarde illuminate in different ways the forms that this multilingualism has taken, their analyses are constrained by the frameworks that structure them. Oso Casas correlates her subjects’ linguistic proficiency in French and their desire to use it with their adherence to one of two possible “strategies of migration”—that of saving money or that of consuming material and symbolic goods in the host country. For his part, Lagarde bases his analysis on the assumption that the form of language spoken by his informants, by simple virtue of the fact that they are Spanish immigrants in Roussillon, is *melandjao*. Even though he acknowledges a wide envelope of variation within this language, he only marginally considers that such variation might be due to individual choice rather than interference.

The narrow scope of the linguistic analyses put forth by Oso Casas and Lagarde might be attributed to their primary methods of data collection—that is, one-time semi-

⁶ “reveals explicitly the mix—that is, above all, the interference between these codes that blur, that feed off one another”

⁷ “according to idiolect”

⁸ “It is no less certain that... the chronology of immigrants’ arrivals, their geo-linguistic origins, and the sociolinguistic milieu to which they came, constitute a number of possible factors conditioning their linguistic performances.”

⁹ For information on Spanish émigrés who returned to Spain, see *Petite Espagne* (Sensier, 2006), a documentary film in which Natacha Lillo interviews Spaniards who have remained in France and others who have returned to their home country.

structured interviews with individual informants. Relying on ethnographic methods of investigation that focus on individuals and language use *in context*, I address the linguistic practices of the same population from a different perspective, teasing out the contrasts *and* similarities among them as they are embodied individually. For indeed, despite my focus on linguistic idiosyncrasies, I also consider commonalities and the relationships between them. Ethnographic methods enabled me to make connections between the two; they also led me to focus on Lina, Amalia and Benita once I had established that, among the women at the Centro, their distinct ways of speaking reflect three broad poles of multilingual variation.

These poles to which I refer are not fixed categories; rather, they are based on loose constellations of perceptions, memories and affiliations that give shape to an individual's general preference for a particular language—be it her first or a second language, or the language in her repertoire that most suits a particular context of use. Here, I am conceiving of “preference” as a general and personal orientation toward code selection, rather than a contingent choice that reflects an individual's immediate social semiotic needs. Such “preferences” are dynamic, and they reflect a confluence of subjective and external factors that can be traced across the lifespan. Amalia, for example, found work as a *bonne à tout faire* within days of arriving in Paris; she quickly became attached to her employer's eight year-old daughter and ended up living with the family for nearly a decade. In 1970, after an attempt to return to Spain that lasted no longer than eight months, Amalia chose to migrate once again to Paris, and she dedicated herself to “perfecting” French. Once in the capital, she became romantically involved with her swimming instructor, an older Frenchman who would later become her husband; for the 32 years they were married, they communicated solely in French. Lina, for her part, moved to Paris alone, planning to send for her Spanish fiancé once she had found work. Her first—and only—job as a *bonne à tout faire* lasted only a month in the home of a French couple she now recalls as “shameless.” Wanting to avoid the domestic service industry at all costs, she relied on the sewing skills she had acquired in Spain to find employment in a string of workshops. Although she continued to speak Spanish with many of her co-workers and at home, she nevertheless learned enough French to interact with her employers and ensure that they would not exploit her. As for Benita, she did not migrate to Paris for work but to reunite with her husband who had left their village years earlier. In order to differentiate herself from other Spanish women abroad and to defy the low expectations placed on their linguistic proficiency, Benita endeavored to learn and use what she calls “correct” French in a way that reflected her self-perception as a paradigmatic speaker of Castilian.

The other women in my research sample practice multilingualism in ways that loosely reflect one of the three poles outlined above. The majority of them—17 out of 22 women—generally prefer to use Spanish, although they are almost all highly proficient in French. There are three individuals who now prefer to use their second language, and all of them are, or have been, married to French men. And while most of the individuals in my sample perform at least occasional code-switches between languages, two women (in addition to Benita) insist on using Spanish or French monolingually. Perhaps unsurprisingly, these two women were the most educated among those I met at the Centro: Maria had spent a few years studying at the university in Saint-Denis as part of a program designed for students who had not earned their *baccalauréat*; Lucía graduated

from secondary school in Burgos before meeting her husband, a French sailor, and moving to Paris, where she worked as a secretary in the Spanish embassy.

While individual linguistic preferences within this group of women seem to constellate loosely around one of the poles embodied by my three case studies, no one constructs multilingual styles through identical patterns of variables. Thus, any attempt to establish points of similarity *among* them must be complemented by an account of the subtle points of difference *between* them. It is precisely through these interstices that I have accessed the subjective dimension of their acquisition and use of language. Although broad types of multilingual style are sure to emerge in other situations of language contact shaped by particular sociohistorical circumstances, as they have done here, researchers must also account for the meaningful differences that such classification effaces by focusing on individuals through comparative case studies.

7.4 Closing remarks and future directions

Over the course of this project, I have assumed a multilingual perspective that protracts not from the social group or the linguistic form, as Oso Casas and Lagarde do respectively, but from the individual herself, foregrounding the subjective, ideological and historical dimensions of her acquisition and use of language. The variables on which I have focused, code-switching and bilingual discourse-marking, have enabled me to illustrate how individuals activate social meanings tied to ideological formations that they share as part of a group brought together by sociohistorical processes. While code-switching entails acts of language choice that index meanings through broad, but commonly held, associations of language—“French” or “Spanish”—with social categories or stances, bilingual discourse-marking operates on a more immediate level, conjuring social meanings more likely to bear on the moment-to-moment navigation of interaction. The women in my research sample thus activate the form-meaning relationship on multiple levels of discourse at once across their repertoire of languages. My understanding of how and why they configure these linguistic practices in particular ways was informed by the multilingual approach I took to studying them.

In spite of the insight afforded by such an approach, however, most research to date on situations of language contact and the individuals who navigate them have been shaped by a monolingual bias (Auer and Wei, 2007; Heller, 2007). Within adult SLA, such a bias has ensured a continued focus on the acquisition of autonomous linguistic systems that are assumed not to affect, and not to be affected by, the languages that already comprise an individual’s repertoire. The language learner’s task, regardless of the sociohistorical context in which she undertakes it, entails reaching a “target” defined as the idealized body of linguistic knowledge possessed by native speakers. Within sociolinguistics, a monolingual bias has ensured a focus on the “speech community” (Labov, 1972) as a circumscribed group of individuals bound by a shared set of linguistic norms, as well as guidelines for evaluating those norms. This concept, which continues to underpin mainstream quantitative work, assumes a homogeneous population whose use of linguistic variables from a single language can be predictably correlated with demographic categories. Even ethnographic research that has departed from the Labovian paradigm and attempted to account for stylistic variation among more local social

formations, such as communities of practice and discourse communities, has rarely investigated *non-monolingual* settings (though, for exceptions, see Gal, 1979, Gumperz, 1967, and Mendoza-Denton, 2008).

As I learned from my own experience, the monolingual bias is often difficult to overcome. Indeed, I set out to conduct fieldwork in Paris with the intention of focusing exclusively on the French spoken by non-native adult Spanish immigrants. After just a few days at the Centro, however, I realized that such an orientation to language use *in situ* could never account for its complexities—or at the very least, that it would not account for its complexities among the population I had chosen to work with—precisely because there was no monolingual French there. The gap between what I thought I would find in the field and what I actually saw when I got there led me to reconsider just how much I had overcome my own monolingual proclivities. From the start, my experience in Saint-Denis forced me to articulate the empirical manifestation of a multilingual perspective that departs from the individual and focuses on the subjective dimensions of her language use. I thus referred to areas of SLA and sociolinguistics that have reconceived monolingual end-states and static life stages as “histories of engagement” (Kinginger & Blattner, 2008) and “linguistic life courses” (Eckert, 1998).

The formulation of such constructs has been enabled by a small but robust line of inquiry by scholars attempting to eschew the monolingual bias—and its repercussions—that I describe above. Romaine (1995), for example, illustrates this trend in the opening pages of *Bilingualism*, her seminal investigation of that topic, when she comments on how odd it would seem to encounter a book entitled *Monolingualism*. Alluding to the deep-rooted bias that informs prevailing linguistic theory, her provocative gambit is meant to expose the monolingual inclinations of previous research on bilingualism and bilingual individuals. Romaine rejects the notion of an ideal speaker-hearer who belongs to a homogeneous speech community—the very cornerstone of mainstream linguistic research since Chomsky (1965) first articulated it—and argues instead for a “reasonable” account of bilingualism that addresses its cognitive, social and affective particularities (p. 321).

Scholars within various subfields of linguistics have made similar claims, insisting on the psycho- and sociolinguistic differences between monolingual and multilingual individuals (Auer, 2005; Auer and Wei, 2007; Clyne, 2003; Cook, 1992, 1997; Eckert, 2000; Grosjean, 2010; Koven, 2007; Pavlenko, 2005; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004; Sridhar, 1994). Grosjean (1982), for example, argues from a psycholinguistic perspective that bilingualism cannot be reduced to composite monolingualisms. Pavlenko & Blackledge (2004), for their part, discuss research in second language acquisition that demonstrates how “the relationship between individuals’ multiple identities and second language learning outcomes” is far more complex than portrayed in traditional accounts (p. 6). And Koven (2007), in her ethnographic study of Portuguese-French bilingual adolescents, contends that her subjects’ sociolinguistic practices differ from those of their monolingual counterparts because they necessarily draw on associations that are tied to, and that emerge through the relationship between, “two distinct named languages of ideologically monolingual nation-states, ‘French’ and ‘Portuguese’” (p. 247).

Framing issues of concern to SLA and sociolinguistics in *multilingual* terms, my project complements these previous studies by revealing through its attention to

individual language use the idiosyncratic aspects of this phenomenon that monolingually oriented studies necessarily overlook. As I have shown in my analysis of data, the conceptual shift towards a multilingual framework entails a concomitant shift in analytic focus from linguistic forms to social meanings. Through ethnographic fieldwork, I have come to understand how people index such meanings locally through the creation of multilingual styles that are comprised of variables from across languages. To be sure, these multilingual styles function similarly to their monolingual counterparts; they vary between individuals and across contexts, and they emerge through their iterated use over time among particular aggregates of speakers. Woolard (2004) has even argued that multilingual practices are essentially equivalent to the alternation in ways of speaking among monolingual individuals who shift between dialects and registers—in other words, between different forms of the same language. Defining codes broadly as “language varieties” (p. 74), Woolard cautions against exclusive associations of code-switching with bilingualism, which risks overlooking “the extent of the phenomenon” of any form of alternation (p. 74). While I agree that stylistic variation operates according to the same principle in monolingual communities as in multilingual ones—that is, through the indexical relations that inhere between linguistic forms and social meanings—my analysis nevertheless shows that the nature and extent of those relationships become more complex when multiple languages are at play. Not only do multilingual individuals create meaning through local associations tied to language *choice*, activating semiotic relationships within indexical fields that are linked to social aggregates formed over time, but they also have recourse to a wider swath of options for the obvious reason that they have at their disposal ranges of variables from each of the languages that they speak.¹⁰

Within multilingual communities, the social meanings created by individuals emerge from within *and* between the languages in their repertoires. The multilingual women in my research sample, for example, construct intelligible styles by selecting particular variables *within* Spanish or French—an exaggerated apico-alveolar /r/, say, or a devoiced final high vowel—variables that are meaningful in relation to *other* variables within the same language. They also, however, generate social meanings through the broader level of language choice *between* Spanish and French. At any given moment of interaction, then, they create social meanings through configurations of segmental variables *and* choices of language within specific contexts of use. Among multilingual speakers, alternations of code foreground in stark ways the ideologically mediated relationships among individuals, the social formations in which they participate, and the language varieties that comprise the repertoires that they share.

A multilingual perspective demands consideration of the social and historical conditions in which an individual began to learn and use a second language; through an analysis of artifacts that reflect those conditions, one can begin to reconstruct a sociolinguistic landscape. To date, such artifacts have rarely figured in sociolinguistic or SLA research; in this project, however, they have been indispensable points of reference as I have traced biographical trajectories both *through* and *about* language, locating the

¹⁰ Koven (2007) argues that multilingual speakers “have recourse to ... languages as reified entities that become more readily accessible to their awareness” (p. 247). Citing Errington (1985), she suggest that the choice between languages is more “pragmatically salient” than the use of a given variable within a monolingual system.

subject within the historical, but also accessing the historical through the subject's experience. Such methods lie at the heart of a phenomenological approach that takes *becoming* multilingual—the inchoative, dynamic, adaptive process that entails, but is not reducible to, acquisition—as its object of focus and seeks to answer questions about how linguistic variables come to mean socially and how they are used individually. They also challenge the boundary between sociolinguistics and SLA, helping scholars reformulate questions and imagine new ways of answering them.

I suggest that future research in the fields of SLA and sociolinguistics consider the idiosyncratic dimensions of language learning and use alongside their more traditional, generalizing concerns with cognition and communities. To this end, scholars must focus on the individual as I have done here—as a socially and historically situated subject whose perceptions, memories and emotions accrue over time and inform the linguistic choices that she makes. No matter the object of their analysis—large-scale survey samples or traditional sociolinguistic interviews, linguistic practices in language classrooms or senior centers—they must trace within such samples the individual trajectories of which they are composed. As Coupland writes: “Aggregation *rounds down* our understanding of stylistic processes. It often blurs the potential for analytic insight” (p. 27-28, italics in original). Thus, through a shift in footing, through assuming a different stance, researchers can begin to make sense of the mutually constitutive relationship between the individual and the social. How do language learners in other times and places experience the process of language acquisition—as did the women in my study—in part as one of becoming multilingual? How are these experiences reflected in the ways in which they practice multilingualism? And how do such practices change over time?

Thus, I return here to some of the questions with which I began, reorienting them toward other sites of language contact and adding one in particular that imbricates a historical dimension through a shift in methodology. Over the course of this project, I have configured and analyzed data from and about a specific population—that is, female seniors—with the intention of reconstructing their processes of language learning from a sociohistorical perspective. In some ways, then, my approach, which locates the diachronic in the synchronic, has resembled that of apparent-time studies within traditional sociolinguistics that attempt to chart language change by comparing the use of linguistic variables across age-stratified segments of a community at a given moment in time. The insight afforded by such methods in my own project beckons further investigation along a different temporal axis—that of “real time”—through which my claims about the relationships among the individual, the context of her acquisition, and her stylistic practices might be fortified by longitudinal evidence. Indeed, the process of language acquisition—or, as I have re-described it here, the process of becoming multilingual—continues throughout the lifespan; a real-time study grounded in ethnography would enable a researcher to trace actual changes in the individual and her language use, as well as in the sociolinguistic landscape through which she moves.

As Eckert (2000) writes:

I am inclined to think of language acquisition as a process that continues throughout life, but focuses on different aspects of language through the life course as speakers construct and revise their theories of the linguistic behavior of others and of the effects in the world of their own linguistic

behavior. (p. 216)

Within the context of her study, Eckert's understanding of acquisition applies to monolingual speakers; within the context of *my* study, however, it could easily describe the experience of my multilingual subjects. Although Eckert does not intend to throw into question the boundary between sociolinguistics and SLA, her comment above nevertheless invites its reconsideration. Over the course of my project, I have laminated theoretical principles from these traditionally distinct subfields of linguistics, generating insights into the idiosyncratic dimension of language acquisition and use that would not have otherwise been revealed. Grounding these principles in ethnographic fieldwork has ensured a balanced and recursive consideration of the individual *and* the community. Indeed, for the idiosyncratic to have meaning, it must be recognizable within the social aggregate in which it is articulated; the individual and the community are thus inextricable from one another, and any serious investigation of the former will necessarily take into account language phenomena that structure the latter. As I hope to have shown here, an individual's experience of becoming multilingual ultimately informs the ways in which she expresses herself through language and assumes her place(s) within a social landscape.

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Appendix A

Transcription Conventions

(adapted from Bucholtz & Hall, 2008)

Each line represents a single intonation unit.

.	end of intonation unit; falling intonation
,	end of intonation unit; fall-rise intonation
?	end of intonation unit; rising intonation
!	raised pitch and volume throughout the intonation unit
:	length
=	latching; no pause between intonation units
—	self-interruption; break in the intonation unit
-	self-interruption; break in the word, sound abruptly cut off
(.)	pause of 0.5 seconds or less
(n.n)	measured pause of greater than 0.5 seconds
@	laughter; each token marks one pulse
“”	reported speech or thought
.h	inhalation
[]	overlapping speech
(())	physical action
x	unintelligible; each token marks one syllable